

Women are the force for change

Women against
fundamentalism and for equality

50 years and on

Solidarity with Iranian women's struggle for freedom

Brief history of Iranian women's movement
Facts of repression against women in Iran
Activities of women for freedom



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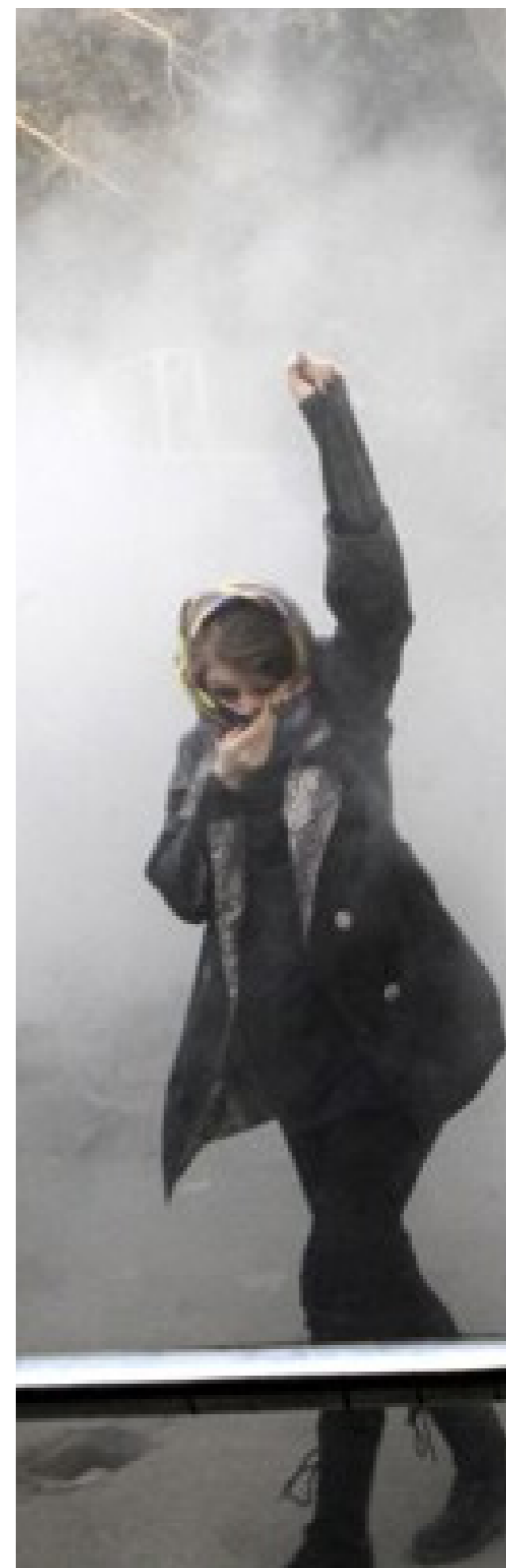
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NCRI AND MARYAM RAJAVI

The National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) is a broad-based parliament-in-exile with more than 500 members, including representatives of ethnic and religious minorities such as the Kurds, Baluchis, Armenians, Jews and Zoroastrians, and representing a broad spectrum of political tendencies in Iran. Women comprise over 50% of the Council's members.

PARLIAMENT IN EXILE

The NCRI aims to establish a secular democratic republic in Iran, based on the separation of religion and state. There are five organizations in the NCRI, including the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI/MEK), the largest and most popular resistance group in Iran.

NCRI'S PLATFORM ON WOMEN

The NCRI recognizes "the right of women to elect and be elected in all elections, and the right to suffrage in all referendums," "the right to employment and free selection of profession, and the right to hold any public, office or profession including the presidency or judgeship," "the right to freely choose clothing and covering," and "the right to use, without discrimination, all instructional, educational, athletic, and artistic resources; the right to participate in all athletic competitions and artistic activities."

