

July 2019

A brief look at the clerical regime's history and record on violations of women's rights in Iran

A publication of the NCRI Women's Committee

Steady and Strong, Rebellious and Resilient, Iran's Women Defy the Mullahs' Oppression



Status of Women in Iran

It is a widely accepted rule that the situation of women is the most telling and reliable measure of general freedoms in any society. Khomeini's crackdown on women's rights and freedoms, was a decision taken knowingly and deliberately, as a prelude to absolute suppression of everyone's rights and freedoms in Iran.



March 8, 1979: In an anti-compulsory veil demonstration, woman holds a placard reading, "Combative women of Iran won't become slaves."

Gender Discrimination Institutionalized

Discrimination against women started in the Constitution and expanded into all other penal and civil codes. In this way, women were systematically discriminated against from all sides of the compass with regards to their political, social, economic, cultural and individual rights.

After Khomeini's death in June 1989, parallel with the regime's growing need to rein in a restive populace, the mullahs stepped up their clampdown on women's rights. Over the past four decades, suppression of women has been the cornerstone of the regime's rule.

Sports	Judgeship	Divorce	Mandatory Veil
<p>February 28, 1979</p> <p>Discrimination against women was extended to the sports arena and women's athletic tournaments were cancelled one after the other.</p>	<p>March 2, 1979</p> <p>Women were banned from judgeship. Hundreds of female judges and juristic interns were left in limbo.</p>	<p>March 4, 1979</p> <p>The right to divorce was granted exclusively to men, enabling them to unilaterally decide for divorce at any time.</p>	<p>March 7, 1979</p> <p>Khomeini issued a fatwa obliging women who worked in government offices to cover their hair at work.</p>

93 ordinary women have been hanged during Rouhani's terms in office



FLOGGING

May 22, 1979

The first time a woman was flogged in public.



EXECUTIONS

July 12, 1979

The first time three women were executed on the alleged charge of committing vice.



STONING

June 29, 1980

The first time two women were stoned to death in Kerman, southern Iran.

Presidency	Family Rights	Mandatory Veil	Singing
<p>March 1979</p> <p>The clerical regime's Constitution was adopted, banning women from running for president.</p>	<p>Sep. 30, 1979</p> <p>A new law replaced the Family Protection Act which took away the limited benefits granted to women by the Shah.</p>	<p>February 3, 1980</p> <p>The first government directive was issued obliging female doctors and nurses to wear the compulsory veil at work.</p>	<p>April 19, 1980</p> <p>Female singers were summoned to court, intimidated and humiliated, and forever deprived from singing.</p>

Economic Participation

The occasional data published on the status of Iranian workers fails to address the number of female workers and the problems they face in this male-dominated environment, under discriminatory laws. Instead of “eliminating structural barriers and discriminatory laws” and “creating equal economic opportunities,” the Iranian regime tends to further marginalize women by this misogynist vision that women

“physically and emotionally have been created by God for a special role in life” and “the issue of women’s employment is not among the main issues.”

Consequently, women who need to make ends meet for their families are forced to accept just any job with any salary, usually hired by small workshops to work under unsafe conditions without insurance coverage, bonuses, or job security.

“Women have the highest rate of unemployment” and “women’s economic participation is not noteworthy.”

Alireza Mahjoub, General Secretary of the House of Workers, IRNA news agency, April 28, 2018

NURSES



The majority of female nurses in Iran work on temporary contracts and are offered a small salary usually not regularly paid. Their overtime fees are often not paid for between six to twelve months. The average income of female nurses is 2.4 million tomans (\$178) but many work for 500,000 tomans (\$37) without insurance. The shortage of at least 150,000 nurses exerts tremendous pressure on nurses. At least 21 nurses have died in the past three years due to pressure at work.

TEACHERS



More than half of teachers in Iran are women. They live on salaries which are less than one-fourth of what they need to subsist. They also face numerous discriminations at work. Teachers on permanent jobs earn a monthly salary of 1.4 million tomans (\$100). The majority of teachers, however, work on temporary contracts who earn only 800,000 tomans (\$60) per month, way below the minimum wage of 1.1 million tomans (\$81.5). Yet, it frequently happens that teachers are not paid for months.

