



**THE
GRIM STATE OF
WOMEN'S SPORTS
IN IRAN**

NOVEMBER 2017

MONTHLY REPORT
Women's Committee
of the National Council of Resistance of Iran



A Glance at the Grim State of Women's Sports in Iran

There were a number of important issues in the month of November. This bulletin makes brief references to some and focuses on women's sports in Iran.

Ranking low on gender gap rating

November kicked off with the World Economic Forum's [2017 Gender Gap report](#) placing Iran 140th, one step lower compared to last year, in the ranking of 144 countries based on women's parity. With a global index of 0.583, economic participation and opportunity score of 0.357, and political empowerment score of 0.046, Iran stands only ahead of Chad, Syria, Pakistan and Yemen. This is a significant indication of the injustices and discrimination against women under the clerical regime.

One of the [officials](#) in charge of women's affairs blamed the gap on laws "which expand men's participation and activity and have made employment and making income rights for men, and free services at home a duty for women."

She also said that men's authority according to the law to prevent their wives from having a job also contributes to women's unemployment. (The official IRNA news agency – November 7, 2017)

Another [official](#) said, "Women almost disappear in senior management positions." (The state-run ISNA news agency – October 31, 2017)

Long lasting consequences of VAW in Iran

On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, there were some confessions made by regime's experts and MPs.

Parvaneh Salahshouri, head of the women's faction in the mullahs' parliament, admitted, "The anxiety and fear caused by the [Guidance Patrol](#) affects some young women and girls for long years, leaving undesirable psychological consequences... and leading to other ailments." (The state-run Mehr news agency – November 28, 2017)

In yet another meeting, Salahshouri acknowledged, "Currently [domestic violence](#) against women is pervasive in the society... If a woman makes a little mistake, it would cause great problems for her, subjecting her to violence. However, when a man makes a huge mistake there is no violence against them." (The state-run IRNA news agency – November 25, 2017)

Ali Hadizadegan, head of the Coroner's Office of Mashhad, told an expert meeting that the rate of domestic violence in Iran had a 3.2% rise in one year, but admitted that the figures provided by the government do not reflect the reality. (The state-run Fars news agency – November 23, 2017)

Earthquake adds to women heads of household

Late night Sunday, November 12, a 7.3-magnitude earthquake shook western Iran leaving thousands dead and injured and tens of thousands of people homeless. Instead of sending urgent relief, the regime dispatched anti-riot troops to quell any potential protests.

Three weeks after the earthquake, women and children still live on the streets in the freezing cold, without any shelter. There have been a number of shocking reports that the relief taken to the affected areas by ordinary people is stopped and confiscated by security forces to be later sold to the victims of earthquake at high prices.

The state-run media reported that the earthquake had added to the number of [single women heading households](#) as the earthquake has widowed hundreds of women. (The state-run Salammat News website – November 19, 2017)

Women actively participated in protests

At the same time, women continue to actively participate in most protests across the nation and play their leading role. At least 77 protests have been registered by the NCRI Women's Committee in the month of November where women were prominently present.

The Grim State of Women's Sports

Numerous reports emerged in November on wide-ranging issues and shed light on the abysmal conditions of women's sports in Iran.

No budget for women's sports

Lack of financial support forced the [women's basketball team](#) of Gorgan to refrain from participating in the cross-country games.

Gorgan is the capital of the northern Iranian province of Golestan.

The vice-president of the basketball delegation of Golestan said the team had 12 years of experience in professional sports. Soghra Mohebbi said, "The budget predicted for the participation of the women's team in this tournament was 50 million toumans but no agency stepped forward to provide the budget for supporting the women's team. One of their reasons was that the games are not broadcast by the national media so the private sector does not feel motivated to spend money on these games." (The state-run radio and television news agency – November 17, 2016)

The Pars Jonoubi Jam football team did not participate in the league in November due to lack of budget, and their game was easily cancelled.

In October, the girls' basketball team was removed from the [Asian U16 games](#) because of the Iranian federation's \$325K debt to FIBA. The team was to take part in the official event for the first time after 37 years. (The state-run ISNA news agency – October 21, 2017)



No media coverage allowed on women's games

It is forbidden to broadcast women's competitions in Iran.

