



A Report to the UN Beijing+25 Forum

# The Plight of Women in Iran



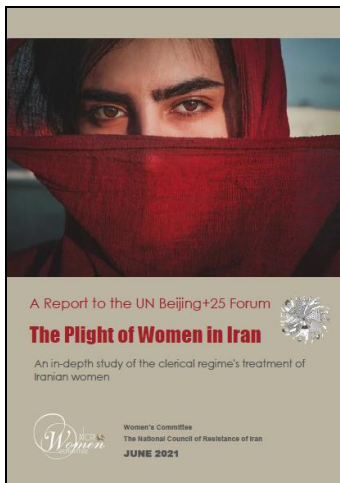
An in-depth study of the clerical regime's treatment of Iranian women



Women's Committee

The National Council of Resistance of Iran

**JUNE 2021**



## A Report to the UN Beijing+25 Forum, The Plight of Women in Iran

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>i</b>	FOREWORD
<b>1</b>	PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS
<b>61</b>	INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT, SHARED PROSPERITY AND DECENT WORK
<b>101</b>	POVERTY ERADICATION, SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIAL SERVICES
<b>171</b>	FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE, STIGMA AND STEREOTYPES
<b>237</b>	PARTICIPATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE INSTITUTIONS
<b>249</b>	PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES
<b>269</b>	ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION, PROTECTION AND REHABILITATION
<b>289</b>	NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES
<b>295</b>	DATA AND STATISTICS







## FOREWORD

This study is based on the fact that the clerical regime ruling Iran is inherently a misogynistic regime that lacks the slightest intention to eliminate discrimination against women or promote their rights.

Due to its misogynistic nature, the mullahs' regime can never advocate for women's rights, let alone empower women and promote their political, economic, and social participation.

The regime is founded on gender discrimination and male domination over women. If one day they give up this patriarchy and provide an opportunity for women's participation, they would not maintain their political system. They advance their goals by restricting and suppressing women's rights under the banner of Islam.

The mullahs kicked off their rule by imposing the mandatory Hijab on Iranian women, obliging women to observe the official dress code if they work in government offices. Female judges were among the first groups of women fired from their jobs because, according to the clerical regime's Constitution, women cannot sit on the bench, run for president, or lead society.

Gradually, they started banning women's entrance to shops, hospitals, etc., if they did not observe the mandatory Hijab dress code.

The following weeks saw the regime's abrogation of women's limited family rights under the previous regime.

Discrimination against women is entrenched in the law and the Constitution.

The Iranian regime has refused to sign on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals simply because the SDGs seek to promote gender equality.

Iran's fall into the lowest group of the World Economic Forum's gender gap index is due to the laws and structural restrictions imposed on Iranian women.

One of the most important reasons for the gender gap in the economy is laws in the economic sphere which makes 'employment and earning of income' rights for men and 'free services at home,' a duty for women. Although employment has been recognized in the law as an equal right for all citizens, in practice, men have priority in employment and economic opportunities.

The male-dominated atmosphere in decision-making, law-making, and management arenas is another factor that keeps women away from social, economic, and political participation. Women

have to earn permission from their husbands, fathers, or brothers for making an investment or using shared sources. They also need the signature of a man on their contract to obtain facilities and resources. When they have to travel abroad to sign a contract with non-Iranian parties, they must have their husbands' letters of consent for leaving the country.

In deliberating the status of women in Iran, it is also essential to keep in mind that women's rights and freedoms in Iran contradict the regime's general policies. For this reason, advocates of women's rights in Iran become convicted of acting against national security, and women's issues are considered "political."

Women's political participation and presence as members of parliament or ministerial deputies have little impact on changing the legal procedures in favor of women or improving their social status. One primary reason is that women in the political arena have been picked according to the power structure's needs and selectivity. They do not represent the masses of women or emerged from an independent movement of women's associations. Therefore, many women who have a political or managerial position, are not acting like a woman. They are more committed to their party interests than the interests of women in general.


Four decades of domestic and foreign policies of the Iranian regime, along with corruption, inefficiency, and waste, have brought a wealthy country with vast human and natural resources to a point where three-quarters of its population lives in a miserable state of absolute poverty. Therefore, it is essential to understand that answering questions on the improvement of the status of women in Iran and the measures adopted by the government in this regard is irrelevant and not applicable to the so-called Islamic Republic of Iran.

The answer to most of the questions should have been a simple NO or NONE. So, the only option left for us was to answer each question by providing an overall picture of the status quo and listing the obstacles to improving women's status and their participation, as far as the obscure data obtained from official sources allowed.

The first step for any regime to promote women's rights in Iran and implement the Beijing Platform for Action is to sign the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). It should also sign the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention 2011) and other international conventions upholding women's rights.

The other imperative is to overhaul the Constitution and recognize Iranian women's rights to become a leader, a president, and a judge. The Constitution and all other laws of the clerical regime must recognize women as equal human beings with equal worth and rights in all areas, particularly before the law. Women must enjoy the freedom to choose their clothing and freely engage in any social activity of their liking. All of which are currently considered existential threats to the mullahs' rule.

So, this study is an effort to shed light on the conduct of the Iranian regime 26 years after Beijing and convey the voice of Iranian women suffering under the mullahs' tyrannical regime. Iranian women have never relented their struggle to obtain their legitimate rights, and the time has come for the world to hear their voice and support their cause.



# PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS

1. What have been the most important achievements, challenges and setbacks in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women over the past 5 years?
  - a. What are general achievements in implementation of the BPfA and CEDAW and SDGs?

## BPfA, CEDAW contradict Constitution and laws

- The Iranian regime has refused to join the CEDAW because it contradicts the regime's Constitution, Civil Code, Islamic Penal Code, and other laws and legislations.<sup>1</sup>
- The articles outlined in the Beijing Platform of Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women starkly contrast the fundamental principles and goals pursued by the Iranian regime.
- Discrimination against women has been institutionalized in the Iranian regime's laws and Constitution. All proposals to reform these discriminatory laws have either failed altogether, as was the case with the bill to increase the age of marriage,<sup>2</sup> or were drastically overhauled losing its original purpose as was the case with the bill initially proposed to protect women against violence.<sup>3</sup>

## Emphasis on Equity instead of Equality

- The regime's officials have always stressed on the word "equity" as opposed to "equality" in all UN conferences and forums, including in the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. So, it is not reasonable to expect the Iranian mullahs' regime to make

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<sup>1</sup> [Why the Iranian regime does not join the CEDAW?](#) A study by the NCRI Women's Committee, March 2016

<sup>2</sup> [Marriage age increase rejected by Iran parliament](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, December 25, 2018

<sup>3</sup> [Provision of Security for Women bill finalized by Judiciary after 8 years](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, September 19, 2019

the slightest progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women in the true sense of the word.

### Scrapping implementation of Education 2030 document

- In a meeting on June 13, 2017, presided by Hassan Rouhani, the regime's President, the Supreme Council for Cultural Revolution decided to stop implementation of the UNESCO Education 2030 document which had been signed just a few months before with reservations.
- Later, on May 7, 2017, the mullahs' Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei told a meeting of Iranian teachers, "The UNESCO 2030 education agenda and the like are not agendas that the Islamic Republic of Iran should have to surrender and submit to."<sup>4</sup>
- Three months later, the semi-official Tasnim news agency wrote, "In the (Education) 2030 Framework for Action, there are references to terms such as global citizenship and gender equality. These issues have been criticized by some experts particularly in the Supreme Council for Cultural Revolution. Some are even convinced that the adoption and implementation of this document would transform national education in many ways. Among them, one can point to the omission of sexual stereotypes, teaching of sex education to children, and omission of some Quranic concepts and values from textbooks to promote peace and non-violence."<sup>5</sup>

**IRAN is **not** a signatory to CEDAW**  
**Regime accepts **EQUITY** not EQUALITY**  
 Education 2030 Document was **scrapped** in 2017 because of its references to gender equality, global citizenship, peace, and non-violence

### Moving in the opposite direction

- In fact, the regime has not made any achievements in implementation of the BPfA and CEDAW and SDGs, rather, it has moved in the opposite direction, stripping Iranian women of more of their most basic rights and creating more restrictions for them.
- One of the most obvious examples is the security forces' stepped-up use of violence in the past couple of years in dealing with women who oppose the compulsory veil and the mandatory official dress code.<sup>6</sup>
- This is the most common form of violence against women in Iran which is "state-sponsored."<sup>7</sup> Vice patrols and police agents who brutally batter women on the streets for not properly observing the veil are encouraged and rewarded by the regime.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Khamenei.ir website – May 7, 2017

<sup>5</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, May 7, 2017

<sup>6</sup> [Security Force beats up young woman walking without the compulsory veil](#), NCRI Women's Committee website, October 30, 2019

<sup>7</sup> [The mandatory Hijab proves crucial to the mullahs' war on Iranian women](#), articles, NCRI Women's Committee website, November 24, 2020

<sup>8</sup> [Drastic Rise in Violence Against Women in Iran](#), a report by the NCRI Women's Committee, November 2018

## b. What have been violations of rights?

Violations of rights take place over a wide spectrum.

Discrimination against women is institutionalized in the Iranian regime's laws. Accordingly, a woman's worth, life and testimony are considered half of men.<sup>9</sup>

Women also face various restrictions and bans in economic, social and artistic activities as well as in sports. Following is a brief glance over violations of the most basic rights of women in Iran.



### The right to life

- At least 56 women have been executed in Iran since January 2016. Nine (9) women were executed in 2016; ten (10) women in 2017; six (6) women in 2018; 16 women in 2019; 8 women in 2020; and seven (7) women have been executed from January to May 2021.
- Unprecedented were the hanging executions of four (4) women in just eight days from July 16 to 23, 2019, the hangings of six (6) women in only three weeks in December, and the executions of three women in just one month on the eve of the Persian New Year 1400.
- The Iranian regime is the world's chief executioner of women. At least 118 women have been executed in Iran since August 2013, when the mullahs' president, Hassan Rouhani, took office.<sup>10</sup> That's an average of 15 women every year.

<sup>9</sup> The Iranian regime's Islamic Penal Code, Articles 382 and 550 on blood money for women, Article 716 (f) on blood money on abortion, and Articles 199 and 209 on women's testimony; Misogyny Institutionalized in the laws of the mullahs' regime ruling Iran, website of [NCRI Women's Committee](#), November 8, 2015

<sup>10</sup> [List of Women Executed Under Rouhani](#), documents, NCRI Women's Committee website

- The women executed in Iran are mostly accused of murder. The majority of these women are themselves victims of domestic violence, committing murder of their husbands or other assailants in self-defense.
- A good number of these women have committed murder in young age as a minor, so they had already been victims of forced early marriages in addition to domestic violence.
- These women are subjected to unfair trials and since they are not aware of their legal rights, they fall victim to the injustices of a misogynous judicial system.
- For example, Zeinab Sekaanvand, 24, was hanged in the Central Prison of Urmia, in West Azerbaijan on October 2, 2018. She was accused of killing her husband in 2012 at the age of 17. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet issued a statement condemning this execution.<sup>11</sup> She added, “her claims that she was coerced into confessing to the killing, and that she had been a victim of domestic violence, were reportedly not adequately examined during her trial.”

“The sheer injustice in the case of Zeinab Sekaanvand Lokran is deeply distressing... The serious question marks over her conviction appear not to have been adequately addressed before she was executed. The bottom line is that she was a juvenile at the time the offence was committed, and international law clearly prohibits the execution of juvenile offenders.”

Forced into marriage at the age of 15, Zeinab Sekaanvand lived two painful years, being battered everyday by her husband. The 24-year-old Iranian Kurdish woman was convicted of killing her abusive husband at the age of 17. She told the judge that her husband’s brother, who had raped her several times, had committed the murder.

### WHO ARE THE EXECUTED WOMEN?

#### IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY LEGAL SUPPORT, AND DEPRIVED OF THE RIGHT TO DIVORCE,

- Most of the convicted women committed murder in self-defense against violence
- Some were under 18 at the time of the crime, and victims of forced early marriages
- They are convicted in unfair trials without having access to a lawyer

- Also, shocking was the death sentence issued on June 25, 2019, for Soghra Khalili, 36 and mother of two, for defending herself against rape.<sup>12</sup>

She had been in jail for seven years. Her 4-year-old son was staying with her in the Central Prison of Sanandaj. Her other son, 14, lived with his father.

Soghra’s husband, Omid Badri, said, “The death verdict was issued in 2015, but the murder my wife committed was in defense of her dignity. There was a man who disturbed my wife and harassed her. The residents of our village know that the victim had harassed several other families in the same way and put pressure on other married women.” Fortunately, in this case, Mr. Badri was able to collect the blood money from charitable persons to pay to the victim’s family and win his wife’s release.

- Zahra Esma’ili, 42 with two children, was the 114<sup>th</sup> woman executed on February 17, 2021, during Rouhani’s tenure. She had already suffered a fatal heart stroke before

<sup>11</sup> UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, [statement](#), October 5, 2018

<sup>12</sup> [Soghra Khalili, mother of 4-year-old son, sentenced to death in Sanandaj](#), website of the NCRI Women’s Committee, June 27, 2019

reaching the gallows.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, the mullahs' henchmen tied the noose around her neck and hanged her lifeless body. According to her lawyer, she saw 16 prisoners hanged before her eyes. So, she had a heart attack before being taken to the gallows.

Zahra Esma'ili was an innocent woman. She claimed responsibility for the murder of her husband to save her teenage daughter who had shot him in the head.

Alireza Zamani, her husband, was one of the director generals of the mullahs' Ministry of Intelligence. He routinely mistreated and battered his wife and children. He used to take different women home before the eyes of his own family.

Alireza Zamani had even threatened to kill his wife and attempted to sexually assault his own teenage daughter. As a result of such brutalities, his daughter killed him with the help of her brother.

- Many women linger in Qarchak and other prisons on the death row.<sup>14</sup>
- In a letter published on July 27, 2019, by political prisoner Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee explaining the conditions of female prisoners in Qarchak Prison, she wrote, "In meeting women convicted of murder, I learned that a large percentage of them had murdered their husbands ---instantly or on a pre-meditated plan---after years of being humiliated, insulted, battered and even tortured by them and because of being deprived of their right to divorce. Although, they consider themselves criminals but are convinced that if any of their repeated appeals for divorce had been granted, they would not have committed such a crime."<sup>15</sup>

### The right to freedom of expression

- Any demand for basic freedoms leads to imprisonment and torture.
- The regime's judiciary hands down heavy sentences for rights activists' peaceful activities and demands. Many women are presently incarcerated for exercising their right to freedom of expression.
- Three women's rights activists were sentenced to a total of 55 years and six months in prison on July 31, 2019, for showing their opposition to the mandatory Hijab.<sup>16</sup> Branch 28 of Tehran's Revolutionary Court sentenced Yasaman Aryani, Monireh Arabshahi, and Mojgan Keshavarz, each to 5 years in prison for "association and collusion against national security," one year for "disseminating propaganda against the state," and 10 years for "encouraging and preparing the grounds for corruption and prostitution." In addition to these charges, Mojgan Keshavarz was sentenced to 7.5 years for "insulting the sanctities."
- Saba Kord Afshari, 20, was sentenced to 24 years in prison for "propaganda against the state," "association and collusion against national security," and "promoting corruption and prostitution by removing her veil and walking in the streets without the veil."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> [Execution of a woman -- 42 with two children -- in a prison in Karaj](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, February 17, 2021

<sup>14</sup> [Eleven women imprisoned on death row held in Qarchak Prison](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, October 24, 2018

<sup>15</sup> [Mounting repression of women in Iran, in step with growing discontent](#), Monthly report of the NCRI Women's Committee, July 2019

<sup>16</sup> [55 years for three women's rights activists](#); website of the NCRI Women's Committee, August 1, 2019

<sup>17</sup> [Saba Kord Afshari sentenced to 24 years for refusing video confessions](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, August 27, 2019

- Also, a number of female labor activists were arrested on May 1, 2019. The clerical Judiciary sentenced them to heavy prison terms of up to 11.5 years in prison and flogging for merely participating in the International Workers' Day demonstration.<sup>18</sup>
- In 2020 and particularly after the November 2019 uprising in Iran, the clerical regime stepped up arbitrary arrests of supporters of its main opposition force, the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI/MEK).<sup>19</sup>
- The Iranian Judiciary handed down prison sentences of 6 to 15 years to PMOI activists Zahra Safaei, 57; Parastoo Mo'eni, 20; Forough Taghipour, 25; Massoumeh Senobari, 33; Nejat Anvar Hamidi, 62; Nahid Fat'halian, a retired teacher; Aghdas Pour Eshragh, 64 and a teacher; Maryam Nassiri, 62, a lawyer and a mother of four; Khadijeh (Yalda) Imamdoust, 47 and an athlete; Zeinab Hamrang, 45 and a retired teacher; Sedigheh Morsali, 55; Marzieh Farsi, and Somayyeh Bidi.
- Ms. Farangis Mazloun, mother of political prisoner Soheil Arabi, was sentenced to a total of 6 years in prison by Branch 29 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran on July 8, 2020. The decision was made in her absence and without a trial. She was sentenced to 5 years in prison for "assembly and collusion against national security" through alleged contact with the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI/MEK), and to another 1 year for "propaganda against the state."  
Mrs. Mazloun was arrested on July 22, 2019. She was imprisoned and tortured in solitary confinement in Evin Prison for several months.<sup>20</sup>  
The Appeals Court subsequently commuted her sentence to 18 months on August 25, and informed her lawyer on October 20, 2020.
- In a different case on April 24, 2019, a hairdresser was arrested for advertising her beauty shop on a billboard in the city of Babol, northern Iran. She had posted a picture of herself sitting in front of the billboard on the internet for which she was taken into custody and her beauty shop was sealed.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> On September 7, 2019, [Asal Mohammadi](#), [Sanaz Allahyari](#) and [Sepideh Qolian](#) were each sentenced to 18 years in prison, a total of 54 years.

Labor activist [Atefeh Rangriz](#) was sentenced to 11 years and six months in jail and 74 lashes, on August 31, 2019.

[Marzieh Amiri](#), a journalist and student activist, was sentenced to 10 years and 6 months in prison and 148 lashes, after being tried in Tehran on August 13.

[Nasrin Javadi](#), a female labor activist, was sentenced to 7 years in prison and 74 lashes on August 6, 2019.

<sup>19</sup> [Annual Report 2021](#), documents, NCRI Women's Committee website, March 2021

<sup>20</sup> [Farangis Mazlouni stages hunger strike in solitary confinement](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, April 22, 2019

<sup>21</sup> The state-run Tabnak news agency- April 24, 2019



## Women detained and sentenced for supporting the opposition PMOI/MEK



Zahra Safaei  
8 years



Parastoo Mo'eini  
6 years



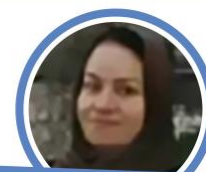
Forough Taghipour  
6 years



Massoumeh Senobari  
8 years



Nejat Anvar Hamidi  
15 years



Zeinab Hamrang  
6 years

## Prisoners illegally sent to exile



Zeinab Jalalian



Golrokh  
Ebrahimi Iraee



Maryam  
Akbari Monfared



Atena Daemi



Sakineh Parvaneh



Sepideh Farhan



Saba Kord Afshari



Yasaman Aryani



Mojgan Keshavarz

### The right to a decent job and employment

- Before the 1979 Revolution, women's participation in the labor force was 12 percent.<sup>22</sup> The World Bank put the average value for Iran from 1990 to 2017 at 14.21 percent with a minimum of 9.83 percent in 1990 and a maximum of 19.41 percent in 2005. While Iran's population, and consequently the population of women, has more than doubled since 1979.<sup>23</sup>
- According to the Iranian Law, women are not allowed to hold certain jobs such as presidency and judgeship,<sup>24</sup> while they are discriminated against in having equal opportunity for a decent job. In the meantime, those who have a job are not equally and regularly paid.
- As a result of this discrimination against women's access to a decent job, most women including teachers and nurses work on temporary contracts without enjoying job security, any insurance, or benefits. Others accept just any job in the informal sector where employers are not monitored by the Labor Ministry and have permission to employ workers with salaries way below the minimum wage and without paying their benefits and insurance.
- Iranian authorities have acknowledged that Iranian women have the largest share in informal jobs.<sup>25</sup>
- According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2018, women's salaries are 17% of men's, underlining the fact that the Iranian regime's conduct in this field has been "one of the worst conducts among the countries of the world."<sup>26</sup>
- The United Nations has categorized Iran among the countries which offer the smallest number of job opportunities to women and for this reason have a high rate of unemployment among women.
- A report by the International Labor Organization, ILO, which was published on March 8, 2018, on the International Women's Day, indicates that women's unemployment rate in Iran is double that of men.
- The unemployment rate of educated women in most provinces is 3 to 4 times higher than men's.<sup>27</sup> According to Iran's National Statistics Center, 65% of unemployed women have higher education.<sup>28</sup>
- 85.9% of women under 30 do not have any jobs. In some areas, women's unemployment is nearing 100%.<sup>29</sup> The overall statistics say that unemployed educated females are four times the unemployed educated males.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>22</sup> The World Bank, Iran Estekhdam website, April 4, 2016

<sup>23</sup> The population of Iran is currently 83,000,000 with men being 51 percent of the population and women being 49.

<sup>24</sup> Item 115 of the Iranian Constitution, Research Center, official website of the parliament, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran

<sup>25</sup> Massoumeh Ebtekar, director of presidential directorate on Women and Family Affairs, the official IRNA news agency, April 28, 2018

<sup>26</sup> World Economic Forum, Gender Gap Report 2018

<sup>27</sup> Massoumeh Ebtekar, director of the presidential directorate on Women and Family Affairs, The state-run Etemadonline.com, October 21, 2019

<sup>28</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, July 19, 2019

<sup>29</sup> The state-run Mehr News Agency – January 5, 2016; the state-run Tabnak website – December 26, 2015

<sup>30</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency – October 5, 2019

## 50% of Iran's population of 84,000,000 are women



- According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021, Iran under the clerical regime is ranked 150 among 156 countries with an index of 0.582. The clerical regime in Iran scores 0.375 on Economic Participation and Opportunity, and a minuscule 0.036 on Political Empowerment of women.<sup>31</sup>
- The ranking is two steps down compared to 2020 and 8 steps down compared to 2019.<sup>32</sup>
- Women's participation in the job market in Iran is significantly lower than the average participation in other upper-middle income countries and is lower than the average for all women in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, and one of the lowest worldwide.<sup>33</sup>
- The Global Report 2021 puts Iran among "the countries with the largest economic gender gaps."
- According to the GGGR2021, the average participation rate is 31% among the countries in the Middle East and North Africa group, "but seven of the 19 countries (Egypt, Algeria, Iran, Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Yemen) in the region have 20% or less of women participating in the labour market, the lowest in the world."<sup>34</sup>
- Women make up about 50% of the population, but their economic participation rate is below 15%, said an official in October 2019.<sup>35</sup>
- Yet in 2021, it was ironically claimed that that women's economic participation in Iran was 15.3%, having dropped by 3.4% in autumn 2020.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>31</sup> World Economic Forum, Gender Gap Report 2021

<sup>32</sup> World Economic Forum, Gender Gap Report 2020

<sup>33</sup> The state-run Donya-e Eqtesad – September 29, 2015

<sup>34</sup> World Economic Forum, [Gender Gap Report 2021](#)

<sup>35</sup> Ali Zainivand, deputy for political and social affairs in the Governorate of Sistan and Baluchistan Province, The official IRNA news agency, October 3, 2019

<sup>36</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, May 8, 2021

- In Iran, 80% of uninsured employees in 2017 were women, often in informal occupations. In fact, the majority of people who cannot benefit from sick pay compensation in the event of Covid-19 contraction are women.<sup>37</sup>
- The GGGR2021 report points out in another part, "Another important factor that limits economic opportunities of women in the region is lack of access to financial assets, including bank accounts. Combined with low presence in the workplace, this drives stark income differences between men and women."
- Financial institutions in Iran consider women to be high-risk clients and give them less facilities.<sup>38</sup> Finding adequate financial resources, access to information, gaining the trust of banks, markets and partners, and creating a balance between work and family (when, under the regime's civil law, a man can keep his wife out of work), are some of the obstacles and problems for women in starting a business.<sup>39</sup>
- Women's institutions are focused only on family issues and if they pay attention to the economy, they will look for everything in domestic jobs, while these types of jobs are unsustainable and cannot lead to the empowerment of women in a desirable way.<sup>40</sup>
- Iranian women also need their husbands or fathers' permission to leave the country, and they do not have tax and economic incentives and support.
- The GGGR2021 report puts Iran among the world's 10 lowest ranked countries in terms of income gender gaps, with Iranian woman's income being only 18% of that of a man.<sup>41</sup>
- Again, Iran is among countries with lowest participation of women in the parliament with 5.6%.<sup>42</sup>
- It should be emphasized that the women who have passed the scrutiny of the Guardian Council and are eligible to participate in the regime's elections are all promoters of the mullahs' misogynistic views and facilitate the advancement of the regime's goals of imposing more and more restrictions on women.
- Following the outbreak of the Coronavirus in Iran, more than 1,000,000 women lost their jobs.<sup>43</sup>
- Some 145,000 women were laid off from their jobs in the winter of 2019.<sup>44</sup>
- In the spring 2020, about 749,000 women lost their jobs. From spring to summer 2020, about 120,000 more women lost employment, indicating the widespread impact of Covid-19 on women's employment.<sup>45</sup>
- On October 20, 2020, the Court of Administrative Justice revoked the "Age ceiling and the priority of appointing women and youth to managerial positions" directive due to "unjustified discrimination against other employees in holding managerial positions, especially basic management."<sup>46</sup> While this directive concerned women and youth, it is interesting to note that the Supreme Administrative Court has been sensitive to women.

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<sup>37</sup> The state-run ILNA News Agency, April 5, 2020

<sup>38</sup> Fatemeh Ghafouri, head of the Qazvin Businesswomen's Association, the official IRNA news agency, July 13, 2020

<sup>39</sup> Fatemeh Ghafouri, head of the Qazvin Businesswomen's Association, the official IRNA news agency, July 13, 2020

<sup>40</sup> Fatemeh Ghafouri, head of the Qazvin Businesswomen's Association, the official IRNA news agency, July 13, 2020

<sup>41</sup> World Economic Forum, [Gender Gap Report 2021](#)

<sup>42</sup> World Economic Forum, [Gender Gap Report 2021](#)

<sup>43</sup> Quarterly report of the Statistics Center of Iran; The state-run Arman newspaper, January 30, 2021

<sup>44</sup> The state-run ILNA News Agency, April 11, 2020

<sup>45</sup> The state-run Arman newspaper, January 30, 2021

<sup>46</sup> The state-run Sharq newspaper - November 20, 2020

- The **participation of women** in the deputy ministerial roles is 5.5 percent, in the management of the provinces 7 percent (77 women among 1174 provincial officials), in the municipalities of all cities 0.58 percent (2 out of 339 mayors), and in the city councils 11.8 percent (38 women among the 321 members of city councils).<sup>47</sup>

### The right to education

- Young women in Iran are also restricted from studying in 77 fields of higher education.<sup>48</sup>
- Dozens of universities reject female students in various fields. Gender-based quotas strongly favor male students, and the number of gender-based majors exceeds 200.<sup>49</sup>
- In December 2015, the Parliament passed Article 5 of the bill on Evaluation and Admission of Students for Complementary Education, emphasizing that the quotas ratified by the Supreme Revolutionary Council and the parliament to limit the number of women and the majors they can study in the higher education system were still valid.<sup>50</sup>
- Many children in Iran are deprived of education because contrary to the Iranian Constitution, education is neither free nor mandatory.<sup>51</sup> More and more schools and universities are asking their students to pay tuitions. As a result of prevalent poverty, many students have to drop out of school because they do not afford to pay tuitions. In the case of girl children, early marriage is an additional factor contributing to school drop outs among them. Poor families give their young daughters to marriage to get rid of their expenses, or receive their dowries as additional revenue.<sup>52</sup>
- According to a member of the Education Committee in the mullahs' parliament, the number of illiterates in Iran has reached 11 million making up some 13 percent of the population of different ages.<sup>53</sup> Approximately two-thirds of this illiterate population are women.<sup>54</sup>
- More recent data provided by Wikipedia in September 2019, however, indicates that the number of illiterates in Iran is 13.2 million which amounts to 8.2 million illiterate women.<sup>55</sup>
- Some 40 to 50 percent of girls in secondary and high schools in many border provinces, leave school for various reasons including "early marriages", "school being too distant from the village", and "lack of female teachers."<sup>56</sup>
- At least a quarter of Iran's students are forced to quit school every year with a large number of them joining the estimated 3 to 7 million child laborers.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>47</sup> [A report to the CSW65, Women in Iran](#), documents, website of the NCRI Women's Committee, March 2021

<sup>48</sup> The state-run khabaronline website, August 7, 2012

<sup>49</sup> Daneshjoonews.com and the state-run Tabnak website, August 6, 2014

<sup>50</sup> The official website of the Iranian parliament ICANA, February 18, 2016

<sup>51</sup> Ali Bagherzadeh, deputy Minister of Education and head of the Iranian Literacy Movement Organization, the state-run Salamatnews.com, April 25, 2018

<sup>52</sup> Social expert, Sulmaz Sharif, Miyinali.com, September 12, 2011 – Modern Slavery, a publication of the NCRI Women's Committee, August 2018

<sup>53</sup> Seyyed Mohammad Javad Abtahi, member of the parliamentary Education and Research Committee, the state-run salamatnews.com, September 26, 2018

<sup>54</sup> The National Statistics Center, 2011

<sup>55</sup> [List of countries by literacy rate](#), Wikipedia.org

<sup>56</sup> Rezvan Hakimzadeh, deputy Minister of Education in elementary affairs, the state-run asriran.com, September 9, 2017; Social Protection, Public Services and Sustainable Infrastructures, a publication of the NCRI Women's Committee, March 2019





- The presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs published a report in 2015, according to which the illiteracy of women and girl children is in critical conditions 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.
- A total of 4.23 percent of students dropped out of school in the academic year 2016-2017. Girl students constituted 4.17 percent of it, meaning that there is a big difference between girls' and boys' dropouts.<sup>58</sup>
- The 82% illiteracy rate makes it much more difficult for (female heads of households) to find a job, which has led to their poverty. In such conditions, they are subjected to social harms.<sup>59</sup>
- After the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in Iran, schooling and education conditions have declined significantly. The regime's education officials have not taken any effective actions to address these shortcomings, or to provide accessible and free education, or to address the country's growing education chasm.
- The launch of virtual methods of education through the so-called "Shad" network has made it even more difficult for underprivileged students to continue their education.

<sup>57</sup> Nahid Tajeddin, member of the board of directors of the Social Commission of the Majlis, the state-run Salamat news, September 27, 2017

<sup>58</sup> Abbas Soltanian, deputy for mid-level education in the Ministry of Education, the state-run ILNA news agency - June 25, 2018

<sup>59</sup> Shahindokht Molaverdi, former presidential deputy on Women and Family Affairs, the state-run ISNA news agency, TNews.Ir, October 10, 2015

- Some rent their smartphones from others in order to access online classes, while others travel miles to access the Internet.
- The regime's Minister of Education had promised that all students would have access to the Internet and smartphones. The promise was never fulfilled. The expansion of Internet signal coverage was also postponed to the future.
- This is while the Ministry of Education had the chance to address the problem of the Internet and online education for an entire year, starting in February 2020 when the coronavirus spread in Iran.
- Almost 3 million students across Iran are deprived of smart educational equipment. Another 2 million students borrow or rent their educational tools.<sup>60</sup>
- Some 89,000 first-graders were forced to drop out of school in the 2020-2021 academic year.<sup>61</sup>
- The lack of access to the Internet and smartphones has multiplied the withdrawal rate compared to previous years, in addition to creating many difficulties for teachers.
- The regime has moved classes to a virtual space without providing the necessary infrastructure, and thus many teachers and students are suffering from double deprivation and additional difficulties. 3,225,000 students do not have access to a smartphone or the Internet.<sup>62</sup>
- The Statistics Center of Iran officially confirmed in a report on December 22, 2020 that the school dropout rate has almost doubled. Dropout rates are higher among girls than boys.

- c. What work, roles, or other activities have been prohibited or criminalized for women and girls?
- d. What are the obstacles to enjoy rights?

