



Education | Healthcare | Public Services

IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF IRAN

The AFT, a union of professionals representing 1.8 million educators, nurses, healthcare workers and government employees in the United States, raises its collective voice in support of the people of Iran, as they bravely fight in the streets of their nation for freedom, justice and fundamental human rights, and courageously confront an authoritarian, theocratic regime.

As we witness this regime subjecting fellow unionists and the people of Iran to the most brutal repression, we endorse the heartfelt plea of the Coordinating Council of Iranian Teachers' Trade Associations for the recognition of a legitimate right to protest; for an immediate end to the state violence against protesters and the release of those who have been arrested and detained; and for policies that address the economic and political conditions that give rise to the protests—intense poverty, widespread unemployment, runaway inflation and rampant government corruption.

Like all peoples, Iranians have a democratic right to self-determination, free of foreign influence and control. The AFT is opposed to U.S. and other outside military intervention in Iran; an invasion can only aid the cause of the authoritarian theocrats in the Iranian state and delay the day when Iranians are finally free and able to govern themselves.

The protests in the streets of Iran are the result of years of neglect, hardship and suffering, all of which must be laid at the feet of its leaders and their self-serving and self-enriching policies. That regime has responded to protest with the most horrific violence. Its forces have fired directly and without warning into peaceful demonstrations, slaughtering protesters and bystanders. International human rights organizations report civilian deaths not in the hundreds, but in the tens of thousands. To facilitate its massacres of Iranian protesters, the regime has sought to restrict communication and limit the flow of information by instituting a near-total shutdown of the internet. The killings and the denial of basic human rights must end now.

Iranian education unions are actively engaged in the current protests, and many of their members and leaders have been incarcerated in Iran's most notorious prisons. As a result, hundreds of teachers have been harassed and interrogated on baseless and false charges;

hundreds more have suffered pay cuts and been suspended from work, forced to retire or dismissed outright.

Abdollah Rezaei—a retired educator, a board member of the CCITTA and the general secretary of the Teachers' Trade Association of Harsin—is one Iranian teacher unionist who has been victimized by this repression. Rezaei was arrested by Iranian authorities during the protests in Kermanshah Province and transferred to an undisclosed location, joining dozens of other imprisoned labor union activists. The AFT demands Rezaei's immediate release, and the immediate release of all detained unionists.

As the Iranian people protest repression from their own regime, they are also facing the threat of war from President Trump. Without even the pretense of congressional consultation and authorization required by the U.S. Constitution and law, Trump has engaged in unconscionable saber-rattling with the Iranian regime. This posture leaves Iranians—millions of whom have protested the current regime—caught between violent repression at home and the threat of death from missiles from abroad. At the same time that Trump has threatened war, the U.S. government has been deporting Iranian families who fled the current regime, including a gay couple who face persecution or worse in Iran.

The U.S. government must provide refuge and support for the Iranian people and civil society—not bombs.

The AFT stands with the CCITTA and with all Iranians from every sector of society who are bravely resisting the current repression. The Iranian people, and the Iranian people alone, have the right to determine their future. Their fight for human rights, workers' rights and a democratic and just society is our fight. The AFT will work with Education International, Public Services International, global trade union allies and local Iranian civil society organizations to extend solidarity to educators and trade unionists in Iran.

AFT Executive Council

February 18, 2026