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# Zhina's Protests in Iran

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## Authors

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**Summary :** A few days after being arrested due to the rules and regulations of the Islamic "Hijab", scarf in Iran, Mahsa (Zhina) Amini died in Taran. Zhina was a Kurdish Lady from Iran. Her death left common grief from Kurdistan to all over Iran.

A few days after being arrested due to the rules and regulations of the Islamic "Hijab", scarf in Iran, Mahsa (Zhina) Amini died in Taran. Zhina was a Kurdish Lady from Iran. Her death left common grief from Kurdistan to all over Iran. Zhina's case became a huge political issue and took a Kurdish Nationalist aspect very quickly. It also became an extremely hot topic for the challenge between reformers, conservatives and internal conservatives in Iran. Besides being an issue of rights, freedom, and women's issues, it also gained a global and international dimension. But how will Zhina's Death impact the political Iranian Situation?

According to an appendix of Article 638 of the Iranian Islamic Penal Law, women who do not wear the hijab can be sentenced to 10 days to two months in prison or fined. However, Zhina did not have a chance to be released from prison after a while or to pay an amount of money as a fine. Zhina's death spawned the most widespread protests in Iran throughout the Islamic Republic, as well as in the Kurdish region of western Iran (Rojhelat). Police behavior on the hijab issue in Iran has tightened over the past three months, such incident is common for many Iranians, and that may have been one of the reasons for the widespread reaction against the incident.

The significant number of influencers and celebrities from various fields in Iran who stood against what happened with Zhina gave the protest popularity and helped to spread very quickly in many major cities such as Tehran, Rash and etc... Massive protests and strikes in the Kurdish region of western Iran (Rojhelat) during the consensus between political parties and activists represent another influential factor for the case.

In addition, Zhina's death was reflected as an issue in the internal struggle between reformists, moderate conservatives and conservatives. It included Former Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, who asked to stop such behaviors, and Former Iranina Foreign Minster Mohammad Jawad Zarifi, who said



"I feel ashamed".

Mohammad Jawad Zarifi

As the people's voices increased, the Iranian president and some senior officials were forced to speak out, and parliament is scheduled to start investigations. Also the Iranian Parliament president Mohammed Baqir Qalibaf promised to investigate in Zhina's death and conduct reforms in some laws related to hijab. Some agencies also reported the dismissal of the head of the moral security police in Tehran.

## What does the incident signify?

The government did not expect such a broad response. The unexpected reaction separated very quickly. Therefore it was initially stated that the police had not hit Zhina, but later on said that the dimensions of the incident demanded clarification! The incident has put Ibrahim Raisi's government in deep trouble. Raisi's government is already suffering because of high prices and poor living conditions in the country. However, this could additionally be the failure of the project of forced Islamization of society that has been worked on more than 43 years.

There is a big difference between the scenes of some people in some countries trying to acquire the right to wear Islamic clothing and the scenes of a policeman in Tehran trying to force people to wear Islamic clothing!

The project of the Islamic party, the Islamic government, the Islamic Society, and the Islamic world which was worked on by imposing locally and exporting abroad was not able to create the Islamic society that they aimed for and there are daily examples proves that. Perhaps one of the goals of the Iranian Regime from keeping scarf issue and police pressure might

be to maintain showing its strength during economic and political struggles to prevent the protests from spreading. However, this can cause a reflection because the more the government used to suppress demonstrations, the more people used to demonstrate again. Since 2009, people have been demonstrating in different places and times for various reasons like for petrol and water, price hikes, and now Zhina's protests.

The topic was critically significant to the Kurds too. It generated attention to the Kurdish issue in Iran and created sympathy for the Kurds in general. Some of Iran's celebrities even used Kurdish words and terms in their reactions. It was also a test for the cooperation between parties in Eastern Kurdistan (Rojhelat) and caused a kind of internal unity on the Kurdish issue. This unity had occurred in the past when Kurdish Zara Mohammadi and some other Kurdish prisoners were executed, but it was not strong as it is now. This issue also again brought back women's rights and freedom in Iranian society.

The events that followed Zhina's death presented the consolidation of power by conservatives alone after the previous parliamentary election was not enough to control the society.

Due to large scale protests, the government is expected to silently relieve some of the pressure and restrictions on scarf. The Foundation for the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice also said that it had repeatedly asked to avoid clashes between police and people who do not wear hijab and that these issues should be resolved without social tension! Zhina's protest once again demonstrated the level of political and social protest in Iran and this silent turning point shows the accumulation that is increasing day by day. It also showed that demonstrations and protest unexpectly can bomb out anytime and where in Iran.