Protests after Mahsa Amini's death sparked solidarity protests around the world, such as in California, pictured here. Photo: Craig Melville/Unsplash

Prayer Diary: Iran

6-12 October 2024

In April this year the Iranian government launched a new campaign to promote stricter enforcement of the country's hijab rules, which dictate that all women must cover their heads in public in accordance with the Islamic Republic's strict interpretation of Shi'a Islam.

Reports soon emerged of women being dragged from the streets, detained by security forces, and subjected to violent beatings and insults in detention. The Iranian regime demonstrated once again that citizens are not free to live in a manner that corresponds with their beliefs.

Readers will likely remember the story of Zhina 'Mahsa' Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian woman who was arrested, physically assaulted and ultimately killed in September 2022, because she was deemed to have failed to properly adhere to the dress code of the majority faith .

Mahsa's death in custody sparked unprecedented nationwide protests, to which the Iranian authorities responded with excessive force. In March 2024 a UN fact-finding mission established by the Human Rights Council reported that violations committed by the authorities while suppressing the protests amount to crimes against humanity.

This week, join us in praying for Iranians across the country whose fundamental rights and freedoms continue to be curtailed, often violently, by a theocracy that imposes a homogenous identity on all citizens.

Please pray:

- For women and girls who have been arrested, detained or subjected to mistreatment in the renewed crackdown on 'violations' of the hijab rules.
- For Christians – especially those who convert from Islam – who continue to be arrested, imprisoned and even tortured on account of their faith.
- For communities which do not enjoy official recognition and face extensive discrimination as a result. Pray particularly for the Baha'i community, whose mistreatment is increasingly seen as amounting to persecution, which is a crime against humanity under international law