## Bans

- While there is no law banning women from entering sports stadiums to watch their favorite teams, the Iranian regime has officially enforced a ban on women. Iranian women opposed this violation of their natural rights, and as an act of protest, kept disguising themselves as men to enter stadiums.
- In September 2019, a young woman –Sahar Khodayari, 29—set herself alight to protest six-month prison sentence for attempting to circumvent the ban on women's entering stadiums and died one week later.
- One month later, on October 10, 2019, after extensive public and international pressure, the Iranian regime allowed a token admission of some 4,000 women into Azadi Stadium under tight security control to watch Iran vs. Cambodia game. However, officials said this will not be repeated for national derbies and any woman seen around the stadiums would be arrested and detained.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Javad Hosseini, the deputy Minister of Education, The state-run ILNA news agency, February 7, 2021

<sup>61</sup> Rezvan Hakimzadeh, deputy director of primary education at the Ministry of Education, The state-run Aftab Yazd newspaper, January 14, 2021

<sup>62</sup> The state-run Tejaratnews.ir, October 14, 2020

<sup>63</sup> Amir Mehdi Alavi, the spokesman for Iran's Football Federation: "Currently it is not possible for women to be present in league games. Representatives of the World Football Federation (FIFA) who had traveled to Tehran, said that only

### Women are banned from entering sports stadiums contrary to the law



Women who disguise themselves to enter stadiums are sentenced to jail



Sahar Khodayari, 29, set herself alight in September 2019 to protest six-month prison sentence for attempting to enter a stadium



Iran regime was forced to admit a token number of women to watch game of Iran vs. Cambodia on October 10, 2019

**But this is not going to be repeated again.**

- On numerous occasions, concerts have been cancelled for participation of female players<sup>64</sup> or the concerts were performed after women players left the concert hall altogether.<sup>65</sup>
- Also, women are banned from solo singing. A female singer was prosecuted for solo singing during a tour of Abyaneh, a village in Isfahan Province, in May 2019.<sup>66</sup>
- Ali Khamenei, the mullahs' Supreme Leader, reiterated a ban on female singing in a new fatwa. In response to the question whether listening to the voice of a female singer who

the national games are in their jurisdiction, and that they respect the laws enforced by countries regarding their premier league." The state-run khabaronline.ir – October 14, 2019

<sup>64</sup> A member of the Orchestra of Isfahan: "Women always take part in the rehearsals but are not granted permission to participate in the actual performances. Women musicians of Isfahan have not had the permission to go on stage for years." The state-run ILNA news agency, January 15, 2018

<sup>65</sup> Female musicians were banned from playing in a traditional music band supposed to perform in a charity concert at the auditorium of the Azad University of Qazvin. They were not allowed to even sit among the audience. The state-run ILNA news agency – May 23, 2019

<sup>66</sup> On May 21, 2019, the Prosecutor of Isfahan announced that upon the report of "the intelligence police for public security" a case had been filed against Negar Moazzam had travelled to Abyaneh on May 17, 2019, with a sightseeing tour. She sang solo in this village, a video clip of which was circulated on the social media. The state-run Fararu website - May 21, 2019

On July 18, 2019, the charity concert of an all-women musical band called Delyar was cancelled in Urmia, northwest Iran, claiming that they did not written permission from the State Security Force. (The official IRNA news agency – July 17, 2019)



sings solo is forbidden for non-mahram men, he replied: "Avoid listening to what is usually corrupt."<sup>67</sup>

- On January 16, 2021, two soloists of Glaris all-women music group in Kermanshah were arrested by the security police for participating in the production of a promotional video for a furniture store. Nazanin Atabaki and Nasrin Yazdanipour were released on bail the next day after completing their interrogations.<sup>68</sup>
- Mahdis Ebrahimian, a two-string guitar solo teenager, cannot play the string because of her gender. She said that many times there was coordination with her before performing in a program, and that she had spent a few days practicing, but before the program she was informed that her performance had been canceled and that she was not allowed to perform because she was a girl.<sup>69</sup>

## Prohibitions

- As mentioned in the previous section, women are constitutionally deprived of becoming a president or a judge.<sup>70</sup>
- The regime's laws also ban women from travelling without their husband's permission.
- Paragraph 3 of Article 18 of the Passport Law also explicitly conditions the issuance of passports for married women to the written consent of the husband. But before marriage, the exit permit for the woman is given to the father or paternal grandfather.
- Samira Zargari, the head coach of the national alpine skiing team, was banned from leaving the country due to her husband's objection. She could not go to Italy with her team for the competition. A source in the Ski Federation said that the efforts of the federation officials to lift the exit ban and to send her to the Italian competitions failed.<sup>71</sup>
- On October 9, 2017, Tayyebah Siavoshi, then a member of the mullahs' parliament, said eight women who were members of national teams could not participate in international tournaments because of their husbands.
- A woman cannot work outside of home without her husband's permission, either.
- Article 1117 of the Iranian regime's Civil Code, a husband can forbid his wife from a profession or industry that is contrary to the interests of the family or the dignity of the man or woman.
- With the ruling of the Tehran Court of Appeals, a female emergency physician in Imam Hossein and Baqiyatallah hospitals in Tehran was banned from practicing medicine due to her husband's complaint. The doctor examined 180 to 200 patients daily for Covid-19.<sup>72</sup>
- Women also cannot open bank accounts for their children, and they cannot have the custody of their children aging over 7 after divorce.
- Women cannot rent rooms in hotels on their own and it should be in the presence of their husband or father.
- Women are also deprived of studying in more than 200 fields of higher education and consequently, 200 fields of work.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>67</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, July 14, 2020

<sup>68</sup> The state-run Khabar Online news agency, January 17, 2021

<sup>69</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, July 4, 2020

<sup>70</sup> [Misogyny institutionalized in the laws of the mullahs' regime](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, November 8, 2015

<sup>71</sup> The state-run Sharq newspaper, February 17, 2021

<sup>72</sup> The state-run Akhbar Fori website, October 12, 2020

- Married women who want to take the dental residency exam are required to obtain their husbands' consent. The text of this commitment has been entered in the test according to which the husband agrees to allow his wife to serve after the end of the training period in any place designated by the Ministry of Health and Medical Education.<sup>74</sup>
- Women can work for only limited hours in places which are sex segregated.<sup>75</sup> Their employment is restricted by government quotas.<sup>76</sup> According to the law, women can be prevented from having a job by their husbands.<sup>77</sup>
- Women are prohibited from riding bicycles in public.<sup>78</sup> The mullahs' supreme leader has on various occasions reiterated the ban on women's bicycling.<sup>79</sup> 70 women cyclists were arrested in Tehran's Vali-Asr Square. Gholam Hossein Ismaeli, spokesman for the Judiciary, confirmed the news when talking to a reporter. He said the 70 women cyclists had been arrested for breaching the rules of "chastity and Hijab." He did not specify the timing of the arrests.<sup>80</sup>

### Criminalization

- The Iranian regime has criminalized the act of removing the veil. Tehran Police Chief announced that "removing the veil and improper veiling are considered among obvious social crimes."<sup>81</sup>
- According to the regime's law, the punishment for women appearing in public without covering their hair is imprisonment from 10 days to two months and cash fines between 50 to 500 thousand Rials. They could also be punished to 74 lashes for "hurting public chastity."
- On February 23, 2019, the State Security Force announced in the state media that "encouraging people to shun the veil applies to paragraph 2 of Article 638 and is punishable by one to ten-year prison sentence which cannot be transformed to alternative forms of punishment."

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<sup>73</sup> [Women's Economic Empowerment in Iran-Moving in the opposite direction](#), a study by the NCRI Women's Committee, September 2017

<sup>74</sup> The state-run Etemad newspaper, May 11, 2020

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. A legislation adopted in January 2016 stipulates that women's employment in any business must be limited to 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and they should be confined to a segregated workplace.

<sup>76</sup> In the 2016 Government Employment Exam, 961 job titles had been designated as exclusively for men, and only 16 titles had been considered for recruiting women. The government also ordered in 2014, to allocate only 16 of 2,700 job opportunities to women. The state-run Khabaronline.ir, July 27, 2016

<sup>77</sup> [Misogyny institutionalized in the laws of the mullahs' regime](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, November 8, 2015; Article 1117 of the Civil Code

<sup>78</sup> The website of the municipality of Isfahan posted an announcement on May 15, 2019, saying: "We are unable to provide bicycles to the honorable ladies and to youths under 15."

The website published a document according to which the Prosecutor of Isfahan had addressed the police, instructing them to, "stop women bicyclists and confiscate their identification papers. If they do not have ID papers, impound their bicycles and take them to the parking lot."

[Women's bicycling banned as illegal by Isfahan's prosecutor](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, May 18, 2019

<sup>79</sup> [Khamenei issues fatwa banning women from riding bicycles](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, September 14, 2016

<sup>80</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, July 30, 2019

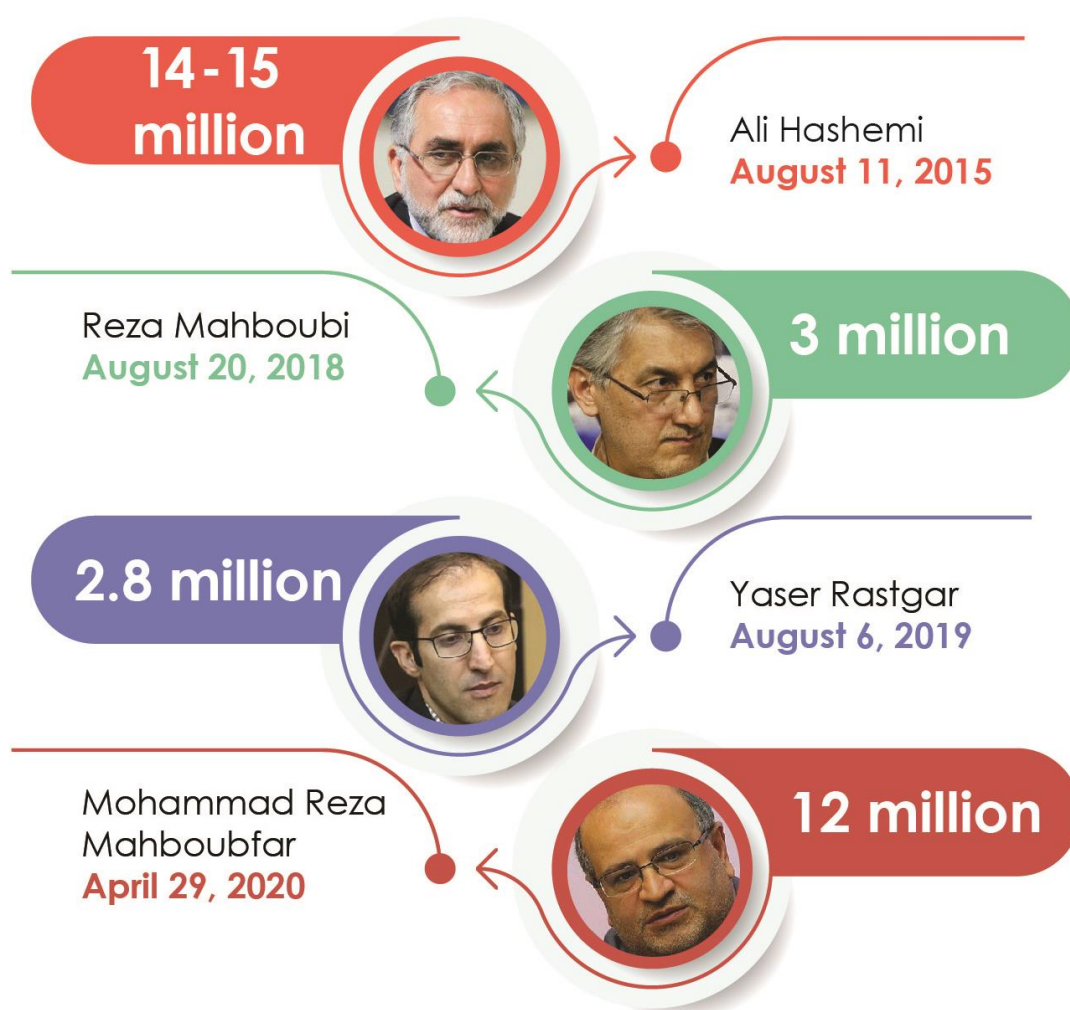
<sup>81</sup> Tehran Police Chief Hossein Rahimi, the state-run ROKNA news agency, June 1, 2019

e. Does the government have gaps in data? If so, what are these?

Yes.

- The Iranian regime is not transparent in releasing figures and statistics.
- There is no effective system of collecting data.
- Officials usually speak by percentages and not actual numbers.
- When and if they do, they present different figures on the same issue.
- Sometimes, the same official gives contradictory figures.
- There have been a number of occasions where the statistics collected in a particular year were released ten years later.
- In the case of violence against women, the statistics collected in 2006 has disappeared altogether.

### IRAN: Concealing the truth Number of Addicts in Iran



## Addiction

Poverty and the lack of family and social supports are the main reasons of women's orientation to addiction. Officials agree that addiction is spreading rapidly among women:

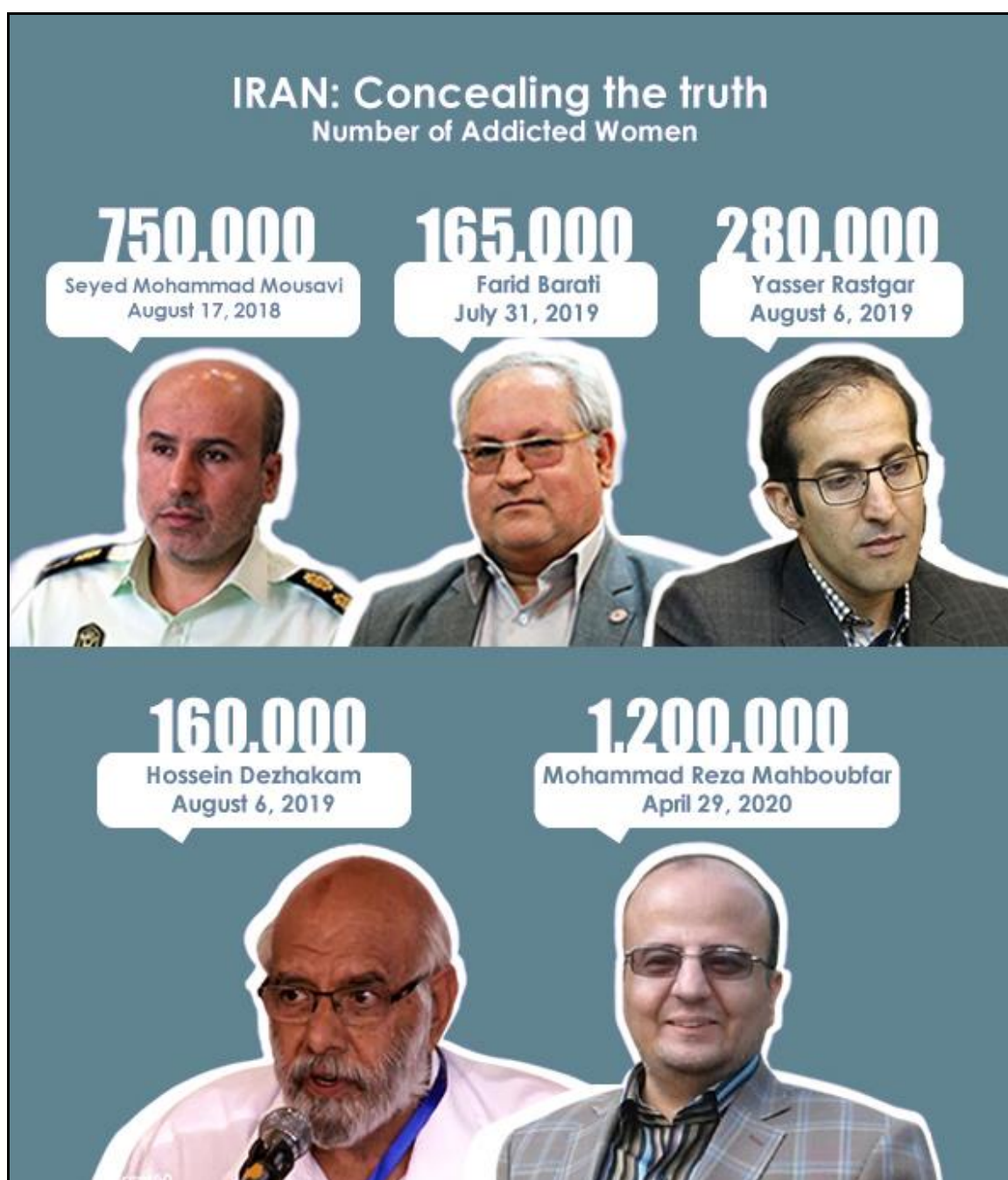
- Hamidreza Fat'hi, head of the Department for Prevention of Drug Addiction in the Ministry of Health: "Women's share of drug addiction is rapidly on the rise." (The state-run IRNA news agency, February 5, 2017)
- Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpay, head of the National Welfare Organization: "Addiction is becoming feminine." (The state-run Mehr news agency, February 13, 2018)
- Yasser Rastgar, sociologist and member of the faculty of the University of Hormozgan: "According to the surveys done in 2011, the age of addiction has dropped, and addiction has become feminized." (The official IRNA news agency – August 6, 2019)
- Farzaneh Sohrabi, Cudras Institute's deputy in social affairs, university lecturer: "Feminization of addiction is a warning on the increase in the number of female consumers of narcotic drugs and a drop in the age of addiction among women... 49 percent of women who consume narcotic drugs and hallucinogens are women under 35 years of age. They become completely dependent on the drug after two years of consumption while in men, the process of dependency takes 8 years." (The state-run ISNA news agency – April 25, 2020)

However, they present different figures on different dates on the number of addicted women and the total number of addicts in Iran. The number of addicts varies from 2.8 million to 3 million to 15 million people. While according to the same officials, the number of addicts has not grown in 1.5 years from February 2018 until August 2019.

In 2020, contradicting figures were given out: 160,000 vs. 1.2 million!

- Ali Hashemi, head of the Independent Committee Fighting Narcotic Drugs in the State Expediency Council: "This phenomenon is in front of people's eyes and at least 14 to 15 million people in the families are addicted." (The state-run ISNA news agency, August 11, 2015)
- Afrashteh, executive deputy for the mullahs' parliament: "Presently, there are 2 million and 800,000 persons addicted to narcotic drugs." (The state-run Tasnim news agency – February 28, 2018)
- Seyed Mohammad Mousavi, the State Security Force Commander of Gachsaran, in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province: "We have to accept that there are more than 750,000 drug addicted women in the country." (The state-run ILNA news agency, August 17, 2018)
- Reza Mahboubi, deputy for social affairs in the Center for Social and Cultural Affairs in the Interior Ministry: "There are 3 million addicts in the country." (The official IRNA news agency – August 20, 2018)
- Farid Barati, Welfare Organization's deputy for preventing addiction: "There are 165,000 addicted women in the country." (The state-run Salamtnews.ir – July 31, 2019)
- Yasser Rastgar, sociologist and member of the faculty of the University of Hormozgan: "According to official figures, there are some 2,800,000 persons involved in addiction and women's share is 10 percent (which amounts to 280,000)." (The official IRNA news agency – August 6, 2019)

- Mohammad Reza Mahboubfar, expert on social ailments: "The number of addicts in Iran has doubled compared to the year 2011. Considering that the population is 85 million, some 12 million Iranians are addicted. 4.5 million of them are permanent consumers... Addiction is the outcome of poverty and unemployment in the country which as a social ailment is the cause for many cases of divorce and disintegration of families." (The state-run ROKNA news agency – April 29, 2020)
- Hossein Dezhakam, general director of the Congress of Human Revival: "The average age of addiction among women is 35. The number of female addicts is 160,000." (The official IRNA news agency – May 28, 2020)
- Farzaneh Sohrabi: "The increase rate of addiction is three times the population growth rate." (The state-run ISNA news agency – June 25, 2020)





Officials agree that the average age for the start of addiction has dropped conspicuously, however, the figure goes from 13 years of age in 2015 to 12 in 2020, and suddenly rises to 15 in October 2018 without explaining the reason. While in some instances, the officials do not give any age:

- Shahindokht Molaverdi, presidential deputy on Women and Family Affairs: “The average addiction age has dropped to 13 years for girls.” (The state-run ISNA news agency, September 4, 2015)
- Seyed Mohammad Mousavi, the State Security Force Commander of Gachsaran, in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province: “The age of drug addiction in Gachsaran has dropped to 12, and today the government cannot fight addiction to narcotic drugs on its own.” (The state-run ILNA news agency, August 17, 2018)
- Akram Mosavvari Manesh, executive director of women’s studies and research: “Addiction age has dropped to the 15-18 range and even under 15.” (The official IRNA news agency, October 15, 2018)
- Yasser Rastgar, sociologist and member of the faculty of the University of Hormozgan: “According to the surveys done in 2011, the age of addiction has dropped, and addiction has become feminized.” (The official IRNA news agency – August 6, 2019)
- Mohammad Reza Mahboubfar, expert on social ailments: “The age of addiction in our country has dropped to 8 years. This is while the average age of starting to consume drugs has dropped to 12. (The state-run ROKNA news agency – April 29, 2020)

Different officials offer different percentages for addicted women while the same figures do not correspond with their acknowledged rapid spreading of addiction among women.

While one official puts the percentage of addicted women at 5 percent in 2001 and 10 percent in 2011, other officials claimed the percentage remained at 10 in 2017 and 2019 despite passage of six to eight years and the growing poverty of the population. These figures also contradict official acknowledgements in 2015 and 2018 of 2 to 30 percent growth in the number of addicted women.

- Saeed Sefatian, expert in the realm of addiction: “Based on figures available from 2008 until 2013, addiction among women has doubled, increasing from 5 percent to 10 percent... But experts believe that the actual figures are much higher than this.” (The state-run Iran newspaper – December 10, 2020)
- Parviz Afshar, spokesman for the Staff Fighting Narcotic Drugs: “10 percent of addicts are women... There are concerns that addiction is increasingly spreading among women of lower age group. This is seriously alarming... In 2001, some 5 percent of addicts were women, but this figure doubled in 2011.” (The official IRNA news agency – February 13, 2018)
- Ahmad Kaheh, general director of public education at the Social Directorate of the State Security Force: “The percentage of women used to be three percent in the past, but unofficial figures indicate that it has risen to 12 percent of the population of addicts.” (The official IRNA news agency, May 12, 2018)
- Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpay, head of the National Welfare Organization, citing statistics compiled in the Persian year 1394 (March 2015-March 2016): “There is one addicted woman for every 6.6 addicted men in the age range of 15 to 25 (i.e. 15 percent).” (The state-run salamatnews.com, July 11, 2018)
- Hamidreza Fat’hi, head of the Department for Prevention of Drug Addiction in the Ministry of Health: “The latest official statistics show that one woman is addicted in Iran

for every 9 male addicts. (i.e. 10 percent).” (The state-run IRNA news agency, February 5, 2017)

- Firouzeh Jaafari, deputy for women's affairs in the Staff of Fighting Narcotic Drugs: “Seven (7) percent of the population of addicts in the country were women in (the Persian year) 1396 (which spans from March 2017 to March 2018) where as in 1398 (March 2019 to March 2020), this has increased to at least 10 percent.” (The official IRNA news agency – August 6, 2019)

### Employment, unemployment, economic participation

- In Iran, the participation rate for the female work force dropped from 17 percent in 2005 to 12 percent in 2014. In 2015, the National Statistics Center announced that women's economic participation was 13.3 percent.<sup>82</sup>
- In 2016, the National Statistics Center announced a 1.6-percent drop in women's economic participation, but instead of 11.7 announced the figure to be 14.3 percent which is 1 percent higher.<sup>83</sup>
- Sussan Bastani, deputy for strategic studies at the directorate for Women and Family Affairs: “Two million girls have graduated from universities in the past 20 years, but unemployment rate among women has increased. Women's economic participation has also dropped from 39.5 to 27 percent.”<sup>84</sup>

One can see the contradiction between 14.3% announced by the NSC, and 39.5% announced by official of the women's directorate for 2016. Whereas the World Bank put the average value of women's economic participation for Iran at 14.21 percent from 1990 to 2017, with a minimum of 9.83 percent in 1990 and a maximum of 19.41 percent in 2005.

- According to reports in winter of 2020, only 3.9 million women, merely 12.7% of 30.96 million women over 15 years old were employed.<sup>85</sup>
- The number of employed women dropped by 1.2 million in Spring 2020 compared to the year 2019.<sup>86</sup>
- By autumn 2020, the number of employed women decreased by another one million and twelve thousand individuals,<sup>87</sup> as 70% of the laid off workers during the coronavirus epidemic were women.<sup>88</sup>

By this account, the number of employed women must have decreased to 2.9 million in autumn 2020 or winter 2021. But in April 2021, the official website of the Health Ministry, Tel.salamatnews.com, citing the NSC wrote that the number of employed women had dropped to its “lowest in the past five years” to 3.5 million in winter 2021!!!<sup>89</sup>

<sup>82</sup> [https://www.amar.org.ir/Portals/0/Files/abstract/1394/ch\\_ntank\\_94.pdf](https://www.amar.org.ir/Portals/0/Files/abstract/1394/ch_ntank_94.pdf)

<sup>83</sup> [https://www.amar.org.ir/Portals/0/Files/fulltext/1395/n\\_nank\\_95\\_3\\_v2.pdf](https://www.amar.org.ir/Portals/0/Files/fulltext/1395/n_nank_95_3_v2.pdf)

<sup>84</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, February 13, 2016

<sup>85</sup> Discrimination in employment has added to problems of working women, the state-run ILNA news agency, March 25, 2020

<sup>86</sup> Appraisal of the Plan to Census the Workforce, Iran's National Statistics Center-Spring 2020, July 26, 2020

<sup>87</sup> Quarterly report of the Statistics Center of Iran; The state-run Arman newspaper, January 30, 2021

<sup>88</sup> Eassa Mansouri, the Deputy Minister of Labor, the state-run Contemporary Strategy Website, December 26, 2020

<sup>89</sup> The state-run Tel.salamatnews.com, April 2021

## Illiteracy

The statistics on literacy or illiteracy in Iran are scarce, inaccurate and conflicting.

- Seyyed Mohammad Javad Abtahi, member of the parliamentary Education and Research Committee: The number of illiterates in Iran has reached 11 million making up some 13 percent of the population of different ages. (The state-run salamatnews.com, September 26, 2018)
- National Statistics Center, 2011 statistics: The population of illiterates is 9,483,028. Approximately two-thirds of this population, i.e. 6,250,965, are women.
- Ali Bagherzadeh, deputy Minister of Education and head of the Literacy Movement Organization: Based on the census done in 2016 in Iran, the number of illiterates in the 10-49 age group was 2.3 million, 60 percent of whom are women (i.e. 1.38 million women). (The state-run Salamatnews.com, [April 25, 2018](#))
- Ali Bagherzadeh, deputy Minister of Education and head of the Literacy Movement Organization: “There are some 2.7 million illiterates between 10 and 49 years of age in Iran, nearly 1.8 million of whom are women.” (The state-run ILNA news agency, [March 31, 2018](#))
- The statistics collected in 2006 and published ten years later in the state press in 2016, indicate that there are over 3.2 million children deprived of education in Iran. (The state-run Mehrkhaneh website, December 5, 2016)
- The parliamentary Research Center published a report in 2015 indicating the number of students deprived of education as 4 million.
- There are more than 15 million school-age Iranians, but the student population is only 13 million. This means that at least 2 million Iranian students have not been able to go to school. (The state-run salamatnews.com, September 26, 2018)

### g. What laws need to be changed?

The Iranian regime’s entire Constitution, Civil Code, Penal Code and all other rules and regulations contradict CEDAW, the SDGs, the planet 50-50 goals, and therefore need to be overhauled.

As it was stated earlier, just Article 1 of the CEDAW, contradicts the regime’s laws in 90 instances, according to the regime’s religious scholars and experts. The case of Education 2030 document is a vivid example:

- Rouhani government’s acceptance with reservations of UNESCO Education 2030 document in 2016, wreaked havoc within the Iranian regime.<sup>90</sup> Officials viewed the Education 2030 document as a “disgraceful” document “bearing a colonialist content” which manifests “one of the most bitter examples of infiltration” and promotes “educational transformation”, “elimination of sexual stereotypes”, “gender equality”, and “global citizenship”, causing grave “security” concerns.
- Opposition to the UNESCO document built up and the supreme leader weighed in. Finally, in June 2017, the regime’s president, Hassan Rouhani, presided a meeting of the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution (SCCR) which decided to stop implementation of

<sup>90</sup> [Education 2030 Framework for Action \(SDG4\) and Iranian officials’ hysteric reactions to it](#), NCRI Women’s Committee, June 2017



the Education 2030 document and consider the Fundamental Reform Document of Education (FRDE) adopted under Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in December 2011, as the benchmark for all educational affairs in the country.

- The reason why this “non-binding” document with the genuine goal of equitable education and learning opportunities for all sends such tremors through the ruling clique in Iran, can be clearly seen in the following paragraph from the state-run Tasnim news agency:
- “In the (Education) 2030 Framework for Action, there are references to terms such as global citizenship and gender equality... The adoption and implementation of this document would transform national education in many ways. Among them, one can point to the omission of sexual stereotypes, teaching of sex education to children, and omission of some Quranic concepts and values from text books to promote peace and non-violence.”<sup>91</sup>

### The laws needed to be urgently changed

- The law on the age of marriage needs to be changed to increase the legal age of marriage to 18 for young women. Presently, the legal age of marriage for girls is 13,<sup>92</sup> and young girls could be wedded at younger age with the consent of their fathers.<sup>93</sup> Previous attempts to raise the marriage age to 16 failed, since the clerical regime's MPs wrongly believe that raising the legal age for marriage contradict the foundations of Islam.<sup>94</sup>
  - As a result of this law, early and forced marriages are rampant in Iran. The marriages of between 500,000 and 600,000 girls under 15 years are registered every year.<sup>95</sup> There are many cases that are not registered.
  - Early and forced marriages have in turn led to a plethora of social ills, including school dropouts, early child bearing and its consequences, child widows, suicides, prostitution, murder, etc.<sup>96</sup>
- The law to protect women against violence has yet to be adopted by the parliament after 10 years of procrastination when it was stripped from its main purpose.<sup>97</sup> Even if passed by the parliament, the “Protection of Dignity and Support for Women Against Violence” bill has many deficiencies that make it inefficient in achieving its goals.
  - Failure to define and criminalize “violence against women”, lacking the necessary transparency and precision in various paragraphs, failure to ban early marriages, failure to address sexual exploitation, formation of brothels and sex trade all of which are organized and modern forms of violence against women, failure to consider the necessary measures to support battered women, are among serious deficiencies in this bill.

<sup>91</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, May 7, 2017

<sup>92</sup> [Misogyny institutionalized in the laws of the mullahs' regime](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, November 8, 2015

<sup>93</sup> Amendment to Article 1041 of the Civil Code allows the father to wed his daughter even before 9 years of age after receiving endorsement of a judge.

<sup>94</sup> [Marriage age increase rejected by Iran parliament](#), NCRI Women's Committee website, December 25, 2018

<sup>95</sup> Ali Kazemi, advisor to the legal deputy of the Judiciary Branch, the state-run daily Entekhab, March 4, 2019

<sup>96</sup> [Annual Report 2021](#), documents, website of NCRI Women's Committee, March 2021

<sup>97</sup> [Bill to protect women against violence faces hopeless situation in Iran](#), articles, website of the NCRI Women's Committee, February 1, 2021; Iranian state media, January 2021

- Experts say the “bill cannot eliminate violence against women, because there is no belief in violence in the text and it pays more attention to crime, while the scope of violence is much higher than victimization.”<sup>98</sup> It is incapable of stopping the cycle of violence in the country, because the grounds for such crimes and murders still exist in the country's economic and legal sectors.<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, the bill does not provide the necessary support for abused women, and such women are forced to continue living passively in the current circumstances.<sup>100</sup>
- Another bill which needs to be changed is the Bill to Protect Children and Adolescents. Hastily passed on June 7, 2020, the bill’s content fails to address any of the current policies or laws that violate children’s rights in Iran. The bill also falls short of defining child abuse, criminalize parental abuse, and providing any means to ensure the allocation of a budget sufficient to meet the needs of child laborers or child widows.<sup>101</sup>
  - The Bill to Protect Children and Adolescents has not provided any definition of the rights of children. When the bill does discuss children’s rights, it merely states that children must enjoy the right to free health care and treatment. Healthy nutrition, mandatory and free education, and safety are fundamental needs for children’s growth.
  - The Bill to Protect Children and Adolescents fails to include language about the regime’s intention to protect children, versus the criminal, profiteering, and misogynist officials. For example, the bill fails to protect children against Tehran’s Municipality, which continues to abuse children and use them as cheap labor. The bill fails to address and revise unfair legal procedures for juvenile offenders and/or imprisoned mothers. The bill contains no references to any plans to address poverty, lack of medical and health care, and nutrition of children particularly in rural areas and city slums.

#### h. Are there public awareness programs about women’s legal rights?

The government does not sponsor any public awareness programs on women’s legal rights. Contrarily, the regime arrests and imprisons members of independent NGOs that try to provide such education for women.

#### Case of the Voice of Iranian Women Association (April 2019 – May 2021):

- Members of the Voice of Iranian Women Association (*Anjoman-e Neday-e Zanan-e Irani*) were arrested and charged with “promoting corruption and prostitution”, “formation of the Iranian Women Association”, “association and collusion against national security”, and “propaganda against state.”
- Akram Nasirian was arrested on April 29, 2019 and detained in solitary confinement at Ward 209 of Evin Prison for a month. Ms. Nasirian is an activist in the literacy movement

<sup>98</sup> Alireza Mafi, a lawyer, the official IRNA news agency, January 4, 2020

<sup>99</sup> Mohammad Reza Mahboubfar, an expert on social ailments, the state-run Jahanesanat.ir, November 19, 2020

<sup>100</sup> Sedigheh Rabii, Director General of Women and Family Affairs in Qazvin, the official IRNA news agency, January 4, 2020

<sup>101</sup> [Bill to Protect Children and Adolescents Fails to Protect Girls](#), documents, NCRI Women’s Committee website, September 2020

and had been actively engaged in sending aid to flood victims. She was charged with disturbing the public opinion and encouraging women to shun their veils.

- Nahid Shafaqi, a women's rights activist, was brutalized and arrested on May 15, 2019, and detained at ward 209 of Evin Prison. She had made a speech on the International Women's Day on the roots of violence against women.
- Maryam Mohammadi was arrested on July 8, 2019, in the city of Garmsar and taken to solitary confinement in the Intelligence Ministry Ward 209 in Evin Prison. She was confined for a month in solitary and subsequently transferred to the Women's Ward.
- Esrin Derkaleh, 36, was arrested on July 28, 2019, in Garmsar and taken to Ward 209 of Evin Prison. She was in prison for more than 40 days. Maryam Mohammadi and Esrin Derkaleh had been active in the field of women's empowerment and women's literacy.
- Parvin Nokhostin, whose activities focus on the rights of children lacking identity papers, was summoned to the Department of Intelligence on July 24, 2019.
- Mahboubeh Farahzadi, a retired teacher and a teachers' rights activist, and a member of the Voice of Iranian Women Association, was interrogated at the Prosecutor's Office of Evin for several hours on September 8, 2019. She was summoned to the Evin Courthouse on May 19, 2021, and was given seven days to report in. She is accused of "propaganda against the state." Usually, people summoned to the Evin Courthouse are taken directly to prison.

#### Case of lawyers and human rights activists (September 2018):

- Women's rights activists, Hoda Amid, a lawyer, and Najmeh Vahedi, a sociology graduate, were arrested at their homes in Tehran on September 1, 2018. The two women used to hold workshops for women to educate them about their rights.
- Another women's rights activist and student of gender studies, Rezvaneh Mohammadi, was arrested by security forces on September 3, 2018. Ms. Mohammadi was detained in the Women's Ward of Evin Prison after undergoing interrogations for nearly one month.
- Amnesty International issued a statement on September 3, 2018, warning that the human rights situation in Iran had reached "crisis point" and that the arrests of lawyers and women's rights activists in Iran signal intensifying crackdown on civil society.<sup>102</sup>

## 2. Which of the following have been important for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country?

The laws, policies and practices of the Iranian regime generally and fundamentally seek to restrict, marginalize and hinder the progress of women. As explained in the case of Education 2030 document, the regime cannot tolerate gender equality, and it even refuses using the word equality, and has replaced it with the word, "equity."

So, one cannot expect this regime to take steps which would accelerate women's progress.

<sup>102</sup> [Iran: Arrests of lawyers and women's rights activists signal intensifying crackdown on civil society](#), Amnesty International, September 3, 2018

### Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice

Under the Iranian law, women are considered half-humans. This is why the regime refuses to use the terms “equality” and “gender equality,” rather, they use the word “equity.”

Women’s testimony,<sup>103</sup> blood-money,<sup>104</sup> and inheritance<sup>105</sup> are always half of men’s. Women are discriminated against in holding leadership position as a president<sup>106</sup> or a decision-making position as a judge.<sup>107</sup> Accordingly, women are discriminated against in every realm of law and justice.

- Article 1133 of the Civil Code states, “A man can divorce his wife any time he so chooses.” But a woman cannot get divorce unless she proves that her husband is either impotent, a drug addict, unable to provide for a family or living away from home for more than six months.”
- As a result, the law does not provide protection for victims of domestic violence and make it difficult for them to escape violence through divorce. Under the Civil Code, women seeking to obtain a divorce as a result of domestic violence must first prove that the abuse was intolerable (*osr va-haraj*).
- One of the most abusive articles of the Iranian Constitution is on marriage of girls. According to the law, the legal age of marriage is 13 for girls and 15 for boys, but if a father decides that he wants to wed his daughter in younger age, the law permits him to do so. This has paved the way for a growing number of early marriages in Iran. Early marriages violate the rights of girl children and young women and are considered a form of violence against women.
- A judiciary official, Ali Kazemi, announced in March 2019, that around 600,000 girl children officially get married in Iran every year, but there are more marriages that are not officially registered.<sup>108</sup>
- The Iranian census organization released statistics indicating that 234,000 marriages of girl children under 15 years of age were officially registered by this organization from

<sup>103</sup> According to Articles 199 and 209 of the regime’s Islamic Penal Code, testimonies of two women are equal to the testimony of one man and are not considered at all if not accompanied by a male witness.