WORKERS



The clerical regime’s officials acknowledge that female workers work under “new slavery” conditions. Women comprise the majority of the workforce in unofficial workshops not monitored by government and greenlighted to pay less to their workers and deny them benefits or insurance. Women usually work up to 12 hours a day with a meager monthly wage of 400,000 tomans (\$30). The poverty line in Iran stands at 6 million tomans (\$480).

143

Iran ranks 143 among 149 countries in the world for women’s economic participation and opportunity, with a score of 0.376.

16.8

Women’s participation rate in the job market in 2017 was only 16.8% compared to the male participation rate of 71.4%. So, Iran’s job market is male-dominated.

3M

From about 39.4 million Iranian women half of whom are considered to be of working age, only 3 million are employed.



77

Iranian women’s participation in the job market is lower than the average for all women in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, and one of the lowest worldwide.

Iranian women are restricted from entering certain professions and 77 fields of education.

85.9

In January 2016, it was reported that the unemployment rate among young women under 30 was 85.9%.



Women are severely underrepresented in senior public positions and as private sector managers.



Iranian women’s participation and representation in the formal political structure is among the lowest in the world: 3 percent female parliamentary representation.

3

The most senior women in government are only three so-called vice-presidents who do not have any authority or influence to advance their mandates.

A Woman’s Main Duty

In mid-April 2013, the mullahs’ supreme leader Ali Khamenei offered a plan to increase the country’s population, by boosting the average birth rate. Khamenei listed women’s “special privileges” as homemaking, giving birth to children, and raising them, emphasizing that these were a great crusade and a feminine art. The regime’s parliament started drafting a bill in May which openly

placed further restrictions on women’s employment and family rights, defining the priorities of employment in the public and private sectors as the following: First, men with children; second, married men without children; and third, women with children. Again on March 19, 2017, Khamenei reiterated that a woman’s main duty is bearing children.

Gender Discrimination



EDUCATION

▶ In 2012, the regime implemented an extensive plan, designating gender quotas for university admission of female students. According to this plan, girls were completely banned from applying for B.S. or B.A. in 77 fields of study.

▶ Also in 2012, new universities were built to facilitate gender segregation among university students by admitting only one sex.

OCCUPATION

▶ In July 2014, Tehran's municipality issued a directive instructing their managers to recruit their new employees only from among men.

▶ In September 2014, women were banned from working in the coffee shops.

▶ In January 2016, a bill was passed according to which women could be employed only in businesses where the work place is gender segregated. Furthermore, women were subjected to new time limits restricting their work to between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m.

▶ In February 2016, the mullahs' parliament passed another bill reducing the working hours of women with special conditions which practically facilitated dismissal of women from their jobs.

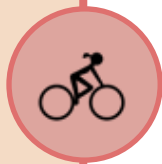
▶ On September 18, 2018, all the 40 female journalists and staff of ANA news agency were fired just because of their gender.

FINANCIAL COMPENSATIONS

▶ Girls burned in the fire incident at a school in West Azerbaijan Province, have been granted only half of the expenses for their treatment because of their gender. According to the regime's Constitution, a woman's blood money is half of that of a man.

PUBLIC PLACES AND FACILITIES

▶ Women have to ride segregated buses and metro trains. Women are not allowed to enter coffeeshops and smoke hookahs.



SPORTS

▶ Women are not allowed to ride bicycles in public. Segregated parks are the only place where women could ride bicycles.

▶ In November 2017, Khamenei once again reiterated the ban on women's bicycling in public and in places that could be seen by male strangers. In May 2019, police was instructed to stop women cyclists and confiscate their bikes.

▶ Dorsa Derakhshani, member of the Women's National Chess Team and the sixth world champion in under18 games, got expelled from the national team for not covering her hair in a tournament in Gibraltar.

▶ A 10-year-old gymnastics champion was deprived of participating in tournaments for posting her photos online showing her practicing in Armenia without covering up.

▶ Eight Iranian women, national team members, were forbidden by their husbands from leaving the country to participate in international tournaments.