MARYAM RAJAVI

Maryam Rajavi was born in 1953 to a middle class family in Tehran. She has a degree in metallurgy from Sharif University of Technology in Tehran. Maryam Rajavi began her activities during the anti-shah movement in early 1970s, as one of the leaders of the student movement while studying at university. Her older sister Narges was killed by the Shah's secret police, SAVAK, in 1975. Her other sister, Massoumeh, an industrial engineering student, was arrested by the clerical regime in 1982.

Pregnant at the time, she was ultimately hanged after undergoing brutal torture. After the 1979 Revolution, Maryam Rajavi became a leading figure in the Social Section of the PMOI. At the time, the PMOI quickly emerged as the principal opposition movement to the clerical regime. In 1980, Maryam Rajavi was among candidates for the parliamentary elections in Tehran and received more than a quarter million votes, despite widespread vote fraud by the regime. In 1982, she left Iran for France. In August 1993, during its plenary session, the National Council of Resistance of Iran, a coalition whose members include a number of Iranian opposition organizations and prominent personalities, elected Maryam Rajavi as the President-elect for the period of transitioning power to the Iranian people.

MARYAM RAJAVI'S PLATFORM FOR FUTURE IRAN

Februafy 2, 2013

1. In our view, the ballot box is the only criterion for legitimacy. Accordingly, we seek a republic based on universal suffrage.
2. We want a pluralist system, freedom of parties and assembly. We respect all individual freedoms. We underscore complete freedom of expression and of the media and unconditional access by all to the internet.
3. We support and are committed to the abolition of the death penalty.
4. We are committed to the separation of Religion and State. Any form of discrimination against the followers of any religion and denomination will be prohibited.
5. We believe in complete gender equality in political, social and economic arenas. We are also committed to equal participation of women in political leadership. Any form of discrimination against women will be abolished. They will enjoy the right to freely choose their clothing. They are free in marriage, divorce, education and employment.

6. We believe in the rule of law and justice. We want to set up a modern legal system based on the principles of presumption of innocence, the right to defense, effective judicial protection and the right to be tried in a public court. We also seek the total independence of judges. The mullahs' Sharia law will be abolished.

7. We are committed to the Universal Declaration of Humans Rights, and international covenants and conventions, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture, and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

We are committed to the equality of all ethnicities. We underscore the plan for the autonomy of Iranian Kurdistan, adopted by the National Council of Resistance of Iran. The language and culture of our compatriots from whatever ethnicity, are among our nation's human resources and must be revived and enhanced in tomorrow's Iran.

8. We recognize private property, private investment and the market economy. All Iranian people must enjoy equal opportunity in employment and in business ventures. We will protect and revitalize the environment.

9. Our foreign policy will be based on peaceful coexistence, international and regional peace and cooperation, as well as respect for the United Nations Charter.

10. We want a non-nuclear Iran, free of weapons of mass destruction.



150 YEARS OF STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

Iranian women have had significant roles in Iran's freedom movement for over 150 years including, the Constitutional Revolution (1906), the Oil Nationalization Movement of Dr. Mossadeq (1953) and in the Anti-monarchic Revolution (1979). They have been vanguards in the fight against Islamic fundamentalism. Throughout the past 35 years, 120,000 people from the main Iranian opposition movement were executed by the Iranian regime, 30% of them were women. Khomeini issued an official decree stating that women and girls were to be raped before execution.



Heroine of resistance



Ashraf Rajavi

She was a vanguard for her activities against both regimes and was the last female prisoner to be released by the Shah. She later played a major role in the education and organization of young girls. She was killed in an attack by the Iranian regime in 1982.



Executed at age of 13



Fatemeh Mesbah

She was executed at the age of 13. She is one example of students killed by the regime. Seven other members of her family including her father, mother, brothers, and sister were executed.



Executed at 50



Massoumeh Shadmani

She was known as Mother Kabiri. She was a political prisoner in both the Shah and Khomeini's dictatorships. She was a parliamentary candidate running for elections and was later arrested, tortured and executed at 50 for supporting the PMOI. Her son was also executed by the mullahs' regime.