<sup>104</sup> According to Article 382 of the Islamic Penal Code, if a Muslim man deliberately murders a woman, he will not be punished in kind (as called for by the principle of Retribution) unless the victim’s parents pay half of the man’s blood-money to his parents. While if a woman murders a man, she may be executed upon request of the victim’s parents. Article 550 of the Islamic Penal Code – The blood money for murder of a Muslim woman (whether deliberate or undeliberate) is half of the blood money for a Muslim man.

<sup>105</sup> Based on articles 861 – 949 of the Civil Code on heritage, the wife and daughter’s share of heritage is half that of the husband and son.

<sup>106</sup> Article 115 of the Iranian constitution views the right to hold the office of presidency as limited to only “religious and political statesmen.”

<sup>107</sup> Article 163 of that constitution has made qualifications for a judge contingent upon the “principles of religious jurisprudence,” stating: “The conditions and qualifications to be fulfilled by a judge will be determined by law, in accordance with principles of religious jurisprudence.”

The “Law on Conditions for Appointing Judiciary Judges” (ratified in April 1982), states, “Judges will be appointed from among men with the following qualifications: 1. Practical faith, justice, and commitment to Islamic principles and loyalty to the system of Islamic Republic of Iran...”

In 1985, amendments were made to the above law allowing women to hold advisory positions or become investigative magistrates in judicial bodies. But they still cannot draft judgments.

<sup>108</sup> The state-run daily Entekhab, March 4, 2019

March 2017 to March 2018 (Persian year 1396). 194 of these were marriages of girl children under 10 years old.<sup>109</sup>

- The parliamentary judicial and legal committee rejected the plan to increase the minimum age of marriage for girls in December 2018.<sup>110</sup>
- Also, a bill called the Law to Support Disadvantaged, Defenseless and Abandoned Children was passed by the Iranian regime's Parliament on September 22, 2013, which sanctions marriage between the girl child and her guardian, with the approval of a court.
- According to the regime's law, fathers and grandfathers are considered owners of blood and they are not punished if they kill their children, hence sanctioning honor killings of young women by their fathers and grandfathers.<sup>111</sup>

### Quality education, training and life-long learning for women and girls

According to Principle 30 of the Iranian Constitution, "The government is obliged to provide free elementary and high school education for all members of the nation and facilitate free higher education for all until the country is self-sufficient." In practice, however, education is neither free nor mandatory.<sup>112</sup>

- The latest figure on the number of illiterates announced by a parliamentary deputy was 11 million,<sup>113</sup> two-thirds of which are women and girls. This shows 1.5-million increase in 7 years considering the figure of 9,483,028, announced by the National Statistics Center (NSC) in 2011.
- According to the figures announced in 2018, at least 2 million out of a total of 15 million school-age children in Iran are deprived of education. Again, two-thirds of these children are girls who are forced to drop out of school due to poverty, early marriages, lack of high schools in their villages, lack of transportation, etc.
- Hundreds of young women and girls become victims of bad roads,<sup>114</sup> old transportation vehicles,<sup>115</sup> worn-out schools,<sup>116</sup> dysfunctional heating,<sup>117</sup> in schools and universities, every year.

<sup>109</sup> The state-run Iran daily newspaper, October 30, 2019

<sup>110</sup> The state-run Fars news agency, December 23, 2018

<sup>111</sup> [Misogyny institutionalized in the laws of the mullahs' regime](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, November 8, 2015; Article 717 of the Islamic Penal Code

<sup>112</sup> Ali Bagherzadeh, deputy Minister of Education and head of the Literacy Movement Organization, the state-run Salamatnews.com, April 25, 2018

<sup>113</sup> Seyyed Mohammad Javad Abtahi, member of the parliamentary Education and Research Committee, the state-run salamatnews.com, September 26, 2018

<sup>114</sup> Eleven high school girls from Kermanshah got wounded with broken arms and legs when their minibus overturned on Kangavar-Sahneh road. The state-run ISNA news agency, April 22, 2019

<sup>115</sup> On December 25, 2018, a bus crash on the campus of the Sciences and Research Branch of Azad University in Tehran, led to the deaths of eight including 3 female students. 28 students were injured.

<sup>116</sup> A 7-year-old Kurdish girl, Donya Veisi, died when the wall crumbled on her at school in Sanandaj. The state-run Tasnim news agency, October 8, 2018

<sup>117</sup> Four pre-school and elementary girl students lost their lives in a fire at a non-governmental girls' school in Osveh Hassaneh in Zahedan, capital of Sistan and Baluchestan Province. The state-run Tasnim news agency, December 18, 2018

Twenty-five girls were poisoned after being exposed to carbon monoxide leak from the heating system in their elementary school in Bam, Kerman Province. The state-run ISNA News Agency, January 29, 2019

- Baha'i students are systematically deprived of continuing their college education and every year dozens of Baha'i students are dismissed from their universities or not admitted due to their faith.
- Student activists are also imprisoned and deprived of continuing their education for a higher degree. Student activist Soha Mortezaei was deprived of continuing her education for a Ph.D. She was sentenced to six years in prison for participating in anti-government protests in January 2018.<sup>118</sup>

After the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in Iran, schooling and education conditions declined significantly. The regime's education officials did not take any effective measures to address severe shortcomings. The launch of virtual methods of education made it even more difficult for underprivileged students to continue their education.

The regime has moved classes to a virtual space without providing the necessary infrastructure. Thus, many teachers and students are suffering from double deprivation and additional difficulties. Some students rent their smartphones from others to access online classes, while others travel miles to access the Internet. The Education Minister's promises to provide smartphones or to expand the internet proved hollow while the ministry had more than a year to address the issues. The lack of access to the Internet and smartphones has multiplied the dropout rate compared to previous years.

- Almost three million students across the country are deprived of smart educational equipment. Another two million students essentially borrow or rent their educational tools.<sup>119</sup>
- 89,000 first-graders were forced to drop out of school in 2020-2021.<sup>120</sup>
- The school dropout rate has almost doubled. Dropout rates are higher among girls than among boys.<sup>121</sup>
- Out of 763,000 students in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, 100,000 are not covered by the virtual network and 300,000 are deprived of access to the necessary equipment.<sup>122</sup>
- 40,000 students in Razavi Khorasan province have been forced to drop out of school since the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year.<sup>123</sup>
- 22,000 students in Hormozgan Province are deprived of access to virtual classes.<sup>124</sup>
- 2,000 students in Qazvin Province have dropped out of school since the beginning of the current academic year.<sup>125</sup>
- 4,500 students have dropped out of school in Khuzestan.<sup>126</sup>

<sup>118</sup> [Annual Report 2019](#), documents, website of the NCRI Women's Committee, March 2019

<sup>119</sup> Javad Hosseini, the deputy minister of education, the state-run ILNA news agency, February 7, 2021

<sup>120</sup> Rezvan Hakimzadeh, Education Ministry's deputy director of primary education, the state-run Aftab Yazd newspaper, January 14, 2021

<sup>121</sup> The National Statistics Center report, December 22, 2020

<sup>122</sup> Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi, the regime's Minister of Communications and Information Technology, the state-run PANA news agency, January 4, 2021

<sup>123</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, December 9, 2020

<sup>124</sup> Fereydoun Emati, the governor of Hormozgan Province, the state-run Passin Hormozgan website, December 30, 2020

<sup>125</sup> Hassan Ali Asghari, director general of education in Qazvin Province, the official IRNA news agency, November 27, 2020

<sup>126</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, December 16, 2020



The coronavirus crisis has exacted a heavy toll from millions of Iranian students. In addition to school dropout rates, there have been painful reports of student suicides because they could not afford a smartphone.

- In October 2020, Parastoo Jalili Azar, a 13-year-old student from the village of Talatapeh in the Nazlu district of Urmia, ended her own life because she could not have a phone to continue her education.
- Seyed Mohammad Mousavizadeh, an 11-year-old boy in Bushehr province, who could not attend his school's online classes due to the lack of a mobile phone, killed himself on October 12, 2020.
- Mani Hashemi almost lost his life while walking through a mountain. He was working as a porter delivering products to help out his mother to raise money to buy a cell phone so that he could continue his education.
- The reopening of schools on September 5, 2020, was a mistake. This was a decision by the Education Ministry when the situation in most of Iran was red.<sup>127</sup>
- 30,000 students under the age of 18 have been infected and nearly 300 have died.<sup>128</sup>
- Simultaneous with the regime Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's ban on the purchase of vaccines and the beginning of the fourth wave of COVID-19 in Iran, the regime's Minister of Education announced that schools will reopen on February 22.<sup>129</sup>
- The reopening of schools will lead to the spread of the British variant of the coronavirus. The mutated virus is more contagious, and according to preliminary studies, the virus is more common in people under the age of 20, especially children, than the original virus.<sup>130</sup>
- It is dangerous to rush the reopening. We experienced this once in May and witnessed that they quickly reopened educational centers, restaurants, shopping malls, etc., and the death toll climbed to 500 people a day.<sup>131</sup>
- Accelerating the reopening of schools and guilds is considered an invitation to the coronavirus. The emergence of a new peak will unleash a tsunami of the virus, which would lead to an extremely terrifying and worrying situation.<sup>132</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Minoo Mohrez, a member of the scientific committee of the coronavirus task force, The state-run Entekhab daily, September 30, 2020

<sup>128</sup> Hossein Kermanpour, director of the emergency clinic at Tehran's Sina Hospital, The state-run Etemadonline.com, October 2, 2020

<sup>129</sup> The official IRNA news agency, January 11, 2021

<sup>130</sup> The head of the Mashhad city Medical Organization, the state-run Young Journalists' Club website, January 16, 2021

<sup>131</sup> Massoud Mardani, a member of the science committee of the coronavirus task force, the state-run ISNA news agency, January 16, 2021

<sup>132</sup> The deputy head of the coronavirus task force in Qazvin Province, the state-run ISNA news agency, January 16, 2021

### Poverty eradication, agricultural productivity and food security

Poverty is the most common problem the people of Iran face contrasting the country's immense national wealth and oil. The middle class has all but diminished and at least 80 percent of Iranians live below the poverty line.<sup>133</sup>

- A socio-economist was cited as saying that one third of low-income Iranians, i.e. around 5 million people, who earn only 1 million tomans a month (\$74) are living in extreme poverty and hunger, while 67% of people live below the relative poverty line.<sup>134</sup>
- Poverty has become feminized. Social ills, suicide, runaway girls, addiction, and a rising number of female prisoners are some of the issues in Iran.<sup>135</sup>
- The face of poverty in Iran has become feminine. This was acknowledged by Rouhani's deputy in women and family affairs.<sup>136</sup> Other officials have also echoed the same theme.
- "Poverty has become feminine... Today, more than 64 percent of impoverished families covered by our Relief Committee are female heads of household."<sup>137</sup>
- "50 percent of beggars and panhandlers are women."<sup>138</sup>
- "The most significant problem in the city of Tehran is the feminization of social ills."<sup>139</sup>
- Poverty of women and its consequent social ailments are mainly and basically due to the regime's official policies and laws which discriminate against women.<sup>140</sup>
- According to the head of Welfare Organization, "We are lagging with respect to economic indices, such as providing jobs and employment for women. Of course, this is mainly due to country's policies where we have 22 women employed compared to every 100 men with employment. Women's employment rate in Iran is 12 percent, at best."<sup>141</sup>
- A parliamentary deputy explained, "Having no guardians, this stratum of women (heads of households) is responsible for the custody of their children, and due to financial poverty, unemployment and their consequences, they are subjected to harms. This is while, because of budget constraints, the Welfare Organization cannot take appropriate measures to empower and create jobs for women heads of household."<sup>142</sup>

<sup>133</sup> The official website of the Iranian regime's parliament, ICANA, March 13, 2018

<sup>134</sup> Fa.shafaqna.com, February 28, 2018

<sup>135</sup> Zahra Shojaii, secretary general of the so-called reformist women's assembly, the state-run dustaan.com, June 20, 2018

<sup>136</sup> In a gathering on women and employment, Shahindakht Molaverdi said the most important challenge to Iran's economy is the unemployment predicament. She said: "The growing trend of female heads of households and feminization of poverty leaves no room for questioning the need to give priority to these women." The state-run ILNA news agency, September 6, 2014.

<sup>137</sup> Mer'at Rassouli, director of the state-run Relief Committee (charity) in Shiraz, the state-run ISNA news agency, August 26, 2015.

<sup>138</sup> Kamran Gardan, spokesman for the City Council of Hamadan, the state-run ISNA news agency, July 24, 2018.

<sup>139</sup> Farzad Hooshyar Parsian, General Director of Tehran's Welfare, Social Services and Cooperation Organization, the state-run IRNA news agency, August 16, 2015.

<sup>140</sup> Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpay, head of the National Welfare Organization, the state-run Tabnak website, February 13, 2018

<sup>141</sup> Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpay, head of the National Welfare Organization, the state-run Tabnak website, February 13, 2018

<sup>142</sup> Hassan Lotfi, a member of the social commission of the mullahs' parliament, May 2018



- Working age women comprise a population of 32,252,090, but only 4,289,528 of them are economically active and the other 27,962,562 women [87 percent] have no role in the country's economy.<sup>143</sup>
- Some 50 percent of the Iranian people live below the absolute poverty line. Consumption of red meat has decreased by 65% and rice by 34% across Iranian households. Simultaneously, with the triple-digit inflation rate of some food items, there is a risk that dairy products and legumes will be removed from Iranian families' tables.<sup>144</sup>
- There are currently 30 million unemployed and 60 million people below the poverty line.<sup>145</sup>
- All Iranian workers live below the poverty line.<sup>146</sup>
- Some 82% of the 4 million women heads of households live below the poverty line and do not have a suitable job, yet they receive no government support. Many women have no choice but to sleep under bridges, in unfinished houses, behind trees, or under cars on cold nights due to their extreme poverty.<sup>147</sup>
- The number of people living in Tehran slums has increased by 60%.<sup>148</sup>
- 38 million people in Iran live in shanty towns and slums in the periphery of major cities.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>143</sup> The state-run Ettelaat newspaper, August 15, 2015

<sup>144</sup> The National Statistics Center of Iran, October 2020

<sup>145</sup> Ibrahim Razzaghi, an economist, The state-run Tabnak website, September 20, 2020

<sup>146</sup> The state-run Ayande-ye Eghtesad, September 20, 2020

<sup>147</sup> Ebrahim Ghaffari, General Director of Welfare Organization of Golestan Province, the state-run Tasnim news agency, February 12, 2017

<sup>148</sup> Mohammad-Reza Mahboubfar, an expert on social harms, The state-run Etemadonline.com, June 22, 2020

<sup>149</sup> Mohammad Reza Mahboubfar, an expert on social harms, The state-run Etemadonline.com, June 22, 2020

- The poverty line in Iran for a family of four has risen to 10 million Tomans (\$427).<sup>150</sup>
- The Welfare Organization offers from 65,000 Tomans (\$2.7) for one person to 400,000 Tomans (\$17) for a family of five.<sup>151</sup>
- These meager donations, which of course fail to solve problems, cover only 250,000 female breadwinners.<sup>152</sup> The rest of the at least 3,750,000 women-headed households, are deprived of even a meager assistance and struggle with deadly poverty.
- The majority of 120 workers of Safireh garbage-sorting site in Ahvaz are women heads of households and they risk injury and contracting diseases.<sup>153</sup> They work 8 hours a day and earn a monthly salary of 2 million Tomans (\$85).<sup>154</sup> They had not been paid since the beginning of the Coronavirus outbreak, in February 2020, and were therefore, under tremendous financial pressure.<sup>155</sup>

### Rural women

Iran's rural women bear the brunt of life's responsibilities: They do the lion's share of the agricultural business and contribute to villages' economies without being paid. In addition, they must do all the housework and serve the family.

Their unpaid work includes caring for the livestock, hauling wood, fetching water, mending the tent, weaving carpets, milking the cow, making yogurt, baking bread, cleaning the house, cooking, and washing every family member's clothes.

Doing all this work translates into a very difficult life that involves working like a slave.<sup>156</sup>

Many of Iran's rural women begin their work before sunrise and sleep after everyone else has already gone to bed.

Despite the fact that rural women are actively engaged in work, but their occupation has not been considered in any program.<sup>157</sup> Usually, the statistics is based on owners of the production units, and since women do not own production units, they have not been mentioned in the official statistics and their employment has not been considered, either.<sup>158</sup>

- Rural women must do various difficult jobs like working in farms and agricultural fields at all stages and shepherding, as well as housework and handicraft. These women have a large economic and social share in all the works and production in every village.<sup>159</sup> But they are deprived of social or economic security. There is no secure future for them and

<sup>150</sup> The state-run asriran.com, November 25, 2020

<sup>151</sup> Mojtaba Naji, the state-run asriran.com, November 25, 2020

<sup>152</sup> Welfare Organization website, March 30, 2020

<sup>153</sup> [Women Workers of Safireh Garbage Site Deprived of Minimum Rights](#), articles, NCRI Women's Committee website, June 15, 2020

<sup>154</sup> The state-run Jahanasanat.ir, June 2, 2020

<sup>155</sup> The official IRNA news agency, April 30, 2020

<sup>156</sup> [For rural women of Iran life means suffering and working as slaves](#), documents, NCRI Women's Committee website, October 15, 2020

<sup>157</sup> Zahra Faraji, general director for Women and Family Affairs in the Central Province's Governorate, the state-run ISNA news agency, January 25, 2015

<sup>158</sup> Forough-os Sadat Bani-Hashem, general director of the Development Office of Agricultural Activities of Rural and Nomad Women in the Ministry of Agricultural Crusade, the website of the presidential directorate of Women and Family Affairs, October 22, 2017 - <http://women.gov.ir/fa/news/7803>

<sup>159</sup> The state-run ISCANews website, October 17, 2016

when they are disabled, widowed, or divorced, and when they become sick or elderly, there is no social security system to give them support.<sup>160</sup>

- Women who plant rice do more than 60 percent of the planting and harvesting of rice, but their wage is 10,000 Tomans less than the wage of their male counterparts. A seasonal female worker participates in all stages of plantation and harvest of rice. In other seasons, they work in other farms.<sup>161</sup>
- Harvest of potatoes is also part of the agricultural work women engage in, but women workers harvest between 50 to 70 sacks of potatoes every day for only 350,000 Tomans (\$30).
- In other agricultural sectors, despite doing the same work for the same number of hours, women end up with half of the pay allocated to their male counterparts.<sup>162</sup>
- Iranian women make 75 percent of the handicraft industries' products, 40 percent of agricultural products, and 80 percent of the carpet industry productions.<sup>163</sup> Most of these women are women heads of household.<sup>164</sup>
- Another example of Iran's rural women's oppression is that state-backed brokers usurp their products. Rural women are not educated with regard to modern markets. They lack practical financial skills and have limited access to technology training. They are unaware of the need to adapt their professional skills to consumer trends. They face political and economic restrictions in accessing world markets. At the same time, the domestic economy is unstable, and prices are high. So, brokers take advantage of all these deficiencies. They pay very little for products that took nomadic women many long hours to produce. The brokers then sell the women's products for prices several-fold higher.<sup>165</sup>
- Every kilogram of the fibers that nomadic women spin is worth between 60 to 70 thousand Tomans. But since they have no access to the markets, they must sell these and other products to brokers at one-third of their real value.<sup>166</sup>
- The situation has become even more difficult for Iran's rural women in the wake of the Coronavirus outbreak. Most rural women handle animal husbandry, grow medicinal plants, do handicraft, etc. After the Coronavirus outbreak, they lost all their jobs. Rural people's livelihoods depend on dairy products, but they longer have customers since the daily markets and stores have closed due to the Coronavirus outbreak.<sup>167</sup>
- Another segment of Iran's rural women has no business assets, so they work as daily rate workers. In northern Golestan Province, women work in different agricultural sectors. On average, female farmers' wages are 40% lower than men's wages... Farmers cannot pay less to men, because the men do not accept (to work for less). But for various reasons, women agree to work for lower wages.<sup>168</sup>

<sup>160</sup> The state-run ISCANews website, October 17, 2016

<sup>161</sup> [Iranwire.com](http://iranwire.com), October 16, 2017

<sup>162</sup> The official IRNA news agency, November 22, 2018

<sup>163</sup> Massoumeh Ebtekar, head of the presidential directorate for women and family affairs, the official IRNA news agency, May 4, 2019

<sup>164</sup> The official IRNA news agency, May 16, 2018

<sup>165</sup> The state-run IMNA news agency, November 12, 2019

<sup>166</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, October 6, 2020

<sup>167</sup> Fatemeh Esmailpour, Executive Director of the Micro Credit Funds for Rural Women, The state-run BORNA news agency, June 16, 2020

<sup>168</sup> Qassem Soukhtesara'i, head of the Agricultural Trade Organization of Golestan Province, The state-run Eghtesad.ir, November 1, 2019





Rural women must do various difficult jobs but they are deprived of social or economic security. When they are disabled, widowed, or divorced, and when they become sick or elderly, there is no social security system to give them support.

### Food security

As for food security, in many Iranian villages, people are living below the minimum humane conditions.

- The inhabitants of Hosseinabad village, in the middle of a desert, eat hay as their main food. They do not have drinking water. They use the little water they have for farming to sow several hundred square meters of hay near their sheds. Some of the hay sown is used for the livestock and some is kept for human consumption.<sup>169</sup>
- Not all the villagers can easily procure food from cities. This is why their food security is jeopardized, leading to the displacement of rural inhabitants who finally have to change their territory.<sup>170</sup>
- Poor urban women resort to the trash bins to find food leftovers, a scene which has become all too common these days in Tehran and other major capitals.<sup>171</sup>
- 33 percent of Iran's population, i.e. nearly 26 million people, are suffering from absolute poverty, and six percent, or five million people, are starving. They are not even able to buy enough food, while they also have other expenses like housing, transportation, and clothing.<sup>172</sup>

<sup>169</sup> The state-run asriran.com, January 21, 2018

<sup>170</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency October 16, 2017

<sup>171</sup> Mousavi Chelek, deputy of Welfare Organization, the state-run ILNA news agency, October 8, 2016

<sup>172</sup> Hossein Raghfar, Iranian economist, the state-run ISNA news agency, April 7, 2018



- A sociologist says class difference is so deep that the food and things a poor man can find in a city trash bin is more than what he can earn in his own village.<sup>173</sup>
- Some 50 percent of the Iranian people live below the absolute poverty line. Consumption of red meat has decreased by 65% and rice by 34% across Iranian households. Simultaneously, with the triple-digit inflation rate of some food items, there is a risk that dairy products and legumes will be removed from Iranian families' tables.<sup>174</sup>

## Eliminating violence against women and girls

Not only the clerical regime's Constitution and laws institutionalize violence against women and sanction the death penalty and cruel punishments of flogging, stoning and blinding, but the regime systematically and formally undertakes violent measures against Iranian women day and night, throughout the country.

### VAW in Iran is state sponsored

- Violence against women is not a cultural issue in Iran, but a state-sponsored phenomenon.
- The most common form of violence against women in Iran are the measures to force Iranian women to observe the compulsory veil. Hossein Ashtari, the Commander of the State Security Force (SSF), announced in September 2016 that "Some 2000 women who wear improper clothing are arrested every day in Tehran and some other provinces."<sup>175</sup> This amounts to 730,000 arrests in a year, a minimized figure both due to the lack of transparency on the part of the regime, and the increase in suppression of women since then.
- At least 118 women have been executed since August 2013 when Rouhani became the clerical regime's president which is an average of 15 women per year.

Official violence against women has sanctioned and promoted domestic violence against women, as well, so much that the regime's experts have been talking about the drastic rise in domestic violence against women in Iran.

- Violence (against women) has become institutionalized.<sup>176</sup>
- Currently, domestic violence against women is pervasive in society.<sup>177</sup>
- Violence against women occur in various forms in society.<sup>178</sup>
- 66 percent of Iranian women experience domestic violence in their lifetime.<sup>179</sup>

<sup>173</sup> The state-run Mehrkhane website, November 9, 2016 <http://mehrkhane.com/fa/news/29640/>

<sup>174</sup> The National Statistics Center of Iran, October 2020

<sup>175</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, September 29, 2016

<sup>176</sup> Parvaneh Salahshouri, member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run ILNA news agency, September 18, 2018

<sup>177</sup> Parvaneh Salahshouri, head of women's faction in the mullahs' parliament, the state-run IRNA news agency, November 25, 2017

<sup>178</sup> Parvaneh Salahshouri, head of women's faction in the mullahs' parliament, the state-run IRNA news agency, November 25, 2017

<sup>179</sup> Fatemeh Ghassempour, head of the Research Center on Women and Family in Tehran, the state-run ISNA news agency, November 16, 2018

Although the figure is double the world average of one-in-every-three women (or 33%), it must be considered a blatant mitigation of the reality.

- Violence against wives ranks second only after violence against children in Iran.<sup>180</sup>
- Iran holds the world record on domestic violence against women.<sup>181</sup>
- Domestic violence in Iran has turned into an open wound which needs to be cured. The law must criminalize domestic violence and punish the assailants. There is also need for institutions that support women who are victims of violence. In the absence of all the above, the statistics on domestic violence in the form of physical beating and murder of women and girls in the country has seen a drastic rise.<sup>182</sup>
- Family murders top the country's crises. It is estimated that at least 8 murders take place in Iran every day. The continuation of this trend could increase the previous average of 450 honor killings per year to 2,736 cases in 2020.<sup>183</sup>

### Ill-fated VAW bill

Ten years after its proposal, the bill to prevent or eliminate violence against women has not yet been adopted by the clerical regime's parliament and turned into a law. Even if passed, the bill fails to address the most urgent needs of Iranian women who are victims of violence. The bill hollowed of its original aim, fails to define or criminalize "violence against women." It also fails to provide legal and social support for battered women, sending them back to their abusive husbands or fathers. Neither does the bill address the issue of forced early marriages and the legal age of marriage for girls in Iran which is a blatant violation of the rights of girl children and the source of a plethora of social ailments. The bill does not address modern forms of violence against women including human trafficking and sex slavery. Following is a brief history of the VAW bill in Iran.

- A VAW bill was finalized by the Iranian regime's Judiciary and sent to the government on September 17, 2019.<sup>184</sup> The bill called "Provision of Security for Women (PSW)" had been stalled for eight years in the labyrinths of decision making in the parliament, the Guardian Council and the Judiciary Branch.<sup>185</sup>
- Some experts say a major deficiency in the new bill is replacing the word "women" with "ladies" which refers only to married women. Therefore, girls under 18, single women, victims of social ills and those subjected to such harms, are not covered by this bill.
- Neither does the bill criminalize sexual harassment, rape, and sexual exploitation of women and it does not contain any punishment for the assailants.
- Another serious problem is the lack of effective and sufficient guarantees in the bill to prevent violence against women or counter it. The bill has totally turned a blind eye on

<sup>180</sup> Kamel Delpasand, sociologist and a researcher in social sciences, interview with the official IRNA news agency, July 18, 2018

<sup>181</sup> Mohammad Reza Mahboubfar, an expert on social ailments, the state-run Jahanesanat.ir, November 19, 2020

<sup>182</sup> Mohammad Reza Mahboubfar, an expert on social ailments, the state-run Jahanesanat.ir, November 19, 2020

<sup>183</sup> Mohammad Reza Mahboubfar, an expert on social ailments, the state-run Jahanesanat.ir, November 19, 2020

<sup>184</sup> [Provision of Security for Women bill finalized by the Judiciary after 8 years](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, September 19, 2019

<sup>185</sup> [Annual Report 2019](#), documents, website of the NCRI Women's Committee, March 2019

the state-sponsored violence against women to enforce the compulsory veil, as the main systematic form of VAW.<sup>186</sup>

- If the bill is passed, the situation for women will be much worse. The current bill removes the term “violence against women,” and sections on women's security are either omitted or modified in some way. As a result, the intent of the bill is lost. In this bill, they have manipulated words.<sup>187</sup>
- The bill does not provide the necessary support for abused women, and such women are forced to continue living passively in the previous circumstances.<sup>188</sup>
- On December 16, 2020, Mohsen Dehnavi, member of the board of directors of the mullahs' parliament, acknowledged in an open session of the parliament the receipt of a plan called “Protection, Dignity, and Provision of Security for Ladies against Violence.”<sup>189</sup>
- Nasrollah Pejmanfar, head of the Principle 90 Committee in the parliament: “The government had announced several times that it would present the bill on provision of security for women to the parliament, but it did not. So, we tabled it in the form of a plan.”<sup>190</sup>
- Behrouz Mohebbi Najmabadi, MP: “The parliament wanted to point out the government's delay.”<sup>191</sup>
- The “Protection of Dignity and Support for Women Against Violence” bill was finally adopted by the government on January 3, 2021. The government took another 11 days to present the bill to the parliament on January 14 for final examination.<sup>192</sup> It took five months for the parliament to acknowledge the receipt of the bill, but it has yet to adopt it.
- Considering the various other concerns and priorities of the parliament, it is a far-fetched expectation that the parliament would examine the bill by the end of Rouhani's term (in July 2021), pass it to the Guardians' Council and return it to the government.<sup>193</sup>

### Access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights

- Based on the general population policies outlined and announced by the mullahs' supreme leader in May 2014, men and women faced strict measures to prevent fertility. Vasectomy in men and tubectomy (closure of the fallopian tubes in women) were also banned in medical sciences university hospitals and government centers.
- According to Article 717 of the Islamic Penal Code, abortion is a crime and if a woman has an abortion, she must pay the blood money for the aborted fetus.

<sup>186</sup> [Ensuring women's security, a far cry from the misogynistic dictatorship](#), articles, the NCRI Women's Committee website, November 28, 2020

<sup>187</sup> Parvaneh Salahshouri, a former member of the regime's parliament, the state-run Khabaronline.ir, December 16, 2019

<sup>188</sup> Sedigheh Rabii, Director General of Women and Family Affairs in Qazvin, The official IRNA news agency, January 4, 2020

<sup>189</sup> The official IRNA news agency, December 16, 2020

<sup>190</sup> The state-run Fararu news agency, December 20, 2020

<sup>191</sup> The state-run Etemadonline.com website, December 21, 2020

<sup>192</sup> [Bill to protect women against violence faces hopeless situation in Iran](#), articles, website of the NCRI Women's Committee, February 1, 2021; Iranian state media, January 2021

<sup>193</sup> Shahindokht Molaverdi, former presidential deputy for Women and Family Affairs, The state-run Sharq daily, January 18, 2021

- Under the National Screening Plan, adopted in 2005, all pregnant women could choose to have an abortion by having a test in the first trimester to prevent the birth of babies with chromosomal defects or severe physical abnormalities.
- The law of 2005 was implemented with the jurisprudential opinion of the Supreme Leader and the religious and legal approval of the Guardian Council.
- In addition, a code of conduct for fetal abnormalities was published in 2011 with a focus on chromosomal abnormalities, or Down syndrome.
- The 2005 law did not mean that pregnant women were free to choose to have an abortion, and the permit only applied if the child was likely to have a genetic abnormality or the mother's health was at risk. In this case, the abortion was referred to as “medical abortion.” Screening and sonograms were only allowed for medical abortions.<sup>194</sup>
- Only 9,000 medical abortions are performed annually in Iran.
- On March 17, 2021, the clerical regime’s 11<sup>th</sup> parliament approved a plan called the Population Growth and Family Support. The plan in 74 articles and presently being examined by the Guardian Council, has been criticized for blocking the previously sanctioned narrow avenue left for medical abortions.<sup>195</sup>
- According to Article 56 of the plan, medical abortions are allowed only upon approval of the Forensic Medicine Organization and its executive order.<sup>196</sup>
- Article 56 calls for the formation of a council by religious jurists and physicians. The Forensic Medicine Organization can issue its executive order after it convenes a consultative council comprised of the head of the Forensic Medicine Organization, three religious jurists, a specialist approved by the Health Minister, a medical specialist, a Supreme Court judge, and a representative from the parliamentary Health Commission of the 11th Parliament. Only this council has the authority to diagnose and confirm the definitive necessity of abortion.
- The parliament’s new plan to integrate religious jurists in the abortion decision-making council “endangers public health and is irrational.” The plan was formulated in an “inexpertly manner and without considering scientific levels.”<sup>197</sup>
- Article 53 of the plan bans any advice to pregnant mothers by health care staff or encouragement or referral by therapists to diagnose fetal abnormalities. Such advice or referral is only allowed in the form of Note 3 of this article.
- In the meantime, the Health Ministry has stopped distribution of contraceptives free of charge.<sup>198</sup>
- The new population growth plan does not account for women’s health. It eliminates the mandatory screening plan and prevents access to free contraceptives in health centers.<sup>199</sup>
- In addition, the plan engages security services in the process of screening and abortions.<sup>200</sup>

<sup>194</sup> The state-run etemaad.ir, March 21, 2021

<sup>195</sup> [Iran's 11th Majlis Pushes for Marginalization of Women Through its Population Growth Plan](#), articles, NCRI Women’s website, April 10, 2021

<sup>196</sup> The state-run etemaad.ir, March 21, 2021

<sup>197</sup> Letter by the Assembly of Scientific Associations of Iran’s Medical Group to the Guardian Council, [bbc.com/Persian](#), April 11, 2021

<sup>198</sup> [BBC.com/Persian](#), April 11, 2021

<sup>199</sup> [Independent/Persian](#), April 11, 2021

<sup>200</sup> The state-run etemaad.ir, March 21, 2021

- There are concerns that further restrictions on legal abortions in Iran, as well as the cessation of contraceptive programs, may increase the risk of unsafe abortions.
- In pregnancy due to rape, although the birth of such a baby causes "difficulty" and a very serious complication for the mother (and even the child), but the existing laws in Iran do not allow such a mother to terminate the pregnancy. According to the sharia and jurisprudential and official laws of the clerical regime, a woman victim of rape who has suffered serious psychological damage also faces the problem of pregnancy resulting from rape.<sup>201</sup>

## Political participation and representation

Iranian women's participation and representation in the formal political structure is among the lowest in the world. The most senior women in government are only three deputies to the president who do not have any executive powers or influence on key economic, foreign policy, political, cultural, or social matters.

