



A Network of  
**26 Agencies**

Charged with  
**Clamping Down  
on Women in Iran**



A special report by  
NCRI Women' s Committee  
September 2016

# A Network of 26 Agencies Charged with Clamping Down on Women in Iran

## Introduction

The misogynist regime ruling Iran preserves its grips on power by relying on two pillars of domestic repression and export of terrorism and fundamentalism abroad.

Since the beginning of its rule, suppression of women under the pretext of mal-veiling has always been a great part of domestic repression. However, thanks to the Iranian women's defiance of such forcible impositions and standing for their right to choose their own clothing, the issue of "veiling and virtue" has turned into a political and security problem for the regime.

Numerous government agencies are therefore tasked to clamp down on women over the issue of Hijab (head covering). The State Security Force's Commander in Chief Ashtari, revealed in December 2015 that "26 agencies have responsibilities with regards to (women's) veiling and virtue."

## 26 agencies officially tasked to terrorize women

Suppression of women under the pretext of mandatory veil was the clerical regime's first step from the outset, when it seized power in 1979. In the course of the past 37 years, however, the organization of the agencies in charge of such suppression has expanded.

In April 2010, the mullahs' parliament (Majlis) adopted a bill entitled, "the law on expansion of practical solutions for virtue and veiling" and defined the responsibilities of at least 26 government agencies with regards to enforcing the mandatory veil.

In the section on policies and solutions, the plan points out the "priority of virtue and veiling in the programs of the executive organs" and tasks the agencies with "overseeing the observation of Hijab."

The solutions include "revival of the tradition of enjoining virtue and forbidding vice with regards to virtue and veiling." This means engagement of unofficial operatives to harass women on the streets. In October 2014, this led to organized acid attacks and stabbing of women by such unofficial gangs.

The 26 agencies in charge of enforcing the mandatory veil and their responsibilities in this regard are briefly listed in this pamphlet.

1. The Parliament is responsible to institutionalize violations of women's rights through

legislations. In 2014, the bill passed to support those who “enjoin good and forbid evil,” led to an extensive wave of acid attacks on women.

The clerical regime is further planning for:

- Provision and adoption of bills to facilitate marriage;
- Revision of laws on punishment of gangs who promote an anti-Hijab culture.

2. The Judiciary also expands its oppressive measures under five specific duties which include:

- Giving proposals for making laws more effective by giving judicial backing to those who enforce the Hijab and punishing those who do not observe the proper Hijab;
- Setting up special judiciary branches and prosecution offices in cities throughout the country to deal with those who do not observe the veil.

On January 11, 2016, the public relations of the Justice Department of Mazandaran Province announced that 14,183 people had been summoned to the guidance units and judiciary branches of the province in the course of one month and another 1,029 had been fined over the phone.

In the final days of June 2016, the General Prosecutor's Office of Torghabe-Shandiz announced that the city would control and prevent entry of women riding bicycles and they will be dealt with.

3. The Ministry of Interior has 11 defined duties and is charged with monitoring all public and private agencies, organizations, offices and institutes to make sure they observe the rules regarding the compulsory veil.

4. The State Security Force has 21 tasks, the most important of which are:

- Giving warnings to mal-veiled women and dealing with them according to the disciplinary rules of the city's public buildings;
- Proposing bills and legislations to lawmakers with regards to observing the rules on clothing;
- Supervision and control of recreational and public areas like parks, movie theatres, gyms, mountains, beaches, free commercial zone, airports, terminals, etc.;
- Strict monitoring and supervision of women's observance of the veil in residential complexes, towers and townships;
- Enforcing the regime's laws on mandatory veiling in feasts, celebrations and weddings;
- Obligating hairdressers to observe the rules of mandatory veiling and controlling brides' entry and exit from the hairdresser's;
- Declaring the SSF's views on the activities of certain sectors that could promote vice and preventing the activities of businesses that do not comply with the laws on Hijab.