Pregnant upon execution



True national champion



Symbol of 1988 massacre of political prisoners



Murdered while helping refugees



Soraya Abulfat'hi

Soraya was executed in Tabriz at the age of 20 on September 27, 1981. She was a university student opposing the Iranian regime. Her resistance under torture was legendary.



Forouzan Abdi

She was a member of the National Volleyball team and was executed in Tehran at the age of 31.



Monireh Rajavi

She is the symbol of the political prisoners massacred in 1998 and was executed only for being the sister of Massoud Rajavi. One of Khomeini's most notorious crimes against humanity was the massacre of 30,000 political prisoners in the summer of 1988.



Zahra Rajabi

She was a 20 year PMOI veteran and a member of its Leadership Council. She was murdered in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1996 by diplomat terrorists of the Iranian regime. Her sister and husband were executed by the regime in the 1980s.

MARYAM RAJAVI ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN TOMORROW'S IRAN

Ten Point Plan for Women

1. Fundamental freedoms and rights

- Women shall have the equal right to enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- Irrespective of their ethnicity, religion, social class or demographics, women everywhere, in whatever village or city, must have the same rights as men in all economic, social and political spheres. Discrimination against women must be abolished in all its forms.
- Women are free to choose their place of residence, occupation, and education. They must have the opportunity to travel freely, have the right to freely choose their clothing and spouse, and have the right to leave the country, to obtain foreign citizenship, to devolve citizenship to their children, to divorce, and to obtain custody and guardianship over children.
- Belief in a specific faith or religion or lack of it, must not count as a factor to degrade any women or to prevent them from access to employment opportunities or educational and judicial resources.

2. Equality before the law

- Women must enjoy protection of the law equal to men.
- Women must enjoy access to guaranteed judicial recourse in the face of violence, rape, discrimination and deprivation of liberty.
- Women must have equal rights as men before the courts.
- Courts must view testimonies and affidavits submitted by women as equal in weight to those submitted by men.
- The legal age for girls shall be 18. Prior to this age, girls shall not be subject to criminal punishment;

3. Freedom of choosing one's own clothing

- Women are free to choose their own clothing. Government interference in this regard is prohibited.
- The law of forced veiling shall be repealed.

- Laws that prescribe administrative punishment for lack of veiling of female workers or employees shall be repealed.
- Written or unwritten laws on controlling the clothing or behaviour of women under the rubric of "mal-veiling," which have violated Iranian women's right to freedom and security, shall have no place in tomorrow's Iran.

4. Equal participation in political leadership

- Women shall enjoy the right to participate "in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government."
- Women must specifically enjoy the right to equal participation in the country's political leadership.
- In order to dispense with any inequality, the government must appoint women for at least half of its posts, and political parties are obliged to choose at least half their candidates from among women for parliamentary elections.
- Any laws that cause prohibitions or limitations on women occupying government posts or senior judicial and legal positions must be repealed.

5. Equality in the economic sphere

- Women shall enjoy equal rights as men in terms of inheritance, entering contracts and management of property.
- Women shall have equal opportunities as men in the labour market.
- Women must receive equal pay for equal work as men, in addition to having job security and complete benefits.
- In accessing housing, appropriate nutrition, medical services, and employment, as well as athletic and artistic endeavours, women shall enjoy equal opportunities as men.

6. Equality in the family

- Women must have free and equal right to choose, marry or divorce a spouse.
- Polygamy is prohibited.
- Marriage before reaching legal age is prohibited. In family life, any coercion or compulsion of women is prohibited.
- Familial responsibilities such as housekeeping, raising children, employment, and educating children are the obligation of both men and women
- Women shall have the rights to obtain custody over their children.
- Employment of young girls below the legal age shall be prohibited. They will enjoy special privileges in field of education.
- Government inquisition and meddling in women private lives is prohibited.