- In August 2017, when Hassan Rouhani was elected for a second term as the mullahs' president, he failed to appoint even one woman as cabinet minister.
- Despite being strongly criticized for excluding women again from his second-term cabinet, Hassan Rouhani did not include any women among the new governors he appointed on September 13, 2017.<sup>202</sup>
- The mullahs' parliament voted down a proposal to allocate a one-sixth quota of parliamentary seats to women on April 16, 2019.<sup>203</sup>
- Women's participation in the Iranian parliament was 5.9 percent in 2019 and 5.6 percent in 2020 compared to the world's average of 24.3 percent.<sup>204</sup>
- A study done by the Women's Committee of the National Council of Resistance of Iran found out that in a total of 500 big and small cities, only 64 women were elected as members of City Councils compared to 3,724 male members. That amounts to a meager 1.7% participation for women in the City Councils.<sup>205</sup>
- In the administration of Iranian cities and provinces, women hold only 13 out of 2,653 positions as provincial governors, governors, district governors, and mayor, which is a mere 0.5 percent participation.<sup>206</sup>
- Massoumeh Ebtekar, Rouhani's deputy in Women and Family Affairs, once admitted that "women almost disappear in senior management positions."<sup>207</sup>
- The latest study by the NCRI Women's Committee prepared for the 65<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in March 2021, however, came up with the following data: No women among the 31 Provincial Governors; only 77 women among

<sup>201</sup> Independent/Persian, April 11, 2021

<sup>202</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, September 14, 2017

<sup>203</sup> [Mullahs' parliament votes down quota for women MPs](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, April 18, 2019

<sup>204</sup> Parvaneh Mafi, MP, the state-run Iran daily, April 17, 2019; [Annual Report 2021](#), documents, NCRI Women's website, March 2021

<sup>205</sup> [A study on women's participation as governors, mayors and members of city councils](#), June 2017, website of the NCRI Women's Committee

<sup>206</sup> [A study on women's participation as governors, mayors and members of city councils](#), June 2017, website of the NCRI Women's Committee

<sup>207</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, October 31, 2017

1,174 provincial officials amounting to less than 7% participation; no women among the mayors of the 31 provincial capitals, and only 2 women among the total of 339 mayors which is a mere half percent participation; only 25 women among 830 administrative officials in 30 cities, i.e. 3.11% participation; and only 38 women among 321 members of the city councils in 31 provincial capitals, i.e. 11.83%.<sup>208</sup>

## Right to work and rights at work (e.g. gender pay gap, occupational segregation, career progression)

### Right to work

As explained in answer to questions 1-c in this section, Iranian women confront an array of restrictions and are denied equal access to employment.

- First of all, they are restricted from entering certain professions and 77 fields of education, while denied equal benefits at work, basic legal protections.
- Secondly, employers give priority to men and the social and economic infrastructure is built to exclude women from the job market. Often, employers are reluctant to hire women because their ability to travel depends on their husband's permission.
- Only 3.9 million women out of the 30.96 million over 15 years old, merely 12.6%, were employed, according to a survey in winter 2020,<sup>209</sup> a 1.2 million drop in the number of women with jobs compared to winter 2019.<sup>210</sup>
- The National Statistics Center announced in fall 2020 that another million and 12,000 women had been laid off from winter to summer 2020. In other words, at least 70% of those who lost their jobs in Iran during the Coronavirus pandemic were women.<sup>211</sup>
- Unemployment rates among young people, women and educated women, are alarmingly high particularly in western provinces. In some of these provinces, youth unemployment rates range from 50% to 63% and educated women's unemployment rates in the same provinces fluctuate between 63% and 78%.<sup>212</sup>
- Unemployment rate among young women under 30 was 85.9%.<sup>213</sup>
- Women with higher education are regarded as a new sector who are either unemployed or have been forced to engage in menial jobs with low wages. Many women with college education have to resort to peddling in the streets, working in restaurants or as secretaries in offices and accept salaries as low as one-third of the minimum wage. Women with bachelor's degrees are working in welding workshops, and a graphics major is now a simple worker.
- In its annual survey of Iran's labor force, the National Statistics Center (NSC) also confirmed gender inequality in the job market of Iran in the 10-year period spanning from 2008 to 2017. The NSC findings indicate that the 63% average participation rate of men in the job market was four times greater than women's participation rate of only 14% in the

<sup>208</sup> [A report to the CSW65, Women in Iran](#), documents, website of the NCRI Women's Committee, March 2021

<sup>209</sup> Discrimination in employment has added to problems of working women, the state-run ILNA news agency, March 25, 2020

<sup>210</sup> Appraisal of the Plan to Census the Workforce, Iran's National Statistics Center-Spring 2020, July 26, 2020

<sup>211</sup> The Coronavirus cut the population of working women, the state-run Mizanonline.ir, January 30, 2021

<sup>212</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, November 21, 2018

<sup>213</sup> The state-run Mehr News Agency, January 5, 2016 / the state-run Tabnak website – December 26, 2015



said period. The survey also indicated that out of every 100 persons holding jobs in Iran, 84 were men and only 16 were women, a clear indication that the job market is male-dominated.

- A survey by the Labor Ministry's Center for Statistics and Strategic Information found unequal access to wage-earning jobs for men and women. According to this study done for the period spanning from March 2016 to March 2017, men's share of wage-earning jobs was 82.7 percent compared to women's 17.3 percent share, indicating a fivefold access for men to wage-earning opportunities compared to women.<sup>214</sup>
- According to the figures compiled by the NSC, the rate of unemployment among young women between 20 and 30 years of age is double that of men in the same age range.<sup>215</sup>
- According to the latest National Statistics Center report, women make up 18% of jobholders in the 24-million labor force, 4,320,000.<sup>216</sup>
- The quarterly economic report by the National Statistics Center announced the labor force in Iran was 23,263,000 as of Autumn 2020.<sup>217</sup>
- According to the National Statistics Center report published in April 2021 on employment and unemployment in Iran during winter 2021, the number of employed women dropped down to its lowest in the past five years, i.e., less than 3.5 million.<sup>218</sup>
- 85% of the 40-million population of Iranian women do not have paid jobs.<sup>219</sup>
- The Global Gender Gap Report 2021 puts Iran among the world's ten lowest-ranked countries in terms of income gender gaps, with Iranian woman's income being only 18% of that of a man.<sup>220</sup>
- Women make up 70% of those who lost their jobs due to the Covid- 19 crisis by summer 2020.<sup>221</sup>
- More than 1,000,000 women lost their jobs during the pandemic. 145,000 lost their jobs in winter 2020.<sup>222</sup> About 749,000 women lost their employment in spring 2020, and 120,000 more lost their jobs in summer 2020.<sup>223</sup>
- Iran's economically inactive population grew by 2,181,000 from 34,410,000 in autumn 2019 to 36,591,000 in autumn 2020. This increase was comprised of 1,370,000 women vis-a-vis 807,000 men.<sup>224</sup>
- Most rural women in Iran do husbandry, grow medicinal plants, do handicrafts, etc. They have lost their jobs after the outbreak of the Coronavirus.<sup>225</sup>
- Since the livelihood of rural people depends on dairy products, they have no customers to purchase their products since the daily markets and stores have closed down due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus.<sup>226</sup>

<sup>214</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, January 23, 2018

<sup>215</sup> The state-run asriran.com, December 20, 2017

<sup>216</sup> The state-run Daneshjoo news agency, August 9, 2020

<sup>217</sup> Quarterly Report on Iran's Economy in Autumn 2020, published Winter 2021

<sup>218</sup> The state-run Tel.salamatnews.com, April 2021

<sup>219</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, May 8, 2021

<sup>220</sup> World Economic Forum's [Global Gender Gap Report 2021](#), published on March 31, 2021

<sup>221</sup> The Quarterly Report of the National Statistics Center, Autumn 2020

<sup>222</sup> The state-run ILNA News Agency, April 11, 2020

<sup>223</sup> Aladdin Azvaji, Director General of the Employment Policy and Development Office of the Ministry of Labor, The state-run Arman daily newspaper, January 30, 2021

<sup>224</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, May 8, 2021

<sup>225</sup> Fatemeh Esmailpour, executive director of the Micro Credit Funds for Rural Women, The state-run BORNA news agency, June 16, 2020

## Working rights

- Working women receive 77% of men's wage for equal work, and as such they lag 10 years behind their male colleagues.<sup>227</sup>
- Half of Iranian women workers receive only one third of their real wage.<sup>228</sup>
- Women workers work in step with men in production units, but do not receive equal wages. They are not aware of their legal rights. Therefore, they do not even find out if their insurance has been considered in their payrolls. But they do not file any complaints in this regard since they fear being fired by their employers.<sup>229</sup>
- Temporary three-month contracts have deprived female workers of job security. Sometimes, employers mistreat women workers for the smallest flaw in their work. They face long working hours but are deprived of many rights and benefits.<sup>230</sup>
- There is a wide gap in the salaries of nurses and doctors. In most countries this difference is three folds at most, but in Iran it is 100 folds. Sometimes, the doctors' payrolls are 500 times greater than those of nurses.<sup>231</sup>
- The number of women working in the rice fields is less than the market demand, but many farm owners prefer to employ women because their wages are always lower than men's.<sup>232</sup>
- In some agricultural sectors, despite doing the same work for the same number of hours, women end up with half of the pay allocated to their male counterparts.<sup>233</sup>
- Some women are working more than the legal working hours and the wages they receive are rather small... Women are kept at their workplace for long hours and they are paid wages less than men.... (They) go to work at these production centers since early morning and work up to 12 hours with a meager (monthly) wage of 400,000 tomans (\$35).<sup>234</sup>
- Even in official and government jobs, the paychecks of formally employed women and receive salaries are not equal to those of their male colleagues. Men enjoy a series of benefits and rights for heading the household of which women are deprived. This inequality is seen even among government employees who seemingly receive equal wages.<sup>235</sup>
- Women face discrimination even in formal jobs. For example, in the Education Ministry, a married woman is not entitled to child benefits unless her husband is deceased or separated. In other words, she must be the head of household, and she must prove with documents that she is the guardian of her children. Men, however, do not need to show

<sup>226</sup> Fatemeh Esmailipour, executive director of the Micro Credit Funds for Rural Women, The state-run BORNA news agency, June 16, 2020

<sup>227</sup> Hassan Ta'ii, job market advisor to the Minister of Labor, the state-run ISNA news agency, September 2, 2017

<sup>228</sup> A Rouhani advisor, the official IRNA news agency, April 21, 2015

<sup>229</sup> Fatemeh Pourn, Secretary of the Union of Women Workers in Qazvin (a state institution), The official IRNA news agency - May 3, 2018

<sup>230</sup> Fatemeh Pourn, Secretary of the Union of Women Workers in Qazvin (a state institution), The official IRNA news agency, May 3, 2018

<sup>231</sup> [Female nurses in Iran entangled in a web of damaging problems](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, February 27, 2019

<sup>232</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, March 4, 2018

<sup>233</sup> The official IRNA news agency, November 22, 2018

<sup>234</sup> Ahmad Amirabadi Farahani, a member of the presiding board of the mullahs' parliament from Qom, the state-run ISNA news agency, May 1, 2018

<sup>235</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, March 17, 2021

any evidence when having a child. For every new child, they receive an amount of benefit. Even when they get married, their salaries are increased. However, none of these benefits have been considered for women, and their wages are not raised. Usually, when an office grants loans, men always enjoy priority over women. In general, it could be concluded that wherever there is talk of empowerment, men enjoy priority.<sup>236</sup>

### Women's entrepreneurship and women's enterprises

- Despite the regime's propaganda, many women who wish to start and are capable to run a business, have great difficulties in receiving loans for the initial investment, because bank managers think that women would not be able to pay back.<sup>237</sup>
- The Directorate for Women and Family Affairs' proposal to distribute 18 million Tomans of investment in villages to invest on women's entrepreneurship and employment networking, has gotten nowhere due to limits in the fiscal budget.<sup>238</sup>
- Iran ranks 54 among 58 nations according to a MasterCard ranking of countries with regards to women's entrepreneurship. The countries that lag Iran are Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Bangladesh and Egypt.<sup>239</sup>
- Women's economic participation in Iran has grown only less than 7 percent from 9.2 percent in 1956 to 16 percent in 2019 in a span of 63 years despite doubling of the country's population and women's higher education.<sup>240</sup>
- Despite Iranian women's efforts to increase their economic participation, they face numerous structural obstacles that go beyond employers' mentalities. These obstacles include lack of support for women's entrepreneurship where women are not trusted by banks and have difficulty in receiving loans and are required to place deposits.<sup>241</sup>
- Female entrepreneurs do not still receive any facilities from the government.<sup>242</sup>
- Women's roles are limited to marketing, sale and clerkship, and they do not manage their own businesses.<sup>243</sup>
- Women also suffer from a lack of balance between their family and business, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic when they lost access to their traditional markets.<sup>244</sup> Whereas, women produce some 80% of Iran's handicrafts and weave 75% of the country's hand-woven carpets.<sup>245</sup>

<sup>236</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, March 17, 2021

<sup>237</sup> Fatemeh Zolqadr, member of the Labor Committee of the parliament, said, "Many women who wish to start a business, do not have the initial capital despite their capability to run one. When we speak of supporting employment and occupation for women, the first thing is to provide the initial capital, and accordingly, women who wish to start a business must be able to be granted loans... Getting loans is more difficult for women compared to men. Thinking that women would have more problems in paying back their loans compared to men, banks refuse to grant them loans."

The state-run ILNA news agency, October 9, 2019

<sup>238</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, October 9, 2019

<sup>239</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, November 24, 2019

<sup>240</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, November 24, 2019

<sup>241</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, November 24, 2019

<sup>242</sup> The state-run Fars news agency, May 10, 2021

<sup>243</sup> The state-run Student News Network, snn.ir, May 12, 2021

<sup>244</sup> Tayyebbeh Siavoshi, senior advisor to the directorate on Women and Family Affairs, the state-run ISNA news agency, May 10, 2021

<sup>245</sup> Massoumeh Ebtekar, head of the Directorate on Women and Family Affairs, the official IRNA news agency, May 10, 2021

- Financial institutions consider women as high-risk costumers, and therefore, they make limited resources available to women.<sup>246</sup>
- The lack of a husband's or father's approval to travel, the absence of tax and economic incentives and support, and officials' ignorance about economics are among the reasons no adequate measures have been taken over the past 40 years regarding women's entrepreneurship despite their dignity and capabilities.<sup>247</sup>
- There are many disruptive laws about women's work. If a woman wants to start even a small workshop, legal obstacles will hinder her activity. A male who wants to be economically active can easily access information from his male colleagues about the market situation, government grants, and marketing. But women's access to such networks that can show her the way is minimal. There are plenty of industrial counseling centers available to men. But women, who want to work in various sectors, do not have access to centers that could help them develop and implement their creative ideas.<sup>248</sup>
- Institutions set up for women focus only on family affairs. When these institutions consider economic activity, they only support home-based businesses. And those types of businesses are both unstable and cannot lead to favorable women's empowerment.<sup>249</sup>
- The rural women of Iran face many obstacles in doing their work. Having no education about modern markets, they lack practical financial skills and have limited access to technical training. They are not aware of the need to adapt their professional skills to the dominant style of consumers' life. They face political and economic restrictions in accessing world markets. At the same time, the domestic economy is unstable, and the prices are high. Brokers take advantage of all these deficiencies. They pay very little for products that are the outcome of long hours of hard work by nomad women. Then, they sell the products for prices several-fold higher.<sup>250</sup>
- No action has been taken concerning the handicraft of nomad women, and there is no plan. For example, the value of every kilogram of the fibers nomad women spin is between 60 to 70 thousand Tomans. But since they have no access to the markets, they must sell this and other products to brokers at one-third of its actual value. Brokers exploit the rural and nomad women.<sup>251</sup>
- Rouhani's government declared in 2018 that they had a project to facilitate jobs for rural women. However, some 2,300 Micro Credit Funds for Rural Women were not covered by such facilities, an advisor in the Ministry of Agricultural Crusade said. The general director of the nomad and rural women's affairs office in the Ministry of Agricultural Crusade said rural women needed to deposit bail to receive bank loans, which is a significant obstacle since banks do not accept village (rural) estates as deposits.<sup>252</sup>

<sup>246</sup> Fatemeh Ghafouri, the head of the Businesswomen's Association in Qazvin, the official IRNA News Agency, July 13, 2020

<sup>247</sup> Fatemeh Ghafouri, the head of the Businesswomen's Association in Qazvin, the official IRNA News Agency, July 13, 2020

<sup>248</sup> Nasrin Yousefi, an entrepreneur and industrialist activist in Khorasan Province, the official IRNA news agency, May 21, 2018

<sup>249</sup> Fatemeh Ghafouri, the head of the Businesswomen's Association in Qazvin, the official IRNA News Agency, July 13, 2020

<sup>250</sup> The state-run IMNA news agency, November 12, 2019

<sup>251</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, October 6, 2020

<sup>252</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, October 6, 2020

## Majority of working women are heads of households



### Unpaid care and domestic work / work-family conciliation (e.g. paid maternity or parental leave, care services)

- The regime's general approach is for women to stay home and do not engage in any outside work. As a result, they are not prone to work-family conciliation. The limited steps they have taken in this regard either remain on the paper or are not implemented due to lack of funds.
- It was reported that the government began deducting child benefits from the payrolls of women heads of household in Autumn 2017.<sup>253</sup> The decision was implemented abruptly and the amounts previously paid to them were withdrawn from their accounts, at once.
- A number of government officials have also admitted that despite legislations which allow working women enjoy maternity leave, at least 74,000 women are dismissed every year when they return to work after delivering their babies.<sup>254</sup>
- Women also suffer from a lack of balance between their family and business, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic when they lost access to their traditional markets.<sup>255</sup>

<sup>253</sup> Zahra Sa'ii, spokeswoman for the parliamentary Social Commission, the state-run salamatnews.com, March 28, 2018

<sup>254</sup> Fatemeh Sadeqi, Professor and member of faculty of Teachers' Training University, the state-run Fars news agency, June 16, 2015

The state-run ISNA news agency, June 30, 2015; the state-run entekhab.ir website, August 1, 2015

- Homemakers are engaged in unpaid work, taking care of the children, doing the house chores, providing services to the family, caring for the sick and elderly, etc.
- With the outbreak of the Coronavirus, women faced a considerable increase in the volume of housework. In addition to their usual chores, they had to do the sanitization, cleaning, and teaching their children at home. If any member of the family gets infected, women are the ones who have to care for them.<sup>256</sup>
- The closure of schools and kindergartens forced many working women to reduce their hours at work to attend to their increasing responsibilities at home. So, housework is considered unpaid work in light of their educational, nursing, service, and productive activities. Caring for the sick and elderly is a service paid for, but women do it at home and spend their time and energy to do so without being paid. They are doing the social services which the government is obliged to provide for the citizens. So, it is not just the man in the family who has to provide financial support for this wife. But part of such support must be provided by the government, which is not.<sup>257</sup>

### Gender-responsive social protection (e.g. universal health coverage, cash transfers, pensions)

Only 19 percent of the total number of insured individuals in Iran are women.<sup>258</sup>

- Women have the largest share in informal jobs, which means they are hired by small workshops and production units which are not officially registered and, therefore, not monitored by the government.<sup>259</sup>
- Women working in the informal sector work longer hours under unsafe conditions, are paid less, and denied benefits and insurance, including medical and retirement insurance.<sup>260</sup>
- The General Board of Directors of the Administrative Court of Justice rescinded a directive by the general director of the Labor Ministry which had banned laying off working mothers for two years while they nurse their children.<sup>261</sup>
- In Iranian villages, rural women often work continuously for up to 20 hours a day, farming, breeding livestock, or weaving carpets, coupled with all the tedious and hard work related to the daily routine of rural life. So, their employment is limited to family-based and unpaid work, which does not bear any direct material benefits for them.<sup>262</sup> They are not entitled to social protection.

<sup>255</sup> Tayyebeh Siavoshi, senior advisor to the directorate on Women and Family Affairs, the state-run ISNA news agency, May 10, 2021

<sup>256</sup> Mansoureh Mousavi, a sociologist, the state-run ISNA news agency, March 17, 2021

<sup>257</sup> Mansoureh Mousavi, a sociologist, the state-run ISNA news agency, March 17, 2021

<sup>258</sup> Vahideh Negin, Labor Minister's advisor, the state-run Tejarat-e Emrouz website, April 24, 2015  
<http://tejaratemrouz.ir/fa/news/2988>

<sup>259</sup> Massoumeh Ebtekar, presidential deputy for Women and Family Affairs, Labor Ministry gathering in Tehran, April 28, 2018

<sup>260</sup> The official IRNA news agency, April 28, 2018

<sup>261</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, September 15, 2017

<sup>262</sup> Iranwire website, October 16, 2017 - <https://iranwire.com/fa/features/23608>



## Basic services and infrastructure (water, sanitation, energy, transport etc.)

Basic infrastructure to include piped water, electricity, accessible medical clinics, and land transport, is among the necessities of human life. However, a sound infrastructure is an unattainable dream for Iranian villagers and even some city-dwellers in the 21st century.<sup>263</sup>

The lack of basic infrastructure takes its toll on Iranian women and girls. They are the ultimate victims of a lack of basic infrastructure in the rural areas and particularly in disadvantaged provinces including Hormozgan and Sistan and Baluchestan. Their fate testifies to the clerical regime's non-compliance with international obligations.

- Lack of access to clean and adequate water is one of the greatest infrastructural problems of rural women in Iran. Reports on the situation of 100 villages in Golestan Province,<sup>264</sup> 44 villages in Sistan and Baluchestan Province,<sup>265</sup> and dozens of villages in the four corners of the country<sup>266</sup> reveal that most villages do not have water pipelines. The inhabitants receive water by tankers, and only 15 liters per person and only 2 or 3 times per week. As a result, they do not have enough water for bathing and they use the water for basic needs such as drinking and farming. Often people can take a bath every three months.<sup>267</sup>
- The lack of access to water is catastrophic in Iran's southern cities. In July 2020, an unprecedented water shortage forced the 13,000 residents of the cities of Sib and Soran to drink the condensation from air conditioners or seek water from other areas with gallon jugs.<sup>268</sup>
- In Sistan and Baluchestan's population of 2.8 million, more than 50% of residents live in rural areas.
- Residents of Sistan and Baluchestan, even in the provincial capital of Zahedan, have very brief access to tap water as the water is cut routinely for the better part of the day. 80% of citizens in the capital, Zahedan, experience water cut-offs. Extreme water shortage has compelled many rural inhabitants to leave their home villages.<sup>269</sup>
- Approximately 700,000 residents have no water supply network. Some 1,261 villages are supplied with water by tankers with a per-person daily ration of 15 liters.
- Even in the best of cases, the water tankers reach the village once every 3 days and cannot fulfill villagers' daily rations.<sup>270</sup>
- The situation of 44 villages near Chabahar, in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, southeast Iran, and their lack of access to water is tragic. These villages do not have pipelines. Their water is provided by worn-out tankers that bring them unsanitary and unclean water with

<sup>263</sup> [The lack of basic infrastructure takes its toll on Iranian women and girls](#), articles, NCRI Women's website, September 10, 2020

<sup>264</sup> Alireza Ebrahimi, secretary of the assembly of representatives of Golestan Province, the state-run Tasnim news agency, December 28, 2017

<sup>265</sup> The state-run salamatnews.com, October 22, 2017

<sup>266</sup> The state-run Raja News website, July 10, 2017; Bartarinha website, August 29, 2017; The state-run Tasnim news agency, December 20, 2017; The state-run Kashmari website, January 27, 2018; ...

<sup>267</sup> The state-run Raja News website, July 10, 2017

<sup>268</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, July 12, 2020

<sup>269</sup> The official IRNA news agency, July 23, 2019

<sup>270</sup> The state-run Eghtesad.ir, September 8, 2019

long delays and small amounts. For every person living in these villages, only 15 liters of water have been considered, which is not sufficient.<sup>271</sup>

- Due to a severe water shortage, people have dug out ditches called *Hootag* to collect rainwater. The ditches attract flies and mosquitoes. This water is used for bathing, laundry, and doing the dishes at the same time. Sometimes, when the *Hootag* water is fresh, or the water tanker has delays, people also drink the same water as animals do.<sup>272</sup>
- Sometimes, fetching water from a *Hootag* ends up drowning one or more children and women. Occasionally, they fall prey to local crocodiles also living in *Hootags*. Some 20 children have lost their lives in recent years while bringing or drinking water from *Hootags*.<sup>273</sup>
- On August 25, 2020, two children, 3-year-old Fatemeh Pa and 2-year-old Yahya, drowned while going to the river to get a drink of water. On August 24, Yasna Padian, a 5-year-old girl from the outskirts of Rask city in southern Sistan and Baluchestan province, drowned in a river. On August 21, 2020, Zeinab Pour Gholami, an 8-year-old girl from the village of Jakigor in Zahedan, went to the river with her mother to fetch water and wash clothes, but she drowned.<sup>274</sup>
- On August 11, 2020, Amir Hamzeh, 7, was retrieving water from a *Hootag* when he was attacked by a Gando crocodile. The child lost one of his hands.<sup>275</sup>
- The women and girls of Sistan and Baluchestan villages must travel a long distance several times a day to bring water for their families. Such long walks while carrying heavy buckets of water in the hot summer weather or cold winters cause them irreparable physical damage. Waist discus, fracture of spine discs, backache, and miscarriages are among rural women's health complications.<sup>276</sup>
- Rural and nomad women do not have warm water in their washbasins. They hardly have any access to a bath. They wash their clothes with cold water in a stream or river.<sup>277</sup>
- The women of Bakhtiari Tribes must carry 70-kilogram water bags on their backs and walk several kilometers to provide water.<sup>278</sup>
- Some 700 villages in Khuzestan Province have problems in providing and distributing water among inhabitants. The government has so far not heeded the issue raised repeatedly by inhabitants.<sup>279</sup>
- The inhabitants of 800 villages in Khuzestan do not have access to potable water despite their proximity to five major dams and seven rivers.<sup>280</sup>

<sup>271</sup> The state-run salamatnews.com, October 22, 2017

<sup>272</sup> The state-run salamatnews.com, October 22, 2017

<sup>273</sup> The official IRNA news agency, July 23, 2019

<sup>274</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, August 13, 2020

<sup>275</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, August 25, 2020

<sup>276</sup> The official IRNA news agency, July 23, 2019

<sup>277</sup> Parichehr Soltani, the secretary of the working group on rural women in nomad tribes and deprived regions, the state-run ROKNA news agency, October 6, 2020

<sup>278</sup> Parichehr Soltani, the secretary of the working group on rural women in nomad tribes and deprived regions, the state-run ROKNA news agency, October 6, 2020

<sup>279</sup> Sadeq Haghighipour, executive director of water and sewage in Khuzestan, the official IRNA news agency, June 13, 2019

<sup>280</sup> Mojtaba Yousefi, member of the mullahs' parliament from Ahvaz, The state-run Fars news agency, August 10, 2020

After the floods of 2019 devastated most Iranian cities, the roads connecting 120 villages in Hormozgan province became difficult to cross. Moreover, access to 20 villages became impossible because the surrounding bridges were destroyed in the flooding.

In villages in Sistan and Baluchestan province, dirt roads connecting 25 villages also became completely impassable.

Abdul Hashem Hassan-Nia, the head of the Roads and Transportation Organization, revealed in February 2020 that about 1,000 billion Tomans (\$42726) of credit was needed to rebuild the destroyed roads, but the regime has failed to allocate a budget to implement the needed repairs.<sup>281</sup> The lack of roads means that villagers must make a 3-4-hour journey on foot to travel a one-hour drive distance. Meanwhile, the nearest medical center that is equipped with vials of special medicinal serums and antidotes is at least 6 to 7 hours away from the accident-prone villages.

- Maryam Sadeghi was a 16-year-old girl from Kuh-e Haidar village in Bashagard county, Hormozgan Province, in southern Iran. She suffered a scorpion sting at 2 a.m. on July 5, 2020, but there was no vehicle to transport her to the Emergency Room. At 6 a.m., Maryam's brother asked a driver to take his sister to the hospital. The route to the hospital is a 40- 45-kilometer dirt road, only the last 5 kilometers of which are paved. Maryam's family took her to the first medical center they could reach and returned her to the village after initial emergency procedures to avoid losing the driver. After her return home, Maryam became ill again.

After a massive effort that included navigating dangerous terrain from the village to the city, the innocent girl was taken to Minab Hospital. Upon her arrival at the hospital, Maryam's urine was filled with blood – an indication that her kidneys had failed. Maryam was taken to the Intensive Care Unit, and doctors tried to resuscitate her. Unfortunately, it was too late. Maryam Sadeghi lost her life precisely 49 days after her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. Ali, one of Maryam's brothers, had died under similar circumstances about 5 years earlier.<sup>282</sup>
- Unfortunately, Maryam's case is not an isolated incident; there are many more examples like hers. In Bashagard, a county in Hormozgan Province, residents have had to deal with flooding since January 2020 – more than 8 months. Despite the hardship, they still live in desert camps with no access to electricity or water.
- Scorpion stings and the spread of the Coronavirus have only added to the suffering. A mother says, "Our villages are closed with every rain. It is impossible to cross the roads by car. After each rain, it takes 2-3 months for the road to reopen. In the meantime, anyone in the village who is stung by a scorpion or bitten by a snake, or if a mother goes into labor, there is no way to go to a doctor or a hospital. People in need of urgent medical attention may die."<sup>283</sup>

Area residents have been left without any support. Not a single night passes that 4-5 people are stung by scorpions in their tents. Girls in this community have scars and blisters all over their bodies. Most children suffer from heatstroke.
- A 17-year-old girl died after being stung by a snake in the Upper Jegin village, near the Port of Jask in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, on May 23, 2021. There is no medical center and no nurse or paramedic in this village. Due to lack of roads, it takes three hours to get to the main road.

<sup>281</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, January 27, 2020

<sup>282</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, July 11, 2020

<sup>283</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, July 12, 2020

- A young woman, 22, residing in Sezar village of Dezful, in the oil-rich Khuzestan Province, lost her life due to scorpion sting, on June 2, 2021. She was stung at 4 a.m. on June 2, 2021, but her family were not able to call the emergency because of their mobile's failing to access antenna. Their own village does not have a clinic. At 11 a.m. they manage to contact the Baghcheban medical center in Liou village, but the ambulance did not get there until 5 p.m. and even then, the ambulance could not reach their home. So, they had to carry the girl 9 kilometers on their hands to reach the ambulance. At Baghcheban medical center, they said she must be taken to Dezful, and there was nothing they could do for her there. She was carried on a motorbike to Dezful, but by the time she reached the hospital in Dezful, poison had spread all over her body and she lost her life.<sup>284</sup>
- The roads leading to many villages are unpaved and difficult to pass. They are blocked with any slight rain or snow and there is no public transportation.<sup>285</sup>
- Sixteen (16) women including a pregnant woman died in four bus accidents in various parts of Iran from January 9 to 20, 2020.
- According to the state-run media in Iran, every half an hour, one Iranian woman loses her husband or father due to road accidents.<sup>286</sup>
- In investigating the causes of increase in road accidents in Iran, many domestic and international experts believe that the lack of standard roads and traffic infrastructures, worn-out and sometimes out-of-date vehicles, lack of traffic signs on the roads, population growth and rising number of cars, poverty and economic pressure on drivers are among the causes of road accidents in Iran. This is in addition to mismanagement by a kleptocratic regime.
- Iran ranks the world's number one with the highest death toll, in 800,000 road accidents per year (1.5 times the world average).
- In terms of casualties caused by road accidents, Iran ranks 189th among 190 countries.
- Alireza Senobar, Head of Construction Engineering Organization of Alborz Province, announced in November 2019 that the rate of deterioration of buildings in Iran was well above international standards.<sup>287</sup> The alarming deterioration rate is due to non-compliance with building standards and the continued use of low-quality materials.
- Hormozgan has 12 run-down neighborhoods in which more than 40 percent of the province's population resides.<sup>288</sup>
- More than 30 percent of the urban population of Khash, a city in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, resides in deteriorated houses. More than 700 hectares of Khash's dirt roads must be asphalted.<sup>289</sup>
- A 10-year-old girl in Shamil village of Bandar Abbas in Hormozgan Province, became a victim when her aging house collapsed in late August 2020.<sup>290</sup>

<sup>284</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, June 3, 2021

<sup>285</sup> The official IRNA news agency, October 30, 2017

<sup>286</sup> The state-run salamatnews.com, January 25, 2020

<sup>287</sup> The official IRNA news agency, December 12, 2019

<sup>288</sup> Arash Rezaii, General Manager of Roads and Urban Development of Hormozgan Province, the state-run Mowj news agency, August 14, 2020

<sup>289</sup> Abdolmajid Tamandani, Mayor of the city of Khash in Sistan and Baluchestan, the state-run ROKNA news agency, August 25, 2020

<sup>290</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, August 25, 2020

## Strengthening women's participation in ensuring environmental sustainability

The clerical regime does not give priority to environmental protection. The Environmental Protection Organization is a small department with limited budget which is only one-tenth of a percent of the country's total budget.<sup>291</sup>

Tremendous damages have been done to the environment during the 40 years of the clerical rule in Iran. Deforestation, drying up of major lakes, water shortages, soil erosion, and heavy air pollution in Tehran, Khuzestan and other provinces are just some of the major environmental issues in Iran which have not been addressed by the organization.

The Iranian regime does not allow citizens' participation to ensure environmental sustainability and keeps arresting conservationists under various pretexts. On November 20, 2019, six environmental experts including two women were sentenced to 4 to 10 years in prison after 20 months of pre-trial detention.<sup>292</sup> Many more, including women, have been arrested and detained for forming groups and trying to conserve their environment.

- The extent of damages done to Iran's nature and environment became evident during the flashfloods in spring 2019 which afflicted at least 25 out of the 31 provinces in Iran.
- The main reason behind Iran's devastating, lethal flash floods was 40 years of environmental mismanagement and government led deforestation.<sup>293</sup>
- Rain has decreased by 20% in the past 50 years while Iran's floods have increased by 50%.<sup>294</sup>
- Every year, around 600 hectares of northern forests are destroyed. Some 200,000 hectares of northern forests have been destroyed in forest fires in the past 40 years.<sup>295</sup>
- Iran ranks the world's first in terms of soil erosion. The average depth of Iran's soil is just three centimeters compared to the world average of around three meters. It takes more than 300 years for one centimeter of soil to form. The main cause of soil erosion in Iran is the destruction of vegetation as a result of deforestation and the unrestrained building of villas in northern Iran.<sup>296</sup>
- Some 20 percent of the country's lands are located on the desert strip, which is called by the state-run outlets as a silent earthquake. Currently, 18 out of 31 provinces and 97 cities of Iran are involved in desertification, and these numbers are increasing annually.<sup>297</sup>
- Air pollution is increasing and biodiversity in Iran has suffered unprecedented destruction, as statistics released by the Global Carbon Project show that Iran is the seventh largest air polluter in the world with an annual emission of 648 million tons of carbon dioxide.
- Iran's groundwater resources are running out. Iran consumes more than 85 percent of its freshwater resources annually, while global statistics show that more than 60 percent of water consumption is a sign of crisis and water stress.<sup>298</sup>

<sup>291</sup> Gholam-Ali Jafarzadeh Imenabadi, member of parliament from Rasht, Mojnews.com, January 26, 2019: Share of environment from 1398 budget is one-tenth of a percent.