The women's national futsal team, champion of Asia, hosted Italy's team in Tehran on November 23 and 24, 2017, while [no photographers or cameramen](#) were allowed in the stadium.

The only picture was taken at the end of the games in an empty stadium while Italian players had to cover their hair with pink shawls. (The state-run ISNA news agency – November 24, 2017)



No job security for female coaches

The head coach of the women's national futsal team complained of lack of job security. In reaction to the Football Federation's objection, [Shahrzad Mozaffar](#) said, "If my contract was for 50% of male coaches' contracts, I would confidently concentrate on the national team. If I have job security, I will stay with the team. But if I quit my other job today as head coach of a club team, I would not have job security and a stable income." (The state-run IRNA – November 23, 2017)



No adequate place for the games

Some of the teams participating in the [Football League](#) had not been allocated a field where they could play.

The fields where the games took place were peppered with holes and ditches making it impossible for the players to dribble.

It was also reported that the restrooms and locker facilities were not adequate for the teams to get ready for the game. (Iranwire news agency – November 3, 2017)

The Vice-President of Women's Basketball, Fatemeh Karamzadeh, said the absence of a basketball court for women is a real predicament for women's basketball. "In a country that so much underlines gender segregation in sports, women do not have even one court to play their games," Karamzadeh admitted. (The state-run ISNA news agency, November 1, 2017)

No medical support for injured players

Zeinab Karimi, footballer of the Kheibar women's team of Khorramabad (capital of Lorestan Province in western Iran), experienced an inhuman treatment after being injured in the field and suffering a dislocated shoulder.

In an interview about her injury during the third week of women's Football League she said, "I was injured in the 20th minute of the game. I remained suffering from pain beside the field until the end of the first half of the game. The supervisor did not even turn an eye on me. The ambulance driver came to me, but when I asked him to quickly take me to the hospital, he answered that 'the supervisor does not allow this. Since you are not bleeding, we do not have permission to transfer you to hospital.' After a while, I was taken to hospital by someone's car." "I waited for four hours in the hospital before being attended to because I had not been transferred by an ambulance. They did not even give me a chair to sit," she lamented. (The state-run ISNA news agency – November 5, 2017)



Violation of FIFA universal rules

The Iranian Football Federation briefed the teams participating in the Women's Football League that players would be shown the [yellow card](#) if they do not properly cover all their hair during the games. If repeated, they would be shown the red card and sent off the field.

Female champions are abandoned

[Atousa Abbasi](#), a bronze medal winner in the Asian Cycling Race and a record holder in women's speed cycling in Iran, had to peddle in the streets for a while due to financial problems. She has been deprived of participating in cycling tournaments due to breaches made by her husband who is a cycling coach. (The state-run Mashreq website - October 18, 2017)

[Sousan Rashidi](#), who has been the champion of women's kick boxing for eleven terms, is now training under difficult conditions for foreign tournaments. She is a nomad girl living in Kermanshah (western Iran). Due to poverty and lack of government support, she has to work in the village from early in the morning. She has to bake bread, take the sheep for grazing, bring log wood, etc. (The state-run Fararu website – October 18, 2017)

Ms. Rashidi says, "Some days, I did not have my transportation fare to go for training. Sometimes, if I were given some money to buy an egg to eat, I saved the money to pay for my transportation."

"I became a champion for nine terms, but I did not receive any prize for these victories," she added. (The state-run ISNA news agency – December 26, 2016)

Rock climber [Elnaz Rekabi](#) won the gold medal of women's Asian Bold Ring Cup. (The state-run ISCANews.ir – October 29, 2017)

In a short interview, she also complained about the difficulties of training without any government backing while being alone in her field. She said, "In Iran, I am very lonely. No one is ahead of me and they do not let me practice with boys."

