



August 30, 2023

The Hon. Mélanie Joly, PC, MP  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Minister:

I am writing to you on behalf of the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE), which represents more than 425,000 workers across the country, regarding the deteriorating human rights situation in Iran.

Last fall, NUPGE joined many others in calling for justice for Mahsa Amini. We expressed solidarity with the women-led demonstrations in Iran calling for an end to human rights violations, including the repression of women's rights.

Despite the large-scale demonstrations by Iranians that garnered international attention and support, the Iranian government has recently redoubled its efforts to enforce the mandatory hijab laws, including through surveillance techniques. A recent [report from Amnesty International](#) documents how the Iranian government is intensifying its crackdowns on women and girls who choose not to wear the hijab.

A new bill passed this spring will compound this. Women and girls who do not wear the hijab, or who do not wear it in an approved way, would be subject to a range of penalties. These include being denied access to essential services, dismissal from work, or deductions from their salary and benefits, fines, and imprisonment. The bill is widely seen as further codifying into law the blatant violations of women's rights.

NUPGE is extremely concerned by these developments. They add to the Iranian government's shameful track record of violating fundamental human rights, sparking [condemnation from UN human rights experts](#).



**NUPGE.ca**

15 Auriga Drive  
Nepean, Ontario, Canada  
K2E 1B7

**e** national@nupge.ca  
**p** 613-228-9800  
**f** 613-228-9801

**President** Bert Blundon  
bblundon@nupge.ca  
709-727-6892

**Secretary-Treasurer** Jason MacLean  
jmaclean@nupge.ca  
902-549-1888

In recent years, there has also been a surge in labour strikes and protests regarding wages, working conditions, and human rights. These actions, too, have been met with government repression and violence. Activists have been threatened or detained because they advocate for workers' rights and for fair and decent working conditions.

NUPGE expresses solidarity with human rights defenders and with the "Woman, Life, Freedom" movement in Iran. I am calling on your government to condemn the Iranian regime's ongoing and worsening human rights violations. It is important that the international community continue to pay attention. And I urge you to take steps to support the Iranian people's movements and to ensure that measures to pressure the Iranian regime, such as sanctions, do not contribute to the deteriorating human rights situation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ben Blundell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ben" and last name "Blundell" clearly distinguishable.

cc: Jason MacLean, Secretary-Treasurer  
National Executive Board