<sup>292</sup> [Montrealgazette.com](https://montrealgazette.com), November 22, 2019, Iran sentences McGill-trained scientist to 10 years in prison: reports

<sup>293</sup> The state-run Shafaqna.com news agency, March 24, 2019

<sup>294</sup> The state-run Shafaqna.com news agency, March 24, 2019

<sup>295</sup> The state-run Shafaqna.com news agency, March 24, 2019

<sup>296</sup> Eassa Kalantari, director of the Environmental Protection Organization, the state-run Shafaqna.com news agency, March 24, 2019

<sup>297</sup> The state-run website Gostaresh News, May 2, 2021

<sup>298</sup> The state-run website Gostaresh News, May 2, 2021

- The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which dominates the country's Armed Forces and economy, has had an extremely destructive role in this regard. The IRGC has changed the path of rivers and built numerous dams in wrong locations to serve the regime's nuclear and military projects. The drying of Lake Urmia, Zayandeh Rood river and other major rivers in Khuzestan and Kohgiluyeh and Boyer Ahmad provinces are attributed to the IRGC projects.
- The IRGC's Khatam al Anbiya Construction Headquarters is one of the regime's agencies that is fully involved in destroying Iran's environment and natural resources. The company announced in September 2020 that it has 10 trillion Tomans' worth of construction plans in progress in West Azerbaijan Province, alone. Building dams is a part of its portfolio of projects.<sup>299</sup>
- The IRGC's Khatam al Anbiya Construction Headquarters has built at least 62 dams across the country; this represents 50 percent of Iran's reservoirs and dams. The company currently has 285 constructive projects in progress.<sup>300</sup>
- The regime has issued permission to raze large parts of Iran's jungles and forests to smuggle wood out of the country, to construct hotels and buildings in the natural course of rivers to earn more money. They export the country's water for economic and political profits.<sup>301</sup> They have sold out the Caspian Sea and allowed Chinese companies to use industrial fishing methods causing irreversible damages to the Persian Gulf environment. By doing so, they have virtually eliminated the source of income for local people and vastly contributed to the destructions caused by natural disasters such as the case in the flash floods which washed away large parts of the country in spring 2019 and afterwards.
- As a result of such destructive policies, whoever attempts to take any step to voluntarily conserve the environment and natural resources, comes automatically into collision with the state interests and is accused of jeopardizing the country's national security.
- Employees of the Environmental Protection Organization held a protest on October 26, 2015, where they protested mismanagement of the country's environment, by overlooking experts' views. The organization's response, however, was to order protesters to leave if they were discontented.<sup>302</sup>
- At least three women, environmental activists, were arrested by security forces in Marivan, Iranian Kurdistan. These women had staged a protest gathering against burying the city's waste in a tourist area called, Samaghan Valley.<sup>303</sup>
- Twenty (20) female environmental activists were arrested by security forces in Marivan on March 18, 2017.<sup>304</sup>
- Sahar Kazemi, a civil rights and environmental activist and an athletics coach, was arrested in Sanandaj, capital of Iranian Kurdistan, on August 9, 2018.<sup>305</sup>

<sup>299</sup> The state-run Young Journalists Club news agency, September 3, 2020

<sup>300</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, September 25, 2020; The State-run Mehr news agency, September 21, 2020

<sup>301</sup> A report aired on an Iraqi TV channel, Iran's Foreign Affairs Minister, Javad Zarif had negotiations with Iraq last year on exporting Khuzestan's water to Basra. The event was not carried by Iranian news agencies and Iranians were unaware of it until the al-Baladi TV station covered it. A number of amateur videos were also published online showing large pipes carrying fresh water to Iraq.

<sup>302</sup> The state-run Fars news agency, TNews.ir, October 26, 2015

<sup>303</sup> [Three female environmental activists are arrested](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, April 7, 2017

<sup>304</sup> [Three female environmental activists are arrested](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, April 7, 2017

<sup>305</sup> [Sahar Kazemi and Zahra Modarres-Zadeh arrested in Sanandaj, Karaj](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, April 12, 2018



- Some 75 members of a group of environmental activists were arrested in February 2018 on the charge of espionage.<sup>306</sup>
- The Department of Intelligence of Sanandaj arrested conservationist Faranak Jamshidi at her home in Sanandaj, on June 28, 2020. A member of the Green Society of Kurdistan, she was interrogated and pressured for making false confessions. She is charged with “acting against national security” and “propaganda against the state.”

### Gender-responsive budgeting

Budgeting for the Presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs which is the only agency following up on the issues of women is very small compared to other government departments and ministries. That small budget has been cut off year by year.

- In the fiscal year 1397 (March 2018 – March 2019), the credit for empowering women heads of household was lowered from 20 billion tomans (\$1.74 million) in the previous year to 15 billion (\$1.3 million) in the Sixth Development Program.<sup>307</sup>
- Also the budget for insurance of housewives with more than three children was cut down by more than 30%.<sup>308</sup>
- While the budget considered for the Directorate of Women and Family Affairs was only 21 billion tomans (\$1.8 million), the budget allocated to the Policy Making Council for Women's Seminaries, which is part of the regime's religious propaganda machine, was 270 billion tomans (\$23.5 million).<sup>309</sup> Ironically, the Iranian regime considers this, allocating funds to the cause of gender equity!
- There was a 39% cut in the budget allocated to women heads of household in the Iranian fiscal year 1397 budget, while the budget of some other cultural agencies remained the same or doubled.<sup>310</sup>
- The parliamentary Research Center evaluated the budget for 1398 fiscal year for women, family and children. Persian year 1398 started on March 21, 2019 and will end on March 20, 2020.
- The Research Center studied the credit predicted for the two policy-making institutions, i.e. the Presidential Directorate for Women and Family Affairs and the Social and Cultural Council of Women and Family, and concluded that the total credit allocated to these two institutions dealing with women had been reduced by 30% from 22.5 billion tomans to 15.7 billion tomans. It said the reduction was due to the cut in the total credit for the Directorate for Women and Family Affairs from 21 billion tomans (\$1.83 million) in 2018 to 14.2 billion tomans (\$1.2 million) in 2019, which is a 32 percent budget cut tantamount to 7 billion tomans.<sup>311</sup>

<sup>306</sup> [Sahar Kazemi and Zahra Modarres-Zadeh arrested in Sanandaj, Karaj](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, April 12, 2018

<sup>307</sup> Parvaneh Salahshouri, a member of the Cultural Committee of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run ISNA news agency – December 18, 2017

<sup>308</sup> Parvaneh Salahshouri, a member of the Cultural Committee of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run ISNA news agency – December 18, 2017

<sup>309</sup> The state-run donya-e-eqtasad.com, December 20, 2017

<sup>310</sup> Zohreh Ashtiani, secretary of the Family Faction of the mullahs' parliament (Majlis), the state-run Shahrvand daily, July 10, 2018

<sup>311</sup> The state-run Etemadonline.com, December 26, 2018

- Due to insufficient funds in the 1398 fiscal year, 88% of women heads of household eligible for Poverty Preventing Plan were excluded from the program. Only 5,000 of the 40,000 women heads of household nominated by the Ministry of Health and Medical Education to be covered by the Poverty Prevention Plan for Pregnant and Lactating Women, were included in the plan.<sup>312</sup>
- The number of women heads of household who were taught skills to find jobs was only 12,000.<sup>313</sup> There are 3.6 million women heads of household in Iran. 82% of these women do not have any jobs, and only 180,000 of them receive a meager monthly support from the Welfare Organization.<sup>314</sup>
- Contradicting the Research Center of the mullahs' parliament, officials of the women's directorate announced this year (2020), that they received 20.3 billion of the allocated 21 billion toman budget of the Persian fiscal year 1398.<sup>315</sup>
- Officials of the Presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs are boasting that they are going to receive 19% more budget in the new Persian 1399 fiscal year (March 2020-March 2021), amounting to 25 billion tomans (\$2.17 million).<sup>316</sup> In the meantime, they acknowledge that this is a very small budget compared to other agencies and institutions.
- One of the main criticisms to the 1399 budget bill is omission of the credits for insurance of women heads of households and women with bad guardians. The articles 19 and 22 of the 14th amendment to the 1398 bill which concerned credits for insurance of women heads of households and women with bad guardians have been omitted altogether.<sup>317</sup>
- Neither were any funds allocated to paragraph d of Article 80 of the Sixth Development Program for the empowerment of women.<sup>318</sup> This is while the Welfare Organization has a one trillion toman deficit for implementation of paragraph d of Article 80 of the Sixth Development Program.<sup>319</sup>
- Also, the budget for Women's Cultural and Social Council has been cut by 18% because of omission of the plan for strategic research without any clear reason.<sup>320</sup>

<sup>312</sup> Ahmad Maidari, Deputy Minister of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare, the state-run IRNA News Agency – February 12, 2019

<sup>313</sup> Zahra Javaherian, deputy for planning and coordination in the Presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs, the state-run ISNA news agency, December 11, 2019: "12,000 women heads of household were covered by plans in 1398 to teach them skills to find jobs."

<sup>314</sup> Massoumeh Ebtekar, head of the Presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs, the official IRNA news agency, October 7, 2018.

<sup>315</sup> Zahra Javaherian, deputy for planning and coordination in the Presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs, the state-run ISNA news agency, December 11, 2019: "21 billion tomans had been adopted for the directorate's budget in 1398 but only 20.3 billion tomans was granted to the directorate."

<sup>316</sup> Zahra Javaherian, deputy for planning and coordination in the Presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs, the state-run ISNA news agency, December 11, 2019: "The budget allocated this year to the presidential directorate on Women and Family Affairs is 25 billion tomans which shows a 19% growth compared to last year, which is of course very small in comparison to many other agencies and institutions."

<sup>317</sup> Zahra Javaherian, deputy for planning and coordination in the Presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs, the state-run ISNA news agency, December 11, 2019; Tayyebah Saivoshi, member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run javanonline.ir, January 2, 2020

<sup>318</sup> Farideh Olad Ghobad, member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run ICANA.ir, December 17, 2019

<sup>319</sup> Derakhshani, member of the Social Directorate of the Welfare Organization, the state-run ICANA.ir, December 17, 2019

<sup>320</sup> Tayyebah Saivoshi, member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run javanonline.ir, January 2, 2020

- In the discussions about the new year's budget, it was revealed that from the meager 300 billion tomans allocated in the 1398 fiscal year to the insurance of housewives, only 12 percent of it had been granted by July, and by January, it was still not clear if they had received the actual credit for it.<sup>321</sup>
- Welfare Organization officials have also revealed that implementation of the Comprehensive Plan for Empowerment of Women requires 322 billion tomans, which is 13 times the entire budget of the women's presidential directorate.<sup>322</sup> They also acknowledged that they have no credits for providing support to 245,000 women heads of household, 60,000 families and 77,000 students who are on the Welfare Organization's waiting list.<sup>323</sup>
- The 1399 budget bill has allocated only 3 billion tomans for screening and health while the budget needed for screening is 17.5 billion tomans and 50 billion tomans for health care. The Welfare Organization officials also said they needed 600 billion tomans of credit to provide housing to the families who need to receive support from this organization.<sup>324</sup>
- In the Persian fiscal year 1399, in the absence of oil revenues, the Iranian regime has based its budget on revenues from taxes on property and water to be exacted from the Iranian public. With the majority of the populace living under the poverty line, there is no guarantee for them to secure this revenue.
- In the Persian fiscal year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022), the budget allocated to the Women's directorate was only 32 billion Tomans (approximately \$1.37 million), and it is not certain if all of this amount would actually go to the directorate.<sup>325</sup>

### Gender-responsive disaster risk reduction and resilience building

Disaster risk reduction and resilience building is non-existent in Iran. Every time, there is an incidence of flood or earthquake, it becomes evident that the buildings had been constructed with bad material, not resistant or resilient to earthquakes and floods.

The relief efforts have always been poor. Due to widespread corruption in the ruling hierarchy, even popular and international aid cannot get to the victims. Women and children are the most vulnerable in these situations. Following are some examples:

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<sup>321</sup> Farideh Olad Ghobad, member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run ICANA.ir, December 17, 2019

<sup>322</sup> Derakhshani, member of the Social Directorate of the Welfare Organization, the state-run ICANA.ir, December 17, 2019

<sup>323</sup> Derakhshani, member of the Social Directorate of the Welfare Organization, the state-run ICANA.ir, December 17, 2019

<sup>324</sup> Derakhshani, member of the Social Directorate of the Welfare Organization, the state-run ICANA.ir, December 17, 2019

<sup>325</sup> The state-run DiyarMirza.ir website, December 3, 2020



A woman sitting among the ruins of her house and belongings after floods in Pol-e Dokhtar, Lorestan Province

### Flashfloods

- During the floods in Spring 2019, many buildings and bridges were destroyed or extensively damaged by the flashfloods. At least 20 women and several girl children died in the devastating floods throughout Iran. No exact figures have been announced by the regime officials. But real evidence, including the number of submerged villages and the cities destroyed by floods indicates that the actual figures must be much greater.<sup>326</sup>
- A middle-aged woman by the name of Ana Sultan, in Golestan Province, described their situation after the devastating floods. “We were stuck for one-and-a-half days on the upper storey of the house, without any food or toilets. People came with trucks. We jumped from up there and were saved.”
- A flood-hit girl in Lorestan Province said, “We have not received any assistance, so far. We sleep in cars at night. We have no place to go. We have no tents and did not receive one from the government.”
- 14 Iranian provinces were washed away by massive floods in spring 2020 and 2021 while the regime did not take any effective measure to help people. Obviously, women and children are the prime victims and suffer most during such natural disaster crises.

<sup>326</sup> NCRI Women’s Committee monthly report, [February-March 2019](#) and [April 2019](#)



- On April 9, 2020, massive floods swept through 14 provinces across Iran. In a matter of five days, the flood over-ran 18 provinces. 29 persons lost their lives and 41 people were injured.<sup>327</sup>
- On July 15, 2020, 21 cities in Iran were flooded due to heavy rain in the provinces of Tehran, East Azerbaijan, Ardabil, Gilan, Mazandaran and North Khorasan. As a result of this flood, two people were killed in Ardabil, two in Amol and one in Rezvanshahr. A 65-year-old woman died in the city of Talesh.
- On September 20, 2020, another flood occurred in Talesh. Seven cities were flooded. 2 people were killed. Roads to 100 villages were blocked. 20 rural houses were completely destroyed and 240 houses were damaged. 100,000 hectares of farms and gardens in Talesh city, which are the local people's source of income, were damaged.
- October 4, 2020, flood in Meshkinshahr destroyed more than 100 residential and commercial units. In the first days of August, floods caused 350 billion Tomans worth of damages in this city.
- The floods in March 2021 inflicted damages on some cities in East Azerbaijan province and destroyed the iron bridges in Urmia, capital of West Azerbaijan Province.<sup>328</sup>
- Floods in northern Kerman Province (southern Iran) in April 2021, left several people injured. Roads, gardens, and agricultural lands suffered extensive damages.<sup>329</sup>
- The head of the Relief and Rescue Organization said floods had inundated 14 provinces in the period from April 29, 2021, at 6:30 a.m. until May 5, 2021. He said: "During this period, 14 provinces of East and West Azerbaijan, Isfahan, Tehran, South Khorasan, Razavi Khorasan and North Khorasan, Semnan, Sistan and Baluchestan, Khuzestan, Kerman, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Mazandaran and Yazd were in need of rescue services. 47 villages and 6 cities in eight provinces of Sistan and Baluchestan, Kerman, Yazd, Tehran, Semnan, South Khorasan and Khorasan Razavi and Isfahan had the greatest impact of these rains. We had 11 people missing."<sup>330</sup>

## Earthquakes

- In the earthquake in **Kermanshah** in November 2017, apartment complexes built by government contractors were destroyed and their residents rendered homeless.<sup>331</sup>
- The teams assigned to help the people, left them alone. The contractors employed to rebuild the stricken areas, abandoned their projects and banks did not grant loans to the victims of earthquake.<sup>332</sup>
- More than 750 families in the earthquake-stricken areas are still living in trailers, two years after the earthquake.<sup>333</sup>
- The freezing cold weather in Kermanshah Province led to the deaths of a number people, including children and infants.<sup>334</sup>

<sup>327</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, April 10, 2020

<sup>328</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, March 24, 2021

<sup>329</sup> The state television, April 16, 2021

<sup>330</sup> The state-run BORNA news website, May 5, 2021

<sup>331</sup> Parviz Fattah, head of the Relief Committee, the state-run Tasnim news agency, January 14, 2018

<sup>332</sup> The state-run ICANA news agency, November 7, 2018; Farhad Tajarri, MP from Qasr-e Shirin, Sarpol-e Zahab and Gilan-e Gharb, the state-run BORNA news agency, November 8, 2018

<sup>333</sup> The state-run Young Journalists Club, January 19, 2020

<sup>334</sup> [Deaths of 11 pregnant women, 39 children under 5 in Kermanshah](#), website of NCRI Women's Committee, December 6, 2017

- One of the residents said, “The situation is particularly bad for women. Many have suffered miscarriages and pregnant women are living in difficult conditions in tents.”<sup>335</sup> He said, “Pregnant women had been promised to get a trailer. Our neighboring woman went to get hers; she was told that she could get a trailer only if she was eight or nine months pregnant.”
- Some women had to deliver their babies in the tents, and they have nowhere else to go. Then they contract infections and face thousands of other problems.<sup>336</sup>
- Frequent earthquakes measuring 4 to 5.2 on the Richter scale shook cities and villages in different parts of **Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad** Province from May 2 to 13, 2018, leaving hundreds of people injured, inflicting extensive damages. Women in the quake-hit towns and villages protested against government official’s failure to attend to their problems.<sup>337</sup>
- An earthquake measuring 5.9 on the Richter scale shook **East Azerbaijan** on November 8, 2019. 30 residential units were destroyed. In the village of Vernkesh, two women and two young girls lost their lives. After two months, people were left homeless in the cold. They do not have a bathroom. They live in tents or barracks with leaking roof. There are 340 families living in this village.<sup>338</sup>
- 60% of earthquake victims in Vernkesh are women.<sup>339</sup> Zahra Abedi, a 10-year-old girl, was still alive after being pulled out from under the rubble, but lost her life due to the lack of a doctor and timely action.<sup>340</sup>
- An earthquake measuring 7.5 on the Richter scale shook the Qotur county and 40 surrounding villages on February 23, 2020. Some 100 people were injured. 3,500 families had their homes destroyed or left homeless. In one month, more than 30 aftershocks occurred in the range of Qotur, Khoy and Salmas. These regions are among the most deprived regions of **West Azerbaijan**. Residents' livestock is in danger of extinction. Rural women collected nylons and made shelters for themselves in sub-zero temperatures. Local sources reported, “The Revolutionary Guards are catching fish from the muddy water. They suggested to the people affected by the earthquake in the villages that whoever wants a tent should pay 35,000 Tomans a night.” According to local sources, “The Red Crescent has handed over 400 tents to the municipality and 300 tents to another institution, but these institutions have so far not provided any tents to the quake victims.”
- On February 17, 2021, a magnitude 6.5 earthquake shook the small town of Sisakht in **Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad** Province. 47 people were injured. More than 70% of people's homes were damaged. 200 women heads of households were affected by the earthquake. 3,700 houses were damaged. The city’s agricultural sector, especially the fisheries sector and fish farms, suffered 950 billion Rials in damages.<sup>341</sup> 40 schools with 171 classrooms have been severely damaged in Sisakht and its surrounding villages in Dena county or need to be repaired.<sup>342</sup> One of the residents of Sisakht posted a video clip on the internet in which he says: “Dear friends, if you hear our voice, here is the Red Crescent building of Dena county, the city of Sisakht. Due to the lack of the smallest

<sup>335</sup> [Women’s condition deplorable four months after the quake](#), website of NCRI Women’s Committee, March 17, 2018

<sup>336</sup> The state-run salamatnews.com, March 15, 2018)

<sup>337</sup> The state-run News Network website, May 2, 2018

<sup>338</sup> The official IRNA news agency, December 11, 2019

<sup>339</sup> The state-run Young Journalists Club website, November 9, 2019

<sup>340</sup> The state-run Young Journalists Club website, November 10, 2019

<sup>341</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, March 6, 2021

<sup>342</sup> The official IRNA news agency, March 4, 2021



amenities such as tents, blankets, food and clothing, this woman was forced to go to the roof to throw herself down from the building. The situation is the same outside and inside the Red Crescent building. People have gathered and are protesting."

Despite so many problems for women in the disaster-hit areas, the measures undertaken by the regime are limited to a few educational workshops.

### Changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes

- The culture promoted by the ruling regime has led to further male domination and violence against women. The legal, judicial and disciplinary structures are such that men allow themselves to imply force and commit violence against women.<sup>343</sup>
- Male domination and its related prejudices have grown in the younger generation, and based on the culture promoted, men consider domestic violence against women as a right they are entitled to.<sup>344</sup>
- Since mid-summer 2002, there has been a proposal to register the backward misogynistic tradition of "khoon-bas" as a "valuable cultural heritage" among regime officials and the media. The cease blood tradition (Khoon bas) is a kind of nomadic ransom for resolving individual disputes and tribal wars, according to which in the event of murder, desecration, assault and any deviation and deviance of the inhabitants, the elders of the tribes intervene and sacrifice innocent women and girls to end the conflict between the men of the tribes.<sup>345</sup>
- The clerical regime has also refused to raise the legal age of marriage for girls which destroys the lives of hundreds of thousands of young women and girls, and has led to a plethora of social ills.<sup>346</sup>

### Other

#### Gender gap due to laws in economic sphere

In an interview with the official IRNA news agency on November 7, 2017, Shahindokht Molaverdi, who presently serves as Rouhani's deputy for citizen's rights, gave a good picture of the plight of women in Iran's male-dominated job market, their rights to work and their working rights. Excerpts of her interview are illuminating:

One of the most important reasons for gender gap in the economy is the existence of laws in the economic sphere 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.

Although employment has been recognized in the law as an equal right for all citizens, but in practice men have priority in employment and economic opportunities.

<sup>343</sup> Ahmad Bokharaii, director of social damages group affiliated with the Sociology Association, interview with the official IRNA news agency, July 18, 2018

<sup>344</sup> Interview with a sociology expert, the official IRNA news agency, July 18, 2018

<sup>345</sup> [Call for registration of cease blood tradition promotes misogyny, violence in Iran](#), articles, NCRI Women's Committee website, October 25, 2020

<sup>346</sup> This issue has been dealt with in length in response to questions 12-17.

This is a problem that has remained unsolved despite passage of four decades since the Islamic Revolution and despite women's endeavors to prove their capabilities.

Men are authorized to prevent their wives from having a job. This is another restriction that women face in economic participation which has made women's unemployment twice as much as the unemployment of men.

The male-dominated atmosphere in decision-making, law-making and management arenas is also another factor which keeps women away from the excitements of presence and participation. This means that women have to earn the permission of their husbands, fathers or brothers for making an investment or using shared sources. They also need the signature of a man on their contract to obtain facilities and resources. When they have to travel abroad to sign a contract with non-Iranian parties, they must have their husbands' letter of consent for leaving the country. These factors have frustrated and disappointed women and over time, they have left the scene in favor of their male rivals.

Having job experience in senior positions of management is another obstacle and condition for the presence of women in political and economic fields.

Women's participation in the parliament, governorates, municipalities and other political arenas is an indication of the reality.

### **3. Over the past five years, has the state acted to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination?**

None, whatsoever. The regime justifies discrimination against women and does not endeavor to prevent them or promote the rights of women and girls.

### **4. Have conflicts, climate-induced or other disasters or other events affected the implementation of the BPfA/CEDAW in your country?**

The Iranian regime does not intend to implement the BPfA or the CEDAW and is not a signatory to the international convention. As a result, the recurrent disasters could not make the situation worse for the regime in implementing the BPfA/CEDAW. Whereas they caused tremendous difficulties and problems for women and children whose rights are not protected by any government or private entity.



## INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT, SHARED PROSPERITY, AND DECENT WORK

5. What actions has your country taken to advance gender equality in relation to women's role in paid work and employment?

Ensured the same employment opportunities for women as men, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment

### Discrimination against women's employment

Women in Iran are systematically discriminated against in the law, employment, and the job market.

- In July 2013, the mullahs' parliament adopted a bill<sup>347</sup> according to which employment priority in all public and private sectors is given to married men who have children. Next in line are married men who do not have children. Women who have children are the third in line, while women who do not have children do not even exist on the list.<sup>348</sup>
- The Iranian parliament put further restrictions on women's employment by passing the bill of "protecting hijab and chastity" on January 3, 2016. According to item 5 of this bill, women's work is limited to businesses that have segregated workspace and only from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.
- In addition, "the bill to reduce the working hours of women who have special conditions" was passed on February 1, 2016. Rouhani's deputy for Women and Family Affairs, Shahindokht Molaverdi, admitted that the bill would effectively result in the gradual elimination of women from the workforce.<sup>349</sup>
- The recruitment of women in government jobs has confronted more obstacles every year. According to government orders in 2014, only 16 of 2,700 job opportunities were allocated to women.<sup>350</sup>
- The Ministry of Education employs one woman per every five men. From the 3,703 individuals selected by the Ministry of Education through the employment exam, 3,073 were men, and 630 were women.<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>347</sup> [Population growth, mullahs' hoax to exploit women](#), the NCRI Women's Committee website, July 6, 2015

<sup>348</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, April 9, 2014

<sup>349</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, February 1, 2016; donya-e-eqtesad.com, February 3, 2016

<sup>350</sup> The state-run donya-e-eqtesad.com website, September 29, 2015

- In the 2017 government employment test, 961 job opportunities were allocated to men, and only 16 were assigned to women.<sup>352</sup>
- Iran is among the countries that offer the smallest number of job opportunities to women and have a high unemployment rate. A report by the International Labor Organization, ILO, published on March 8, 2018, indicated that women's unemployment rate in Iran is double that of men.
- The average rate of women's participation in the labor market is 31% among the countries in the Middle East and North Africa group, but seven of the 19 countries (Egypt, Algeria, Iran, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen) in the region have 20% or less and are among the lowest in the world.<sup>353</sup>
- According to the International Labor Organization's estimates, women's participation in the labor force (percentage of female population above 15 years of age) was 17.89% in 2017, 17.72% in 2018, and 17.61% in 2019.<sup>354</sup>

### Male-dominated job market

Iran's job market is male-dominated, and the gender gap is widening.

Following are the data made available by the Iranian state agencies or media from 2016 to 2020, albeit they might be conflicting due to the regime's lack of transparency, as explained in the previous chapter. The data provided by the World Bank or the World Economic Forum are also based on the data provided by Iran's ruling regime, and there is no independent source that could have access to the accurate data.

- Before the 1979 Revolution, women's participation in the labor force was 12%. The World Bank put the average value for Iran from 1990 to 2017 at 14.21 percent.<sup>355</sup>
- According to a survey by the National Statistics Center on the Iranian workforce for the Iranian year 1395 (March 21, 2016 – March 20, 2017), from 20,654,750 people who held jobs in Iran, only 16.2% were women, and 83.8% were men. 48.1 percent of women with employment had higher education compared to 26.1 percent of employed men. In addition to the gender gap, this data shows a discriminatory approach to women's employment despite their better education.
- A survey by the Labor Ministry's Center for Statistics and Strategic Information said for the period spanning from March 2016 to March 2017, men's share of wage-earning jobs was 82.7 percent compared to women's 17.3 percent share.<sup>356</sup>
- Iran's total labor force in 2016 was 21.3 million, which includes only 3 million women out of 27 million working-age women.<sup>357</sup>
- According to another official report, women's participation rate in the job market in 2017 was only 16.8%, which is considered very low compared to 71.4%.<sup>358</sup>
- In 2019, women constituted 62% of university graduates but held only 4% of managerial positions.<sup>359</sup>

<sup>351</sup> The state-run Arman newspaper, August 9, 2015

<sup>352</sup> The state-run Khabaronline.ir, July 27, 2016

<sup>353</sup> World Economic Forum's [Global Gender Gap Report 2021](#), published on March 31, 2021

<sup>354</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS>

<sup>355</sup> The GlobalEconomy.com, the World Bank

<sup>356</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, January 23, 2018

<sup>357</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, June 8, 2016

<sup>358</sup> The official IRNA news agency, January 17, 2019

- The unemployment rate of educated women in most provinces is 3 to 4 times higher than men's.<sup>360</sup>
- According to Iran's National Statistics Center, 65% of unemployed women have higher education.<sup>361</sup>
- Women make up about 50% of the population, but their economic participation rate is below 15%, said an official in October 2019.<sup>362</sup>
- Yet in 2021, it was ironically claimed that that women's economic participation in Iran was 15.3%, having dropped by 3.4% in autumn 2020.<sup>363</sup>
- According to the latest National Statistics Center report, women make up 18% of jobholders in the 24-million labor force, 4,320,000.<sup>364</sup>
- The quarterly economic report by the National Statistics Center announced the labor force in Iran was 23,263,000 as of Autumn 2020.<sup>365</sup>
- According to the National Statistics Center report published in April 2021 on employment and unemployment in Iran during winter 2021, the number of employed women dropped down to its lowest in the past five years, i.e., less than 3.5 million.<sup>366</sup>
- Many countries have 80% economic participation (for men and women), but this figure is around 40% in Iran. So, women have meager economic participation in Iran.<sup>367</sup>
- Based on World Bank statistics, the average economic participation in countries worldwide is around 60%. In Iran, however, the official economic participation is 41%.<sup>368</sup>
- The rate of economic participation is calculated differently in Iran. Based on the criterion of the clerical regime in Iran, the "economically active" population ironically includes those who have jobs and those looking for jobs.<sup>369</sup>
- 85% of the 40-million population of Iranian women do not have paid jobs.<sup>370</sup>
- The Global Gender Gap Report 2021 puts Iran among the world's ten lowest-ranked countries in terms of income gender gaps, with Iranian woman's income being only 18% of that of a man.<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>359</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, December 1, 2019

<sup>360</sup> Massoumeh Ebtekar, director of the presidential directorate on Women and Family Affairs, The state-run Etemadonline.com, October 21, 2019

<sup>361</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, July 19, 2019

<sup>362</sup> Ali Zainivand, deputy for political and social affairs in the Governorate of Sistan and Baluchestan Province, The official IRNA news agency, October 3, 2019

<sup>363</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, May 8, 2021

<sup>364</sup> The state-run Daneshjoo news agency, August 9, 2020

<sup>365</sup> Quarterly Report on Iran's Economy in Autumn 2020, published Winter 2021

<sup>366</sup> The state-run Tel.salamatnews.com, April 2021

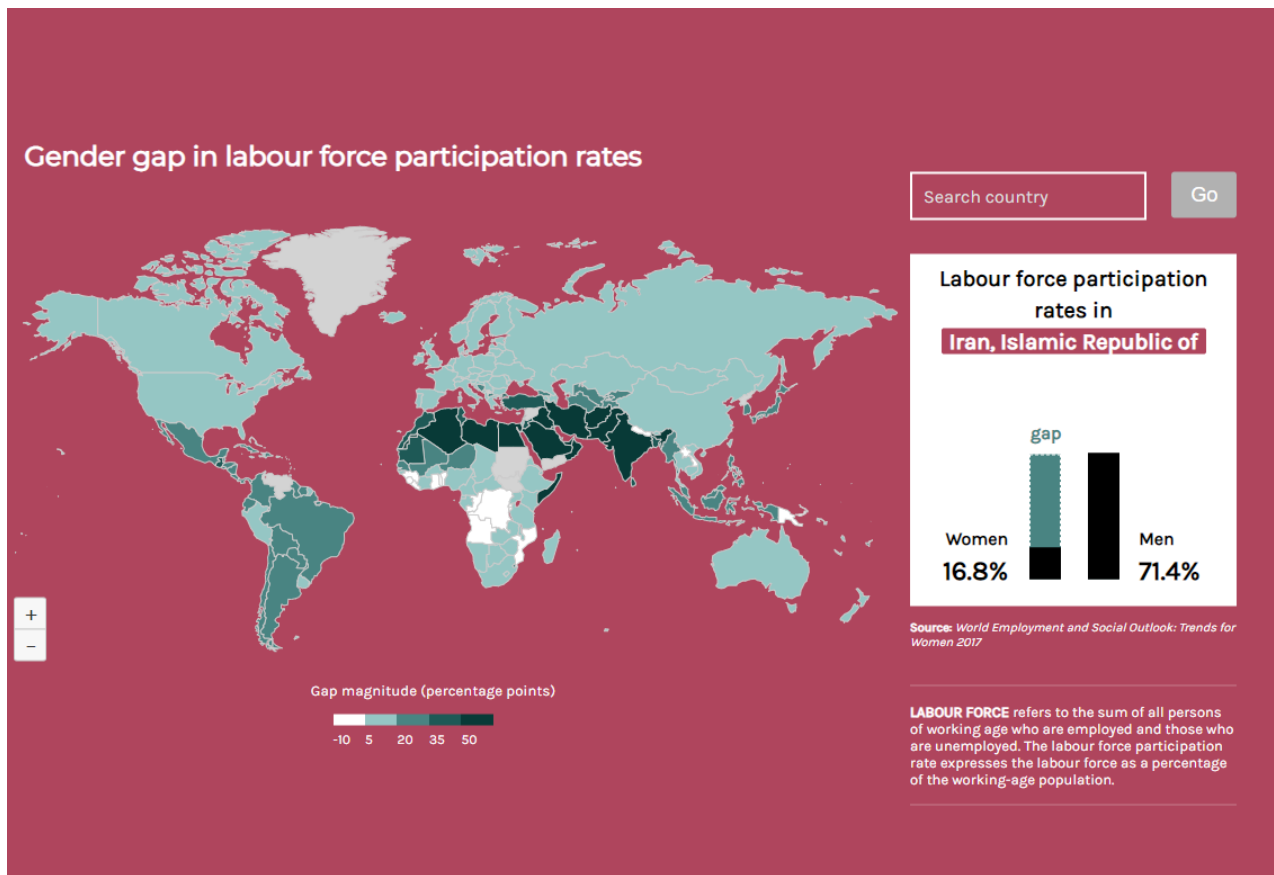
<sup>367</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, May 4, 2019

<sup>368</sup> Radio Farda website, March 8, 2021

<sup>369</sup> Radio Farda website, March 8, 2021

<sup>370</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, May 8, 2021

<sup>371</sup> World Economic Forum's [Global Gender Gap Report 2021](https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-gender-gap-report-2021/), published on March 31, 2021



International Labor Organization's data 2021

### 25% increase in unemployment in just seven years

- The number of unemployed women in Iran has increased by 200,000 from 830,996 in 2011 to more than 1,037,000 women in 2017. That is a 25% increase in just seven years.<sup>372</sup>
- An average of 100,000 women gets fired every year.<sup>373</sup>
- Addressing his rivals in the election campaign, the mullahs' president Hassan Rouhani said 860,000 women had been expelled from their jobs in four years, which means 215,000 women per year.<sup>374</sup>
- 85.9% of women under 30 do not have any jobs.<sup>375</sup>
- The National Statistics Center of Iran declared in summer 2016 that the average unemployment rate for young women in Iran reached 47.3% in summer 2015.
- The unemployment rate of young women in 2015 had reached the highest level in 20 years.<sup>376</sup>

<sup>372</sup> Report by the Iranian Labor Ministry's Centre for Strategic Statistics and Information, October 2018, the state-run ISNA news agency, November 21, 2018

<sup>373</sup> Abol Hassan Firouzabadi, deputy Minister of Labor and Social Welfare, the official IRNA news agency, September 6, 2015

<sup>374</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, May 9, 2017

<sup>375</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, January 1, 2016; the state-run Tabnak website, January 5, 2016

<sup>376</sup> Shahindokht Molaverdi, former presidential deputy for women and family affairs, the state-run psychnews.ir, January 22, 2017