▶ On May 25, 2019, male security guards entered the locker room of female footballers, using verbal and physical violence against the players.

▶ Women continue to be banned from watching sporting events in stadiums.

▶ On June 6, 2019, female football fans holding tickets to watch Iran-Syria game in Tehran's Azadi Stadium were brutalized by security forces and two of them got arrested, while Syrian women were allowed in.

▶ Broadcast of women's sports events by the state radio and television networks is banned, an issue depriving women athletes of finding sponsors and in many cases leads to the dismantling of the teams.

SINGING AND PLAYING MUSIC

▶ Women are not allowed to sing solo. On May 17, 2019, Negar Moazzam was sued for singing during a sightseeing tour.

▶ Music groups are not allowed to perform and hold concerts with female members on stage. Numerous concerts have been called off for featuring female musicians.

Iranian women have not given up on their rights and continue to defy the repressive restrictions imposed on them by the state.



Early Marriages, Family Rights



The Iranian Constitution sanctions marriage of girls as young as 13. It also permits the father to wed his daughter of younger age if he can obtain endorsement of a court.

▶ Every year 180,000 girls under 18 get married in Iran. 43,000 of them were under 15 from March 2017 to March 2018.

▶ The number of girls getting married in the country under 10 years of age was 220 in 2011; 187 in 2012; 201 in 2013; 176 in 2014; and 179 in 2015. The actual figures are much higher. In some villages, girls as young as 7 are given to marriage.

▶ Early marriage is the worst form of oppression of young girls and future women of Iran. It is an example of violence against women. Thousands of girl children have to drop out of school due to early marriage.

▶ A regime MP disclosed that there were some 24,000 widows under 18 years in Iran, and most of the early marriages end up in divorce. A member of Tehran's City Council said there were 15,000 young widows under 15 years in Iran.

▶ On September 22, 2013, the mullahs' parliament passed an act which allowed guardians to marry their adopted daughters with court permission, something that was previously absolutely forbidden.

▶ With more than one million widowed women, Iran presently ranks first among 40 countries with regards to the number of widows.

▶ Efforts to increase the marriage age for girls to 16 have so far failed. The Legal and Judicial Committee of the parliament rejected the bill in December 2018, saying it contradicted the teachings of Islam, and the general policies of the clerical regime.

DIVORCE

The marriage-divorce ratio signals worrying circumstances in Iran.

Iranian regime officials acknowledge that there was one divorce for every 8 marriages in Iran in the year 2008. In 2018, however, there is one divorce for every 3.1 marriages.

A record high of 175,000 divorces were registered in 2017.

Divorce topped the list of social ailments in Iran among the five most urgent issues in line with addiction to narcotic drugs, unemployment, moral corruption and shanty dwelling.

One of the reasons for the growing number of divorces in Iran is the increasing number of girl children forced into early marriages, caused by prevalent poverty in the country.

Violence Against Women

The most common form of violence against women in Iran is the state-sponsored measures to force Iranian women to wear the compulsory veil. According to Article 102 of the Punishment Code ratified in 1983, women who appear in public and in the streets without the religious veil are punishable with 74 lashes of the whip.

Over the past 40 years, at least 26 government agencies have been tasked to impose the veil in society. Formation of Moral Security patrols, invisible

patrols, Mountains Police, Beaches Police, Street Police, etc. are among the measures undertaken to monitor women more closely and in all social environments. Special emphasis has also been placed on the activities of the Veil and Virtue Front comprised of 301 institutes and associations all across the country.

The Ministry of Higher Education instructed all universities in August 2016 to form Hijab Committees and submit their plans on three main topics of informing, guiding and dealing with violators.

A report by the Research Center of the mullahs' parliament in July 2018, indicated that some **70% of Iranian women do not believe in the mandatory dress-code**, namely the head-to-toe black veil or *Chador*, imposed by the regime. The report confirms that Iranian women observe the veil only through coercion and harsh restrictions.

WOMEN BRUTALIZED FOR FLOUTING THE VEIL

Some of the most horrific scenes of women being brutalized by security forces for not properly observing the veil have happened over the past year. And these scenes are repeated at least 2,000 times every day all across Iran.

