

Hi my name is Anahita, I was the former Artist Production Intern at Newworld Theatre. I am Iranian. I was born in Tehran and I immigrated to Canada with my family when I was 7 years old. Iran is my motherland. Farsi is my mother tongue. Being Iranian is an integral part of the fabric of my humanity.

If you don't know what's happening in Iran right now, we are currently on the 19th day of protests. These protests were ignited after Jina Amini, a Kurdish and Iranian woman, was brutalized and murdered by the "morality police" for improperly wearing her hijab.

Since then, women in Iran and Kurdistan have been burning their hijabs, and everyone has been coming together to protest these oppressive and outdated laws. This is currently the greatest fight for human rights happening globally, it is more than a protest, it is a revolution.

And these protestors have been met with brutal inhumane military violence. The internet in Iran is shut down to stifle the voices of protestors and stop them from organizing, there is an estimated 400 people have been murdered for protesting so far, and an estimated 20,000 arrests have taken place. Standing with Iran at this time means you are standing with the peoples rights to protest without fear of their safety and freedom.

If you don't know, the hijab is not innately a part of Iranian culture. It became mandatory after the 1979 revolution. It is not what the people want, it never has been. In 1979, there are photos of thousands of women protesting the mandatory hijab and the regime. This is a fight that is 43 years in the making. We must listen to, and support the demands of the people at this time and what the people want is a total end to this regime and all of the oppressive laws and treatments that come with it. They are fighting for change. For revolution. Jina Amini's death was a catalyst.

Currently in Iran, you can be put in prison for taking off your hijab, for showing your hair, for saying anything at all that defies the Islamic regime in any way, for protesting peacefully, for ripping up a picture of Khomeini, for simply saying death to the Islamic Regime, death to Dictatorship, for dancing on the street.

In Iran I couldn't be Non-Binary, I couldn't have a girlfriend, I couldn't dance in the streets, I couldn't go outside without wearing a hijab and loose fitted clothing. I couldn't sing. I couldn't be who I am without being imprisoned, tortured and possibly murdered.

I cut my hair for my sisters back in Iran, for every woman who has ever been stopped by the morality police and feared for her life, for Jina Amini, for Niloufar Hamedei- the journalist who broke the news about Amini who is now imprisoned, for Nika Shakamari who was only 17 and murdered, for her family that was denied the right to hold a memorial for her, for Shervin Hajipour who was imprisoned for writing a song about freedom that has now become the anthem of this revolution, for the students and professors currently being trapped, kidnapped and murdered across Universities in Iran, for every life lost in protest to this cruel fucking regime and in complete and total solidarity with the women and people in Iran and Kurdistan who are currently fighting for their fundamental human rights.

The protests are teaching me what true courage looks like in practice. Giving me lessons in solidarity. Reminding us all how powerful we can be when we come together to demand change.

I need to put things in perspective for a moment.

Because of everything I have been posting on my own social media, along with images of me at protests (where my face is not covered) I will not be able to travel to Iran under this regime.

I will, like thousands and thousands of other Iranians across the globe, not be able to visit my motherland ever again without compromising my life and my safety unless this regime ends. It's not an exaggeration. It really is that bad. So when you see Iranian people speaking up - know that they are paying a huge price when they do. When you see people in IRAN protesting know that they are risking everything for this fight. Everything.

I have seen images of teenage girls in schools, highschools, elementary schools, taking off their hijabs. Know that they are risking their lives. Know how brave and determined they are. Be inspired by it and join them. Know how valuable your voice as a Non Iranian is right now in amplifying this. You have free speech without consequences. Use it.

We are not free until we are all free. This includes people in the Middle East. It includes my beautiful brothers, sisters & siblings in Iran and Kurdistan. It has to. I do not want to be a part of a world where it doesn't.

I am begging you to see the revolution that is happening in front of your eyes. I am calling you to action. Get creative. Figure out how you can be of support and solidarity in tangible consistent ways until we see this through together.

This is history in the making. This is a glorious, victorious moment for Iran as the people stand absolutely united for change. So please, in this movement led by women. Do not pity our women. Do not vilify men. Get up and stand with US.

if you believe in women's rights, if you believe in LGBTQIA+ rights as well as the liberation of Queer and Trans folks, if you believe in racial justice, if you believe in democracy, if you are against police and state violence, if you have ever said ACAB, if you believe there should be a separation between church and state, if you believe in the right to bodily autonomy, if you believe in human rights - stand the fuck up with Iran and Kurdistan right now.

Amplify ! Share news as it comes out and when you share, add your own statements of solidarity, share your outrage, share it directly with your people, take it offline, come to protests, bring this shit up in your staff meetings, your personal conversations, and keep your mind and heart open for any ways in which you can be of service and comradery. If you are a university student, or an alum- contact your school- put pressure on them to speak up, if you are a part of any institution or organisation, keep talking, keep showing up, keep an open heart ready to jump in when new opportunities come up.

Please. This violent regime is counting on the rest of us outside of Iran to not care. To not engage. I am begging you to not let that happen.

For Jin Jiyan Azadi, Woman Life Freedom.

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there have been protests in Iran and Kurdistan that have spread globally protesting mandatory hijab laws & (police) state violence & brutality after Jina Amini, also known as Mahsa Amini, a young Kurdish & Iranian woman, was murdered by the Tehran morality police.

Jina was arrested because of her “improper” hijab (a small section of her hair was showing). She was taken to a centre to receive “re-education” but was brutalised and beat, which ultimately led to her death.