- The number of women with bachelor's degrees working as simple workers is on the rise. These women prefer not to mention their degrees to be able to get hired.<sup>377</sup>
- Unemployment rates among young people, women, and educated women are alarmingly high, particularly in western provinces. In some provinces, educated women's unemployment rates fluctuate between 63% and 78%.<sup>378</sup>
- A 2017 study indicates that 52 percent of female university and college graduates were "economically inactive," meaning they had given up looking for jobs.<sup>379</sup>
- "Women have the highest unemployment rate" and "women's economic participation is not noteworthy" in Iran.<sup>380</sup>
- In autumn 2020, educated men's share of the unemployment rate was 28.1%, while women's share was 70.3%. So, educated women experienced the taste of unemployment 42% more than men did. Job opportunities are not equally divided between women and men, and the Coronavirus pandemic has aggravated the situation.<sup>381</sup>
- According to the National Statistics Center report published in April 2021 on employment and unemployment in Iran during winter 2021, the number of employed women dropped down to its lowest in the past five years, i.e., less than 3.5 million.<sup>382</sup>

### The impact of Covid 19 pandemic on women's jobs

- Women make up 70% of those who lost their jobs due to the Covid- 19 crisis by summer 2020.<sup>383</sup>
- More than 1,000,000 women lost their jobs during the pandemic. 145,000 lost their jobs in winter 2020.<sup>384</sup> About 749,000 women lost their employment in spring 2020, and 120,000 more lost their jobs in summer 2020.<sup>385</sup>
- 50% of the jobs lost in spring 2020, 60% of the jobs lost in summer, and between 70-75% of the jobs lost in autumn 2020 belonged to women, most of whom worked in small workshops with a maximum of four workers. Most of these jobs were unstable, and women and educated people borne the brunt of these layoffs.<sup>386</sup>
- After the coronavirus outbreak and the shutdown of many businesses, women left the labor market 1.6 times more than men.<sup>387</sup>
- Iran's economically inactive population grew by 2,181,000 from 34,410,000 in autumn 2019 to 36,591,000 in autumn 2020. This increase was comprised of 1,370,000 women vis-a-vis 807,000 men.<sup>388</sup>

<sup>377</sup> Hossein Akbari, a member of the Workers Services Association, the state-run asriran.com, September 23, 2015

<sup>378</sup> The state-run Dana news agency, July 2, 2016

<sup>379</sup> The state-run Kayhan daily newspaper, June 20, 2017 <http://kayhan.ir/fa/news/106849>

<sup>380</sup> Alireza Mahboub, General Secretary of the House of Workers (a government foundation) and member of the Social Committee of the mullahs' parliament, the official IRNA news agency, April 28, 2018

<sup>381</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, May 8, 2021

<sup>382</sup> The state-run Tel.salamatnews.com, April 2021

<sup>383</sup> The Quarterly Report of the National Statistics Center, Autumn 2020

<sup>384</sup> The state-run ILNA News Agency, April 11, 2020

<sup>385</sup> Aladdin Azvaji, Director General of the Employment Policy and Development Office of the Ministry of Labor, The state-run Arman daily newspaper, January 30, 2021

<sup>386</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, May 8, 2021

<sup>387</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, May 8, 2021

<sup>388</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, May 8, 2021

- Most rural women in Iran do husbandry, grow medicinal plants, do handicrafts, etc. They have lost their jobs after the outbreak of the Coronavirus.<sup>389</sup>
- Since the livelihood of rural people depends on dairy products, they have no customers to purchase their products since the daily markets and stores have closed down due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus.<sup>390</sup>

**Strengthened/enforced laws and workplace policies and practices that prohibit discrimination, including on the grounds of marriage, pregnancy, or maternity in the recruitment, retention, and promotion of women in the public and private sectors, and equal pay legislation**

- Women's unemployment index has gone up, partly because of the wave of expulsions of women. An average of 100,000 women gets fired every year for taking maternity leave.<sup>391</sup>
- The General Board of Directors of the Administrative Court of Justice rescinded a directive that had previously banned laying off working mothers for two years while they nurse their children.<sup>392</sup>
- The rescinded directive No. 49517, dated June 9, 2014, issued by the general director for labor relations and service compensation at the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, had stated that "laying off working women during their maternal leave and the period while they nurse their children (up to two years) is forbidden under whatever pretext."
- Employers in the private and informal sectors have set conditions on the marital status of women, making them sign papers and agree to be fired if they get pregnant.<sup>393</sup>
- Starting in Autumn 2017, child benefits were no longer paid to women heads of household. The decision was implemented abruptly, and the amount previously paid to them was withdrawn at once from their accounts.<sup>394</sup>
- Even in official and government jobs, the paychecks of formally employed women who receive salaries are not equal to those of their male colleagues. Men enjoy a series of benefits and rights for heading the household of which women are deprived.<sup>395</sup>
- Women face discrimination even in formal jobs. For example, in the Education Ministry, a married woman is not entitled to child benefits unless her husband is deceased or separated. In other words, she must be the head of household, and she must prove with documents that she is the guardian of her children. Men, however, do not need to show any evidence when having a child. For every new child, they receive an amount of benefit. Even when they get married, their salaries are increased. However, none of these benefits have been considered for women, and their wages are not raised. Usually, when an office grants loans, men always enjoy priority over women.<sup>396</sup>

<sup>389</sup> Fatemeh Esmailipour, executive director of the Micro Credit Funds for Rural Women, The state-run BORNA news agency, June 16, 2020

<sup>390</sup> Fatemeh Esmailipour, executive director of the Micro Credit Funds for Rural Women, The state-run BORNA news agency, June 16, 2020

<sup>391</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, June 30, 2015; the state-run entekhab.ir website, August 1, 2015

<sup>392</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, September 15, 2017

<sup>393</sup> The state-run Shaffaf website, August 2, 2015 <http://www.shafaf.ir/fa/news/335310>

<sup>394</sup> Zahra Sa'ii, spokeswoman for the parliamentary Social Commission, the state-run Salamatnews.com, March 28, 2018

<sup>395</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, March 17, 2021

<sup>396</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, March 17, 2021

# Women's Economic Participation

## 0.19%

### 15%

Female participation in the labor force = 15%  
Women earn about one-fifth of men  
Most women are employed in the informal sector with low wages, no insurance or benefits

### 65%

Only 3.9M out of 30.96M women (12.6%) are employed  
65% of unemployed women have higher education  
Women's unemployment 3 to 4 times higher than men

### 70%

From winter to fall 2020, over 1 million women lost their jobs in Iran, i.e. 70% of the total layoffs  
145,000 women lost employment in winter 2020  
749,000 women lost employment in spring 2020  
120,000 more lost employment in summer 2020

**Provided social security for women, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave**

Women in Iran do not enjoy social security or any form of social protection.

The clerical regime occasionally introduces various cosmetic programs in its propaganda. Still, none of them are implemented, or their overall impact is so low that severe problems remain.

- Lack of social security is one of the three main problems women heads of households face in Iran. The three main problems are discrimination and inequality, unemployment, and lack of social security.<sup>397</sup>
- There are at least 3.6 million women heads of household in Iran, and every year, 60,300 more women are added to this population.<sup>398</sup>
- Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpay, head of the Welfare Organization, acknowledged that only 180,000 women heads of household consistently receive aid from the organization, and 100,000 receive social insurances. Bandpay said, "With regards to job loans to women without guardians or with bad guardians, however, the organization faces major challenges."<sup>399</sup>
- The Welfare Organization's aid is a monthly pension of around 70,000 Tomans (\$5) which is nothing compared to the poverty line of 8 million Tomans (\$700).
- Women have the largest share in informal jobs.<sup>400</sup>
- Only 1.5 million, i.e., 50 percent, of working women have insurances, and the other half work in the informal sector, without any social or legal support.<sup>401</sup>
- An official of the Interior Ministry's Social Security Organization Research Institute said 80 percent of uninsured job holders in Iran are women.<sup>402</sup>
- The number of insured women is only 19 percent of the total number of employed individuals in Iran because the unofficial sector mainly recruits women.<sup>403</sup>
- The minimum wage and food basket is not paid to the workers... Recently, I was in a meeting in Tehransar, where 200 needy female workers were in attendance. None of these women had received subsidies to support their livelihood. This was asserted by Soheila Jelodarzadeh, a former member of parliament.<sup>404</sup>
- Despite increasing one million women heads of households over four years, plans to support them had not yet reached a definite conclusion in the year 2020.<sup>405</sup>
- For around four years, the authorities and relevant agencies have been considering a comprehensive plan to attend to and empower women heads of households, but it has yet to be ratified. The plan is covered by Article 80.T of the Sixth Development Program

<sup>397</sup> Susan Bastani, strategic studies deputy at the directorate for women and family affairs, the official IRNA news agency, May 4, 2019

<sup>398</sup> Moussavi Chalak, chair of the Social Aid Association in Iran, the state-run salamatnews.com, May 19, 2018

<sup>399</sup> The state-run Tabnak website, February 13, 2018

<sup>400</sup> Massoumeh Ebtekar, presidential deputy for Women and Family Affairs, Labor Ministry gathering in Tehran, April 28, 2018

<sup>401</sup> Minister of Labor and Social Welfare, the state-run Mehr news agency, June 8, 2016

<sup>402</sup> The state-run khabaronline.ir, November 24, 2016

<sup>403</sup> Vahideh Negin, Labor Minister's advisor, the state-run Tejarat-e Emrouz website, April 24, 2015  
<http://tejaratemrouz.ir/fa/news/2988>

<sup>404</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, February 1, 2020

<sup>405</sup> The state-run Khorasan Daily- September 16, 2020

(2017-2021). The parliamentary Budget Commission rejected the bill proposed for reform in this article by the directorate for Women and Family Affairs.<sup>406</sup>

- In the 2019 budget, 230 billion Tomans was set for insurance for women heads of household. However, this budget was eliminated in the 2020 budget.<sup>407</sup>
- The majority of working women work in the informal sector, which the government greenlights to make their workers work longer hours, pay them less, and deny them benefits and insurance.<sup>408</sup>
- Again, most women working in the informal sector are women heads of household.<sup>409</sup>
- The increase in the number of women heads of household in Iran has reached alarming proportions. This situation can lead to widespread problems and represents a wake-up call to the community. Statistics show that women head 14% of Iranian households.<sup>410</sup>
- Zahra Bonyanian, a charity director: "Information about women heads of households are kept confidential."<sup>411</sup>
- There are no exact statistics on the number of women heads of household in the province because any specific institution does not support some.<sup>412</sup>
- The Welfare Organization has set many conditions for the protection of women. For example, if they are employed, their salary should be 40% less than the basic salary announced by the Ministry of Labor. Otherwise, they are considered capable and are not subject to receive the services of this body.<sup>413</sup>
- The assistance of the state Welfare Organization covers only 250,000 women. Assuming that all of these 250,000 women are heads of households, at least 3,750,000 of the remaining women heads of households are deprived of even this meager aid and face deadly poverty.<sup>414</sup>
- Most women heads of households have a low level of education and professional skills and work in the economy's informal sector. Their jobs are mostly part-time, uninsured, and with lower benefits, and they are among the first group to be fired during economic crises.<sup>415</sup>
- Despite their capabilities, women heads of households face many employment problems. Only 10 percent of them have access to employment, although 30 percent are qualified in at least one profession.<sup>416</sup>
- About 68% of unemployed persons were women heads of household.<sup>417</sup>

<sup>406</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, May 9, 2020

<sup>407</sup> Persian BBC website, April 5, 2020

<sup>408</sup> The official IRNA news agency, April 28, 2018

<sup>409</sup> Fatemeh Pourn, Secretary of the Union of Women Workers in Qazvin, the official IRNA news agency, May 3, 2018

<sup>410</sup> The state-run Jahanasanat.ir, September 21, 2020

<sup>411</sup> The state-run IMNA news agency, December 8, 2020

<sup>412</sup> Somayyeh Ghasemi Tusi, director general of women and family affairs at the Mazandaran provincial governor's office, The state-run ILNA news agency, December 6, 2020

<sup>413</sup> The Welfare Organization's official website, March 30, 2020

<sup>414</sup> The Welfare Organization's official website, March 30, 2020

<sup>415</sup> Zahra Bonyanian, a charity director, the state-run IMNA news agency, December 8, 2020

<sup>416</sup> Mahmoud Abbasi, Deputy Minister of Justice for Human Rights and International Affairs, The state-run salamatnews.com, January 20, 2021

<sup>417</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, October 11, 2020

### Improved financial inclusion and access to credit, including for self-employed women

- Women who wish to start and are capable of running a business have great difficulties receiving loans for the initial investment because bank managers think that women would not be able to pay back.<sup>418</sup>
- Financial institutions consider women as high-risk costumers, and therefore, they make limited resources available to women.<sup>419</sup> Women lack support for entrepreneurship since they are not trusted by banks and have difficulty in receiving loans. They are required to place deposits.<sup>420</sup>
- The lack of a husband's or father's approval to travel, the absence of tax and economic incentives and support, and officials' ignorance about economics are among the reasons no adequate measures have been taken over the past 40 years regarding women's entrepreneurship despite their dignity and capabilities.<sup>421</sup>
- There are many disruptive laws about women's work. If a woman wants to start even a small workshop, legal obstacles will hinder her activity. A male who wants to be economically active can easily access information from his male colleagues about the market situation, government grants, and marketing. But women's access to such networks that can show her the way is minimal. There are plenty of industrial counseling centers available to men. But women, who want to work in various sectors, do not have access to centers that could help them develop and implement their creative ideas.<sup>422</sup>
- Institutions set up for women focus only on family affairs. When these institutions consider economic activity, they only support home-based businesses. And those types of businesses are both unstable and cannot lead to favorable women's empowerment.<sup>423</sup>
- 70% of Iran's one million carpet weavers are women, and a large percentage of them are heads of households. By this account, the number of women weaving carpets amounts to at least 700,000. Only 320,000 carpet weavers (both men and women) have insurance.<sup>424</sup>
- The rural women of Iran face many obstacles in doing their work. Having no education about modern markets, they lack practical financial skills and have limited access to technical training. They are not aware of the need to adapt their professional skills to the dominant style of consumers' life. They face political and economic restrictions in accessing world markets. At the same time, the domestic economy is unstable, and the prices are high. Brokers take advantage of all these deficiencies. They pay very little for

<sup>418</sup> Fatemeh Zolqadr, member of the Labor Committee of the parliament, said, "Many women who wish to start a business, do not have the initial capital despite their capability to run one. When we speak of supporting employment and occupation for women, the first thing is to provide the initial capital, and accordingly, women who wish to start a business must be able to be granted loans... Getting loans is more difficult for women compared to men. Thinking that women would have more problems in paying back their loans compared to men, banks refuse to grant them loans." The state-run ILNA news agency, October 9, 2019

<sup>419</sup> Fatemeh Ghafouri, the head of the Businesswomen's Association in Qazvin, the official IRNA News Agency, July 13, 2020

<sup>420</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, November 24, 2019

<sup>421</sup> Fatemeh Ghafouri, the head of the Businesswomen's Association in Qazvin, the official IRNA News Agency, July 13, 2020

<sup>422</sup> Nasrin Yousefi, an entrepreneur and industrialist activist in Khorasan Province, the official IRNA news agency, May 21, 2018

<sup>423</sup> Fatemeh Ghafouri, the head of the Businesswomen's Association in Qazvin, the official IRNA News Agency, July 13, 2020

<sup>424</sup> Abdollah Bahrami, the CEO of National Union of Hand-woven Carpet Producers, cited by the state-run ILNA news agency, May 16, 2018



products that are the outcome of long hours of hard work by nomad women. Then, they sell the products for prices several-fold higher.<sup>425</sup>

- No action has been taken concerning the handicraft of nomad women, and there is no plan. For example, the value of every kilogram of the fibers nomad women spin is between 60 to 70 thousand Tomans. But since they have no access to the markets, they must sell this and other products to brokers at one-third of its actual value.<sup>426</sup>
- Women are not permitted to open short-term or long-term bank accounts for their children. Based on Articles 1180 and 1181 of the Civil Code, the opening of an account must be in the presence of the father.<sup>427</sup> All banks must abide by it.<sup>428</sup>
- Rouhani's government declared in 2018 that they had a project to facilitate jobs for rural women. However, some 2,300 Micro Credit Funds for Rural Women were not covered by such facilities, an advisor in the Ministry of Agricultural Crusade said. The general director of the nomad and rural women's affairs office in the Ministry of Agricultural Crusade said rural women needed to deposit bail to receive bank loans, which is a significant obstacle since banks do not accept village (rural) estates as deposits.<sup>429</sup>

### Supported the transition from informal to formal work, including legal and policy measures that benefit women in informal employment

#### "Employment not an issue for women"

The overall attitude and vision dominating the Iranian regime and its policies are against women's economic participation and formal employment. So, the government could not be expected to support the transition from informal to formal work or adopt legal and policy measures that would benefit women in informal employment.

- Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader of the clerical regime, explicitly says, "God has created women for a particular area of life ... Employment is not a major issue for women."<sup>430</sup>
- His representative in Mashhad, mullah Ahmad Alam-ol Hoda, says, "One of the problems our society has to deal with today, is women's excessive involvement in economic matters and in their husbands' economic activities which is not appreciated in Islam because external (outside the house) and economic issues must not be relayed to women whatsoever."<sup>431</sup>
- Economically, the government is unable to create jobs. The presidential directorate on women and family affairs has been advocating women's employment in the private and informal sectors and their self-employment at home.

<sup>425</sup> The state-run IMNA news agency, November 12, 2019

<sup>426</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, October 6, 2020

<sup>427</sup> Article 1180 of the Civil Code states: A minor is under the compulsory guardianship of his/her father and the father's father. The same is the case for immature and insane children who are considered minors.

Article 1181 of the Civil Code states: The father or the father's father are guardians of their children.

<sup>428</sup> Mehdi Bagheri, a banking expert, the state-run ILNA news agency, August 11, 2014

<sup>429</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, October 6, 2020

<sup>430</sup> The official website of Ali Khamenei, April 19, 2014

<sup>431</sup> The state-run Alef website, July 12, 2017

- There are no compliance mechanisms to hold employers accountable for advancing gender equality in the private and informal sectors, and women end up with inadequate earnings, and no job security or safe working conditions.
- Most of the women in the workers' community are heads of households, but they face long working hours and are deprived of many rights and benefits.<sup>432</sup>
- A June 2017 study revealed that educated women with BA and BS degrees were hired without legal contracts and insurance for a monthly salary of 150-300 thousand Tomans (\$13-26). The employers sometimes get blank checks from these women so that they would not be able to file complaints against their employers.<sup>433</sup>

### Ensured the right to organize collective action and freedom of movement

According to the Iranian Constitution, women are not allowed to leave home, travel, or get employed for a job without their husband's permission.

Article 1105 of the Civil Code: Heading the household is the inherent duty of the man, and the woman cannot even leave home without his permission.

Article 1117 of the Civil Code: A husband can prevent his wife from working in a profession or industry contrary to the family's interests or the dignity of the man or woman.

Paragraph 3 of Article 18 of the Passport Law also explicitly conditions the issuance of passports for married women to the husband's written consent. But before marriage, the exit permit for the woman is given to the father or paternal grandfather.

- Niloufar Ardalan, 30 and captain of the women's national football team, could not travel with the team to the Asian Championship competitions because her husband disagreed with her participation in the Asian Games. He did not hand in her passport.<sup>434</sup>
- The Hiking Board of Razavi Khorasan Province issued a directive on November 4, 2018, to all hiking clubs in the province. According to this instruction, "married women must have their husbands' permission, and single women, as well as young women under 20 years, must have their fathers' permission before they can participate in any nature tours."<sup>435</sup>
- With the Tehran Court of Appeals ruling, a female emergency physician in Imam Hossein and Baqiyatallah hospitals in Tehran was banned from practicing medicine due to her husband's complaint. The doctor examined 180 to 200 patients daily for Covid-19.<sup>436</sup>
- Married women who want to take the dental residency exam are required to obtain their husbands' consent. Complying with this commitment is mandatory, and the relevant text has been included in the written examination form. The pledge states that the husband agrees to allow his wife to serve after the training period in any place designated by the Ministry of Health and Medical Education.<sup>437</sup>

<sup>432</sup> The official IRNA news agency, May 3, 2018

<sup>433</sup> The state-run shahrvand-newspaper.ir, June 28, 2017

<sup>434</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, September 14, 2015

<sup>435</sup> The official IRNA news agency, November 13, 2018

<sup>436</sup> The state-run Akhbar Fori website, October 12, 2020

<sup>437</sup> The state-run Etemadonline.com, May 11, 2020

- Samira Zargari, the head coach of the national alpine skiing team, was banned from leaving the country with her team due to her husband's objection.<sup>438</sup>

### Devised mechanisms for women's equal participation in economic decision-making bodies (e.g. in ministries of trade and finance, central banks, national economic commissions)

The government in Iran has not devised any mechanisms for women's equal participation in economic decision-making bodies. Data and information in this regard are also scarce.

- According to a 2014 report,<sup>439</sup> a table on women's management positions in the banking system showed that in the 22 leading Iranian banks surveyed in this study, there was only one woman in the board of directors, who was retired in 2008.<sup>440</sup> Only one woman sat as the deputy for human resources.<sup>441</sup> Fourteen women held manager positions in 22 banks, and 13 women headed various departments.<sup>442</sup> The table also shows that women have not occupied any top management or decision-making position in the banking system.

#### 2014 Report: Banking system's management positions at the disposal of women<sup>443</sup>

R	Bank	Board of Directors	Deputy	Manager	Head of Department
1	Melli	0	0	0	0
2	Maskan	0	0	0	4
3	Tose'eh Ta'avon	0	0	0	0
4	San'at va Ma'dan	0	1	0	0
5	Tejarat	0	0	0	0
6	Pasargad	0	0	0	0
7	Eqtesad-e Novin	0	1	0	1
8	Refah	0	0	0	0
9	Saman	1	0	4	0
10	Gardeshgari	0	0	1	5
11	Saderat	0	0	0	1
12	Khavar Mianeh	0	0	0	0
13	Parsian	0	0	0	0
14	Karafarin	0	0	4	0
15	Iran Zamin	0	0	0	0
17	Shahr	0	0	2	0
18	Hekmat Iranian	0	0	0	1
19	Sina	0	0	1	0
20	Ghavamin	0	0	0	0
21	Ayandeh	0	0	2	0
22	Sepah	0	0	0	1

<sup>438</sup> The state-run Sharq newspaper - February 17, 2021

<sup>439</sup> The state-run Asr-e Bank website, July 24, 2014

<sup>440</sup> Farideh Geraminejad worked as head of the Treasury Department from 1978 to 2008 in Bank-e Tejarat (Bank of Commerce). She is presently retired.

<sup>441</sup> Maryam Eslami, head of the Department of Human Resources in the Bank of Industries and Mines.

<sup>442</sup> The state-run Asr-e Bank website, July 24, 2014

<sup>443</sup> The state-run Asr-e Bank website, July 24, 2014

- A recent study in March 2021 by the NCRI Women's Committee indicates that women's economic participation is a meager 0.19% in total.<sup>444</sup>
- According to this March 2021 study, all 35 well-known banks in Iran are headed by men. Thus, the share of women in this position is 0%.<sup>445</sup>
- There is only one woman out of 173 members of the banks' boards, equal to a 0.57% share for women.<sup>446</sup>
- From a list of 104 companies introduced as top 100 companies in 2019-2020, all but one, are headed by men, showing that less than 1% of company CEOs are women. The board of directors of the said companies also consists entirely of men.<sup>447</sup>
- Given the above facts, women's participation in economic decision-making positions is equal to 0.19% in total. This situation is not limited to senior management positions but extends to all levels.
- Only 3.9 million women out of the 30.96 million over 15 years old, merely 12.6%, were employed, according to a survey in winter 2020,<sup>448</sup> a 1.2 million drop in the number of women with jobs compared to winter 2019.<sup>449</sup>
- The National Statistics Center announced in fall 2020 that another million and 12,000 women had been laid off from winter to summer 2020. In other words, at least 70% of those who lost their jobs in Iran during the Coronavirus pandemic were women.<sup>450</sup>
- On October 20, 2020, the Court of Administrative Justice revoked the official directive called "Age ceiling and the priority of appointing women and youth to managerial positions" (adopted on August 21, 2017) due to "unjustified discrimination against other employees in holding managerial positions, especially fundamental management." While this directive concerned women and youth, it is interesting to note that the Supreme Administrative Court has been sensitive to women.<sup>451</sup>

<sup>444</sup> [Report to CSW65, Women in Iran](#), documents, website of the NCRI Women's Committee, March 2021

<sup>445</sup> The names of the surveyed banks have been selected from the list of banks and financial institutions on the government website: Iran Urban Economics Scientific Association, iuea.ir The information of each bank has been extracted from the official website of that bank.

<sup>446</sup> The names of the surveyed banks have been selected from the list of banks and financial institutions on the government website: Iran Urban Economics Scientific Association, iuea.ir The information of each bank has been extracted from the official website of that bank.

<sup>447</sup> The information was extracted from the state-run Asr-e Eghtesad website, January 20, 2020

<sup>448</sup> Discrimination in employment has added to problems of working women, the state-run ILNA news agency, March 25, 2020

<sup>449</sup> Appraisal of the Plan to Census the Workforce, Iran's National Statistics Center-Spring 2020, July 26, 2020

<sup>450</sup> The Coronavirus cut the population of working women, the state-run Mizanonline.ir, January 30, 2021

<sup>451</sup> The state-run Sharq newspaper, November 20, 2020

## 6. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to recognize, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work and promote work-family conciliation?

Included unpaid care and domestic work in national statistics and accounting (e.g., time-use surveys, valuation exercises, satellite accounts)

- There are no accurate statistics available in this area, and it does not enjoy any priority or significance.
- For good measure, the employment of rural women and girls has not been defined. Even though these women are actively engaged in work, their occupation has not been considered in any program.<sup>452</sup>
- Usually, the statistics are based on the owners of the production units. Since women do not own production units in Iran's rural areas, they have not been mentioned in official statistics, and their employment has not been considered.<sup>453</sup>

### Expanded childcare services or made existing services more affordable

The statistics on childcare services are very scarce.

The limited information available indicates that the government has not attempted to expand childcare services or make the existing services more affordable. On the contrary, credit cuts for plans that directly support female workers have aggravated their vulnerability considering high inflation rates, which have shrunk the food basket for workers' families.

- The Research Center of the Parliament studying the 1398 fiscal year budget noted a reduction of credits for supporting female workers.<sup>454</sup>
- The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare had a 35 percent reduction in its activities to guide and support the daycare centers for women working in economic institutions and the plans to provide physical and psychological self-care for female workers in the work environment.<sup>455</sup>
- In the 1397 fiscal year budget, the report also noted that the government had been obliged to cover 7,000 female workers by allocating 300,000 Tomans (\$26) to each. This amount was reduced to 200,000 Tomans (\$17) for every woman in the 1398 budget.<sup>456</sup>
- Regarding daycare services, the Labor Ministry had been obliged to support 40 daycare centers by granting 25 million Tomans (\$2,174) to each, 14 million Tomans less than the 39 million Tomans (\$3,391) specified for each daycare in the previous year.<sup>457</sup>
- In 2020, at least 85% of kindergartens in Iran were privatized because the government did not provide the necessary funding for public kindergartens.<sup>458</sup> As a result, kindergarten became unaffordable for many women workers.

<sup>452</sup> Zahra Faraji, general director for Women and Family Affairs in the Central Province's Governorate, the state-run ISNA news agency, January 25, 2015

<sup>453</sup> Forough-os Sadat Bani-Hashem, general director of the Development Office of Agricultural Activities of Rural and Nomad Women in the Ministry of Agricultural Crusade, the website of the presidential directorate of Women and Family Affairs, October 22, 2017 - <http://women.gov.ir/fa/news/7803>

<sup>454</sup> Research Center of the Iranian Parliament, January 14, 2019

<sup>455</sup> Research Center of the Iranian Parliament, January 14, 2019

<sup>456</sup> Research Center of the Iranian Parliament, January 14, 2019

<sup>457</sup> Research Center of the Iranian Parliament, January 14, 2019

- Tuition at private kindergartens can run anywhere from 15 million to 30 million Tomans per year, which is around 2 million Tomans per month.<sup>459</sup> Whereas, the minimum wage for 2020 was set at 1,835,426 Tomans (approximately \$78.00).<sup>460</sup>
- Gender discrimination and the significant wage gap, in many sectors, have created significant difficulties for women who must both work outside the home and take care of their children. Adding to the problem is that women are paid less than men, even in low-wage and informal jobs. The wage disparity creates additional concerns among women, many of whom can no longer afford the high cost of living and the escalating kindergarten fees.<sup>461</sup>
- The poverty line for urban families is close to 5 million Tomans (\$213). In Tehran, it is close to 10 million Tomans (\$427).<sup>462</sup> Thus, in 2020, the minimum wage was three to five times below the poverty line.
- This sad reality comes at a time when more than 90 percent of workers are hired on temporary contracts. Temporary contract workers are not covered by labor laws, nor do they qualify for even minimum wage. Temporary workers are paid barely 1 million Tomans (\$42) per month.<sup>463</sup>

#### Expanded support for frail elderly persons and others needing intense forms of care

- The 2016 census of the general population and their housing showed that the total number of older women in Iran is 3,755,686, which is 9.5% of the country's total number.<sup>464</sup>
- Based on this census, 9.2% of urban women and 10.4% of rural women are elderly.<sup>465</sup>
- Only 0.28% of these older women live in group households or nursing homes that care for the elderly. 99.72% of these women live in ordinary households.<sup>466</sup>
- A 2019 study of the characteristics of the elderly population in Iran said there are 97 older men for every 100 older women in Iran. Officials say this correlation will become 88 older men for every 100 women by 2021, a phenomenon described as the feminization of the elderly population. At the same time, the total population of Iran's elderly has exceeded 8 million.<sup>467</sup>
- The population of older adults above 60 years in Iran is 8,231,000, comprising 9.9%. The over-65 population makes up 6.4% of the general population.<sup>468</sup>

<sup>458</sup> Habibollah Massoudi Farid, Deputy Minister of Social Affairs of the Welfare Organization, the state-run ILNA news agency, April 19, 2020

<sup>459</sup> Iran's currency depreciated greatly in 2020 and 2021. The exchange rate for these years was calculated as 23,405 Tomans for a dollar. The value of Toman was higher in the previous years, and the dollar equivalent for each figure in this book has been calculated based on the value of Toman/dollar exchange rate in that year.

<sup>460</sup> The state-run Tabnak website, April 9, 2020

<sup>461</sup> The state-run Tabnak website, April 9, 2020

<sup>462</sup> Rassoul Khezr, member of the Social Committee of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run Donyay-e Eqtesad website, November 30, 2019

<sup>463</sup> The state-run asriran.com, May 2, 1998

<sup>464</sup> The official website of the Retirement Fund [www.cspf.ir](http://www.cspf.ir)

<sup>465</sup> The official website of the Retirement Fund [www.cspf.ir](http://www.cspf.ir)

<sup>466</sup> The official website of the Retirement Fund [www.cspf.ir](http://www.cspf.ir)

<sup>467</sup> The state-run salamatnews.com, April 27, 2019

<sup>468</sup> The official IRNA news agency, September 29, 2020; <https://www.irna.ir/news/84059056>



- About 95% of nursing homes for the elderly are private. They are managed at the expense of charities and the families of the elderly.<sup>469</sup>
- Only 150 government-run centers in Iran provide care for 20,000 elderly whose identities are mostly unknown. The maximum fund allocated by the government for each elderly in these centers is 200,000 Tomans a month (\$17).<sup>470</sup>
- According to the Director-General of the Office of Well Being of the Elderly, the monthly cost to care for every older adult is not more than 550,000 Tomans (\$48).<sup>471</sup>
- Private centers, however, receive between 1.2 to 6 million Tomans (\$104 - \$522) per month for every elderly, depending on the geographical area and type of services they provide, which does not include physiotherapy and health care.<sup>472</sup>
- While criticizing the government for not allocating sufficient funds to the care centers for the elderly, a Welfare Organization official announced that the organization intends to raise the fees. In his remarks, one can see how the government has cut down on the budget needed for persons who need intense forms of care. He said, "The welfare organization estimates that implementing the law on the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities would require 12 trillion Tomans (\$1.05 billion). However, the parliament's specialized commissions have allocated only 1.1 trillion Tomans (\$95.65 million), less than one-tenth of the estimated fund to implement the law."<sup>473</sup>
- No budget was allocated to the issues concerning the elderly population in the Persian fiscal year 1400 (March 21, 2021 – March 20, 2022).<sup>474</sup>
- The budget needed to implement the law in the year 1400 is around 38 trillion Tomans. However, the budget allocated to the Welfare Organization is 1.7 trillion Tomans.<sup>475</sup>
- The small budget allocated to the law to protect the rights of the disabled has never been fully granted in the past several years.<sup>476</sup>

### Introduced or strengthened maternity/paternity/parental leave or other types of family leave

On the paper and according to the legislated acts, Iranian women who have a job are entitled to six to nine months of maternity leave. In practice, however, many women find out after returning to work after six or nine months that they have been dismissed.

There are no provisions to oblige employers to safeguard a woman's right to maternity leave. In addition, the government's adoption of a plan to extend women's maternal leave has caused added restrictions on the employment of women.

<sup>469</sup> Homayoun Hashemi, head of the parliamentary faction supporting people with disabilities, the state-run Mashreqnews.com, August 24, 2014

<sup>470</sup> Homayoun Hashemi, head of the parliamentary faction supporting people with disabilities, the state-run Mashreqnews.com, August 24, 2014

<sup>471</sup> Homayoun Hashemi, head of the parliamentary faction supporting people with disabilities, the state-run Mashreqnews.com, August 24, 2014

<sup>472</sup> Homayoun Hashemi, head of the parliamentary faction supporting people with disabilities, the state-run Mashreqnews.com, August 24, 2014

<sup>473</sup> Vahid Ghobadi Dana, head of the Welfare Organization, the official IRNA news agency, January 13, 2019

<sup>474</sup> Ali Akbar Bastami, member of the parliamentary Budget Planning Commission, interview with ICANA.ir news agency, January 31, 2021 <https://www.icana.ir/Fa/News/466629>

<sup>475</sup> Vahid Ghobadi Dana, head of the National Welfare Organization, Khabarban.com, January 18, 2020

<sup>476</sup> Ali Hemmat Mahmoudnejad, the executive director of the Association Defending the Rights of the Disabled, the state-run Etemadonline.com, February 4, 2021

- Some employers have set conditions on the marital status of women they plan to employ and make them sign papers and agree to be fired if they get pregnant.<sup>477</sup>
- Many private-sector employers terminate the employment of female workers as soon as they find out that they are pregnant. In some workshops, the employer limits the benefits for the number of dependents to two children; if a woman has a third child, they terminate her contract.<sup>478</sup>
- According to official figures, over ten years, 74,000 women were expelled from their jobs each year after returning from maternity leave.<sup>479</sup>
- 74,000 out of 145,000 women who had taken a six-month maternity leave of absence were fired in 2014-2015.<sup>480</sup>
- The General Board of Directors of the Administrative Court of Justice rescinded a directive that had banned laying off working mothers for two years while they nurse their children.<sup>481</sup>
- The rescinded directive No. 49517, dated June 9, 2014, issued by the general director for labor relations and service compensation at the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, had stated that "laying off working women during their maternal leave and the period while they nurse their children (up to two years) is forbidden under whatever pretext."
- In informal jobs, we often see that a woman's going on maternity leave is tantamount to the end of her employment in that job and working with that company. Women who work in informal jobs talk to the employer to not lose their jobs. Female workers are granted only ten days of maternity leave, and if they do not go back to work after ten days, they are fired.<sup>482</sup>
- In formal jobs, there are injustices both in the legal arena and regarding the right to employment. For example, in the Education Ministry, if a woman who is a school principal goes nine months on leave, she will lose her management position and be demoted.<sup>483</sup>

### Ensured that women engaged in unpaid work or in the informal sector have access to non-contributory social protection

The Iranian regime has failed to provide non-contributory social protection to any sector of Iranian women. Those who have formal employment, like teachers and nurses, are not paid for months, and their salaries are way below the poverty line.

