

THE WORLD WATCHES IRANIAN PROTESTS



1

Warm up

In pairs, discuss the following questions.

1. How many countries share a border with Iran?
 - a. four
 - b. seven
 - c. nine
2. What is the official language of Iran?
 - a. English
 - b. Turkish
 - c. Persian
3. What is the capital of Iran?
 - a. Tehran
 - b. Ashgabat
 - c. Baghdad
4. Which religion did NOT originate in Iran?
 - a. Mandaism
 - b. Bahatism
 - c. Zoroastrianism
5. What is the largest Iranian export after petroleum products?
 - a. non-alcoholic beer
 - b. iron ore
 - c. carpets
6. What's the official stance on women singing in public?
 - a. Women have the same singing rights as men.
 - b. Women are encouraged to sing in public.
 - c. Women cannot perform on their own but if a man joins in it's permitted.

What else do you know about Iran?

2

Focus on vocabulary

Now, match the definitions to the words below. There is one extra word

Revolution	Strict Islamic dress code	Theocratic rule	Islamic republic	Supreme leader
Kurdish militant groups	Morality police	Live ammunition	Ethnic minorities	Human rights groups

1. Refers to groups of people who belong to a particular race or national origin that differs from the dominant or majority group in a country.
2. A government agency or group responsible for enforcing laws related to moral or religious behavior, often in public places.
3. A political system in which the government is controlled by religious leaders or institutions.
4. Laws or rules requiring individuals to adhere to a particular dress code based on religious beliefs.
5. Groups of armed individuals fighting for Kurdish autonomy or independence.
6. Bullets or other projectiles that can cause injury or death, fired from firearms or other weapons.
7. A form of government that blends elements of Islamic law and principles with a democratic system of governance.
8. A sudden and often violent change in the political system or social order of a country or society.
9. The highest ranking religious and political authority in Iran, who holds ultimate power over the country's government and policies.

Part B: Complete the following vocabulary and definitions with the missing vowels (a, e, i, o, u).

1. **r _ lly** (v): bring a lot of people together to support something
2. **th _ _ cr _ t _ c** (adj.): governing a country according to religious laws
3. **m _ _ m _ r** (n): a person at a funeral who was close to the deceased
4. **br _ _ ch** (v): act in a way that breaks a rule or the law
5. **n _ gl _ ct** (n): the act of not caring for someone properly to the point where they are in danger or at risk
6. **_ ll _ g _ dly** (adv.): a legal term meaning that someone has said that this has happened, but we cannot confirm it as fact at the moment.
7. **cl _ sh** (n): a short fight, usually between groups of people with different views
8. **d _ sp _ rs _** (v): go from being a large amount of something to breaking up into smaller parts and disappearing
9. **c _ m _** (n): a state where you are alive but unconscious for a long time. often caused by a serious accident or illness.

3**Watching for general information**

You are going to watch a video on recent protests in Iran. What role did the following people play?

1. **Mahsa Amini**

2. **Mohammad Reza Pahlavi**

3. **Ali Khamenei**

Answer these questions in pairs or small groups.

1. What is the source of Iran's economic problems?
2. What does the Chamber of Commerce think about the disruptions to internet use?
3. Who does the Iranian government say is responsible for the protests?



4**Scanning for vocabulary**

Quickly read through the article on page six and find words which have the following definitions.

1. _____ have to stay somewhere without the opportunity to leave, often in an unpleasant situation (v, paragraph A)
2. _____ a movement of a group of people who are from a country that they are not living in (n, paragraph C)
3. _____ an effort to do something (n, paragraph C)
4. _____ an official order by one country aimed at making life more difficult for another country by limiting trade or goods with the aim of getting the target country to take action (n, paragraph C)
5. _____ act in a way that is in line with the expectations of a group of people (v, paragraph D)
6. _____ a headscarf worn to cover the head which some muslim women wear in public (n, paragraph D)
7. _____ creating sexual desire (adj., paragraph D)
8. _____ convince someone not to do something (v, paragraph E)

5**Scanning for details**

Quickly read the article on page six and decide what the following numbers represent.

