NEWS

"I try to live in black and white but I'm so blue."
BLUE BILLIE EILISH

Students mourn victims of Iranian regime, call for city recognition

BY SARAH RIVAS
STAFF REPORTER



SARAH RIVAS / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER
At an event to commemorate the four-year anniversary of a woman's death under Iranian police custody, organizers also circulated a petition that called on New Haven to recognize Sept. 16 as a day of solidarity for Iranians killed by their government.

Around 20 students gathered at Beinecke Plaza on Wednesday evening to mourn the lives of Iranian citizens who have been subject to violence by the nation's regime.

Organizers also shared copies of a petition that urged New Haven to recognize Sept. 16 as a day of solidarity and remembrance for killed Iranian citizens.

The event recognized the four-year anniversary of the death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old woman whom, according to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, was detained and tortured by the Iranian police for wearing her hijab improperly before she died of a heart attack or stroke.

"Events like Wednesday's gathering are important because they give our community a chance to come together, share those experiences, and help our neighbors better understand what is happening beyond our own borders," Ward 1 Elias Theodore '27, whose district includes much of Yale's central campus, wrote in a letter in support of the event.

The memorial was hosted by the Yale Alliance for Solidarity with Iran and the Lion & Sun Corporation — a New Haven-based nonprofit founded in May by YASI members to connect students from the Iranian diaspora in academic institutions, according to Hadi Mahdeyan '27, the president of YASI.

The event began with the organizers distributing folders that contained letters of support from Theodore and Sen. Richard Blumenthal LAW '73. They also provided attendees with a copy of their city petition, which also implores New Haven to raise the Lion and Sun flag, the traditional opposition flag against the current regime, on the city's flag pole that day.

"The current Iranian regime is cruel, callous, and barbaric," Blumenthal wrote in a letter to the event's organizers, one of whom read the message aloud. "Its leaders have slaughtered thousands of innocent Iranians who simply want justice, fairness and a better way of life. That is why Americans must send a message of support to the Iranian people who yearn for freedom."

Mia Tabib DIV '20, who helped lead the event, spoke to the crowd about the Iranian regime's physical violence and its citizens' isolation.

"This is how you destroy a person's soul: by preventing them from connecting to their stories, the stories of their family and the stories of their loved ones," Tabib said.

The organizers also played an audio recording of Hossein Shanbehzadeh, a political prisoner held in Tehran's Evin Prison, who spoke in Farsi of the isolation and suffering of his imprisonment.

Every week, YASI gathers at the Women's Table to honor the names and stories of killed Iranian protesters, a post on the group's Instagram.

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'Etymology Nerd' defends Internet slang at crowded YPU debate

BY SARAH RIVAS
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Adam Aleksic, known online as the "Etymology Nerd," advocated for the resolution, "Speak the Language of the Internet," on the floor of the Yale Political Union on Tuesday.

Aleksic is an educational influencer who makes content about linguistics on several social media platforms, where he has gained over three million followers, according to his website. He has also written the New York Times-bestselling book, Algospeak, which explores how social media is impacting language.

"I think the political conversations we have are really downstream of the cultural conversations we have," Aleksic told the News in an interview. "This is, to me, more important than talking about a single political issue: this sort of encompasses where everything is coming from."

Aleksic drew a big crowd that exceeded the 53 Wall St. auditorium's 240 maximum capacity, with at least 20 additional attendees standing in the back.

Anna Sigmon '30 said she was excited to attend the YPU debate after following Aleksic's content on social media for several years.

"He sees these conversations from a Gen-Z perspective and is very good at voicing that perspective and getting into the nitty-gritty of what really drives things," Sigmon said.

After addressing the crowd as "friends, Romans, chuds," Aleksic defended modern Internet slang, which he referred to as "brainrot." He encouraged the audience to use it carefully and contextually in addition to standard language.

"You can tell your friend you're 'homework-pilled study-maxxing,' but you shouldn't tell your professor, and that's fine," Aleksic said, referencing the viral term "maxxing," which refers to the maximization of a particular habit.

"Brainrot" words are a reaction that indicate broader problems with social media platform algorithms, Aleksic said.

"The new language that emerges on the Internet is an incredibly powerful political tool for expressing ourselves," Aleksic argued. "To speak the language of the internet is to assert our political power."

Vic Perry '29 affirmed the resolution in a speech, highlighting the role of Internet slang in bridging connections among people from across the globe.

"This shared language has allowed you and I to gain one small point of access to another person's social world that we simply did not have before," Perry said.

Jonathan Adler '29, however, spoke against the resolution, arguing that Internet slang is dangerous as it collapses many words into one, simplifying self-expression.

Sygne Stole '29 also raised the concern that the language of the Internet undermines people's ability to speak sincerely about serious topics.

The resolution passed with 67 votes in favor, 32 against and two in abstention.

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MARTÍN PERALTA / HEAD PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR
Adam Aleksic, the social media creator also known as the "Etymology Nerd," spoke in favor of the resolution, "Speak the Language of the Internet," at a Tuesday evening debate. The resolution passed 67-32-2.