

Stand With Free Iran!

Friday 26 June 2009, by [Socialist Alliance \(Australia\)](#) (Date first published: 25 June 2009).

The Socialist Alliance stands in solidarity with the millions of Iranians who are bravely demanding their rights in the streets despite huge state-sanctioned repression. These are the biggest protests in Iran since the 1979 protests in which the US-backed Shah was deposed.

Millions of people, old and young, ethnic and religious minorities, have taken to the streets, day in and day out since the disputed election on June 12.

They have bravely defied the repressive regime of Mahmoud Ahmedinejad to demand the most basic of rights: the right to freely and transparently elect their representatives.

At least 27 people, including a young woman Neda Agha-Soltan whose death was captured on video, have been killed in the crackdown on protests.

Several hundred have been injured, and a leading student activist is in a coma. Government officials on June 24 announced that there had been a total of 645 arrests in Tehran since June 13. Activists say that several hundred more, including journalists, editors, students, professors, party officials and unionists have also disappeared.

Iran's unelected Guardian Council, while admitting electoral irregularities, has ruled out a recount or a fresh election.

The regime's response is no surprise: it uses its repressive apparatus – including the National Guard and the basji – to violently repress trade unions, curb the rights of women, gays and lesbians, national minorities and other oppressed sectors.

What started as a protest in support of opposition candidate and former prime minister Mir-Hossein Mousavi, who claims to have been defrauded, has become a rallying point for Iranians from many sectors fed up with their lack of rights.

On June 20, the Autobus Workers Union of Iran (Sendikaye Sherkat Vahed) declared its support for the protests and protestors, and condemned the state-sponsored repression.

"Iranian society is facing a deep political and economic crisis", the union, many of whose leaders have been imprisoned and disappeared, said.

"Million-strong protests, which have manifested themselves with a silence that is replete with meaning, have become a pattern that is growing in area and dimension, a growth that demands a response from any responsible person and organization."

The union demanded that workers' and democratic rights, in particular the freedom to organise and the freedom to elect, be respected, or "any talk of social freedom and labor union rights will be a farce".

The autoworkers union has also joined the protestors.

Socialist Alliance salutes those millions of Iranians who are determined not to let this latest attack on democratic freedoms pass by.

The Iranian people are reminding the world that their struggle for democracy and rights is not over. The apparent split in the Islamic ruling elite may assist them in this struggle – and our international solidarity will also be a critical factor. To that end, we commit our support the Iranian community in Australia in their efforts to organise international solidarity.

In addition, we want the Australian government to take a stand in support of democracy in Iran.

At a minimum, the Rudd government must:

- condemn the Iranian regime's repression of the protests
- demand the release of all political prisoners, including union leaders and activists
- demand the regime sends the Iranian National Guard back to barracks and de-commissions the basji shock troops
- demand that the regime hold fresh elections, with international observers.

P.S.

* From Socialist Resistance website:

<http://www.socialist-alliance.org/p...>