

Editor's note

On the death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian woman

Saturday 24 September 2022, by [KELLY Annie](#), [The Guardian](#) (Date first published: 21 September 2022).

Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian woman, was travelling with her family from Iran's western province of Kurdistan to the capital, Tehran, to visit relatives when she fell foul of Iran's notorious morality police. Stopped for failing to meet the required standards for wearing the mandatory hijab, her arrest allegedly turned violent with reports of her being beaten in police custody. Days later, [she died](#) in a Tehran hospital.

Her death has sparked a wave of fury on the streets of Iran and across social media that the authorities are now struggling to contain. [Three people have been killed](#) in street protests, with the Iranian regime continuing to hold the official line that Amini died of pre-existing medical conditions instead of at the hands of the police who detained her.

Her death is the consequence of an increasingly repressive crackdown on women's rights across the country, after Iran's hardline president Ebrahim Raisi launched a new hijab decree mandating stricter enforcement of Iran's laws on women's dress in public spaces.

For the past month, the Rights and Freedom team has been reporting on the fallout from Raisi's crackdown, [on the spate of arrests, detentions and public humiliation](#) of women who dared to defy the required dress code. The government has also announced it was [planning to use facial recognition technology](#) to identify women flouting dress laws on public transport.

We reported how some of the women arrested for going against the new decree were identified after videos were posted online of them being harassed on public transport for not wearing the hijab properly. One, 28-year-old Sepideh Rashno, was arrested after a video circulated on social media of her being berated for "improper dress" by a fellow passenger. She was then allegedly beaten before being forced to apologise on television to the person who harassed her.

Whether Amini's death becomes a turning point in the Iranian people's tolerance for the unaccountable and often brutal enforcement of Iran's strict dress code on women remains to be seen. Yet from the waves of protest on the streets and the videos being posted online of young women cutting their hair and ripping off their hijabs in solidarity with Amini, it is clear that a fire has been lit that will be very difficult for the authorities to extinguish.

Annie Kelly, editor, Rights and freedom

P.S.

• The Guardian. Wed 21 Sep 2022 05.49 BST:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/20/iran-death-mahsa-amini-protests-morality-police>

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