▶ Plainclothes agents of the State Security Force (SSF) arrested five young women and men on June 22, 2019, in a park in Tehranpars where they were playing water guns. A video clip posted in the social media showed a male plainclothes agent grabbing a young woman, said to be 15-16, and violently pushing her into the police car.

▶ On April 18, 2018, at least four Guidance Patrols attacked four young women in a park, beating and shoving them around for improper veiling. One of the young women suffered from a heart condition and went unconscious as a result of the beatings.



▶ The SSF Commander, Hossein Ashtari, announced in September 2016, "Some 2000 improperly veiled women are arrested every day in Tehran and some other provinces."

PUNISHMENTS FOR FLOUTING THE VEIL

1

According to the law in Iran, any woman who appears in public without the veil is punishable by imprisonment of 10 days to two months plus a cash fine of 50 to 500 thousand tomans.

2

Women could also be punished to 74 lashes for appearing in public without the veil.

3

The State Security Force announced on February 23, 2018, that encouraging the public to shun the veil is punishable by one to ten years of imprisonment.

MONITORING WOMEN DRIVERS

► The Moral Security Patrols started a new round of activity on April 16, 2016, in Tehran to counter mal-veiling and unveiling in vehicles.

► Tehran's Police Chief also announced that 7,000 invisible security police forces had been organized to monitor and report those who drop their veils in their cars. However, they have not succeeded in preventing this common practice by women despite threatening to file court cases against them.

► Most recently, in April 2019, the Moral Security Police of Tehran sent thousands of text messages to warn commuters against flouting the compulsory veil behind the wheels. Tehran Police Chief said, should the offense be repeated, they will be charged and referred to a court of law.

PROMOTING VIRTUE AND FORBIDDING VICE

- Article 8 of the mullahs' Constitution institutionalizes the duty of "promoting virtue and forbidding vice." In this way, the state-backed operatives find an open hand in cracking down on women.

- Also in 1992, the mullahs' parliament adopted a law to lend Judiciary's support to the paramilitary Bassij in their mandate of "promoting virtue and forbidding vice."

- Another act was adopted in 2010 to "spread the culture of chastity and Hijab" according to which at least 26 government agencies were instructed to carry out duties to enforce the compulsory veil on Iranian women.

ACID ATTACKS

- Such legislations and incitements by Friday prayer leaders prepared the grounds for a wave of inhuman acid attacks on women in 2014 by gangs tied to the regime who inflicted irreparable injuries and disabilities on women. The assailants were never arrested or punished.

- On May 13 and 20, 2019, under pressure of the NGOs protecting victims of acid attacks, the mullahs' parliament passed a bill to have the perpetrators of acid attacks and their accomplices punished, but stopped short of limiting the sale and purchase of acid.

- As long as acid is freely available for sale, women remain subject to acid attacks which destroy their health and life for good without the perpetrators getting arrested or punished.

- Sigal Mandelker, the Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence at the U.S. Treasury Department, said that the state-backed Ansar-e Hezbollah has been linked to the acid attacks against women in Isfahan. (USAdarFarsi, June 7, 2018)

Assailants with government ties evade justice



Zahra Navidpour and Mahdis Mir Ghavani

● 41 RAPES IN IRANSHAHR

Forty-one young women between 18 and 30 were assaulted by a gang of four men, in June 2018 in Iranshahr, in the province of Sistan and Baluchestan. The assailants had ties to the city's wealthy and influential families, the Bassij and IRGC.

● ZAHRA NAVIDPOUR, RAPED AND MURDERED BY MP

Zahra Navidpour, 28, was repeatedly raped by the Majlis MP from their district. She was found dead at her mother's home on January 6, 2019.

Zahra was looking for a job after her father's death, when she was lured into the office of Salman Khodadadi with promise of a job. Khodadadi had threatened to kill Zahra and her family «overnight without anyone knowing.»

