



KURDISTAN SOLIDARITY FORUM (KSF)

Forûma Pişgirtia Kurdistan

Independent • Non-Profit • Non-Partisan
Human Rights • Democracy • Kurdish Rights
London, United Kingdom

3 October 2026

The Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP

Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister,

Subject: Urgent UK action to protect the rights of Kurds in Iran

Four years after the death in state custody of **Jina Amini on 16 September 2022**, the Kurdistan Solidarity Forum (KSF) calls on your Government to lead a focused diplomatic and accountability response to the continued human rights violations affecting Kurds in Iran, including within the Kurdish regions known as Rojhalat Kurdistan. We request urgent intervention to protect prisoners at risk, stronger protection for civilians and a substantive written response setting out the action the United Kingdom will take.

Jina was a young Kurdish woman whose life should never have ended in custody. The movement associated with her name, Jin, Jiyan, Azadî — Woman, Life, Freedom, expresses a demand for dignity, equality and freedom from fear. For families seeking news of detained relatives or justice for those killed, international solidarity must translate into concrete protection, effective remedies and accountability.

These demands are grounded in Iran's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These instruments protect life, liberty, fair trial, freedom from torture, peaceful expression and assembly, equality, and cultural and linguistic rights, alongside rights to work, health and education. Security concerns cannot justify torture or arbitrary deprivation of life. Kurds in Iran must be able to exercise their rights without discrimination and participate meaningfully in decisions affecting their lives.

The UK Government's own country information reinforces the need for action. The Home Office's May 2026 bulletin cites the Kurdistan Human Rights Network's documentation of 240 Kurdish people killed, including 20 children, during the December 2025–January 2026 protests, and reports of more than 2,000 Kurds arrested. While these figures are attributed to the reporting organisation rather than independently verified UK totals, they raise grave concerns requiring a substantive diplomatic response. The bulletin also records reports of Iranian missile and drone attacks on Kurdish opposition groups in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), underscoring the need to protect civilians and refugee communities in the KRI.

KSF also wishes to highlight rhetoric associated with Reza Pahlavi and elements of the monarchist movement surrounding him that we consider deeply concerning, particularly where it dismisses or attacks Kurdish

political demands, self-determination and the rights of other national and ethnic communities in Iran. Pahlavi has presented himself as a leading figure in Iran's opposition and has publicly described his proposed political transition as secular and democratic; however, rhetoric from large sections of the monarchist movement, including hostility towards Kurdish political organisations and demands, raises serious concerns about whether Kurdish rights and meaningful political participation would be protected in any future political settlement.

KSF rejects rhetoric or political projects that subordinate Kurdish rights, cultural and linguistic identity, or political participation to a centralised conception of Iranian national unity. The history of the Pahlavi monarchy includes documented repression of Kurdish political and cultural demands, while contemporary criticism of the Pahlavi movement has highlighted Persian-centric nationalism and hostility among some supporters towards Kurdish and other minority claims. Any future political settlement must guarantee equal rights, meaningful Kurdish political participation, cultural and linguistic rights, and protection for all ethnic and religious communities. Replacing one repressive system with another would not fulfil the principles expressed by Jin, Jiyan, Azadî.

The cases of **Pakhshan Azizi and Varisheh Moradi** also illustrate the urgency of protecting individual lives and ensuring due process. Human Rights Watch documented serious fair-trial and torture concerns in January 2025. Its World Report 2026 reported that Azizi remained under sentence of death and that Moradi's death sentence had been overturned in December 2025, with a retrial ordered. We urge the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to seek immediate confirmation of their present circumstances and pursue coordinated diplomatic intervention to protect their lives, secure their rights and prevent further abuse.

A credible human rights response must also address economic exclusion and the safety of displaced families. Kolbars, predominantly Kurdish porters, face dangerous working conditions linked to poverty and limited employment opportunities, with Human Rights Watch reporting continued unlawful lethal force against them. The UK should therefore support protection for kolbars, investigations into unlawful killings, safe livelihoods, and protection for Kurdish refugees and other civilians in the KRI from attacks and forced return to persecution or torture. These concerns require a coherent UK response centred on equal rights, civilian protection and accountability, informed by affected Kurdish communities.

We therefore ask you to instruct the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to pursue the following six actions:

- 1. Make the rights of Kurds in Iran an explicit diplomatic priority:** Raise unlawful killings, arbitrary detention and restrictions on peaceful political, cultural and linguistic activity in bilateral engagement and relevant UN forums. Press for independent investigations, access to justice and effective remedies, with particular attention to discrimination against Kurdish women and girls.
- 2. Intervene urgently to protect prisoners and prevent executions:** Raise the cases of Azizi, Moradi and other Kurdish prisoners through coordinated diplomatic representations. Press for the release of those detained solely for peacefully exercising their rights, access to independent lawyers, families and medical care, and investigations into torture allegations. Call for an immediate moratorium on executions with a view to abolition, and an end to death sentences imposed following unfair trials.
- 3. Use targeted measures to advance accountability:** Review evidence against officials and entities implicated in serious violations and impose targeted sanctions where the applicable legal criteria are met, in coordination with partners. Support lawful criminal accountability through competent authorities, respecting prosecutorial independence. Design measures to protect humanitarian access and avoid worsening civilian hardship.

4. Sustain independent scrutiny and survivor access to justice: Support the UN Fact-Finding Mission on Iran and the Special Rapporteur, including adequate resources for documentation and evidence preservation. Press for access to affected communities and places of detention. Expand safe support for independent human rights organisations, with informed consent, confidentiality and protection against reprisals for survivors and witnesses.

5. Protect Kurdish civilians and refugees in the KRI: Raise Iranian attacks with the relevant authorities and work with Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government and international partners to prevent further civilian harm. Press for independent investigation of alleged unlawful attacks, humanitarian access and protection against forced return to persecution or torture.

6. Address exclusion with Kurdish communities: Make the protection of kolbars and access to safe livelihoods part of UK engagement. Press for investigations into unlawful shootings and remedies for victims. Establish regular consultation with independent Kurdish civil society, including women's organisations, so UK policy reflects the priorities of those affected and supports their equal participation.

We recognise the complexity of the United Kingdom's engagement with Iran, but protecting human rights must remain central to that engagement. A focused response to the situation of Kurds in Iran would demonstrate the UK's commitment to equal rights and ensure that the experiences of communities in Rojhalat Kurdistan receive sustained attention. As British nationals, we expect our Government to uphold these commitments through concrete diplomatic action to protect the rights and lives of Kurds in Iran.

We request a substantive written response within 30 days of receipt, addressing each of the six actions above and outlining the responsible FCDO team, next steps and proposed timetable. Where the Government cannot pursue a request, we ask that it explain its position and identify any alternative measures. Urgent action to protect life should proceed without waiting for that response. We also request a meeting with the responsible FCDO minister or senior officials within six weeks to discuss these priorities and establish a channel for follow-up. KSF stands ready to engage constructively through peaceful, lawful and evidence-based dialogue.

Prime Minister, **remembrance of Jina Amini should be accompanied by action that protects those still at risk.** We urge your Government to use its diplomatic influence and available accountability measures to help secure safety, justice and equal rights for Kurds in Iran.

Yours faithfully,

**For and on behalf of the Management Committee
Kurdistan Solidarity Forum (KSF)**

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