- | | | | | | |
|----------------|---------------|-----------|------------|-----------|----------|
| 100,000 | 14,800 | 32 | 328 | 40 | 6 |
|----------------|---------------|-----------|------------|-----------|----------|
- a. _____ The number of people alleged to have been jailed for protesting in Iran.
 - b. _____ The number of people alleged to have been killed during the protests in Iran.
 - c. _____ The number of children alleged to have been killed in Iran during the protests.
 - d. _____ The number of Iranian journalists who have been jailed for covering the protests.
 - e. _____ The number of Iranians who marched in protest against the Iranian government in Berlin.
 - f. _____ The number of people in a morality police squad.

Protests in Iran

Reaction across the world

- A.** With the protests entering their eighth week in Iran, they are showing no signs of slowing down. Yet neither is the government response. Local human rights activists report that around 14,800 people have been detained for protesting with around 328 people having been killed at the time of writing, including over 40 children. There are reports of beatings and torture in the prisons as well as sick people being denied vital medicine. Bails have been set at such high amounts that many people are too poor to afford them and so are left languishing in their cells.
- B.** With the government crackdown on social media, and the state-controlled media working closely with the government to control the narrative of events, it's difficult for the outside world to know the truth of what is taking place. As well as foreign correspondents being banned from the country and filming protests, 32 Iranian journalists have been arrested for covering the demonstrations.
- C.** Still, this has not entirely prevented information from leaking out. In Berlin, close to 100,000 people, largely from the Iranian diaspora, attended a rally in the German capital

chanting 'Women, Life and Liberty!' in protests against the Iranian government. The Biden administration in the US has eased its restrictions on Iran in an attempt to aid protesters and allow tech firms to operate there. This will remove some of the barriers on communication online in a bid to counteract the measures by Tehran. Meanwhile, the UK, Canada, the EU and the US have introduced sanctions aimed at the morality police by targeting their families abroad to discourage others from joining the force.

- D.** Iran's morality police work in teams of six, four men and two women and target civilians who are not conforming to the dress code, which invariably means women. In a recent interview, a member of the morality police said that their purpose was to protect women as dressing improperly could provoke men who may then hurt women. However, they are often criticised for their methods. One woman said she was stopped with her daughter for wearing lipstick and was only allowed to leave when her husband signed a paper to say that he was responsible for not letting them leave the house without wearing a hijab. Another

woman was arrested for wearing boots which were deemed 'too erotic' and had to sign a paper admitting that she was at fault, leaving her with a criminal record. The morality police are also notorious for issuing beatings and torture and other cruel and unusual punishments. A woman reported that she was told that unless she complied with their demands, they would cover her body in cockroaches.

- E.** Yet despite these efforts to support the protesters from a distance, most countries are still prioritising their economy and security over human rights in a foreign land. China and Russia, the two main non-Western powers, have maintained friendly relations with Tehran. Both countries have come under heavy criticism by human rights organisations and could do little to dissuade Iran's current government from its tactics without being accused of hypocrisy. In short, it is unlikely that any of the measures taken against Iran's regime will effectively discourage it. Still, as we have seen in the past, there's a great power in a large group of people who seek freedom. Iran's protesters have already gone past the point of no return.

Source: bbc.com



5

Discuss these questions.

1. Why do you think such a large number of people were protesting in Berlin?
2. Why do you think morality police squads include women?
3. Why do you think the woman was threatened with cockroaches?
4. Based on what you know, how much do you think the government in Iran and the protesters are telling the truth?
5. If you were an Iranian in this situation, what would you do? Would you support the protests or not? Why?
6. What do you think the outcome of the protests will be? Why?
7. Do you think you could live happily in a theocracy? Why/Why not?
8. Why are China and Russia maintaining friendly relations with Tehran despite heavy criticism from human rights organizations?
9. What is the potential impact of the protesters' actions on Iran's government?
10. Should other countries prioritize their economy and security over human rights in a foreign land? Why or why not?