● MAHDIS MIRGHAVAMI RAPED IN DETENTION

Mahdis Mir-Ghavami, an engineer, ended her own life immediately after being released from the detention center of Kermanshah's Intelligence Department. She had been summoned on January 24, 2017, and detained for two days where she was sexually assaulted.

While assailants go unpunished, women who file complaints of rape are accused of wilfully engaging in illicit relationship, then punished for adultery



● SYMBOL OF IRAN'S DEFENSELESS WOMEN

Reyhaneh Jabbari, 26, walked to the gallows at dawn on October 25, 2014, after seven years of incarceration.

She stands as the symbol of defenseless women who are handed the death penalty without deserving it.

An interior designer by profession, she had defended herself against rape by a high official of the Intelligence Ministry (MOIS), Morteza Sarbandi.

Reyhaneh was viciously tortured to make false "confessions" which would whitewash the methods and image of the Ministry of Intelligence but she did not give in.



● ANOTHER VICTIM OF SELF-DEFENSE AGAINST RAPE

Soghra Khalili, 36 and mother of two, was sentenced to death on June 25, 2019, for defending herself against rape.

She has been imprisoned in the Central Prison of Sanandaj for seven years. Her 4-year-old son is staying with her in the Central Prison of Sanandaj. Her other son is 14 and is living with his father.

40 Years of Misogyny

What has been the outcome?



Suicide Among Women

- ▶ Increasing pressure and restrictions on women in Iran and numerous obstacles for women's employment and social activities, as well as patriarchal relationships in the family ignoring the rights of women, coupled with extreme poverty in recent years have led to widespread depression and despair among women and culminated in a high rate of suicide.
- ▶ More teenagers are taking their own lives. While there is a considerable number of young mothers and pregnant women who are committing suicide out of poverty. On a number of occasions, they have taken their children with them.
- ▶ Women's suicide rate in Iran is the highest in the Middle East.
- ▶ The Iranian Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine reported that more than 1,365 women committed suicide in the Persian year 1396 (March 2017 - March 2018).
- ▶ Woman's suicide increased by 66 percent in Iran during a five-year period, according to social pathologists.

VAW Record Holder

- ▶ Iran has one of the highest statistics on violence against women.
- ▶ Today we see that violence (against women) has become institutionalized.
- ▶ Currently domestic violence against women is pervasive in society.
- ▶ Many women who are subjected to violence do not file complaints for different reasons. Nevertheless, they lose their living skills due to the violence inflicted on them, to the extent that sometimes they lose their sanity and commit suicide...
- ▶ 66 per cent of Iranian women experience domestic violence in their lifetime.
- ▶ The number of battered women referring of the Coroner's Office increased from 74,180 in 2016 to 77,059 in 2017.
- ▶ Domestic violence against women grew 20% in just one year.

All of the above are admissions by Iranian officials and government experts. But the mullahs' parliament and Judiciary have refused for eight years to pass the bill to Provide Security for Women (PSW), originally named "Elimination of VAW."

ILLITERACY

among women and girl children is critical in some 40 Iranian cities. Drop-out of girl children, 6 years and older, is widespread particularly in the provinces of Sistan and Baluchestan, Khuzestan, Western Azerbaijan, and Eastern Azerbaijan.

Women's Drug Addiction Rapidly on the Rise

- ▶ In light of the deteriorating economic conditions in Iran and surging unemployment, addiction has spread viciously among low-income and impoverished sectors affecting even young children.
- ▶ The alarming rate of addiction growing among Iranian women and girls, has compelled the regime's officials and experts to acknowledge it.
- ▶ The average addiction age has dropped to under 13 years of age among Iranian women and girl, according to Rouhani's deputy on women and family affairs.
- ▶ Unofficial figures indicate that the number of addicted women in Iran has risen from 3 to 12 per cent.
- ▶ There is one addicted woman for every 6.6 addicted men in the age range of 15 to 25.
- ▶ The number of AIDs victims among women has increased ten folds in just two years.
- ▶ According to the State Security Force, there are more than 750,000 Iranian women drug addicts in Iran.