<sup>477</sup> The state-run Shaffaf website, August 2, 2015 <http://www.shafaf.ir/fa/news/335310>

<sup>478</sup> Working mothers, hiding their children and signing to be fired voluntarily, the official IRNA plus news agency, November 3, 2019; semi-official Tabnak website, August 15, 2017

<sup>479</sup> Fatemeh Sadeqi, Professor and member of faculty of Teachers' Training University, the state-run Fars news agency, June 16, 2015

<sup>480</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, June 30, 2015; the state-run entekhab.ir website, August 1, 2015

<sup>481</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, September 15, 2017

<sup>482</sup> Mansoureh Mousavi, a sociologist, the state-run ISNA news agency, March 17, 2021

<sup>483</sup> Mansoureh Mousavi, a sociologist, the state-run ISNA news agency, March 17, 2021

The regime's policy has been to hire people through third-party companies and temporarily, denying them the benefits and social protection they are entitled to while officially employed by the government.

More than 61% of working Iranian women are hired in informal jobs which do not provide insurance, benefits, and other protections.

Homemakers and rural women are engaged in unpaid work but do not receive social protection from the government.

- In recent decades, Iran's labor market policy has been based on the temporary labor force, removing legal and social protection for workers and employees.<sup>484</sup>
- "The Ministry of Health policy over the past seven to eight years has been based on two things," said Mohammad Sharifi Moghaddam, secretary-general of the Nurse's Home. "One is to increase supply, meaning the number of nursing graduates, and the second is to eliminate job security for nurses. All this is an effort by the Ministry of Health to make the nursing workforce cheaper."<sup>485</sup>
- Mohammad Sharifi Moghaddam adds: "In the past, the number of nursing graduates was 5,000 a year, and in recent years we have 12,000 nursing graduates a year. Sixty thousand (60,000) people graduated in the last five years, and in the most optimistic case, the Ministry of Health has hired only 10,000 of them. Thus, 50,000 graduated nurses are unemployed and are looking for work. Because they are unemployed, they will become obedient workers who follow the employer's orders and even endure the burden of exploitative contracts such as the 89-day temporary contracts."<sup>486</sup>
- Due to economic recession, institutionalized restrictions on employment of women, and widespread corruption of the ruling clique, more and more women are driven into informal jobs in substandard conditions which do not grant them any social protection.<sup>487</sup>
- In Iranian villages, rural women often work continuously for up to 20 hours a day, farming, breeding livestock, or weaving carpets, coupled with all the tedious and hard work related to the daily routine of rural life. So, their employment is limited to family-based and unpaid work, which does not bear any direct material benefits for them.<sup>488</sup> They are not entitled to social protection.

### Informal sector

- A regime official confessed that women are taken advantage of despite their high productivity and diligence because they are desperate to have just any job with any amount of difficulty.<sup>489</sup>
- Women work with heavy machinery in uninspected closed environments and are given only five days of insurance for the whole month.<sup>490</sup>

<sup>484</sup> The state-run meidaan.com, May 30, 2018

<sup>485</sup> The state-run ILNA News Agency, May 11, 2020

<sup>486</sup> The state-run ILNA News Agency, May 11, 2020

<sup>487</sup> Shahindokht Molaverdi, former presidential deputy for Women and Family Affairs, the official IRNA news agency, November 7, 2017

<sup>488</sup> Iranwire website, October 16, 2017 - <https://iranwire.com/fa/features/23608>

<sup>489</sup> Pour Moussa, the Secretary General of the Supreme Assembly of Labor Councils, the state-run ISNA news agency, February 27, 2015

<sup>490</sup> Fatemeh Pournou, Secretary of the Union of Women Workers in Qazvin, the official IRNA news agency, May 3, 2018

- Many women work between 10 to 12 hours at home applying glue on envelopes or sewing spangles on fabric, but their daily wage is around 5,000 Tomans, less than 50 cents. These women do not even have a specific employer, and their products are sold through intermediaries who pocket most of their revenues.<sup>491</sup>
- According to a 2018 report by the Research Center of the Iranian regime's parliament, more than 61% of women had informal jobs.<sup>492</sup>
- The Social Security Organization's financial institution announced in 2017 that about 80% of employees who lacked insurance were women – many with disabilities – whose jobs included home jobs and workshops.<sup>493</sup>
- Female workers in Iran are the most vulnerable in society. The clerical regime claims that from 2015 to 2019, the population of working people has increased by 3 million. But what is the truth? The truth is that this new population of working people is the most vulnerable to the lower demand amid the Coronavirus pandemic. New jobs are neither in the government sector nor in private companies or factories. The latest jobs are concentrated in retail and wholesale, repairs, transportation, brokering, and food services. This group of jobholders usually does not work full-time, has no job security, and has no insurance. These jobs are largely disappearing due to plummeting demand between March 2019 and May 2019.<sup>494</sup>

### Unpaid work

- Iran's rural women bear the brunt of the responsibilities of life. They do the lion's share of the agricultural business and economy of the village without being paid. At the same time, they must do all the housework and serve the family. Their unpaid work includes caring for the livestock, bringing wood, bringing water, mending the tent, weaving carpet, milking the cow and making yogurt, baking bread, cleaning the house, cooking, washing the clothes of everyone in the family, etc.<sup>495</sup>
- The rural women of Iran have an essential role in the economy. Based on available evidence and data, rural and nomad women in Iran do more than 70% of livestock activities, some 40% of farming and gardening, and 80% of traditional farm products. But in most cases, there is no mention of them, and all the credit goes to men.<sup>496</sup>
- Although female carpet weavers carry the family's economic burden, they do not even own their house. Their husbands own everything. The majority of carpet weaving women are deprived of insurance.<sup>497</sup>
- Rural women also face numerous obstacles in entrepreneurship due to a lack of adequate financial and legal support.<sup>498</sup>

<sup>491</sup> Ahmad Amirabadi, a member of the presiding board of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run ISNA news agency, May 1, 2018

<sup>492</sup> The state-run Eghtesadonline.ir, June 17, 2020

<sup>493</sup> The state-run Eghtesadonline.ir, June 17, 2020

<sup>494</sup> The state-run Eghtesadonline.ir, June 17, 2020

<sup>495</sup> The state-run Hamdeli.ir, October 6, 2020

<sup>496</sup> The state-run Hamdeli.ir, October 6, 2020

<sup>497</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, May 16, 2018

<sup>498</sup> Fatemeh Zolqadr, member of the Labor Committee of the parliament, said, "Many women who wish to start a business, do not have the initial capital despite their capability to run one. When we speak of supporting employment and occupation for women, the first thing is to provide the initial capital, and accordingly, women who wish to start a business must be able to be granted loans... Getting loans is more difficult for women compared to men. Thinking that

- Rouhani's government declared in 2018 that they have a project to facilitate jobs for rural women. However, some 2,300 Micro Credit Funds for Rural Women were not covered by such facilities, an advisor in the Ministry of Agricultural Crusade said. The general director of the nomad and rural women's affairs office in the Ministry of Agricultural Crusade said rural women needed to deposit bail to receive bank loans, which is a significant obstacle since banks do not accept village (rural) estates as deposits.<sup>499</sup>
- Most of the women living in Hengam Island do fishing from their childhood until they die. The Labor Law does not recognize them, although they do fishing for 50 years.<sup>500</sup>
- Homemakers are engaged in unpaid work, taking care of the children, doing the house chores, providing services to the family, caring for the sick and elderly, etc.
- With the outbreak of the Coronavirus, women faced a considerable increase in the volume of housework. In addition to their usual chores, they had to do the sanitization, cleaning, and teaching their children at home. If any member of the family gets infected, women are the ones who have to care for them.<sup>501</sup>
- The closure of schools and kindergartens forced many working women to reduce their hours at work to attend to their increasing responsibilities at home. So, housework is considered unpaid work in light of their educational, nursing, service, and productive activities. Caring for the sick and elderly is a service paid for, but women do it at home and spend their time and energy to do so without being paid. They are doing the social services which the government is obliged to provide for the citizens. So, it is not just the man in the family who has to provide financial support for this wife. But part of such support must be provided by the government, which is not.<sup>502</sup>

### Unpaid formal workers and employees

One of the forms of unpaid work in Iran includes workers and employees working for many months without their wages.

- Studies on women's employment in Iran's labor market show that most employed women are working in the services sector and that the share of women's employment in the agricultural and services sectors is more than men's.<sup>503</sup> But according to the National Statistics Center of Iran (NSC),<sup>504</sup> 60% of the commercial and services sector employees did not receive any salary in 2015.<sup>505</sup>
- The fees and salaries of nurses working for the hospitals affiliated with the Medical Sciences University of Golestan Province (northern Iran) were not paid for one year.<sup>506</sup>
- The Literacy Movement's educators systematically do not receive their wages for several months while deprived of job security.<sup>507</sup>

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women would have more problems in paying back their loans compared to men, banks refuse to grant them loans.”

The state-run ILNA news agency, October 9, 2019

<sup>499</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, October 6, 2020

<sup>500</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, February 10, 2020

<sup>501</sup> Mansoureh Mousavi, a sociologist, the state-run ISNA news agency, March 17, 2021

<sup>502</sup> Mansoureh Mousavi, a sociologist, the state-run ISNA news agency, March 17, 2021

<sup>503</sup> The state-run agronic.ir, June 23, 2017

<sup>504</sup> The official website of the National Statistics Center of Iran, June 12, 2018

<sup>505</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, June 25, 2018

<sup>506</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, September 18, 2018

- Casual teachers must also be considered unpaid workers. These well-qualified teachers work on an hourly basis. They do the same work as teachers who the Education Ministry formally and permanently employs, but they receive less than half the salary of an officially hired teacher. Deprived of all privileges of their hired peers, they enjoy no job security and have no benefit in the subsequent hiring season. They are not paid for summer and are not granted New Year bonuses.<sup>508</sup> The principle of same work, same pay is not applied to casual teachers.
- Some 250 physicians, nurses, and medical personnel of the largest hospital in Karaj, including many women, held at least 35 rounds of protests, marches, strikes, and sit-ins from May till the end of December 2018. They demanded payment of their salaries not paid for over a year.
- According to a social researcher, "What happens in the Iranian economy is that due to recession and lack of production, the non-wage and wage-earning sector is expanding, reaching 45 to 46 percent of the total workforce. The first characteristic of this kind of employment is that the labor law does not cover them. Their probability of being insured is low, the minimum wage laws are not respected, the education level of workers is lower, and the probability of being laid off is higher... The number of insured workers in Iran is about 15 million, and 6.5 million workers have no insurance. These people are not wage-earners, and at least 80% of them are women."<sup>509</sup>

**Invested in time- and labor-saving infrastructure, such as public transport, electricity, water, and sanitation, to reduce the burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women**

Lack of access to clean and adequate water is one of the most significant infrastructural problems of rural women in Iran. Since most Iranian villages do not have piped water, women and girls are responsible for providing water for their families. They carry water in heavy receptacles and sometimes over long distances, which inflicts various physical and psychological damages on women.

- Rural and nomad women do not have warm water in their washbasins. They hardly have any access to a bath. They wash their clothes with cold water in a stream or river."<sup>510</sup>
- The women of Bakhtiari Tribes must carry 70-kilogram water bags on their backs and walk several kilometers to provide water.<sup>511</sup>
- None of the villages in Sistan and Baluchestan Province have piped water. 80% of citizens in the capital, Zahedan, experience water cut-offs. Extreme water shortage has compelled many rural inhabitants to leave their home villages.<sup>512</sup>
- The situation of 44 villages near Chabahar, in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, southeast Iran, and their lack of access to water is tragic. These villages do not have pipelines. Their

<sup>507</sup> Mohammad Javad Abtahi, member of the Education and Research Committee of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run salamatnews.com, September 26, 2018

<sup>508</sup> The state-run Fars news agency - August 9, 2019; the state-run ILNA news agency, February 6, 2020

<sup>509</sup> Hessam Nikoupour, a research associate at the Institute for Social Security Research, the state-run khabaronline.ir, June 28, 2017

<sup>510</sup> Parichehr Soltani, the secretary of the working group on rural women in nomad tribes and deprived regions, the state-run ROKNA news agency, October 6, 2020

<sup>511</sup> Parichehr Soltani, the secretary of the working group on rural women in nomad tribes and deprived regions, the state-run ROKNA news agency, October 6, 2020

<sup>512</sup> The official IRNA news agency, July 23, 2019



water is provided by worn-out tankers that bring them unsanitary and unclean water with long delays and small amounts. For every person living in these villages, only 15 liters of water have been considered, which is not sufficient.<sup>513</sup>

- Due to a severe water shortage, people have dug out ditches called *Hootag* to collect rainwater. The ditches attract flies and mosquitoes. This water is used for bathing, laundry, and doing the dishes at the same time. Sometimes, when the *Hootag* water is fresh, or the water tanker has delays, people also drink the same water as animals do.<sup>514</sup>
- Sometimes, fetching water from a *Hootag* ends up drowning one or more children and women. Occasionally, they fall prey to local crocodiles also living in *Hootags*. Some 20 children have lost their lives in recent years while bringing or drinking water from *Hootags*.<sup>515</sup>
- The women and girls of Sistan and Baluchestan suffer from various illnesses due to a severe shortage of water. Women and girls in these villages must travel a long distance several times a day to bring water for their families. Such long walks while carrying heavy water containers in the hot summer weather or cold winters have caused them different illnesses. Waist discus, fracture of spine discs, backache, and miscarriages are among rural women's health complications.<sup>516</sup>
- Some 700 villages in Khuzestan Province have problems in providing and distributing water among inhabitants. The government has so far not heeded the issue raised repeatedly by inhabitants.<sup>517</sup>
- The inhabitants of 800 villages in Khuzestan do not have access to potable water despite their proximity to five major dams and seven rivers.<sup>518</sup>
- More than 100 villages in Golestan Province lying by the Caspian Sea receive water by tankers, and villagers are deprived of minimum essential services.<sup>519</sup>
- Water condition is the same in villages across the country. People reportedly do not have access to drinking water in Jalaran village<sup>520</sup> in South Khorasan near the border of Afghanistan, Calshour village<sup>521</sup> in North Khorasan Province, Kaftar village<sup>522</sup> in Eghlid (southern Iran), and Gandombar village<sup>523</sup> in Kashmar (in the northeast).

<sup>513</sup> The state-run salamatnews.com, October 22, 2017

<sup>514</sup> The state-run salamatnews.com, October 22, 2017

<sup>515</sup> The official IRNA news agency, July 23, 2019

<sup>516</sup> The official IRNA news agency, July 23, 2019

<sup>517</sup> Sadeq Haghighipour, executive director of water and sewage in Khuzestan, the official IRNA news agency, June 13, 2019

<sup>518</sup> Mojtaba Yousefi, member of the mullahs' parliament from Ahvaz, The state-run Fars news agency, August 10, 2020

<sup>519</sup> Alireza Ebrahimi, secretary of the assembly of representatives of Golestan Province, the state-run Tasnim news agency, December 28, 2017

<sup>520</sup> The state-run Raja News website, July 10, 2017

<sup>521</sup> Bartarinha website, August 29, 2017

<sup>522</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, December 20, 2017

<sup>523</sup> The state-run Kashmari website, January 27, 2018

A Baluchi woman doing the dishes by the side of a *Hootag*, holding contaminated rainwater for use by humans and animals



Photo :Meghdad Madadi

FARS NEWS AGENCY

Women carrying jerry cans of water on their shoulders in a village in Ardabil, northwestern Iran



MEHR NEWSAGENCY  
Photo: Amir Ali Razzaghi



Women working in a rice paddy in northern Iran



Hygiene is a real problem in Iranian villages.

- There are no public baths or toilets in Jalaran village, in South Khorasan Province, NE Iran.<sup>524</sup> Families have put clods together and made an outdoor toilet. Bathing depends on water tankers and whenever they arrive. If the weather is good and water comes in the village, and if there is more water than basic needs such as drinking, some inhabitants can bathe. Often people can take a bath every three months.
- More than 80% of the children in South Khorasan's villages suffer from skin problems due to water shortage. Due to water shortage, the people don't have enough hygiene and cannot have a bath correctly. About 480 villages in South Khorasan Province suffer from water shortage, and they receive water by tankers. Many of the watercourses there have dried up.<sup>525</sup>

The roads leading to many of these villages are unpaved and difficult to pass. They are blocked with any slight rain or snow, and there is no public transportation. At the same time, bad roads and worn-out vehicles lead to the deaths of thousands of women every year.

- Iran ranks the world's number one with the highest death toll, in 800,000 road accidents per year (1.5 times the world average).<sup>526</sup> In terms of casualties caused by road accidents, Iran ranks 189th among 190 countries.<sup>527</sup>

<sup>524</sup> The state-run Raja News website, July 10, 2017

<sup>525</sup> Mohammad Bagher Ebadi, MP from Birjand, the state-run ILNA News Agency, May 24, 2018

<sup>526</sup> The state-run tabnak.ir, December 12, 2018

- Experts say addiction, prostitution, divorce, street children, and child labor are consequences of road accidents affecting women and children.<sup>528</sup>
- In investigating the causes of the increase in road accidents in Iran, many domestic and international experts believe that the lack of standard roads and traffic infrastructures, worn-out and sometimes out-of-date vehicles, lack of traffic signs on the roads, population growth, and rising number of cars, poverty and economic pressure on drivers are among the causes of road accidents in Iran.<sup>529</sup>
- A bus accident on Tehran-Shiraz Road led to the deaths of nine passengers, including five women. Another 18 passengers were injured in this bus accident, including four women.<sup>530</sup>
- Sixteen (16) women, including a pregnant woman, died in four bus accidents in various parts of Iran from January 9 to 20, 2020.
- Moor-e Zard-e Zilalii village in Boyer Ahmad (southwestern Iran), with 773 people, has no proper roads. In one instance, a woman who had suffered high blood pressure died because she could not be taken quickly to any medical center. After all, the village's road had been blocked after rainfall.<sup>531</sup>

### Promoted decent work for paid care workers, including migrant workers and domestic workers

Nurses and health care workers in Iran could not be considered to have decent jobs.

Nursing is a high-risk and harmful job. Nurses are exposed to stressors such as abnormal mental and physical conditions during their shifts, infection with pathogens and viruses such as Coronavirus, hepatitis, and AIDS, and exposure to radiation and carcinogens.

Despite the sensitivity of their job, most female nurses in Iran are not permanently employed and work on temporary contracts. As a result, they are offered a small salary which is not regularly paid. Iranian nurses do not have the opportunity to retire after 20 years of service. Under the mullahs' rule, nurses are entitled to retirement after 25 years with a monthly wage of 25 workdays instead of 30 days.

- 78.5% of Iranian nurses are women. By September 22, 2017, the total number of nursing personnel employed by the medical sciences universities, including the personnel for operation rooms, anesthesia, and medical emergencies, amounted to 117,639 persons, including 92,442 female nurses.<sup>532</sup>
- Due to the shortage of nurses and medical personnel in Iran, work conditions for nurses are appalling, worse than the nurses' situation in Kenya and Iraq.<sup>533</sup>
- Nurses are forced to do mandatory shifts and overtime work, but their overtime fees are not paid for between six to 12 months. Nurses working for the hospitals affiliated with

<sup>527</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, July 6, 2015

<sup>528</sup> The state-run salamatnews.com, January 25, 2020

<sup>529</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, July 6, 2015

<sup>530</sup> The state-run Rokna news agency, January 28, 2020

<sup>531</sup> The official IRNA news agency, October 30, 2017

<sup>532</sup> [Female nurses in Iran entangled in a web of damaging problems](#), NCRI Women's Committee website, February 27, 2019

<sup>533</sup> Ali Asghar Dalvandi, president of the National Nursing Organization, the state-run Mehr news agency, January 12, 2019

the Medical Sciences University of Golestan Province (northern Iran) were not paid their overtime fees and salaries for one year.<sup>534</sup>

- A Nursing System Organization official said discrimination and injustice against the nursing community in Iran have aggravated in the past five years. "We need at least another 150,000 nurses. The world standard of the ratio of nurses to hospital beds is 1 to 8 (12.5%), while in our country, this ratio is 0.7% (i.e., 7 for every 1000 beds), showing that we are way below the standards."<sup>535</sup>
- "To provide adequate nursing services, we must have four nurses for (every 1000 persons in) the population. Of course, the world's average is six nurses for every 1000 persons in the population. So, if we want to have the minimum number of nurses for the 80 million population (of Iran), we must have at least 240,000 nurses working across the country. In contrast, right now, there are only 160,000 nurses who provide medical and health services."<sup>536</sup>
- The government, however, does not allocate sufficient funds and budget for the recruitment of additional nurses. Due to financial restrictions and the policy of not granting new licenses, there are 30,000 unemployed nurses in Iran.<sup>537</sup>
- The budget for recruitment of new nurses in the Persian year 1398 (from March 21, 2019- March 20, 2020), was rejected. While half of the nursing graduates remain without jobs, recruiting new nurses is passed from one government agency to the other.<sup>538</sup>
- Due to this situation, some 1,000 nurses leave Iran and migrate to other countries every year.<sup>539</sup>
- With the coronavirus outbreak and the suffering nurses have endured due to the situation, between 100 and 150 nurses leave the country every month. In European countries, nurses, especially during the Coronavirus pandemic, receive high salaries and good benefits.<sup>540</sup>
- Five hundred (500) nurses per month are emigrating to North American and European countries.<sup>541</sup>
- Female nurses in Iran are not only missing their monthly salaries but are enduring tremendous pressure at work. Since they cannot respond to everyone's needs, they become directly face to face with the patients and their companies and are often insulted and even brutalized. At least 28 nurses were brutalized in 2017, and 20 nurses lost their lives due to work stress from 2016 to 2018.<sup>542</sup>

<sup>534</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, September 18, 2018

<sup>535</sup> Ali Asghar Dalvandi, president of the National Nursing Organization, the state-run Mehr news agency, January 12, 2019

<sup>536</sup> Mohammad Sharifi Moghaddam, secretary general of Iran's House of Nurses, the state-run ILNA news agency, January 12, 2019; the state-run Young Journalists Club website, October 29, 2018

<sup>537</sup> Mohammad Sharifi Moghaddam, secretary general of Iran's House of Nurses, the state-run ILNA news agency, January 12, 2019

<sup>538</sup> Mohammad Sharifi Moghaddam, secretary general of Iran's House of Nurses, the state-run ILNA news agency, January 12, 2019

<sup>539</sup> Mohammad Sharifi Moghaddam, secretary general of Iran's House of Nurses, the state-run ILNA news agency, January 12, 2019

<sup>540</sup> Mohammad Sharifi Moghaddam, Secretary General of the House of Nurses, the state-run Jahanesanat.ir, May 5, 2021

<sup>541</sup> Dr. Armin Zareian, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Nursing System Organization, the state-run Daneshjoo News Agency, April 11, 2021

<sup>542</sup> [Female nurses in Iran entangled in a web of damaging problems](#), NCRI Women's Committee, February 27, 2019

- "The Ministry of Health policy over the past seven to eight years has been based on two things," said Mohammad Sharifi Moghaddam, secretary-general of the House of Nurses. "One is to increase supply, meaning the number of nursing graduates, and the second is to eliminate job security for nurses. All this is an effort by the Ministry of Health to make the nursing workforce cheaper."<sup>543</sup>
- Mohammad Sharifi Moghaddam adds: "In the past, the number of nursing graduates was 5,000 a year, and in recent years we have 12,000 nursing graduates a year. Sixty thousand (60,000) people graduated in the last five years, and in the most optimistic case, the Ministry of Health has hired only 10,000 of them. Thus, 50,000 graduated nurses are unemployed and are looking for work. Because they are unemployed, they will become obedient workers who follow the employer's orders and even endure the burden of exploitative contracts such as the 89-day temporary contracts."<sup>544</sup>
- Since 2014, public hospitals hire their nurses on temporary 89-day contracts through third-party private companies. Around 35% of the workforce in medical universities comprises these nurses who are employed on temporary 89-day contracts.<sup>545</sup>
- Shortages of nurses create additional pressure at work, causing professional distress, increasing the possibility of nurses making mistakes, and consequently increasing the likelihood of deaths in hospitals.<sup>546</sup>

### Conditions of health care workers during the Covid-19 pandemic

In particular, during the Coronavirus pandemic, Iran's health care workers, including physicians and nurses, suffered tremendously.

The shortage of nurses was a severe issue in Iran even before the outbreak of COVID-19. But after the epidemic, the situation became much worse. The Iranian regime did not remedy the severe shortages of nurses, doctors, and health care workers. Instead, it fired many nurses after their temporary contracts expired.

A significant number have died due to a lack of basic safety measures and protection.

The regime's policies have turned Iran into one of the "backward countries in terms of shortage of nursing staff." Overwork and excessive physical fatigue have in many cases caused "death and depression among nurses."<sup>547</sup>

With the decision to lift quarantine and start economic and administrative activities in Iran, and the ever-growing number of patients, the pressure has increased even more on nurses who work several shifts and sleep on the floor of hospitals most nights.

Increasing pressure on the medical staff has led to suicides among nurses and interns.

- "Our work shifts are 12 hours, but due to the increase in calls, many nurses are working more shifts, even up to 24 hours," said one of the nurses in Unit 115 of the Tehran Emergency Department, who responds to people's calls into the system.<sup>548</sup>

<sup>543</sup> The state-run ILNA News Agency, May 11, 2020

<sup>544</sup> The state-run ILNA News Agency, May 11, 2020

<sup>545</sup> Mohammad Sharifi Moghaddam, secretary general of Iran's House of Nurses, the state-run ILNA News Agency, May 11, 2016

<sup>546</sup> Abbas Eskandari, chair of the board of directors of the Nursing Organization of Isfahan, the state-run ILNA news agency – January 12, 2019

<sup>547</sup> Mohammad Mirzabeigi, head of the Nursing System Organization, the state-run Salamatnews.com, May 11, 2021

<sup>548</sup> The state-run Mizan news agency, November 5, 2020



- The most crucial problem of the nursing community is the severe shortage of staff. For about 170,000 hospital beds, there are only 145,000 nurses, and the ratio of nurses to beds is about 0.08, while it should be 2.5 nurses per bed. So the number of employed nurses should be 2.5 times what it is now to comply with the standard conditions. If increasing the number of beds and nurses' retirement continues, the shortage will increase every day, and patients will suffer the most.<sup>549</sup>
- According to global standards, four nurses are needed for every 1,000 people in the population. This figure is under one nurse, something around 0.9, in Iran.<sup>550</sup>
- Some officials and media announced that three interns committed suicide in hospitals over the past 10 days. All three were graduate students of the Medical Sciences University. The medical staff is grappling with a tremendous psychological and physical pressure for over a year after the coronavirus outbreak and four heavy peaks. Working on temporary 89-day contracts, not receiving their minimum salaries, working in consecutive shifts, being far from their families and children, severe medical staff shortage, overcrowding of hospitals and deaths of the patients have contributed to the physical and psychological pressure on them.<sup>551</sup>

### Fatalities among nurses and medical staff

- The lack of basic safety and protection facilities for doctors, nurses, and medical staff, has led to the loss of the best medical and specialized teams.<sup>552</sup>
- In an open letter to the regime's authorities, the Nursing System Organization revealed that out of a total of 110,000 nurses, about 20,000 had contracted Coronavirus. Five thousand people have left the service. Fifty of the best nurses have died.<sup>553</sup>
- A member of the national coronavirus task force reported the death toll of 164 doctors and nurses.<sup>554</sup>
- More than 80,000 nurses have contracted the Covid-19, and 110 nurses passed away over the past 14 months.<sup>555</sup>
- There is a severe and chronic shortage of nurses when all cities in Iran are in the red zone. Nurses are in a challenging situation. On the one hand, they have had a significant increase in workload; on the other, 100,000 nurses were infected by COVID-19, and at least 130 nurses have died of it.<sup>556</sup>
- Over the past three years (2018 to 2021), about 16,000 people in the nursing sector have been retired without replacement. Namely, the ratio of nurse-to-bed and population is constantly decreasing while nurses' overtime hours are increasing exponentially. Today, a nurse must carry the burden of at least four others.<sup>557</sup>

<sup>549</sup> Mohammad Mirzabeigi, head of the Nursing System Organization, the official IRNA news agency, December 17, 2020

<sup>550</sup> Mohammad Mirzabeigi, head of the Nursing System Organization, the state-run Entekhab.ir, April 9, 2021

<sup>551</sup> The state-run Arman-e Melli newspaper, May 5, 2021

<sup>552</sup> Mostafa Mo'in, chairman of the Supreme Council of the Medical System and former regime Minister of Science and Health, the state-run Mostaghel newspaper, April 4, 2020

<sup>553</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, September 30, 2020

<sup>554</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency - September 23, 2020

<sup>555</sup> Mohammad Mirzabeigi, head of the Nursing System Organization, the state-run Mehr news agency, April 8, 2021

<sup>556</sup> Mohammad Mirzabeigi, head of the Nursing System Organization, the state-run Salamatnews.com, May 11, 2021

<sup>557</sup> Mohammad Mirzabeigi, head of the Nursing System Organization, the state-run Salamatnews.com, May 11, 2021

- A government official acknowledged that 80% of nurses employed in public hospitals have not yet been vaccinated.<sup>558</sup>
- Everyone knows that during the past 14 months, the government preferred the economy over the lives and health of people. However, the people are always the ones who are sacrificed.<sup>559</sup>
- Unfortunately, in the past week, eight nurses in various cities died from COVID-19, and in light of the delay in the vaccination of nurses, one can say that nurses are being massacred in hospitals. With 130 dead nurses fighting COVID-19, we are among the countries with the most number of infections and deaths among nurses. The death toll of our nurses is three times greater than that of India.<sup>560</sup>

### Dismissals of nurses, lack of security at work during the pandemic

The clerical regime exploits nurses and healthcare workers. In return for their sacrifices and hard work in the frontline of the fight against the Coronavirus, it does not pay their salaries and benefits or fires them.

The population of private sector nurses is about 7,000 to 8,000 individuals. Three thousand nurses also work on a contract basis and do not have any job security. Just as the nurses were expecting to find greater job security, either their jobs were put on hold, or they were expelled in the context of plans implemented in March 2020.

At the same time, the lack of security of nurses and medical staff in the hospitals has turned into a national crisis.

- Many nurses and staff have been laid off at the height of the coronavirus crisis without any supervision or justification.<sup>561</sup>
- 30 medical staff (operating room and anesthesia experts) of Abu Ali Sina Hospital in Shiraz were fired.<sup>562</sup> In another private hospital in Tehran, more than 30 nurses were fired.<sup>563</sup>
- At the Atiyeh Hospital in Tehran, alone, half of the 1,200 medical staff were laid off because the hospital had no budget. The remaining physicians, nurses, and other staff members could only be paid for 20 days a month because the hospital lacks the financial resources to continue working.<sup>564</sup>
- In a private hospital in Mashhad, another 30 nurses were also dismissed from their jobs.<sup>565</sup>
- In the northern Gilan Province, nurses who had been called to work on 89-day contracts amid the coronavirus crisis were fired. They held protests for several days against their dismissals and because they had not been paid their salaries for the period they worked.

<sup>558</sup> The head of the General Assembly of the Iran's Medical Organization, the state-run ILNA News Agency, April 8, 2021

<sup>559</sup> The state-run Jahanasanat.ir, April 8, 2021

<sup>560</sup> Mohammad Sharifi Moghaddam, Secretary General of the House of Nurses, the state-run Khabarban.com, April 13, 2021

<sup>561</sup> The state-run ILNA News Agency, April 13, 2020

<sup>562</sup> The state-run salamatnews.com, May 10, 2020

<sup>563</sup> [Nurses of Private Hospitals Fired Amid COVID-19 Crisis in Iran](#), articles, NCRI Women's Committee website, April 22, 2020

<sup>564</sup> [Nurses of Private Hospitals Fired Amid COVID-19 Crisis in Iran](#), articles, NCRI Women's Committee website, April 22, 2020

<sup>565</sup> [Nurses of Private Hospitals Fired Amid COVID-19 Crisis in Iran](#), articles, NCRI Women's Committee website, April 22, 2020

There are 500 of these nurses in Gilan Province and another 200 in the neighboring Mazandaran Province.<sup>566</sup>

- The officials of a private hospital in Mashhad asked a nurse with 20 years of experience to leave work until further notice. She worked in the ICU Section of this hospital for the past four years on temporary contracts.<sup>567</sup>
- A group of nurses working in some of the hospitals of Khuzestan Province was fired without paying their wages.<sup>568</sup>
- An official of the Nursing System Organization said the lack of security for the hospitals' medical staff has turned into a national crisis. He said: There is no week without two or three violence cases against nurses in medical centers. Many of these cases are never registered or reported.<sup>569</sup>

### Shocking reports on the cover-up of the outbreak

- A shocking report from inside Iran revealed that hospital nurses were banned from talking about coronavirus patients. They had been instructed to register the disease as "acute respiratory syndrome" instead of Coronavirus.<sup>570</sup>
- According to an eyewitness report from Milad Hospital in Tehran, two nurses at Milad Hospital were expelled from the hospital because they had told the patient and his companion that he had Coronavirus.<sup>571</sup>
- In a shocking and inhumane act, hospital authorities took away the hazmat suits from the nurses and, under the pretext that the person accompanying the patient was growing fearful and scared. They ordered the nurses to go back to work without their personal protective equipment.<sup>572</sup>

### 16 months of non-paid work, brutality against nurses

Nurses face many difficulties while making a simple living. A nurse said about the meager salaries: "For two months, I did not see my child or my mother. We have been working for a while, and sometimes we sleep on the floor at night. Our salary is low; they gave us the equivalent of a dollar for our work."