7. Prohibition of violence

- The death penalty has no place in the future of Iran and as such, the death penalty against women shall be annulled. Torture, offensive and degrading treatment of women shall be prohibited.
- Rape shall be considered a crime wherever it occurs.
- Various forms of violence against women, acts of intimidation or forcible deprivation of their freedoms shall be considered crimes.

8. Prohibition of sexual exploitation

- Sex trade is prohibited.
- Trafficking of women and forcing them into prostitution is a crime and those responsible shall be criminally prosecuted.
- Anyone committing sexual crimes against children shall be prosecuted.
- Any form of sexual exploitation of women under any pretext shall be prohibited and all customs, laws and regulations which allow the parents, guardian or a third party related to a girl or woman to give away the latter to another party for sexual pleasure or exploitation under the pretext of marriage or anything else shall be annulled.

9. Repealing mullahs' Sharia laws

- The mullahs' Sharia laws shall not have a place in the laws of the future Iran.
- Emphasis shall be "to repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women."
- Appalling and brutal laws such as stoning shall be repealed.
- All laws authorizing crimes against women under familial pretexts shall be repealed.

10. Social benefits

- Women must have access to social benefits, especially as it relates to retirement, unemployment, old age and other forms of disability, in addition to the right to maternity leave during pregnancy and after delivery, and the right to sufficient nutrition and free services during this period.
- The government is obligated to plan to provide for the nursery and day care requirements of working women.
- All employed women must have access to nursery and day care centers for raising their children.
- Women belonging to minorities, female refugees or immigrants, women living in villages or remote areas, underprivileged women, female prisoners, young girls, and disabled or weak or old women, shall enjoy special financial, educational and medical support

from the government.

- Depriving women employed under temporary contracts of social benefits shall be prohibited.
- Dismissing women from work or reducing their wages due to pregnancy or delivery, or obligating them to perform harmful jobs during this period shall be prohibited.
- The government shall assume responsibility for supporting single women who provide for their families.

EXAMPLES OF MISOGYNOUS LAWS UNDER THE MULLAHS' RULE

- Article 1105 – The family is headed by the husband and the woman may not leave home without the husband's permission.
- Article 1117 - The husband can prevent his wife from engagement in any profession or industry that contradicts family interests or his own or the wife's dignity.
- Article 1210 - sets the age of maturity and legal accountability for girls at 9 lunar years, a measure that exposes girls to maximum social and legal vulnerability.
- Article 198 of the New Islamic Code of Punishment - The value of a woman's testimony is half of a man's and it could be accepted only when it is accompanied by a man's testimony. Such a vision on women leads to prevention of women from sitting on the bench since their judgment should always be accompanied by a male counterpart.

Four decades of Resistance

In the struggle against a misogynist regime, nothing is more powerful than women's leadership in the opposition and their efforts for regime change. Women's leadership and equality pose the most formidable existential challenge to the clerical rule. The existence of an organized opposition with strong roots in Iranian society and a public platform for gender equality, separation of religion and state, recognition of all international conventions on human rights and civil rights provide the right vehicles for change in Iran. This is what the Iranian regime fears most. It is for this reason that the regime's prime objective from the beginning has been to crackdown on any and all demands for basic rights. To this end, the regime has executed 120,000 people for political reason, mostly because of their affiliation with the democratic opposition the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI/MeK). Some 30% of those executed were women, including thousands of women in the 1988 massacre of 30,000 political prisoners.

