

“We are protesting against problems in the whole system in general. We reached a crisis where we noticed that the system cannot handle it anymore”  
– A Chilean Protester

Our world is on fire. Not only forests but also cities are burning all over the world. Social conflicts of all sorts are bursting out, spreading their flames across the planet: Algeria, Chile, Ecuador, Haiti, Hong Kong, Iraq, Rojava, Lebanon, Sudan, you name it. Located within this global context of struggles against the social hell of neoliberal, financialized capitalism, there has been another mass uprising in Iran since November 15, 2019.

Sparked by the sudden tripling of fuel gas price, tens of thousands of Iranian people have been protesting in more than 100 cities throughout the country. Of course, the fuel price *per se* did not generate such a huge and widespread uprising. Rather, it is 30 years of an authoritarian regime grounded on neoliberal principles that has made millions of people impoverished, unemployed, extremely precarious, depriving them from the basic conditions of life (education, healthcare, food, and housing). Just as 30 pesos increase in subway fares exploded the already raging fire into an inferno in Chile, so too, the fuel price sparked the recent uprising in Iran (the same goes for WhatsApp tax in Lebanon, the cancellation of fuel subsidies in Ecuador, and so on). “It is not about 30 pesos”, a Chilean poster announces the sentiment, “but 30 years of neoliberalism”.

Since Friday, the people in Iran have been courageously fighting against the heavily armed personnel of the regime’s Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), as well as armed plainclothes militia thugs (known as Basij) who are economically dependent on the regime. The people had every ‘right’ in this world to defend themselves against the systematic state-violence, build barricades on the streets, block highways, and occupy local areas and roundabouts. The forgotten and the invisible in Iran made themselves visible by setting up fires. The fire to these

people is the yellow vest to the French surplus population and proletarians. Both give voice to the voiceless. While the BBC Persian TV and the company, including reactionary loyalist forces, prescribe the liberal doctrine of ‘peaceful, civil protest’, the Iranian youth are self-conscious of the fact that “a people without hate cannot triumph”, that “material force must be overthrown by material force”, that they have the right to legitimately defend themselves against the state violence systematically aimed at killing the citizens.

‘Enough is enough’ is the message of the people in the Global South and beyond. As students have chanted in one of Tehran universities, “the people are fed up, enough with slavery”. Like our sisters and brothers in Iraq and Lebanon, the Iranian people are absolutely fed up with the authoritarian neoliberalism reducing their lives to a mere vegetable existence, the systematic corruption intrinsic to mafia capitalism, and the sub-imperialism of the Islamic Republic in Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Yemen and the region as a whole. They are not only opposing the tripling of the fuel price but the Islamic Republic as a whole. No other slogan, nicely chanted by our comrades in Lebanon, can better express the spirit of struggles in the current conjuncture: “All means all” (كلن يعني كلن).

The iron fist has been the response of the ruling class to this radical, practical negation of all existing powers. The systematic violence employed by the Islamic Republic to paralyze the uprising has been historically unprecedented in scale and intensity. The authorities have completely shut down the internet for four successive days, transforming the country into a big blackbox, and thereby slaughtering the people with peace of mind. According to Amnesty International, hundreds have been injured, thousands arrested, and “at least 106 protesters in 21 cities have been killed”, although “the real death toll may be much higher, with some reports suggesting as many as 200”. There are many videos showing that the police directly shooting at demonstrators in the head and chest – as we observed before in the case of Iraq. This is particularly happened in the Kurdish and Arab

provinces whose discriminated people are once again at the very forefront of the uprising and have paid the highest price.

The Islamic Republic has been successful so far in achieving its goals. They have seized the opportunity provided by the U.S. sanctions to realize their neoliberal dreams in order to be able to both recover the current budget deficit and increase their military operations in the region. To do so, they have shut down the internet by virtue of which they have brutally slaughtered their opponents. Internationally speaking, there has been no specific media coverage, no international condemnation of the state repression, and very little solidarity from the global left – in other words, the bloodbath is carried out in silence. This is so partly because, while the oppressed classes in Iran and the Middle East have no illusion about the ‘anti-imperialist’ role of the Islamic Republic, many on the left still believe in the ideological self-representation of the regime as an anti-imperialist force standing against the U.S. and its allies in the region.

We, the undersigned academics and militants, invite the global left to break its silence and express its solidarity with the people of Iran and their resistance. It is pointless for us to demand anything from the Islamic Republic, but we will demand from our comrades all over the world to be – in any possible form – the voice of the oppressed people in Iran suffocated by the forced isolation. We also call on the international left to condemn the atrocities of the regime against its own people. Finally, we stand in solidarity with the Iranian protesters who are reclaiming their dignity by refusing austerity, authoritarianism, militarization of society, as well as any other form of domination that puts a limit on their autonomy and freedom.