Shortly after, in Iran and Kurdistan women began burning their hijabs, cutting their hair and publicly defying these horrific laws. The protests in Iran have been met with violence, and at least 180 people have been killed for protesting so far, but some sources say up to 400. The government has restricted access to the internet to stifle the voices of Iranian people, and stop them from organising further protests and sharing the horrific realities currently taking place in Iran.

This is the greatest fight for equal rights happening in the world right now. International solidarity with Iranian and Kurdish women and people is extremely critical right now. We need to keep amplifying the voices of Iranian people, on and offline. ADD ABOUT THIS MOMENT COULD ACTUALLY MEAN CHANGE FOR IRAN

The least we can do is not let Jina's death be in vain. We can let it be a catalyst. We can make sure she is never forgotten and that we stand with Iranian + Kurdish people as they bravely protest and fight today, and every day onwards, making sure the demands of the Iranian people are listened to.

Jin Jiyan Azadi (Kurdish) and Zan Zendagi Azadi (Iranian) have been chanted at the protests. It means Women, Life, Freedom. It is a Kurdish ADD STUFF ABOUT KURDISHNESS

She was 22 years old. She was a woman. She was Kurdish and Iranian. She was murdered. Her name was Jina Amini and she, along with everyone who has died in protest for exercising what should be a basic human right should be alive today. Now, the Iranian people are calling for an end to the Islamic Regime that was implemented after the 1979 revolution. The people have had enough of this violent regime and are risking death, imprisonment and torture in order to fight for the future of their lives, and that of generations who will come after them.

Nasrin Sotoudeh spoke to TIME magazine about the current uprisings, and what they will mean for the future of Iran and compulsory hijab laws, *"I in no way see a return to the past, no matter the nature of the crackdown. Even if the people's demands are not met, the reality will have shifted permanently. They will not tolerate the compulsory veil any more"*.

She also ends by stating, *"You know, in many revolutions, there are concerns about violence. In this revolution, women have no need for violence because the act that they engage in is simply taking off a scarf. It's completely peaceful. All that women have done is to take off their scarf and stand in front of the morality police and say I'm not wearing this. On many such occasions, women have been surrounded and attacked. But all they're doing is just lifting the veil and refusing to wear it. So in this revolution, what we are worried about is the violence of the government, not the people. We expect support from everyone, because we are defending our common values and principles."*

In supporting this movement you stand in solidarity with the fight against gender inequality, police violence and brutality, as well as government corruption. Standing with Iranian and Kurdish women means standing for human rights globally. And

Martin Luther King said "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Global solidarity with the Iranian and Kurdish community is not only a great act of comradery as these brave people fight for their human rights, but more than that, it let's the government officials in all of our respective countries and cities understand that we are here, and we will not tolerate injustice - not in other countries, and certainly not in our own.

When we stand for women's rights, regardless of the country, we all win.

### **Anahita Personal Statement:**

I was born in Tehran, where Jina Amini was murdered for "improper" hijab. I lived in Iran until I was 7 years old. Iran is my motherland. Farsi is my mother tongue. If you know me, you know this situation now too. It is a part of the fabric of my humanity, & if you see me, you must see this too.

I have been so moved by the bravery of Iranian & Kurdish women & the electricity of the unity of all in this fight. Men are standing with women in a way that I have never seen before. This is a historic moment. It is a victorious one.

In fact, this is the GREATEST GLOBAL MOVEMENT FOR EQUAL RIGHTS CURRENTLY HAPPENING. My Feminist friends, my artist friends, my Queer & Trans friends, my BIPOC friends, my friends who are ALL OF THE ABOVE - let us RISE TOGETHER! I am counting on you right now to CARE about what is going on. We are not free until we are ALL FREE. This includes people in the Middle East. It includes my beautiful brothers, sisters & siblings in Iran. It has to. I do not want to be a part of a world where it doesn't.

The Iranian government is hoping the internet shutdown will lead to this movement losing momentum. They want to keep killing, imprisoning and torturing protestors without any consequences. I am begging you to not let this happen. The horror does not end at the fact that Jina Amini could have been so many of us. The horror is that her fate will be that of so many more women & people if we do not demand an end to this cruel regime.

Friends keep asking me what they can do. Here it is step by step: Keep the conversation going on & offline, when posting online don't simply post - add your own statement of solidarity & send updates DIRECTLY to folks as well. Show up to & spread the word about upcoming protests in your area Global Day of Action is THIS SATURDAY OCTOBER 1ST

(TOMORROW). What does that mean? This means there are rallies and protests happening all over the world in support of this movement. From Germany, to Australia, to the United States, Switzerland and Canada. VANCOUVER you will be building a human chain that begins at Georgia Street by the Vancouver Art Gallery, and goes all the way to Stanley Park, from 2-4pm. This will be a beautiful gesture of solidarity. Please, please come out! And if you cannot make it, share the news of this event with your community.

Let's keep staying informed, engaged and active participants in making sure we see this thing through together.

If Iranians are protesting day in and day out, risking death, imprisonment and torture for this fight- who are we to not support them?! Who are we to not dream of a better future with them?

JIN. JIYAN. AZADI. WOMEN. LIFE. FREEDOM.

*"I was 10 years old when the kingdom regime was changed to islamic regime. The main reason was freedom for all Iranians. Unfortunately from the first day of this regime till now after 44 years not only iranian people couldn't find freedom but also they lost everything including right to have any freedom in any kind: dress, idea, love, body, ... and the result is a very kind smart lovely people force to have hijab, say lie and live without any hope. The only hope for all of us, all 10 years old now 54 years old, is to see Iran as a country to live without any Islamic or any kind of idea which torture people for their beliefs. I love to repeat Women, Life, Freedom"*