From day one, the Iranian people have drawn their line against the dictatorship ruling Iran, using every opportunity to show their defiance and opposition to this regime. From the first days of the revolution in 1979, they have opposed the mullahs constitution and took to the streets to protest the compulsory veil emphasizing that they had overthrown the monarchy and its dictatorship for freedom and democracy and not to replace a monarchy with a theocratic dictatorship. Iranians, particularly the youth and women take to the streets at every possibility to express their defiance and raise their voice to obtain their fundamental rights. One of the key turning points in the Iranian people's struggle for freedom was in the summer of 1981. On June 20th, 1981 some 500,000 demonstrators turned out in Tehran in support of Iran's main opposition movement, the PMOI/MEK in a spontaneous demonstration organized via their network of supporters. The peaceful protest was brutally suppressed by the IRGC, killing and wounding hundreds. That same night thousands of demonstrators were arrested and dozens summarily executed. It thus became clear to the Iranian people that the regime cannot tolerate the least dissent. Since then, some 120,000 members of the Iranian Resistance, including elderly mothers, pregnant women, and teenagers as young as 13 have sacrificed their lives in this struggle to establish human rights and democracy in Iran.

But what has the fight been all about?

In one word: "freedom"; freedom of thought, freedom of belief, freedom of expression, and freedom to choose how society is governed.



In July 1981, the National Council of Resistance of Iran, a parliament in exile, was formed, creating a coalition between different political forces solely concentrated on creating a democratic alternative to the mullahs' rule. The NCRI is an inclusive and pluralistic parliament-in-exile, which includes representatives of different political groups and tendencies, ethnic and religious minorities such as the Kurds, Baluchis, Armenians, Jews, and Zoroastrians. The NCRI aims to establish a secular democratic republic in Iran, based on the separation of religion and state. Women comprise over 50 percent of the Council's members. In fact, the president elect of the coalition is a woman, Mrs. Maryam Rajavi.

The threat of Islamic fundamentalism and the solution

The threat of Islamic fundamentalism to women and in the larger context to global peace and security is of great importance. The Iranian women's role in the fight for democracy against the fundamentalist regime ruling Iran, which has been the godfather of fundamentalism and has been recognized for its export of extremism and terror, has therefore emerged as an effective answer to this ominous phenomenon. The solution can be summed up in the role of women in political leadership. Women lead and make up one third of the members of the sole organized Iranian opposition, the People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran (PMOI/MeK). Many of them have spent long years in the Iranian regime's prisons and suffered the most severe tortures and mistreatment but have continued their struggle and have never surrendered their dream of freedom for Iran. They are mostly well-educated. Many have lived abroad for years; nevertheless, they are eager to see democratic change in Iran where freedom and democracy would flourish. The PMOI/MeK women are devout Muslims, but they support a secular system of government and separation of religion and state. They support freedom of choice for women in all aspects of their life including their attire. They advocate women's participation in the political arena and equal participation in political leadership. Therefore, the women of Iran look to Mrs. Maryam Rajavi and the 1,000 women of the Iranian Resistance, members of the PMOI Central Council, as their source of inspiration rather than those who work within the system under the illusion of bringing change from within the regime. The PMOI/MeK rejects all factions within the Iranian regime, including those pretending as moderates, as they all aim to preserve the constitution of the Islamic Republic and the absolute rule of the clergy. The Iranian Resistance's women are a source of inspiration for Iran's courageous women who are the force for change and the ones to overthrow the ruling misogynist and fundamentalist regime.

SUPPRESSION OF WOMEN UNDER THE MULLAHS' RULE

Arbitrary arrests

The arbitrary arrest of prisoners and their conditional release on heavy bail is one of the methods used by the regime to impose pressure on female prisoners and their families. Female suppressive agents are also used to arrest women.



Restrictions

In sports, women also suffer severe restrictions on what they can wear, with the Islamic dress code working as a barrier to free movement and preventing women from engaging in many sports. Women are also barred from stadiums to watch matches. The right to equal education for women is recognized in most of the countries around the world but under the clerical regime, discrimination against women is a policy priority. As a result of such policy many universities either refrained from accepting any female students or just offered subjects that by the mullahs' rule, women are deprived of studying them.