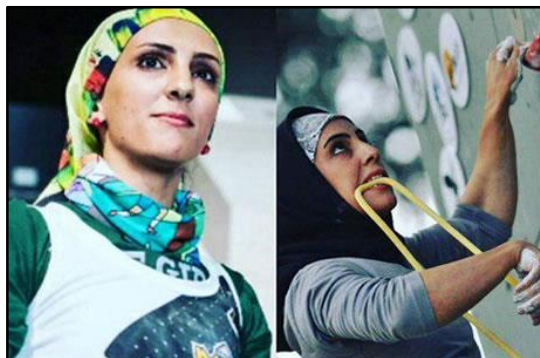
Elnaz Rekabi also spoke on the problems created by the requirement of wearing the compulsory veil. "It is very hard with the veil especially when the weather is hot. I tried to find some proper outfit for this sport to observe the dress code, as well, but I had to do it on my own." (Interview with Euronews – Aparat.com– April 25, 2016)

Talented athletes drain

Horrible conditions for female athletes has led many to leave the country.

[Dorsa Derakhshani](#) who had been banned from the Iranian national chess team for attending the February 2017 international competition in Gibraltar without wearing the mandatory veil, has joined the U.S. team.

Dorsa Derakhshani was awarded the titles Woman Grandmaster and International Master at the age of 18 by the World Chess Federation in 2016. She had taken part in several international competitions without covering her hair.



Dorsa moved to Spain in 2015 after she received an invitation by a chess club that also supported her studies. (The state-run ISNA news agency – October 2, 2017)

Faezeh Kazemi, Handball player from Qazvin Province, joined the Metropolitan team in Turkey in late November.



Ban on women's presence in sports stadiums

Iranian women were refused entry to the World Cup football match that took place on September 5, 2017, at Tehran's Azadi Stadium between the national teams of Syria and Iran.

The Guardian wrote, "Syrian women are allowed into stadium but Iranian women are kept out, despite initially being allowed to buy tickets... A group of women who went to Tehran's gigantic Azadi stadium were told they could not enter. When they started demonstrating they were threatened with arrest."

The State Security forces expelled three young women who were attempting to enter Azadi Stadium to watch the football match between the two most prominent Iranian football teams.

The incident took place on October 26, 2017, when Persepolis and Esteghlal teams were scheduled to face off. The female fans had donned men's clothes in a bid to enter the stadium. (The state-run Rokna.ir– October 26, 2017)



Shahindokht Molaverdi, Rouhani's Deputy for Citizen's Rights Affairs, had recently admitted that the conditions are not yet prepared for women's presence in football stadiums. (The state-run Entekhab website – October 25, 2017)

The Iranian regime's ban on entry of women to stadiums was also noted by the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights on Iran. In Article 92 of her report, she wrote:

Women continue to be banned from watching sporting events in stadiums, and several female athletes have been restricted from participation in international tournaments either by State sporting agencies or by their husbands.

She also noted in her report that in March, a number of Iranian female billiard players were banned from competitions, allegedly for "violating the Islamic code of conduct."

In April, female participants in an international marathon held in Tehran were required to run separately from men and on a shortened route."

Khamenei and religious scholars weigh in

[Religious scholars](#) also underlined the prohibition of women's entry to sports stadiums.

"The issue was tabled by the previous government but the Supreme Leader and other religious authorities opposed it," stated Mullah Makarem Shirazi and added, "It is a deviation to bring up this issue, again." (The state-run ISNA news agency – November 29, 2017)

Mullah Nouri Hamedani also tried to justify the ban by saying, "It is not permissible for men and women to be present in the same sports event because women cannot properly hold their veil." (The state-run Razavi news agency – November 29, 2017)

The mullahs' supreme leader Ali [Khamenei](#) also underlined the ban on women's bicycling in public. Under the pretext of responding to religious questions, he reiterated, "Women's bicycling in public areas and in places that could be seen by strange men is not allowed." (The state-run ILNA news agency – November 26, 2017)

The above facts which are a handful from a ton, show the numerous obstacles created by Iran's ruling regime to exclude women from the sports arena. They also help one realize that Iran's women are not only talented but really hard working and motivated to show their competence at every opportunity despite lack of any form of government support.