Iran's Women Defy the Mullahs

Although the situation in Iran is extremely oppressive for women and they have borne the brunt of repression for the past 40 years, they are not submissive contrary to the regime's expectation. Gender discrimination, gender

segregation, and various restrictions have made Iranian women not just rebellious but also very resilient. And they have been fighting all along in every field to open their way forward despite numerous obstacles and restrictions.

Education

In education, young women have made up over 50 per cent of university admissions every year, for some 15 years, although they are banned from 77 majors and have gender quotas. Let alone that thousands of girl children have to drop out of school due to poverty and forced early marriages.

Sports

In sports, although women's athletic activities are restricted and lack any budget, motivated young women of Iran continue to overcome hurdles and win medals in international tournaments. Their efforts to find their way into stadiums have been a constant headache for the mullahs.

Compulsory Veil

As for the compulsory veil, they have frustrated the regime's efforts of over 40 years, trying to wrap them in the black head-to-toe garment. They have made a mockery of the regime's official dresscode and constantly pay the price for this defiance every day.

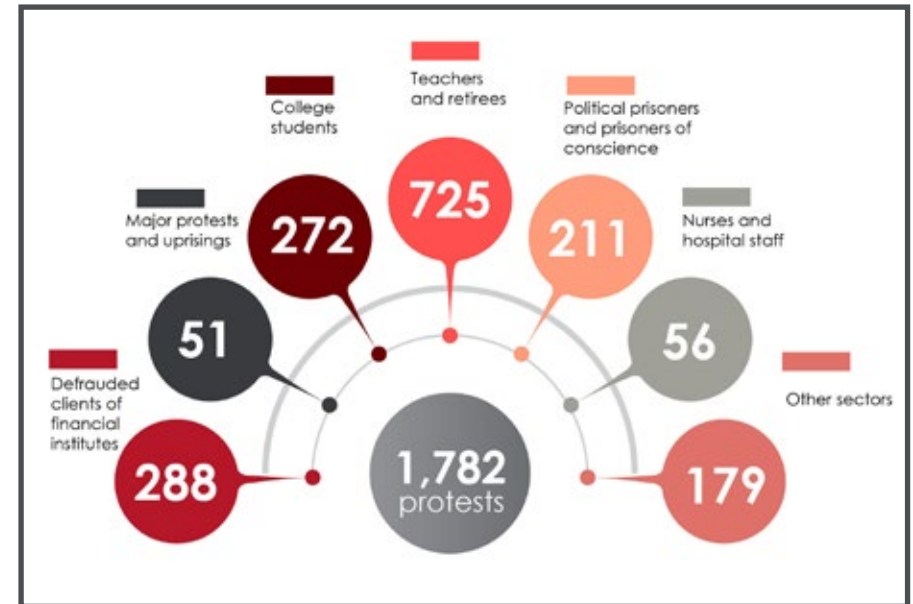
Political Participation

And although they have zero participation in political leadership and decision-making, women are present everywhere in the uprisings and protests, to help decide their own destiny.



Social Impact

Iranian women's impact on the democratic movement was so much that the regime's IRGC commanders had to acknowledge their leading role on multiple occasions and confess to the larger number of arrests from among women.



Iranian women participated in at least 1782 protests from March 2018 to June 2019.



Historic Roots

OF COURSE, THIS HAS NOT BEEN A SPONTANEOUS PHENOMENON

Iranian women have always had role models to look up to, the women of the People's Mojahedin of Iran (PMOI) who defied the mullahs in the face, defended women's freedom of choice from the onset, and made a mockery of the mullahs' fake adherence to Islam.

Those who paid the price of standing up to the mullahs with utmost dedication, in the face of a brutal, fundamentalist regime. And through years of suffering and sacrifice, rose to the leadership of the opposition and qualified to lead the movement through the most difficult and tortuous junctures of its history.

Political Prisoners

The fearless women who got arrested and those who were already in chains have continued their resistance inside prisons, refusing to buckle under, and instead brought the authorities to their knees.

Rights Activists

And the growing number of women who join the ranks of activists and fight for their basic rights, attests to the resolve of Iran's women to be free and have their rights.



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A publication of the
Women's Committee of
The National Council of Resistance
of Iran

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