Some of the SSF measures and activities in a short span of time from November 2015 to August 2016, are as follows:

On November 8, 2015, SSF social deputy Montazer ol-Mahdi announced: "Virtue and veiling are the main issue of concern to the State Security Force and the number of vice patrols have been increased 40 folds. It is the SSF's duty to deal with violators and it will always do so."



In January 2016, Tehran's SSF Commander Hossein Sajedi-Nia announced the formation of a Special Children and Teenagers' Police force.



In July 2016, the SSF Commander in Gilan Province announced launching of a new operational plan to control all the beaches in northern Iran. He said 140 points across the northern coast will be monitored by the SFF's official personnel, plainclothes agents and (the paramilitary) Bassij forces.

The number of street patrols were added in the same month. Head of Justice Department of Isfahan said they had allocated vehicles to the "sisters" who promote virtue and forbid evil.

The Commander of the Revolutionary Guards Corps in Kermanshah also declared that they would launch maneuvers to control the streets and women's covering and clothing. (The state-run Fars news Agency - June 22, 2016)

The SSF Commander in Charmahal o-Bakhtiari Province announced in June 2016 that they had given warnings to 362 businesses and sealed 126 businesses that did not observe the regulations on veiling in their windows. (The state-run Tasnim news agency - June 20, 2016)

The SSF Commander of Boushehr Province (southern Iran) announced that they had given warnings to 64,000 women since March 2016 (beginning of the new Iranian year). He said in the same period, more than 1,262 women had been summoned to the Moral Police HQ, 215 vehicles had been impounded, and 500 people who were suspected of dropping their veil had been dealt with. (The state-run Mehr news agency - June 19, 2016)

More than 30 young men and women were arrested at a graduation party in Qazvin and subsequently punished with 99 lashes of the whip. According to the General Prosecutor of Qazvin, the court sentenced each of the youths to 99 lashes of the whip and the verdicts were carried out the same day. He also announced that being arrested in a co-ed party is considered as criminal record and would have adverse impact on the person's future education, job and employment. (The state-ran Alef website - May 26, 2016)

Making arrests in co-ed parties has become a widespread and common practice for the SSF. 40 men and 30 women were also arrested in a feast in Tehran. (The state-run ISNA news agency – June 4, 2016)

Twenty-one people were arrested in a co-ed party in Kerman. The General Prosecutor of Kerman (southern Iran) added, "Four women have been arrested on the orders of special judges for dropping their veils in public." (The state-run Tabnak website – June 11, 2016)

Security forces found another excuse for clamping down on public in the month of Ramadan. Commander of the SSF in Hamedan Province declared that special Ramadan patrols had begun their work. On June 3, 2016, he announced that eight so-called stations of virtue and veiling and moral security patrols had started their work. He added that all police stations will also monitor observation of fasting in the month of Ramadan and those who violate it.

The acting Commander of the SSF in Khuzistan (southwestern Iran) also declared that concurrent with advent of the month of Ramadan they had added up the numbers of SSF patrols, stations and plainclothes agents. (The state-run Mehr news agency – June 1, 2016)

5. The paramilitary Bassij Force has been given six specific duties to control all locations and interfere in every aspect of people's private lives. The Bassij has branches in schools, universities, as well as associations of physicians, engineers, university professors, government employees and women.

The Bassij Force is especially tasked to have overt and covert supervision in society and communities such as schools, universities, mosques and government offices. Bassij forces are often chosen from among the most uneducated and uninformed layers of society and are given extreme powers to act as law enforcement agents of the judiciary and the State Security Force.

Bassij has trained 52,000 people as "experts on virtue and veil" to be present in schools and universities. The women's community Bassij organization is one of the 22 sectors of the Bassij. These women are instrumental in oppression, harassment and arrest of women activists.

6. The municipalities also have ten duties which can be summarized in two articles:

- Writing sentences with so-called religious content and remarks by religious authorities concerning women's covering in all public places and on big transportation vehicles;
- Ensuring gender segregation by creating separate parks and sports centers and taxis for women.