Prisons

In prisons and detention centres, women suffer frequent abuse, torture and execution while incarcerated. The regime had set up special units for female political prisoners, particularly in Qezel Hesar prison and those who coincidentally came out alive, never speak about what horrors they had been subjected to. They also suffer further violence as the wives, daughters or relatives of prisoners. Hygiene is at its lowest level and prison conditions are unbearable.



Executions

During Rouhani's tenure since August 2013 at least 3,600 executions have been reported including at least 85 women. However many executions carried out inside prisons go unreported. These represent only a tiny proportion of crimes committed by the mullahs against their own people. The head of the regime's judiciary system branded reports by international bodies on the worsening state of human rights in Iran as 'fabricated and biased' and said: "Opposing the death sentence is opposing Islam's orders."



Intimidation

Humiliating and insulting the arrestees, especially the young women is common in the every-day life. Women, because they are women under the misogynist mullahs' rule, are often harassed and threatened for what they wear, what they say, what they want to study and how they live their lives. Rape is the most common way to threaten women. A wave of acid attacks were carried out against women under the pretext of improper veiling.



Dress-code

Imposing pressure on women has become institutionalized in various arenas. Suppressive patrols, using the mullahs' fabricated excuse of 'mal-veiling' harass women especially during summer. In order to broaden the suppression of women, the clerical regime presented its 'national plan for veiling in schools' for children and girl students.



IRANIAN WOMEN RESISTING

1,000 women of the Resistance

Today the struggle of Iranian women is alive in the Iranian Resistance movement. 1,000 brave women of the resistance are a source of hope and motivation for millions in Iran. They have created a movement without borders based on a new level of human solidarity and have risen to defend the resistance.



Protests

Women are actively engaged everywhere, in every protest and confrontation. They have demonstrated tremendous courage, fearlessly confronting armed security forces, encouraging others to not fear and carry on, inviting others to join the protests, leading the chants of "death to the dictator", tearing down the images of Khamenei in every city and fending off security forces trying to apprehend protesters.



Universities

Although freedom of expression does not exist in universities in Iran and those in universities endure an ongoing atmosphere of oppression, students use every opportunity to defy the Iranian regime's policies and transform the university into a place of protest. Their common slogan is: "This is a university, a place to learn not a military base."

60% of university students are women, however, they are deprived of studying in 70 fields of study.



In the frontline

As the world witnessed the Iranian people's desire to change the regime and as they came to the streets at the end of 2017, women were at the forefront of the movement. The simmering wave of discontent took on a sharp turn and erupted into radical anti-government protests which spread to over 140 cities all across the country. Eyewitnesses have also testified that women's courage are a driving force everywhere in all scenes of the protests and demonstrations and use every occasion to break the silence which has prevented them from living in democracy and freedom for nearly 40 years.



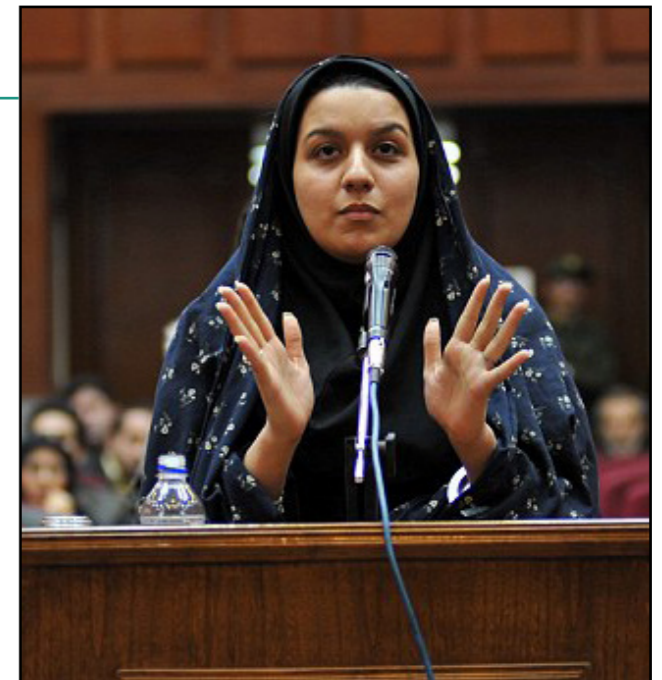
Bonding with the Resistance

Women in the frontline of the Iranian Resistance who play an important role in the leadership of the widespread movement against fundamentalism are a source of inspiration for Iranian women who play an important role in all uprisings and protests.



