

IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF IRAN

1 The AFT, a union of professionals representing 1.8 million educators, nurses, healthcare
2 workers and government employees in the United States, raises its collective voice in
3 support of the people of Iran, as they bravely fight in the streets of their nation for freedom,
4 justice and fundamental human rights, and courageously confront an authoritarian,
5 theocratic regime.

6 As we witness this regime subjecting fellow unionists and the people of Iran to the most
7 brutal repression, we endorse the heartfelt plea of the Coordinating Council of Iranian
8 Teachers' Trade Associations for the recognition of a legitimate right to protest; for an
9 immediate end to the state violence against protesters and the release of those who have
10 been arrested and detained; and for policies that address the economic and political
11 conditions that give rise to the protests—intense poverty, widespread unemployment,
12 runaway inflation and rampant government corruption.

13 Like all peoples, Iranians have a democratic right to self-determination, free of foreign
14 influence and control. The AFT is opposed to U.S. and other outside military intervention in
15 Iran; an invasion can only aid the cause of the authoritarian theocrats in the Iranian state
16 and delay the day when Iranians are finally free and able to govern themselves.

17 The protests in the streets of Iran are the result of years of neglect, hardship and suffering,
18 all of which must be laid at the feet of its leaders and their self-serving and self-enriching
19 policies. That regime has responded to protest with the most horrific violence. Its forces
20 have fired directly and without warning into peaceful demonstrations, slaughtering
21 protesters and bystanders. International human rights organizations report civilian deaths
22 not in the hundreds, but in the tens of thousands. To facilitate its massacres of Iranian
23 protesters, the regime has sought to restrict communication and limit the flow of
24 information by instituting a near-total shutdown of the internet. The killings and the denial
25 of basic human rights must end now.

26 Iranian education unions are actively engaged in the current protests, and many of their
27 members and leaders have been incarcerated in Iran's most notorious prisons. As a result,
28 hundreds of teachers have been harassed and interrogated on baseless and false charges;
29 hundreds more have suffered pay cuts and been suspended from work, forced to retire or
30 dismissed outright.

31 Abdollah Rezaei—a retired educator, a board member of the CCITTA and the general
32 secretary of the Teachers' Trade Association of Harsin—is one Iranian teacher unionist
33 who has been victimized by this repression. Rezaei was arrested by Iranian authorities
34 during the protests in Kermanshah Province and transferred to an undisclosed location,
35 joining dozens of other imprisoned labor union activists. The AFT demands Rezaei's
36 immediate release, and the immediate release of all detained unionists.

37 As the Iranian people protest repression from their own regime, they are also facing the
38 threat of war from President Trump. Without even the pretense of congressional
39 consultation and authorization required by the U.S. Constitution and law, Trump has
40 engaged in unconscionable saber-rattling with the Iranian regime. This posture leaves
41 Iranians—millions of whom have protested the current regime—caught between violent
42 repression at home and the threat of death from missiles from abroad. At the same time
43 that Trump has threatened war, the U.S. government has been deporting Iranian families
44 who fled the current regime, including a gay couple who face persecution or worse in Iran.

45 The U.S. government must provide refuge and support for the Iranian people and civil
46 society—not bombs.

47 The AFT stands with the CCITTA and with all Iranians from every sector of society who are
48 bravely resisting the current repression. The Iranian people, and the Iranian people alone,
49 have the right to determine their future. Their fight for human rights, workers' rights and a
50 democratic and just society is our fight. The AFT will work with Education International,
51 Public Services International, global trade union allies and local Iranian civil society
52 organizations to extend solidarity to educators and trade unionists in Iran.