



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office



**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon
Minister of State (Middle East,
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UN)**

**Prime Minister's Special
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Caroline Lucas MP
House of Commons
London
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11 January 2023

Dear Caroline,

Thank you for your correspondence of 6 January about Iran.

The tragic death of Mahsa Amini in September 2022 sparked a women-led grassroots political movement in Iran, which is fast becoming one of the most critical moments of Iranian history. For over three months, ordinary Iranians have risked their lives to protest against the Iranian regime. As well as a clear demonstration that the Iranian people have had enough and demand a better future, each day has served as a shocking reminder of the appalling violence and repression that has become commonplace in Iran.

The UK position is clear: these protests are an authentic, grassroots call for change. The Iranian public will no longer tolerate the regime's violent authoritarianism. Instead of blaming external actors, Iran's leaders must take responsibility and listen to their people.

The UK is committed to holding the Iranian regime to account for the appalling human rights violations that have taken place during its attempt to suppress dissent in recent months. That is why the government has announced three rounds of sanctions - on 10 October, 14 November and 9 December 2022 - targeting political, security and prison officials involved in the crackdown on protestors. These sanctions send a clear message to the Iranian authorities that they will be held to account for their repression of women and girls, and the shocking violence they have inflicted on the Iranian people.

The UK is also working with international partners to ensure Iran is held accountable on the world stage. We have raised the regime's violations of human rights across multilateral fora, including the UN General Assembly and Security Council. The UK worked closely with partners to ensure Iran was removed from the UN Commission on the Status of Women on 14 December. On 24 November 2022, the UN Human Rights Council passed a Resolution at a Special Session on Iran, which establishes a UN Fact Finding Mission into human rights violations in the ongoing protests. This is an important, concrete step towards accountability for Iran's leadership. We will work tirelessly with our partners at the Council to ensure that it delivers for the Iranian people. The UK also co-sponsored the 2022 UN General Assembly Third Committee Resolution on the situation of human rights in Iran, which underscored how urgently Iran must address its dire human rights record.

The UK will continue to challenge Iran's reprehensible actions at all opportunities. The Foreign Secretary has ordered the summoning of Iran's most senior representative in the UK on three occasions in recent months, most recently on 8 December 2022 to protest the regime's abhorrent use of the death penalty. Recent executions of young people detained in connection to protests shows the Iranian authorities' callous disregard for their citizens' lives. These individuals are the tragic victims of a system where forced confessions, lack of due process and disproportionate sentences are rife. The Foreign Secretary's statement on 8 December underlined our opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances. We continue to call on Iran to immediately halt executions and the imposition of death sentences. On 20 December I spoke to Iran's Chargé d'Affaires to reiterate our profound opposition to Iran's actions.

The UK has made it abundantly clear that Iran must cease its violent and repressive action and should respect the rights of the Iranian people. These messages are reinforced by our Ambassador in Tehran, to ensure that Iran's leaders are in no doubt about the political and diplomatic price they are paying for their brutality.

As the Foreign Secretary has said, the people of Iran have made it clear that the regime cannot continue as it has. It must now demonstrate real change. The UK stands with the people of Iran, who must be empowered to determine the future of their country – for the sake of Iran's peace and security and its future standing in the world.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

LORD (TARIQ) AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON

Minister of State

Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict