



“Women, Life, Freedom” against the War

A Statement against Genocidal Israel and the
Repressive Islamic Republic

2025-06-23

This statement by a collective comprised of Iranian, Kurdish, and Afghani internationalist feminists argues that we must oppose the murderous assault that the Israeli and United States militaries are carrying out against people in Iran while at the same time refusing to condone the oppression perpetrated by the Iranian government. Genocidal imperialist projects will never liberate us,

nor will patriarchal nationalist regimes protect us.

The collective, Roja, composed this statement on June 16, the third day of the war. It was **originally published** in **Persian**. Much has happened since then, including the direct attack that the United States carried out on Saturday, June 21. Nevertheless, this text provides valuable analysis on the strategy of the United States and Israeli governments to reshape the Middle East.

For background on the *Jin, Jiyan, Azadi* (“Woman, Life, Freedom”) movement in Iran, read **this**; for more information on the uprising that broke out in 2022, start **here**. You can read another statement from Roja **here**.

About Roja

Roja is an independent feminist-internationalist collective based in Paris, whose members originate from Iran, Afghanistan (Hazara), and Kurdistan. The collective was formed in response to the state murder of Jina (Mahsa) Amini and the nationwide “Jin, Jiyan, Azadi” (“Women, Life, Freedom”) uprising in September 2022. Roja focuses on political and social struggles in Iran and the Middle East, and on local and internationalist solidarity work in France, including with Palestine. “Roja” means “red” in Spanish; in Kurdish, “roj” means “light” or “day”; in Mazandarani, “roja” means “morning star.”



A sign at a demonstration in Paris organized by Roja, Feminists4Jina, and Socialist Solidarity.

“Women, Life, Freedom” Against War

We stand against both of the warmongering, patriarchal, colonial powers. But this is not passivity. It is the starting point of our active struggle for life.

If Israel drives Gaza’s children to the slaughter with a queer rainbow flag, the Islamic Republic of Iran drenched Syria in blood under an anti-imperialist guise. One commits genocide against Arabs in Palestine, the other subjugates non-Persian ethnicities within its borders. Netanyahu seeks to usurp the meaning of “Women, Life, Freedom” in order to disguise his colonial expansionism and military aggression as “freedom,” while Khamenei has poured all resources into building a Shia empire supposedly to combat ISIS and defend Palestine.

Indeed, these two longstanding foes mirror each other in killing and malevolence. We

must not equate these two capitalist regimes in terms of their positions within the global order: the Islamic Republic's capacity for military aggression is undoubtedly far less than the capacity of Israel and its Western imperialist backer. Still, the suffering it has inflicted is as absolute as the violence of Zionist fascism. Any attempt to relativize this suffering, quantitatively or qualitatively, is reductive and misleading. That suffering spans multiple forms of oppression, including the exorbitant costs of its nuclear project and taking human dignity a hostage.

This asymmetrical war between Israel and the Islamic Republic is, above all, a war against us.

It is a war against what we have created in the "Jin, Jyain, Azadi" uprising, what we've achieved, and what lies at its potential horizon: a feminist, anti-colonial, egalitarian uprising that did not emerge from state power, but originated in the popular struggles of Kurdistan—especially those led by women—and then echoed across the geography of Iran.

It is simultaneously a war against the oppressed and working classes: against the nurses at Farabi Hospital in Kermanshah and the firefighters of the small town of Musian in Ilam, who were struck by Israeli air attacks—the former on June 16, the latter twice, on June 14 and 16.

This war targets the infrastructure and networks that sustain daily life in this region.

Taking a clear, uncompromising stance on the war—condemning Israel's assault and saying "no" to the Islamic Republic—is the minimum strategic foundation for shaping a collective campaign demanding an immediate ceasefire. "Women, Life, Freedom Against War" is not just a slogan; it draws a sharp boundary around a set of tendencies whose contradictions and conflicts are clearer today than ever.

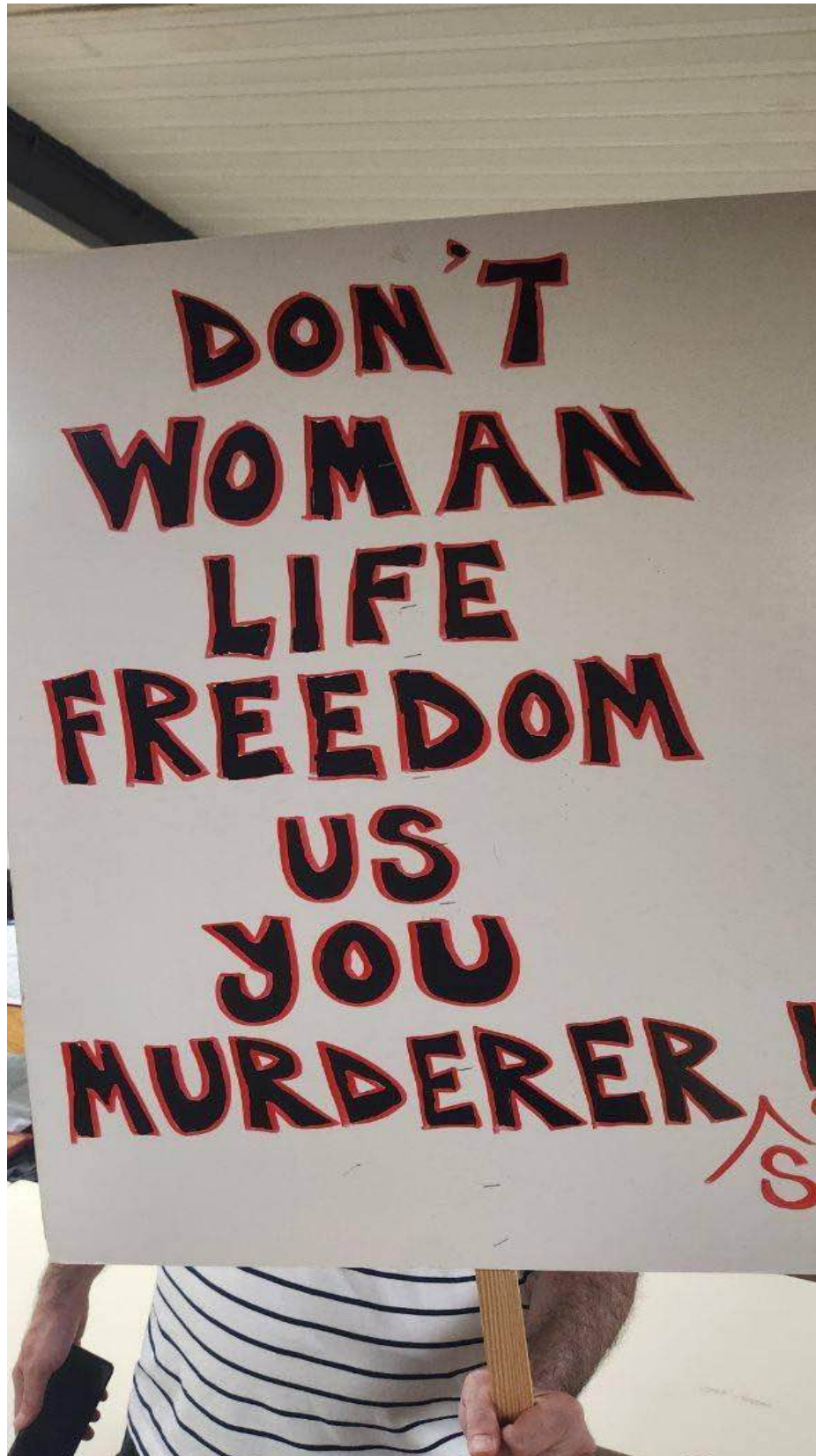
On one side are opportunistic advocates of regime change who, for years, have supported Western and US sanctions, beaten the drums of war, denied Gaza's genocide—and now plead for "liberation" in abject subservience to their master, Israel. In short: those who minimize Western imperialist warmongering, above all the far-right Persian-nationalist royalists.

On the other side is *campism*, the political position that lends its support to any project—no matter how authoritarian—that opposes the Western bloc, presenting it as “resistance.”

In addition, there are forces that prioritize the struggle against Israel’s criminal assault by appealing to a “state of emergency” or “the people’s interest.” This latter group ends up either whitewashing the Islamic Republic’s crimes at home and abroad or adopting a strategic silence regarding them. These are the ones who, after October 7, 2023, issued warnings about the danger of indifference to the shared fate of Middle Eastern peoples—but instead of emphasizing grassroots internationalist struggle, blurred the line between popular resistance and state power. They correctly noted that Iran comes next after Lebanon and Palestine in the so-called “new Middle East order,” but only to downplay and deprioritize the struggles of women, ethnic minorities, and the oppressed classes in this “moment.” Their warnings remained abstract because they did utter not a word about the Islamic Republic’s longstanding appropriation—and ideological monopolization—of anti-colonial discourse since the 1979 revolution.

We believe that only by drawing these boundaries—emphasizing the mutual and inseparable relationships between multiple social struggles in the region—can we form a solid front against Israel’s genocide and simultaneously wrest anti-colonial discourse from the Islamic Republic’s monopoly while confronting ethno-nationalists who deny the existence of ethnic minorities and “internal colonialism” within the Islamic Republic.

In solidarity with the shared fate of Middle Eastern peoples—from Kabul to Tehran, from Kurdistan to Palestine, from Ahvaz to Tabriz, from Balochistan to Syria and Lebanon—which is the material basis of internationalist struggle, we address this statement to the oppressed and the downtrodden within Iran and the region, to the diaspora, and to the “wakeful consciences” of the world.



A sign at a demonstration in Paris organized by Roja, Feminists4Jina, and Socialist Solidarity.

13 June / 23 Khordad: Death by Bombs

and Missiles

The ethnic cleansing perpetrated by the criminal Israeli state is not confined to this day, this year, or even this century. Yet the geopolitical fault line that opened up on October 7, 2023 now threatens to swallow the Islamic Republic and the people of Iran from within—at a staggering speed and with shocking intensity—casting a darkening horizon that strains our emotional and psychological limits.

These may be the most critical days of our lives since the 1979 Revolution.

From the dawn of Friday, June 13, to Monday, June 16, the Israeli military carried out 170 attacks, striking 720 targets across Iran.

- **Phase One:** Nuclear facilities, missile bases, air-defence systems, and assassinations of researchers and military commanders in residential areas—targeting dozens of senior commanders in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps [a branch of the Iranian Armed Forces], inflicting an unprecedented blow to the IRGC’s military-security structure.
- **Phase Two:** Coordinated strikes on refineries and fuel depots (Shahran in Tehran and Pars South in the Persian Gulf), ports, airports, and critical infrastructure affecting not only military arteries, but social reproduction and everyday life.
- **Phase Three:** Assaults on symbols of governmental authority—ministries, official buildings, and the Islamic Republic’s main broadcasting agency in Tehran—the central hub of interrogators, torturers, and hate propagators. A media institution with a four-decade record of fabricating dossiers, spreading lies, and slandering the poor, women, Afghan migrants, and political dissidents.

Across all of these phases, contrary to the seductive promises of fascist propagandists selling bomb-delivered freedom, what has unfolded is not “pinpoint strikes” on military targets, but the indiscriminate slaughter of civilians, women, and children. As of June 15, at least 600 people have been killed and 1277 injured. [*On June 23, as we publish this, the numbers are considerably higher.*]

In response, the Islamic Republic had launched over 350 missiles and drones at Israel by June 16. One major strike targeted northern Israel, including Haifa—the strategic industrial core and an energy-logistical hub. Although most of the projectiles were intercepted by the defense systems of the Israeli military and its allies, several reached civilian areas. As of this writing, 24 Israelis have been killed, including four women from a single family.

In this dire situation, the Islamic Republic has not only abandoned a terrified populace—failing to provide even the most basic services such as transparent public information, air raid shelters, or alarm systems—but has also escalated state control: deploying riot squads, erecting checkpoints across cities, and sharpening its blade for executions under the pretext of “spying for Israel.” While this is unsurprising during wartime—indeed, it is symptomatic of the regime’s inability to ensure safety—it carries with it the whispered threat of “hanging traitors from every tree.” Such logic flows naturally from a regime whose very survival depends on internal repression, executions, the militarization of daily life, and relentless regional expansion.



The Roja banner at a demonstration in Paris on June 14 against the genocide of Palestinians.



A demonstration in Paris organized by Roja, Feminists4Jina, and Socialist Solidarity.

Colonial Representation and the

Normalization of War

The “War on Terror”—the imperialist project which unleashed bloodshed across Afghanistan and Iraq at the dawn of the 21st century—has now passed the torch to Israel: a “preventive” strike aimed at containing the Iranian nuclear threat.¹ Once again, the dominant media script is repeated: Israel targets only “military sites,” deploying “precision missiles” and “smart drones” to deliver freedom and democracy to the Iranian people.

But this narrative does not address Parnia Abbasi, the 24-year-old poet killed in Sattarkhan, Tehran. It makes no mention of the murders of Mohammad Ali Amini, the teenage taekwondo athlete, or Parsa Mansour, a national padel player. Not a whisper of Fatemeh Mirheidari, Niloufar Qalewand, Mehdi Pouladvand, or Najmeh Shams. These were neither “military targets” nor “nuclear threats”—only human beings, their bodies dismembered in global media silence, shredded by Israeli missiles. This is merely the tip of the iceberg of the “freedom” that Israel—backed by the West—intends to introduce by heaping up corpses and devastation.

Reactionary forces that reduce “regime change” to a mere political reshuffling from above—without any real social transformation—are now openly embracing their longtime savior, Israel. Monarchists have turned bombing victims into statistics, shamelessly declaring, “The Islamic Republic executes thousands annually, so the killing of dozens or hundreds by Israel is justifiable.” This is the same dehumanizing logic—the quantitative calculus of death—that the United States deployed to justify destroying Hiroshima and Nagasaki: *“If the war continues, more will die, so drop the bomb.”*

The killing of civilians in Israel’s recent assaults, the heightened state control within Iran, the destruction of social infrastructure—none of these are “unintended mistakes” or collateral damage. They are the logic of war, especially when waged by a regime like Israel’s. The familiar claim that civilians or non-military sites are being used as “human shields”—once invoked in Gaza, now used to justify attacks on Dizelabad Prison and Farabi Hospital in Kermanshah—is a deliberate distortion, deployed to

mask and invert the truth of this exterminatory logic.

There is no such thing as a “just strike” or a “fair bombing.” The historical experiences of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya—yes, the very Libya that Netanyahu openly cites as a model for regime change in Iran—testify in blood to this truth.



A demonstration in Paris organized by Roja, Feminists4Jina, and Socialist Solidarity.

“The New Middle East Order”: Why Did Israel Attack Iran?

The unprecedented scale of Israel’s attacks indicates that Israel is attempting to achieve full-scale regime change—or regime collapse. We cannot dismiss Operation “Rising Lion” as a mere extension of the longstanding hostility between the two states.

It is rooted in a broader regional process that began on October 7 with a blow to the so-called “Axis of Resistance” and has now reached deep into the core of Tehran’s power structures.

Israel’s strike on the Islamic Republic marks the latest chapter in a broader transformation of Middle Eastern geopolitics and economics.

Gaza, for Israel, is not merely a battlefield—it is a colonization project. The assault on Gaza is a campaign to exterminate or expel over two million Palestinians and transform the blood-soaked coast into Trump’s vision of a “Middle Eastern Riviera”—luxury beaches, casinos, and a free trade zone for white people.

Step by step, Israel has driven Hezbollah from southern Lebanon, destroying its infrastructure, killing commanders, and dismantling its war machine. The same is now unfolding with the IRGC. In Syria, a regime propped up by Russia, Hezbollah, and the IRGC—at the cost of half a million deaths and twelve million displaced—has abruptly collapsed under Turkish-backed rebels. The Tehran–Beirut Shia Corridor, once a strategic artery linking Iran to the Mediterranean, has become its Achilles’ heel—the runway via which warplanes now strike it.

In the newly imposed order of the Middle East, a bloc of Israeli–US capitalist power is aggressively reshaping the region via logistical-economic routes (the India–Middle East–Europe Corridor), political-economic normalization (the Abraham Accords), and expansionist militarism in the form of the genocide and annexation of Gaza.²

Amid the disintegration of the “Axis of Resistance,” the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps’ longstanding doctrine of “neither war nor peace”—a strategy of manufactured crises and calculated brinkmanship—has collapsed. For years, the regime weaponized limited, controlled confrontations to forestall both total war and genuine peace. Today, it finds itself exposed on a battlefield where the rules have irrevocably shifted.

This collapse, compounded by the regime’s total loss of domestic legitimacy—marked by the mass uprisings of December 2017, November 2019, and the “Women, Life, Freedom” movement—amounts to a final blow. The Islamic Republic can no longer

manage, defer, or externalize its crises. It commands no legitimacy at home and holds no strategic leverage in the region. It is a scorched remnant in an emerging militarized, multipolar order.

In this vortex of blood, the United States—racing against China and maneuvering through Russia—is striving to reclaim its fractured hegemony. Netanyahu clings to endless war as his ticket to domestic survival. And within the Islamic Republic's ruling apparatus, many now aim to become instruments of regime change themselves. Meanwhile, the people remain hostage—trapped in a war that is not theirs, a war that offers no horizon of liberation.

No to the Repetition of Libya, No to the Summer of 1988 Massacre

Recalling the path from the “blessing” of the Iran–Iraq War for the Islamic Republic's consolidation in its infancy to the regime's mass execution of political prisoners in the summer of 1988 is as urgent today as remembering the imperialist course that led to the “Libyaization” of an entire society.³

The history of “humanitarian interventions” in Iraq and Afghanistan—whether under the pretext of “weapons of mass destruction” or “crimes against humanity”—must be read alongside the history of those struggles in Iran that, from before the 1979 Revolution to today, have wrongly prioritized anti-imperialism above all else. Similarly, the settler-colonial history of Israel—from the 1948 Nakba to Nasser's betrayal of pan-Arabism in 1967—must be understood from the vantage point of Turkmen Sahara and Kurdistan, sites of internal colonialism.

