

This is not about Hair

I was walking through Bonn and I heard someone say: “In the end, it’s just about hair.”

I wanted to take him by the shoulders and shake him and say: “How dare you? It’s not about hair.”

Cause this is not about hair.

The Iranian law says “women who appear in public without religious hijab will be sentenced to whipping up to 74 lashes”.

The Iranian dictator adds “improperly veiled women should be made to feel unsafe”.

Anyone still thinking this is about hair?

Imagine being seven years old and frightened by all the noise and the smells and the colours and all alone because someone has just shot your mother who was recording police brutality. This is not about hair.

Imagine making use of your right to protest and chanting “we are all Mahsa Amini” because there is this rage inside of you, and then you’re shot in the head and it’s over. This is not about hair.

Imagine running, running, running, because they’re behind you, they’re coming, and the message to your friend telling them you’re being chased will be the last one you’ll ever send. This is not about hair.

Imagine being 18, your life’s about to start, you want to be an artist, this will all work out, until it won’t because they killed you as if you’ve never even mattered. This is not about hair.

Imagine the split of a second after the first of six shots was fired at you and you realise they perceive you as a threat and that satisfies you so much that you die smiling. This is not about hair.

Imagine knowing that your voice probably won’t be heard, but you don’t care, you’re 23 and your world is burning, the flames are already at your feet, so you take to the streets and accept you won’t have a happy ending. This is not about hair.

What this is about is the gender apartheid that is taking place in Iran. It's about all the women fighting for themselves and for the ones that will one day come behind them. It's about having the choice to wear a hijab if that's what you want, or to decide not to if you don't want to wear one. It's about the courage to take it to the streets when the brave Iranian men and women know it could mean their death. Why do they do it then? Well, because there's nothing left to lose.

Nazanin Boniadi, a British actress born in Iran, calls the current situation the "first female-led revolution of our time". So I want to end on a positive note: The death of Mahsa Amini and of many other women caused a spark. The people of Iran are unwilling to take it anymore. They want to fight. And we should fight with them. This is not about hair.

We are all Mahsa Amini. There are many Mahsa Aminis.
Women, life, freedom.