



The Iran Institute for Contemporary & Comparative Social Work (ICCSW)

## **Official Statement**

On the Developments of December 2025 and the Imperative of Institutional Redesign

February 21, 2026

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The Iran Institute for Contemporary & Comparative Social Work (ICCSW), concurrent with the formal commencement of its institutional activities in February 2026, issues this statement within the scope of its professional and analytical mandate.

The protests that began in December 2025 across Iran, amid severe economic strain and widespread social dissatisfaction, and which, according to multiple independent reports, have resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of unarmed civilians, have placed the country at a critical institutional juncture. The consequences of these events extend beyond a temporary political episode and have affected the social, institutional, and ethical foundations of public life.

When civil protest is met with lethal force, the implications cannot be reduced to casualty figures alone. Such conditions reflect what analytical literature identifies as structural violence: a context in which formal governing mechanisms, rather than safeguarding citizens, contribute to the reproduction of systemic harm. The widespread and abrupt shutdown of internet access and the obstruction of the free flow of information during these events further restricted public oversight, documentation, and international awareness. The deprivation of society's capacity to record and disseminate factual developments constitutes, in itself, a weakening of institutional accountability.

Comparative research in social work and social policy demonstrates that when accountability mechanisms erode and coercive instruments displace civic dialogue, social capital deteriorates and the divide between society and governing institutions deepens. Public distrust under such conditions is not an episodic emotional reaction; it is a

predictable institutional outcome of the breakdown of protective state functions. No society can secure durable stability through sustained cycles of violence, suppression of information, and exclusion of civic participation.

Contemporary social work literature affirms that the profession is not normatively neutral in the face of structural injustice. When policies and official practices systematically endanger life and security, the issue transcends administrative error and signals deeper structural failure. In such contexts, professional silence risks normalizing conditions that stand in direct contradiction to the foundational principles of human dignity and social justice.

Institutional analysis further indicates that when existing governing structures respond to crisis through increased concentration of power, restriction of independent oversight, and suppression of dissent, the prospects for meaningful internal reform are substantially diminished. In such circumstances, discussion of political transition is not a partisan position but a conclusion derived from structural assessment of systemic deficiencies.

Accordingly, social work does not align with the preservation of conditions that perpetuate violence and institutional harm. Commitment to social justice requires that any political order that broadly and persistently violates the rights to life, security, and participation be subject to structural critique and fundamental redesign. Support for institutional transformation within this framework is not an endorsement of instability; rather, it is a defense of accountable, rule-based governance in which power is limited and independent institutions are able to safeguard fundamental rights.

At this critical moment, the Iran Institute for Contemporary & Comparative Social Work affirms its commitment to the protection of human dignity and the principles of human rights and social justice. The protection of life, transparency in the exercise of authority, and institutional accountability must constitute the foundation of any future governance framework. Social work supports processes that contribute to the cessation of violence, the guarantee of fundamental rights, and the establishment of independent and accountable institutions. Sustainable social reconstruction must be grounded in justice, responsibility, and institutional integrity.