7. The Staff for the Revival of "Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil" has 11 specific duties. The Staff works through unofficial forces to clamp down on women and spy on them. In the mullahs' culture, such virtue is summarized in restricting women and forcing them to wear the

veil (Hijab). Women are punished if they do not abide by the Hijab. Some of the functions of the Revival Staff are as follows. The Staff encourages people to suppress women in offices and public places under the pretext of "enjoining good and forbidding evil." The Staff is also obliged to identify women's associations, unions, organizations, and groups and save their information in a data bank.

8. The Ministry of Islamic Guidance and Culture has been assigned 21 tasks including supervision of all mass media and the internet, promoting clothing fashions as approved by the regime, supervising all art organizations including concerts and art exhibitions, and women's participation in movies and the press, in particular.

9. The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology has six duties dealing with filtering and censorship of the cyber space. They include:

- Blocking websites that oppose the compulsory dresscode, and expediting a targeted filtering system;
- Preparing and submitting semi-annual reports to the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution on the number of users of immoral internet websites;
- Dealing with and preventing the activities of internet institutes that have access to unlawful websites.

10. The Organization of Radio and Television has 31 tasks, for example, production of children's programs in line with the mullahs' misogynist views, continuous supervision of commercial advertisements to conform with the official standards of mandatory veil for women, devising specific policies on the style of clothes and make-up used by artists, anchorwomen and moderators, and adoption of disciplinary policies for actresses working with the radio and television.

This agency also has to prevent promotion, support and honoring of famous female moderators and actresses who do not observe the official dresscode when they appear in public.

11. The Organization of Islamic Propaganda has 12 duties in the field of advertising and public relations. They mainly produce humiliating ads on women's veiling and post them in the waiting lounges at the airports, railroad stations, bus terminals, city squares and intersections, etc.

12. The Organization of Physical Education which has 18 tasks defined for it to impose pressure on women, including:

- Boosting guaranteed observation of virtue and veiling in sports stadiums and special women's halls;

- Preventing entry of women under any excuse (as spectators, etc.) to men's sports stadiums;
- Giving serious warning to women who do not observe the virtue and veiling in sports arenas.

Two years ago, before the Volleyball World Cup in 2014, the secretary of the Iranian Volleyball Federation prevented presence of women in stadium. Subsequently, a group of women staged a protest rally outside the 12,000-strong stadium. Security forces dealt violently with these women and arrested a number of them. (The state-run ILNA news agency - June 15, 2014)

Also in the course of the games in 2015, Rouhani's Interior Minister declared again that women's entry to sports stadiums are prohibited. (The state-run Faradid website - June 16, 2015)

In the latest Volleyball World League Tournaments (July 1-3, 2016) in Tehran, the Iranian regime prohibited sale of tickets to women.

13. The Ministry of Education has 21 responsibilities, the most important of which are:

- Inclusion of teachings on Hijab in school books at all educational levels;
- Emphasizing the need to wear the Hijab and observe the Islamic model, specifying the color and design of students' uniforms on this basis;
- Implementing gender segregation as a must in all educational environments;
- Promoting marriage and family formation in young age through school books;
- Considering privileges for students who observe the so-called Islamic dress code;
- Considering privileges for principals who control their employees' and students' hijab;
- Holding school principals accountable if students do not observe the mandatory veil.

14. The Ministry of Sciences, Research and Technology, Universities and Higher Education Centers has 17 duties, the most important of which are:

- Serious supervision over students' disciplinary bylaws on Hijab;
- Giving priority to and encouraging those who observe the compulsory dress code;
- Dealing indirectly with promoters of unsuitable clothing and refraining from deploying people who are indifferent to Hijab;
- Preparing and submitting an annual report on the status of virtue and veiling to the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution.

15. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs with five duties is responsible to provide whatever means necessary to implement gender segregation in society and make sure that women wear the veil in co-educational classes and training courses by overseeing them.

16. The Ministry of Commerce has been assigned 13 tasks such as continued and effective supervision and monitoring of the conduct of commercial buildings and businesses producing clothes, giving all out and full financial support to textile units that produce garment for Chador (black head-to-toe veil), proposing specific legislations to deal with violators among production units, and overseeing the packaging process to make sure commercial packages do not bear improper images.

17. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has 10 duties in monitoring women who work in the embassies and are in contact with citizens of other countries, including:

- Overseeing the communications and conducts of embassies and foreign cultural centers;
- Overseeing and especially controlling the parties and feasts held by the embassies and the foreign and Iranian guests who participate in them;
- Serious collaboration with the State Security Force to identify and deal with those Iranians who have immoral activities;
- Giving warnings if necessary to the affiliates of foreign embassies to observe the hijab rules.

18. The Ministry of Economy and Finance has been assigned with four tasks which include banning import of dolls, dummies and posters which promote an anti-Hijab culture, setting special customs tariff on women's clothing and make-up, etc.

19. The Health Ministry has 17 tasks in line with suppression of women:

- Drafting and issuing disciplinary bylaws which lay stress on promotion of Hijab;
- Increasing supervision of private hospitals to promote Hijab;
- Giving priority to Hijab as a fundamental prerequisite in the appointment and employment of the staff and managers;
- Creating special facilities for marriage of students;
- Overseeing observation of Hijab in foreign organizations such as the UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, etc. and harmonizing the staffs' uniforms in the above centers.

20. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Construction has nine specific duties in repressing women. This ministry is obliged to design houses in such a way that pedestrians would not be able to see inside the houses. The ministry must also consider a residential unit for the state-backed mullahs in large residential complexes, so that they could closely monitor and interfere in the lives of the residents.

21. The Ministry of Roads and Transportation has seven duties while promoting the compulsory veil by refusing to recruit mal-veiled women and turning in the violators who do not observe the veil to the State Security Force and the Judiciary.

22. The Management and Planning Organization has nine duties. This organization is

responsible for facilitating and generating funds for other organs to implement plans which prevent employment of women under the pretext of observation of the veil (Hijab).

23. The Welfare Organization has five specific duties. Women who do not observe the mullahs' desired Hijab, are identified and convicted. This organization has to work with these individuals during their prison terms and rehabilitation to compel them to conform with the regime's fundamentalist beliefs.

The organization is also tasked to prioritize the convicts, and cooperate with the Prisons Organization for rehabilitation of the convicts. This organization also has to promote the culture of compulsory veil in all the places it controls and even in the kindergartens and childcare centers.

24. Center of Women and Family Affairs has six duties which are basically summarized in promoting the clerical regime's desired dresscode.

25. The Youths Organization in every country is in charge of providing awareness and recreation for the youths. In Iran, however, they are in charge of clamping down on youths. The Youths Organization has 14 duties in line with enforcing the mandatory veil. This organization must work out and propose effective methods to enforce the mandatory veil and devise rules for implementing them.

26. The Organization of Cultural Inheritance and Tourism has a list of 11 duties and is in charge of monitoring the tourists and their accompanying delegations in Iran, and Iranian tourists on their trips abroad. Such control is implemented in the following ways:

- Investigating the moral qualifications of those applying for jobs in this organization to ensure the organization's moral security;
- Overseeing groups of foreign tourists;
- Overseeing, controlling and limiting the trips by Iranian tourists travelling to other countries

## Supreme agencies overseeing enforcement of the veil

The 26 organizations and government departments listed above form a network assigned to suppression of Iranian women. However, this is not the entire system.

There is another body called the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution (SCCR) presided by the regime's president. This institution was founded after the 1979 Revolution in Iran on Khomeini's direct order. The council has a significant role in policy making and drafting the rules. It also governs other agencies.

One of the realms of work by the SCCR is policy formulation on women's issues. The Council adopted a bill in July 2005, amendment 566, in which it listed the strategies of expanding the culture of virtue as the following:

- Expounding the role of virtue and veiling in strengthening national and cultural identity of the youths and its impact on the country's cultural and political independence;
- Careful and comprehensive supervision over production and publication of books, newspapers and cinema magazines with regards to observation of virtue and veil both in form and in content;
- Expounding the need to observe virtue and veiling in cultural and artistic works and advertising;
- Consistent coordination and unification of methods in dealing with cultural abnormalities in various organs;
- Outlining the necessary rules and regulations to prevent import of goods that do not comply with the culture of virtue and veiling.

