



Legislation Text

File #: 22-942, Version: 1

TITLE:

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COSTA MESA SUPPORTING THE IRANIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND CONDEMNING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

DEPARTMENT: CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

PRESENTED BY: ALMA REYES, ASSISTANT TO THE CITY MANAGER

CONTACT INFORMATION: ALMA REYES, ASSISTANT TO THE CITY MANAGER, (714) 754-5090

RECOMMENDATION:

City Council consideration to adopt Resolution 2022-XX in support of the Iranian-American community and condemning violence against women.

BACKGROUND:

On September 13, 2022, Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Kurdish woman from the northwestern city of Saez, was arrested in Tehran by Iran's morality police for not wearing a "proper" hijab or head scarf in compliance with religiously-grounded laws. Police reportedly beat her and took her to Vozara Police Station, where she was reportedly beaten again and later transferred to a hospital after suffering a heart attack or stroke.

Mahsa Amini reportedly later fell into a coma, and on September 16, 2022, she passed away in the hospital. Authorities claim Amini died from underlying health reasons.

Since the announcement of Mahsa Amini's death, there has been an eruption of nationwide protests in the Islamic Republic of Iran, demanding accountability for her death and calling for an end to violence and discrimination against women and girls in Iran.

The government of Iran has committed additional acts of violence and numerous human rights violations against its own people, particularly against women and girls, including but not limited to the killing of over 200 civilians; gassing of an all-girls elementary school; shooting and killing of students at the Sharif University of Technology; threats of sexual violence as a means to silence opposition; and the burning of Evin Prison that holds political prisoners, intellectuals, reporters, and journalists.

Following the tragic death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in the custody of the morality police, the Iranian government has since cracked down on the right to freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly, including shutting down access to the internet.

At the October 18, 2022 City Council meeting, multiple Council Members expressed strong opposition to these reported violations of human rights and requested that staff prepare a Resolution condemning the actions of Iran's morality police against women and girls in Iran and to support the people of Iran in their efforts to defend their human rights and fundamental freedoms. At the request of the City Council, the attached Resolution has been drafted for your consideration.

ANALYSIS:

Since the death of Mahsa Amini, demonstrations have taken place in at least 40 cities throughout Iran, including the capital of Tehran, with protestors demanding an end to violence and discrimination against women and the end of the mandatory wearing of the hijab. Hijabs are obligatory to wear in public, regardless of religion or nationality. Further, Iranian women have lost the right to travel, the right to work, and the right to child custody after the child turns seven years old.

The protests have expanded from being solely focused on women's equality to Iranians expressing frustration over a wide range of issues, including living conditions, corruption, and economic mismanagement under the existing regime. While these challenges are being faced by women and girls in a country far from the United States, there is a large Iranian-American community in Southern California and the country that is calling for assistance from the United States and the global community to stand united in the cause to protect basic human rights for all women and girls in Iran and around the world.

As the United States Constitution stands for equality and democracy for all, foreign actions against women and girls represent human rights violations that threaten the stability of freedom and democracy worldwide. As such, City Council consideration is requested of the attached Resolution condemning violence against women in Iran.

ALTERNATIVES:

The City Council can provide additional direction to staff regarding the Resolution.

FISCAL REVIEW:

The adoption of the proposed Resolution will not have any fiscal impact on the City's budget.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney's Office has reviewed the staff report and prepared the Resolution, and approves them as to form.

CITY COUNCIL GOALS AND PRIORITIES:

This item supports the following City Council Goal:

- Strengthen the Public's Safety and Improve the Quality of Life

CONCLUSION:

City Council consider the adoption of Resolution 2022-XX in support of the Iranian-American community and condemning violence against women. By adopting this Resolution, the City Council is affirming its strong support for the right of all people of Iran, particularly women, to live a life without repression, brutal violence, and restrictions to basic human rights.