Reyhaneh Jabbari

Reyhaneh Jabbari was a 26 year-old interior designer who was hanged after spending seven years in the Iranian regime's prisons. She had defended herself against rape by an agent of the Iranian regime's Intelligence Ministry. Despite international calls to stop the execution, she was executed on October 25, 2014.





Commemorating Women's day

“ The responsibility to bring about change lies with women. Women are the messengers of hope. We firmly believe in a future where women are free to lead and contribute to their societies and will be the source to ratify misogyny and it is here that we must build an international from against fundamentalism. ”

Excerpts of speeches by Mrs. Maryam Rajavi at conferences commemorating the International Women's Day.

2018

"I would like to reiterate that supporting the struggle against fundamentalism is the greatest project of our time for advocates of women's rights. Since the heart of fundamentalism beats in Iran and under the rule of the mullahs, supporting the Iranian people's uprising for the overthrow of the regime is doubly important. I am confident that the women of the world will undertake their historic responsibility."

2017

"The point I would like to make is that for decades, women's struggles and the International Women's Day have focused on the elimination of inequality and violence against women as their objective. Today, however, women have a mission beyond these goals, of saving humanity from fundamentalism and terrorism."

2016

"With women's active and equal participation in political leadership, we will turn this century into the era of women's emancipation."

2015

"It is the voice of women and their unity that can create a world based on justice, freedom and equality. A moment in history is looming when despite darkness and despair, the world will rise of the nightmare of fundamentalism, and the nations of the Middle East will be saved from this evil spell."

2014

"Indeed, the ideal of equality is alive, but not just because of depravations, humiliations and oppression. Because a generation of women has arisen to overthrow dictatorships in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Ukraine, Syria and Iraq; women who are intent on toppling the religious dictatorship ruling Iran. Indeed, rest assured that ultimately, these oppressed women will overthrow the ruling theocracy in Iran."

2013

"I tell my sisters throughout Iran that the goal is not only to liberate women, but the whole society of the scourge of fundamentalism. I call on women to reach a broad united front against fundamentalism. This unjust world must change and responsibility for change rests on shoulders of women. If we want to resist religious tyranny, we must fight against patriarchy and fundamentalism, that is the gender ideology."

2012

"The active and responsible presence of women in all levels of the resistance turned the movement into an effective political force which can turn the international balance of power in favour of the Iranian people. As the struggle to attain freedom and democracy becomes more difficult and the face-off with religious fundamentalism becomes more profound, gender equality and women's participation, particularly their leadership role, in the struggle becomes more indispensable."

2011

"The path to a peaceful and democratic Middle East, where women and youths could play their rightful role, inevitably passes through regime change in Iran. Without this change, democracy and stability would be impossible in this region as the regime would mislead the course of developments. Our option is one which would benefit the entire region: democratic change by the Iranian people and Resistance. Our message to our sisters and brothers in all risen nations in the region is "Beware of the fundamentalist mullahs, the murderers of Iran's women and youth."

2010

"Helping Iranian women supports the movement for freedom and greatly contributes to the resistance against Islamic fundamentalism, the most serious threat to equality movement. Existence of an organized resistance with deep roots in Iranian society. The movement's commitment to gender equality and its historic initiative in accepting women's leadership constitute a progressive leap in the context of equality in the Iranian society."

2008

"Without women in leadership, the fight for freedom will not advance. The PMOI is committed to following an Islam, which rejects discrimination on the basis of gender, and as the Quran has explicitly said, considers the liberation of human beings as the highest and most significant principle."



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