As these measures have not been sufficient in compelling women to comply with the compulsory veil, the regime's President Rouhani ordered the Ministry of Interior to – collaborate with the Social Council of the City of Tehran to – prepare a comprehensive report on the situation of virtue in the country and submit it to the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution. The aim of this report would be to study and work out new solutions for imposing the mandatory veil.



On June 20, 2016, the official IRNA news agency reported that a new committee had begun its work in the parliament. The Women and Family's Committee to Enjoin Good and Forbid Evil has been formed to institutionalize the law on enjoining good and forbidding evil and to implement the law for supporting those who enjoin good and forbid evil.

The state-run Tabnak website also reported on June 23, 2016, the formation of a working group on Virtue and Veiling at pharmaceutical units of universities.

Mohsen Doa'ii, general secretary of the Virtue and Veil Front declared, "Some 301 institutes with various capacities are active on the issue of virtue and veiling all across the country. This is a combination of cultural institutes and activists who have been organized in a coherent structure to work on the issue of virtue and veiling." (State-run Mehr news agency - July 20, 2016)

### **Constant provocations against women**

In addition to official agencies, all the regime's officials and particularly the mullahs keep emphasizing on suppression of women. The following are some of the facts in this regard:

Ali Khamenei, the mullahs' supreme leader: "Gender equality between women and men is among the West's totally wrong ideas." (The state-run Etedal website - April 19, 2014)

Khamenei: "Any discussion on the compulsory or voluntary nature of Hijab is a deviation and does not have any place in the Islamic Republic. You see the motives that are being injected into the society to promote indecency and it does not stop at not wearing the veil. The new instruments like the cyber space and others help such an atmosphere." (The state-run Raja news website - July 20, 2016)

Zahra Ayatollahi, representing Khamenei's representative office in universities: "We do not believe in equality of the sexes, and (we believe that) gender segregation is invaluable." (The state-run ISNA news agency - June 19, 2016)

Mullah Ebrahim Raeesi, member of the Assembly of Experts: "We need to form a new nationwide movement with regards to virtue and veil. This movement needs to be sweeping and complete so that it could solve our problems in this realm." (The state-run ISNA news agency - July 20, 2016)

The Revolutionary Guards Corps Commander in Chief Jaafari: "We must deploy whatever ideas, power and energy we have in the cultural war." (The state-run Fars news agency - July 20, 2016)

The Friday Prayer Leader of Isfahan: "I have received photos in my office from women who have taken pictures by the side of the dry Zayandehrood (river) as if they are in Europe. These things that you do have dried up the river." (The state-run Tabnak website, June 10, 2016)

The Friday prayer leader of Isfahan also said that failure to arrest mal-veiled and unveiled women is a treason. (The state-run Khabar Online website - June 14, 2016)

The temporary Friday Prayer leader of Ahwaz announced that inspection delegations including a judge will be present in various squares and cities so that they could flog any mal-veiled woman who defies verbal warnings on her Hijab. (The state-run Mehr news agency - June 16, 2016)

The Friday Prayer Leader of Mashhad and Khamenei's representative in Khorassan Province, said, "That person who cheats on people's property, or says something unlawful, or has unlawful look (on women), commits sins that can only deviate him. While mal-veiling is a sin that turns humans into tools for the Satan to deviate others with." (The state-run Khabar Online website - April 9, 2016)

Khamenei formally announced his opposition to women's riding bicycle in public: "Women's riding bicycle in public will attract men's attention and exposes society to corruption. Therefore it must be abandoned." (The state-run Fars news agency - September 10, 2016)

It should be noted that this pamphlet contains information only about the repressive network used by the Iranian regime to impose the compulsory veil on Iranian women. However, if women engage in political or human rights activities, they will have to face much more vicious agencies of the Revolutionary Guards Corps and the Intelligence Ministry as briefly explained in the NCRI Women's Committee's special report on ["Female Political Prisoners and Conditions of Women's Wards in Iranian Prisons."](#)

Copyright©2016 by Women's Committee of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI)

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.