For over a decade, ideologues of the “island of stability” (the name that the campists once gave to the Islamic Republic of Iran) have used the fear of “Syriaization” to shame independent popular struggles and call people to the ballot box, selling the IRGC's bloody intervention in Syria as a deterrent strategy to prevent the “Syriaization” of Iran. Just recounting this history is enough to justify a decisive “no” to the discourse of campists—a discourse that, rather than relying on organized popular

power from below, stoops to realpolitik and, in the name of anti-imperialism, treats the enemy of the enemy as a friend even when they are just as bad.

Nearly 45 years ago, at the onset of the Iran–Iraq War, some progressive groups fell into nationalism—treating the war as a “national” event. That only served to consolidate Islamic authoritarian rule. Some remained silent as the Islamic Republic threw around the word “imperialist” to justify imposing mandatory veiling on women and deploying troops to Kurdistan; others, though they spoke up, failed to mobilize public opinion against the internal enemy fashioned in the image of an external one, thus helping to normalize a hierarchy centered on man/Persian/Shia.

Right now—when the “state of emergency” narrative suggests that this is some exceptional, disconnected moment—there is no greater imperative than invoking a plural, multi-layered historical memory. Only from a heterogeneous, multi-voiced historical memory—from the standpoint of oppressed peoples—can we say “no” to imperialism, war-based state control, and campism all at once. The project of remembering that layered history—from Kabul to Gaza, across shared fates and differences—we call *internationalism*.

In a world oscillating between fascist militarization and seemingly endless wars, our path lies in active, mass organizing for an immediate ceasefire, for peace, and for the reproduction of life against the machinery of death. Our field of action is neither aligned behind states nor invested in casting hopeful glances toward them—it lies in caring for one another, in mutual aid, and in building a network of support, awareness, and solidarity—from elders and children to the marginalized and disabled—as we witnessed magnificently in the Woman, Life, Freedom uprising, in which solidarity among the oppressed became a force for living, resisting, and creating.

Transparency of information and consciousness-raising—without reproducing either Israeli or Islamic Republic narratives—must be the pillars of this cultural and political resistance.

Submitting to fatalism and painting an apocalyptic future in which everything is already over—these are ways of reproducing the logic of death. Against that notion of the

future, what is vitally urgent is to shape an all-out campaign aimed at immediate ceasefire and at opening a horizon of liberation:

Women, Life, Freedom Against War

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Resistance is Life

Free Palestine

Roja

18 June 2025



1.

Although the Islamic Republic's nuclear program has, from the very beginning, been a costly and undemocratic process with serious ecological consequences —pushed forward by the Revolutionary Guards to secure the regime's survival in

regional and global geopolitical competitions, at the expense of impoverishing society and destroying the environment—and although we recognize no “right” for the Islamic Republic or any other state to acquire nuclear weapons, and believe that nuclear arms and the global race for them must be entirely dismantled, Netanyahu’s attack is nonetheless based on a false narrative, reminiscent of the US invasion of Iraq under the pretext of eliminating “weapons of mass destruction”: namely, that Iran is only a few steps away from building “the bomb.” While the Islamic Republic has indeed significantly increased its stockpile of uranium close to weapons-grade, there is no evidence of a decision to build a nuclear bomb. Even if we assume that the Islamic Republic has acquired a bomb, it is the peoples themselves within the political geography of Iran who must decide their own fate with autonomy and self-determination—and this in no way justifies Israel’s military assault. ↵

2.

The “Al-Aqsa Flood” operation of October 7 can be interpreted within the context of this new architecture of domination: as an attempt to disrupt Israel’s normalization project through the Abraham Accords, and to interfere with one of the most vital routes of transnational capital flow—beginning in India, passing through Saudi Arabia and the UAE, reaching Israel, and extending from there to the shores of Greece in the Mediterranean. ↵

3.

Libyaization refers to an imperialist strategy in which a state is first diplomatically pressured into disarmament—often under the guise of international agreements or humanitarian concerns—then subjected to military intervention, and ultimately pushed into state collapse and prolonged chaos. The term draws from the case of Libya, where the Gaddafi regime was persuaded to abandon its weapons programs, later targeted by a NATO-led military campaign in 2011, and eventually disintegrated into a fragmented, war-torn country without a functioning central government. ↵