- Nurses' pay across Iran was delayed by about 8 to 14 months in 2019-2020. According to promises made to nurses, their delayed wages were to be reduced to zero by March 2020, but they had not yet been paid by the final months of the Persian calendar year.<sup>573</sup>
- Noting that nurses' salaries had not been paid for 16 months (since the beginning of the pandemic), an official of the Nursing System Organization said the lack of security for the hospitals' medical staff has turned into a national crisis.<sup>574</sup>

<sup>566</sup> Deutsche Welle website, May 20, 2020

<sup>567</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, April 14, 2020

<sup>568</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, January 3, 2021

<sup>569</sup> Vahid Nassiri, parliamentary legal deputy of the Nursing System Organization, the state-run khabaronline.ir, October 7, 2020

<sup>570</sup> [Hospital nurses silenced about coronavirus infections](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, April 23, 2020

<sup>571</sup> [Hospital nurses silenced about coronavirus infections](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, April 23, 2020

<sup>572</sup> [Hospital nurses silenced about coronavirus infections](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, April 23, 2020

<sup>573</sup> The state-run salamatnews.com, February 1, 2020

- The official said: "If the Health Ministry does not have the money to pay nurses' wages which are past due for 16 months, at least provide them security in hospitals; at least give legal protection to the beaten nurses or at least soothe them. There is not a week without two or three cases of violence against nurses in medical centers. Many of these cases are never registered or reported."<sup>575</sup>
- The pension law and the fact that nurses have not been paid their pandemic-era overtime earnings, nor their routine salaries and benefits, are among the primary reasons for the repeated protests of this hardworking group.
- The nurses hired by Ava Salamat Company in Ahvaz held a protest outside the governorate of Khuzestan. A nurse said: "Nurses hired by private companies work the same as other nurses who are hired officially or on temporary contracts and do the same number of shifts. But our salaries are hardly 4.1 million Tomans. The amount of our work is not different from other nurses, but our salaries are between 2 to 4 million Tomans less."<sup>576</sup>
- A group of nurses working in the medical centers and hospitals of Ahvaz and other nearby cities held a protest on January 5, 2021, was against unjustified discrimination against them, failure to pay them salaries equal to officially hired nurses, lack of job security, etc. The nurses participating in this protest said: "They have deducted from our salaries and benefits for consecutive months. We have been going through difficult circumstances over the past year because of the Coronavirus outbreak."
- Nurses and healthcare workers of the Hospital of Karaj held a gathering outside the Governorate of Alborz Province to protest the non-payment of their wages on January 5, 2021. They chanted, "Enough with hollow promises, our food baskets are empty." The staff of the Hospital of Karaj has not received their salaries and benefits for four years.<sup>577</sup>
- On January 4, 2021, the nurses and healthcare workers hired by private companies in Yazd also held a gathering outside the Governorate of Yazd. They said: "We worked along with the official healthcare workers. But at the time of payment of salaries and benefits, we receive less than they do because we are contract workers and we do not have the right to object."
- The Medical Center of Shiraz nurses and employees hired by private companies held a protest outside the provincial governorate in this city. They held up hand-written sheets which said: "We helped you in the worst conditions; you abandon us in the worst circumstances. We demand our rights."<sup>578</sup>

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<sup>574</sup> Vahid Nassiri, parliamentary legal deputy of the Nursing System Organization, the state-run khabaronline.ir, October 7, 2020

<sup>575</sup> Vahid Nassiri, parliamentary legal deputy of the Nursing System Organization, the state-run khabaronline.ir, October 7, 2020

<sup>576</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, January 5, 2021

<sup>577</sup> [Nurses and healthcare workers in Iran hold 7 protests](#), demand salaries, news, the NCRI Women's Committee, website, January 6, 2021

<sup>578</sup> [Nurses and healthcare workers in Iran hold 7 protests](#), demand salaries, news, the NCRI Women's Committee, website, January 6, 2021

**Introduced/strengthened programs that address the particular problems faced by rural women, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy**

No, there have not been any effective programs to address problems faced by rural women working in the non-monetized sectors.

- Rural women do not own their production tools. Most rural women do not receive any wages.<sup>579</sup>
- A group of women works on other people's farms, i.e., their activities are outside their family businesses, but the amount of wage they receive is far less than what men get (for equal work).
- A woman with four children from Kalat Abi village in Mazandaran Province says, "Normally, I wake up at 4 a.m. I do the housework, feed the birds and the livestock, prepare the lunch and then accompany my husband to the land. I return home around noon, feed the children, and go back to the land... In the afternoon, I go to the fruit garden along with other women to harvest the fruit. Amid all this work, I have to remember to milk the cow, oversee my children's homework, and take care of my disabled mother-in-law. Every day, I have to bake the bread, and twice a week, I bake bread for sale. I must bake at least 500 pieces of bread on my own. At night, I come back home around 7 p.m. I prepare the dinner, prepare tea for my husband, tidy the house and do the sewing after dinner." She does not receive any wage from anybody for the work she does. Her husband directly receives even the salary for her work on the farm and in the fruit garden.<sup>580</sup>
- Women who plant rice do more than 60 percent of the planting and harvesting of rice, but their wage is 10,000 Tomans less than the wage of their male counterparts. A seasonal female worker participates in all stages of plantation and harvest of rice. In other seasons, they work in other farms.  
Most of these women suffer from rheumatism and arthritis. They tie their knees with cloth and go to work again. Often, the farm owner does not allow them to wear boots or use gloves. Many of these women start training at the age of seven without receiving any wage. Then, they have to do the work for a lifetime, even in the final months of their pregnancy. Their hands get blistered and bruised. They contract fungal diseases and fever. They do not have insurance, and they do not own any land. But their work is not limited to the land where they work.
- In the hours they do not work on the farm, they have to do all the housework. From early in the morning until they go to the farm, they have to tend the poultry, do the housework, wash the clothes, cook the food, etc. After returning from the farm, they have to bake bread, tend the livestock, and do other chores around the house.<sup>581</sup>
- Harvest of potatoes is also part of the agricultural work women engage in, but women workers harvest between 50 to 70 sacks of potatoes every day for only 350,000 Tomans

<sup>579</sup> General director of the office in charge of rural and nomad women's affairs, the state-run salamatnews.com, October 17, 2016

<sup>580</sup> The state-run salamatnews.com, October 17, 2016

<sup>581</sup> Iranwire website, October 16, 2017

(\$30).<sup>582</sup> In other agricultural sectors, despite doing the same work for the same amount of hours, women end up with half of the payment allocated to their male counterparts.<sup>583</sup>

- Most of the women living in Hengam Island do fishing from their childhood until they die. The Labor Law does not recognize them, although they do fishing for 50 years.<sup>584</sup>

### **Adopted gender-responsive social protection floors to ensure that all women have access to essential health care, childcare facilities, and income security**

There have been no reports on adopting specific gender-responsive social protection floors to ensure women's access to essential health care, child facilities, and income security.

On the contrary, many reports indicate deaths of women and children due to lack of access to essential health care.

- There is one medical center for every 3 to 4 villages in Iran, and most villagers have problems receiving medical care.<sup>585</sup>
- Rural and nomad women have little access to specialist doctors and dentists. Many rural and nomad women die before reaching a medical center when they get sick.<sup>586</sup>
- The inhabitants of Hassanabad village have to ride camels to get to normal roads where cars travel. One of the inhabitants who had suffered a heart stroke died before reaching a city hospital.<sup>587</sup>
- A sick woman lost her life in Hashin village near Ardabil due to the lack of a medical center and bad roads.<sup>588</sup>
- The villages in Damavand and Firouzkouh face medical and health problems.<sup>589</sup>
- Chahak village, with a population of 8,000, does not have even one permanent medical center. The only physician available to this village is a conscript soldier that visits patients from morning until noon. In this period, he can see only 15 out of some 60 patients who need to be seen. In other times, people have no access to any doctor or medics, and emergency patients usually do not survive on the way to a hospital in a distant location. The distance between the last village in this district to the nearest city is 60 kilometers.<sup>590</sup>
- People living in the Ermian village of Shahroud, northeastern Iran, face serious medical problems. A doctor visits this village occasionally, only once a month. Sometimes, no doctor visits this village for 4 to 5 months. Inhabitants of this village have to pay at least 100,000 Tomans for transportation to the nearest medical center.<sup>591</sup>
- During the 5.9 magnitude earthquake in East Azerbaijan on November 8, 2019, two little girls and two women got killed. According to press reports, Zahra Abedi, 10, was killed

<sup>582</sup> The state-run IRNA news agency, November 14, 2017

<sup>583</sup> The official IRNA news agency, November 22, 2018

<sup>584</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, February 10, 2020

<sup>585</sup> Moussa Reza Servati, member of the Social Committee of the Parliament, the state-run Mehr news agency, December 31, 2016

<sup>586</sup> Parichehr Soltani, secretary of the working group on rural and nomad women living in underprivileged areas, the state-run ISNA news agency, October 5, 2016

<sup>587</sup> The state-run asriran.com, January 21, 2018

<sup>588</sup> Balal Eskandari, head of Firouz Governorate in Ardabil, the official IRNA news agency, December 25, 2016

<sup>589</sup> Qassem Mirzaii Nikou, deputy from Damavand and Firouzkouh, the state-run Fars news agency, February 1, 2018

<sup>590</sup> The state-run Ostani Hamshahri website, October 22, 2017

<sup>591</sup> The state-run Dana website, February 8, 2015



because there was no hospital in Varnakesh village and the nearby village had a power outage, not able to help save the girl's life.<sup>592</sup>

- The fatality of newborn infants in Iran is five times greater than in developed countries.<sup>593</sup>
- Every year, 15,000 infants<sup>594</sup> and some 300 mothers die during delivery.<sup>595</sup>
- A considerable part of infant mortality occurs in underprivileged areas and villages because there rarely are any medical centers in these areas.<sup>596</sup>
- In the poor, uneducated rural communities, girl children are given to marriage and become pregnant. Mothers under 19 years of age have a precarious pregnancy. While they need more medical care and attention, there are no such services in their villages.<sup>597</sup>
- One hundred seventy (170) citizens in Dinaran village of Ardel, in Charmahal and Bakhtiari Province, became sick for drinking polluted water, 10 of whom were in critical conditions.<sup>598</sup>
- At least 300 women, children, and even infants were infected with HIV in Chenar Mahmoudi village, in Lordegan county of Charmahal Bakhtiari Province, due to repeated use of disposable syringes for diabetes tests by the clinic in this village.<sup>599</sup> One of the residents said 500 people had taken HIV tests, and all had positive results.

People who do not afford hospital expenses are treated in two ways: they are not admitted to begin with or are held hostage after treatment.

- In February 2018, a 35-year-old mother from Mashhad who had a normal delivery was taken hostage for five days and not allowed to leave the hospital due to lack of financial resources to pay her hospital bill. Hospital officials had insisted that she would be able to leave the hospital only if she made full payment of 1.2 million Tomans (\$89). With the passing of every day, 380,000 Tomans (\$28) were added to her bill. This even though the state's health rules expressly point out that natural births are free of charge.<sup>600</sup>
- Officials of a hospital in Tehran's poor neighborhood of Yaftabad took one of the newborn twin hostages for 27 days until their mother paid the expenses for delivering a second infant. The young mother, Jamileh, had sold all her belongings to pay for delivery costs in the hospital. However, hospital officials told her that she would have to pay the fees and the 1.7 million Tomans that she had already paid for the delivery because she had given birth to twins. They released the mother and her newborn daughter but kept the newborn son until his mother provided the money they demanded. Jamileh said her infant was not taken care of in the hospital, and he had become frail after 27 days. She had to pay 7 million Tomans (\$2,300) to get her son.<sup>601</sup>
- In August 2014, a young pregnant woman gave birth to her baby in the hospital's toilet because the hospital refused to admit her. Parvaneh was in severe pain when she went to

<sup>592</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, November 8, 2019

<sup>593</sup> Ali Akbar Sayyari, deputy Minister of Health, the state-run asriran.com, January 21, 2018

<sup>594</sup> The state-run Tabnak website, February 2, 2017

<sup>595</sup> The state-run asriran.com, January 21, 2018

<sup>596</sup> Iraj Khosronia, head of the GI Specialists' Association, the state-run Tabnak website, February 2, 2017

<sup>597</sup> Fereshteh Sarbazi, member of the Association of Women and Midwives, the state-run ILNA news agency, August 29, 2017

<sup>598</sup> Hassan Nouri, deputy for Emergency Operations, the state-run Jam-e Jam Online, August 29, 2017

<sup>599</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, October 2, 2019

<sup>600</sup> The state-run asriran.com, January 26, 2018; the state-run ROKNA news agency, January 24, 2018

<sup>601</sup> The state-run Tabnak and Jam-e Jam websites, January 20, 2016

the hospital in Kohdasht but was told that she had to go to the hospital in Khorramabad. Having no choice, she went to the hospital's dark toilet with the help of her sister to give birth to her child.<sup>602</sup>

- Kowthar Obstetrics and Gynecology Hospital in Urmia, the only specialized maternity hospital, has only 62 beds for 73,000 inhabitants. Most women in this hospital give birth in the corridor, spend their recovery in the hospital halls, and are discharged right from there.<sup>603</sup>
- In September 2018, Zahra Barghi, 3, died due to a blood infection after the state hospital refused her admittance despite the treating physician's order, saying there were no empty beds for non-emergency patients. Despite her father's insistence that he would hold his daughter in his arms and stay in the hallway, he was thrown out of the hospital using foul language and insults. On the way to another hospital, little Zahra suffered seizures and nausea and died less than 24 hours later.<sup>604</sup>
- An 18-year-old orphan girl was kept hostage for at least seven days in March 2016 in the city of Yazd for not being able to pay for her treatment cost. She went to the hospital's emergency room, where she underwent surgery. The cost of treatment for her seven-day stay was 4 million Tomans (\$296), but she could only afford to pay one million of the amount, and the hospital prevented her discharge.<sup>605</sup>

#### **Conducted campaigns or awareness raising activities to encourage the participation of men and boys in unpaid care and domestic work**

The Iranian regime has not campaigned for or encouraged the participation of men and boys in unpaid care and domestic work. Still, the culture promoted by the ruling regime has led to further male domination and violence against women.

- Regardless of the existing cultural backgrounds promoting male domination, the legal, judicial, and disciplinary structures are such that men allow themselves to imply force and commit violence against women.<sup>606</sup>
- Male domination and its related prejudices have grown in the younger generation. Based on the culture promoted, men consider domestic violence against women as their right.<sup>607</sup>

#### **Introduced legal changes regarding the division of marital assets or pension entitlements after divorce that acknowledge women's unpaid contribution to the family during the marriage**

Under the Iranian regime's laws, a man is the only party who can divorce his wife at any time and for any reason. Outside the law, and at the time of marriage, however, women can register a

<sup>602</sup> The state-run khabaronline.ir, August 19, 2014

<sup>603</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, July 7, 2018

<sup>604</sup> The state-run Young Journalists Club, September 9, 2018

<sup>605</sup> [Destitute girl, 18, held hostage after treatment](#), website of NCRI Women's Committee, April 7, 2016

<sup>606</sup> Ahmad Bokharaii, director of social damages group affiliated with the Sociology Association, interview with the official IRNA news agency, July 18, 2018

<sup>607</sup> Interview with a sociology expert, the official IRNA news agency, July 18, 2018

precondition in their marriage document indicating that they can get divorced, should the circumstances arise.

The only thing a woman can receive after divorce is her dowry, but she is not entitled to any pension or division of marital assets for her unpaid contribution during the marriage.<sup>608</sup>

## 7. Has your country introduced austerity/fiscal consolidation measures, such as cuts in public expenditure or public-sector downsizing, over the past five years?

- In the fiscal year 1397 (March 2018 – March 2019), the credit for empowering women heads of households was lowered from 20 billion Tomans (\$1.74 million) in the previous year to 15 billion (\$1.3 million) in the Sixth Development Program.<sup>609</sup>
- There was a 39% cut in the budget allocated to women heads of households in the Iranian fiscal year 1397 budget, while the budget of some other cultural agencies remained the same or doubled.<sup>610</sup>
- Also, the budget for insurance of homemakers with more than three children was cut down by more than 30%.<sup>611</sup>
- While the budget considered for the Directorate of Women and Family Affairs was only 21 billion Tomans (\$1.8 million), the budget allocated to the Policy-Making Council for Women's Seminaries, which is part of the regime's religious propaganda machine, was 270 billion Tomans (\$23.5 million).<sup>612</sup> Ironically, the Iranian regime considers this as allocating funds to the cause of gender equity!
- The parliamentary Research Center evaluated the budget for the 1398 fiscal year for women, families, and children. The Persian year 1398 started on March 21, 2019, and will end on March 20, 2020.
- The Research Center studied the credit predicted for the two policy-making institutions, i.e., the Presidential Directorate for Women and Family Affairs and the Social and Cultural Council of Women and Family. It concluded that the total credit allocated to these two institutions dealing with women had been reduced by 30% from 22.5 billion Tomans to 15.7 billion Tomans. It said the reduction was due to the cut in the total credit for the Directorate for Women and Family Affairs from 21 billion Tomans (\$1.83 million) in 2018 to 14.2 billion Tomans (\$1.2 million) in 2019, which is a 32 percent budget cut equivalent to 7 billion Tomans.<sup>613</sup>

<sup>608</sup> The state-run Young Journalists Club website, January 10, 2020

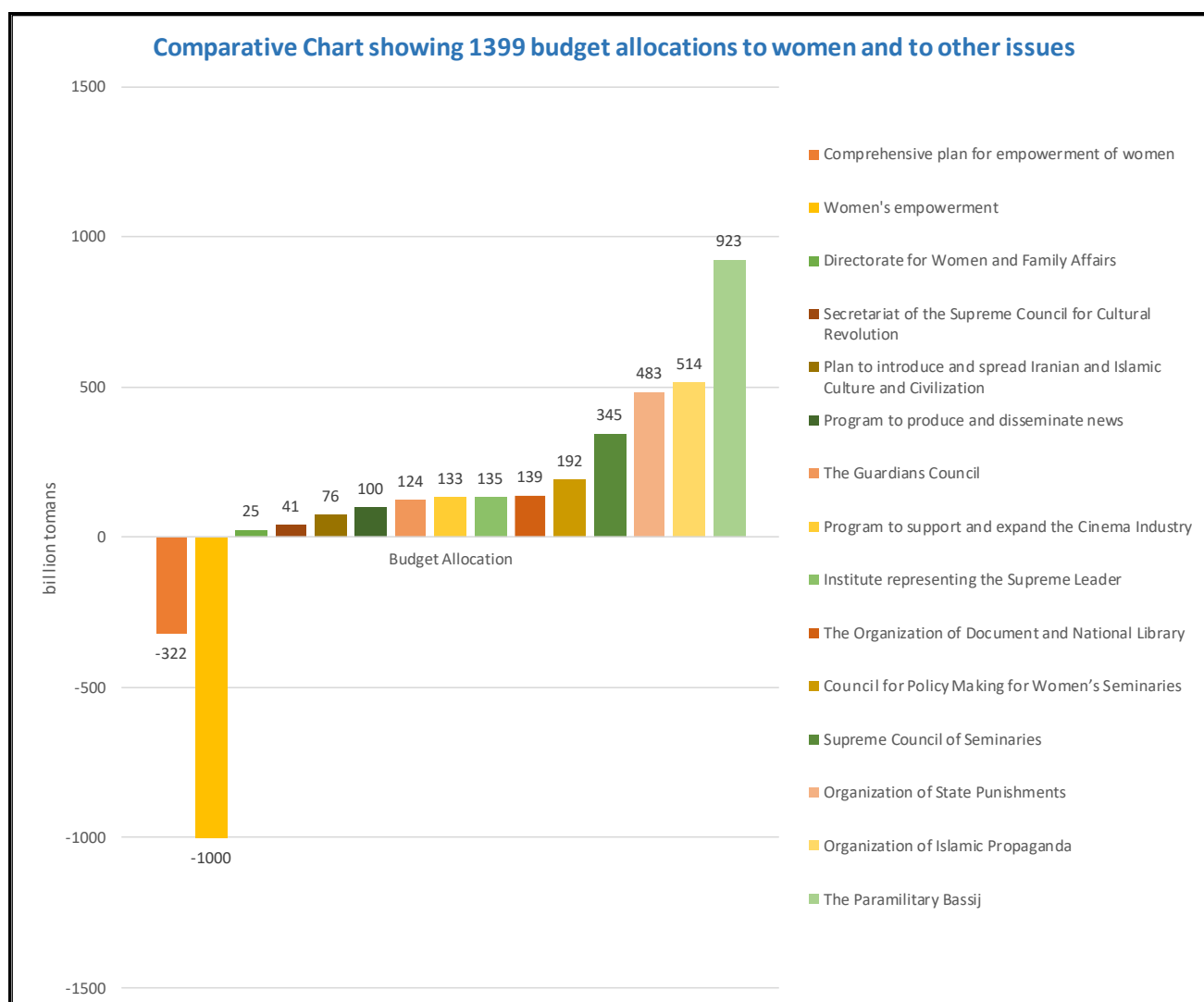
<sup>609</sup> Parvaneh Salahshouri, a member of the Cultural Committee of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run ISNA news agency – December 18, 2017

<sup>610</sup> Zohreh Ashtiani, secretary of the Family Faction of the mullahs' parliament (Majlis), the state-run Shahrivand daily, July 10, 2018

<sup>611</sup> Parvaneh Salahshouri, a member of the Cultural Committee of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run ISNA news agency – December 18, 2017

<sup>612</sup> The state-run donya-e-eqtesad.com, December 20, 2017

<sup>613</sup> The state-run Etemadonline.com, December 26, 2018



The above chart for the Persian fiscal year 1399 (March 2020-March 2021) compares the budget allocated to the Directorate on Women and Family Affairs compared to the funding granted to other plans and departments. While the women's directorate has been given only 25 billion Tomans, the women's empowerment plan in Article 80 of the Sixth Development Program has not received any budget. At the same time, it lacks 1 trillion Tomans for being implemented. Compare this to the seminaries, and the agencies in charge of Islamic propaganda and even cinema (133 billion) and news production (100 billion) have been granted higher budgets. The Council for Policymaking for Women's Seminaries has been given 192 billion Tomans.

- Due to insufficient funds in the 1398 fiscal year, 88% of women heads of households eligible for the Poverty Preventing Plan were excluded from the program. Only 5,000 of the 40,000 women heads of households nominated by the Ministry of Health and Medical Education to be covered by the Poverty Prevention Plan for Pregnant and Lactating Women were included.<sup>614</sup>
- The number of women heads of households who were taught skills to find jobs was only 12,000.<sup>615</sup> There are at least 3.6 million women heads of household in Iran. 82% of these

<sup>614</sup> Ahmad Maidari, Deputy Minister of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare, the state-run IRNA News Agency – February 12, 2019

<sup>615</sup> Zahra Javaherian, deputy for planning and coordination in the Presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs, the state-run ISNA news agency, December 11, 2019: "12,000 women heads of household were covered by plans in 1398 to teach them skills to find jobs."

women do not have any jobs, and only 180,000 receive meager monthly support from the Welfare Organization.<sup>616</sup>

- Contradicting the Research Center of the mullahs' parliament, officials of the women's directorate announced this year (2020) that they received 20.3 billion of the allocated 21 billion Toman budget of the Persian fiscal year 1398.<sup>617</sup>
- Officials of the Presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs are boasting that they will receive 19% more budget in the new fiscal Persian year 1399 (March 2020-March 2021), amounting to 25 billion Tomans (\$2.17 million).<sup>618</sup> In the meantime, they acknowledge that this is a minimal budget compared to other agencies and institutions.
- One of the main criticisms of the 1399 budget bill is the omission of the credits for insurance of women heads of households and women with delinquent guardians. Articles 19 and 22 of the 14th amendment to the 1398 bill concerned credits for women's insurance heads of households and women with delinquent guardians have been omitted altogether.<sup>619</sup>
- The government's budget bill to the parliament pointed out that support for women heads of households is unnecessary, and their insurance budget was removed altogether.<sup>620</sup>
- Neither were any funds allocated to paragraph (d) of Article 80 of the Sixth Development Program for women's empowerment.<sup>621</sup> While the Welfare Organization has a one trillion Toman deficit for implementing paragraph d of Article 80 of the Sixth Development Program.<sup>622</sup>
- Also, the Women's Social and Cultural Council budget has been cut by 18% because of the omission of the plan for strategic research without providing any apparent reason.<sup>623</sup>
- In the discussions about the new year's budget, it was revealed that from the meager 300 billion Tomans allocated in the 1398 fiscal year to the insurance of homemakers, only 12 percent of it had been granted by July. By January, it was still not clear if they had received the real credit for it.<sup>624</sup>
- Welfare Organization officials have also revealed that implementing the Comprehensive Plan for Empowerment of Women requires 322 billion Tomans.<sup>625</sup> They also

<sup>616</sup> Massoumeh Ebtekar, head of the Presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs, the official IRNA news agency, October 7, 2018.

<sup>617</sup> Zahra Javaherian, deputy for planning and coordination in the Presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs, the state-run ISNA news agency, December 11, 2019: "21 billion tomans had been adopted for the directorate's budget in 1398 but only 20.3 billion tomans was granted to the directorate."

<sup>618</sup> Zahra Javaherian, deputy for planning and coordination in the Presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs, the state-run ISNA news agency, December 11, 2019: "The budget allocated this year to the presidential directorate on Women and Family Affairs is 25 billion tomans which shows a 19% growth compared to last year, which is of course very small in comparison to many other agencies and institutions."

<sup>619</sup> Zahra Javaherian, deputy for planning and coordination in the Presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs, the state-run ISNA news agency, December 11, 2019; Tayyebbeh Saivoshi, member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run javanonline.ir, January 2, 2020

<sup>620</sup> Simin Kazemi, a sociologist, the state-run asriran.com, January 2, 2020

<sup>621</sup> Farideh Olad Ghobad, member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run ICANA.ir, December 17, 2019

<sup>622</sup> Derakhshani, member of the Social Directorate of the Welfare Organization, the state-run ICANA.ir, December 17, 2019

<sup>623</sup> Tayyebbeh Saivoshi, member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run javanonline.ir, January 2, 2020

<sup>624</sup> Farideh Olad Ghobad, member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run ICANA.ir, December 17, 2019

<sup>625</sup> Derakhshani, member of the Social Directorate of the Welfare Organization, the state-run ICANA.ir, December 17, 2019

acknowledged that they have no credits for providing support to 245,000 women heads of household on the Welfare Organization's waiting list. The 1399 budget bill has allocated only 3 billion Tomans for screening and health, while the budget needed for screening is 17.5 billion Tomans and 50 billion Tomans for health care.

- In the Persian fiscal year 1399, in the absence of oil revenues, the Iranian regime has based its budget on revenues from taxes on property and water to be exacted from the Iranian public. With most of the populace living under the poverty line, there is no guarantee for them to secure this revenue.
- Despite the abysmal living conditions of most of the populace in Iran, particularly during the pandemic, the clerical regime allocated the lion's share of the budget of the Persian fiscal year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022) to the armed forces and other suppressive agencies. Following is a table listing some of the organs receiving a budget in the year 1400:

Budget recipients	Budget (billion Tomans)
The Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)	38,564
The Army	20,115.30
The Ministry of Defense	4,379.53
The Organization of Bassij	2,121
The General Staff of the Armed Forces	396.8
The Defense Ministry's Organization of Research and Innovation	245
The Office of Islamic Propaganda of the Seminary of Qom	205
The Supreme Leader's representatives in the IRGC	30
The Global Assembly of Ahl-e Bait	75
The Global Assembly to Reconcile Religions	43
The Council of Policy Making of Friday Prayer Leaders	35
The Staff to Revive Promotion of Virtue	35
The Institute to public the works of Khomeini	34
<b>Directorate of Women and Family Affairs</b>	<b>32</b>
Rahian-e Nour	30
The Cultural Foundation of Qassem Soleimani	8.5

**Notes:**

- The Global Assembly of Ahl-e Bait is an agency tasked with the export of Islamic fundamentalism abroad.
- The Global Assembly to Reconcile Religions is in charge of the export of Islamic fundamentalism abroad.
- Rahian-e Nour is an agency in charge of taking students to tour the fronts of the Iran-Iraq War (1981-1988).
- Qassem Soleimani was the regime's No. 2 man killed in January 2020. He was in charge of advancing the regime's policy of meddling in other countries and export of terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism.





## POVERTY ERADICATION, SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIAL SERVICES

### 8. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to reduce/ eradicate poverty among women and girls?

The people of Iran have become much poorer since 2015. The middle class has all but diminished and more than 80 percent of the Iranian people live under the poverty line.<sup>626</sup>

The thought and sight of people sleeping in empty graves and ditches, on roofs, or in abandoned refrigerators batter the conscience of every human being. Today, they are a daily sight everywhere in Iran, under the rule of the mullahs. The regime's officials and media talk and write about these people easily and without shame.

So, the Iranian regime has not taken any steps towards reducing or eradicating poverty, especially among women and girls. In fact, various regime officials have admitted that the face of poverty in Iran has become feminine.

Women are victims of institutionalized discrimination in both society and law. They face numerous barriers to education, employment, and access to bank loans, and they do not receive government assistance or insurance benefits. In Iran, all women's lives are affected by poverty.

- One of the officials of the state-run Relief Committee acknowledged, "Poverty has become feminine... Today, more than 64 percent of impoverished families covered by our Relief Committee are female headed households."<sup>627</sup>
- An official of Tehran's Welfare, Social Services and Cooperation Organization acknowledged: "The most significant problem in the city of Tehran is the feminization of social ills."<sup>628</sup>
- Another official involved with women's issues said: "Poverty has become feminized. Social ills, suicide, runaway girls, addiction, and a rising number of female prisoners are some of the issues we face."<sup>629</sup>

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<sup>626</sup> Shahab Naderi, member of the parliamentary Economic Committee, the official website of the Iranian regime's parliament, ICANA, March 13, 2018

<sup>627</sup> Mer'at Rassouli, director of the state-run Relief Committee (charity) in Shiraz, the state-run ISNA news agency, August 26, 2015.

<sup>628</sup> Farzad Hooshyar Parsian, General Director of Tehran's Welfare, Social Services and Cooperation Organization, the state-run IRNA news agency, August 16, 2015.

- A family of four living in an urban area with a monthly income below 40 million Rials (roughly \$347) is living in poverty. Families in rural parts with an income of less than 20 million Rials per month live in poverty.<sup>630</sup>
- Some 82% of the 4 million women heads of households live below the poverty line and do not have a suitable job, yet they receive no government support. Many women have no choice but to sleep under bridges, in unfinished houses, behind trees, or under cars on cold nights due to their extreme poverty.<sup>631</sup>
- In October 2019, 14,000 women heads of households were removed from the list of low-income families who received subsidies.<sup>632</sup>
- The Welfare Organization offers from 65,000 Tomans (\$2.7) for one person to 400,000 Tomans (\$17) for a family of five.<sup>633</sup>
- These meager donations, which of course fail to solve problems, cover only 250,000 female breadwinners.<sup>634</sup> The rest of the at least 3,750,000 women-headed households, are deprived of even a meager assistance and struggle with deadly poverty.
- Currently 250,000 women heads of households in Iran are covered by the Welfare Organization. About 30,000 needy women heads of households are waiting their turns to receive a pension from the Welfare Organization.<sup>635</sup>
- In 2018, 33 percent of Iran's population, i.e. nearly 26 million people, are suffering from absolute poverty, and six percent, or five million people, are starving. They are not even able to buy enough food, while they also have other expenses like housing, transportation, and clothing.<sup>636</sup>
- In 2020, some 50 percent of the Iranian people live below the absolute poverty line.<sup>637</sup> Consumption of red meat has decreased by 65% and rice by 34% across Iranian households.<sup>638</sup> According to official statistics, in 2011, about 18% of Iran's population lived below the absolute poverty line.<sup>639</sup> This rate increased by about 24% in 2018 and to 35% in 2019.
- In 2018, about 24.3% and in 2019, about 35.4% of the total population of Iran lived below the absolute poverty line (i.e., with standards lower than the standards of the African continent). Statistics related to 2020 are not yet available, but it can be guessed that with the unbridled growth of foreign currency prices, the triple-digit growth of commodity

<sup>629</sup> Zahra Shojaii, secretary general of the so-called reformist women's assembly, the state-run dustaan.com, June 20, 2018

<sup>630</sup> Hossein Raghfar, Iranian economist, the state-run ISNA news agency, April 7, 2018; the exchange rate is based on the 2018 value of the national currency which was around 11,500 Tomans per dollar. Today, the exchange rate is around 23,405 Tomans per dollar.

<sup>631</sup> Ebrahim Ghaffari, General Director of Welfare Organization of Golestan Province, the state-run Tasnim news agency, February 12, 2017

<sup>632</sup> Zahra Sa'ii, member of the regime's parliament, the state-run Aftab website, September 29, 2019

<sup>633</sup> Mojtaba Naji, the state-run asriran.com, November 25, 2020

<sup>634</sup> Welfare Organization website, March 30, 2020

<sup>635</sup> Fatemeh Abbasi, Director General of the Family and Women Empowerment Office of the Welfare Organization, official website of the Welfare Organization Behzisti.ir, August 2, 2020

<sup>636</sup> Hossein Raghfar, Iranian economist, the state-run ISNA news agency, April 7, 2018

<sup>637</sup> The poverty line for a family of four is about 10 million Tomans. This figure takes into account the absolute poverty line, which includes basic necessities of life, including food, clothing, shelter, health care, and transportation. With 38,000 Tomans for a carton tray of eggs and 8,000 Tomans for 100 grams of butter.

<sup>638</sup> Report of the National Statistics Center of Iran, October 2020

<sup>639</sup> The relative poverty line is the minimum viable income to live, but people below the absolute poverty line cannot meet basic needs such as food, clothing, and housing, and are considered absolutely poor.

prices such as butter, beans and the like, as well as the legendary growth of housing and car prices, now at least half of Iranians live in absolute poverty.<sup>640</sup>

- There are currently 30 million unemployed and 60 million people below the poverty line.<sup>641</sup> However, unofficial estimates suggest that between 80 percent and 90 percent of Iranians currently live below the poverty line.
- The poverty line for a family of four stands at about 10 million Tomans (\$427). With an optimistic monthly salary of 3 million Tomans (\$128), workers are in absolute poverty.<sup>642</sup>
- The poverty line in Iran for a family of four has risen to 10 million Tomans (\$427).<sup>643</sup>
- All Iranian workers are below the poverty line.<sup>644</sup>
- In the past, it was estimated that the population of slum-dwellers was about 25 million. We can even boldly say that the number of people living in Tehran slums has increased by 60%.<sup>645</sup>
- 38 million people in Iran live in shanty towns and slums in the peripheries of major cities.<sup>646</sup>
- The 38 million slum-dwellers (46 percent of the population) live below the poverty line.<sup>647</sup>
- The law contains serious issues and gaps regarding women. Presently, the most dangerous and challenging social harms threaten women more than any other time. The government has abandoned the slums despite the high potential in these areas for increasing social anomalies. Informal settlements (in the slums) lack any suitable educational, cultural and medical atmosphere.<sup>648</sup>
- Women heads of households, who are the primary victims of poverty in society, are always anxious about earning money to buy meat, rice, fruit, and so on. In addition, they have to pay all monthly expenses such as rent, water, and electricity. A woman head of household said: "I have three boys, 9, 10, and 15 years old, and they are all growing. They like fruit very much. But I can't afford to buy fresh fruit for them... Eating fruit has become a dream for the children of the poor. As a mother, I am ashamed of my children when we walk past a fruit shop, and my little boy says, 'Mom, will you buy me some pistachios?' I always say that now is not the time!"<sup>649</sup>
- Some poor mothers have no choice but to abandon their babies on the street with a note, because they lack the financial capability to raise them. For example, a picture of a 5-day-old baby abandoned on Manzarfa Street in Tabriz was published on social media on September 24, 2020. The baby's mother had written a letter asking that her baby be handed over to a good family.<sup>650</sup>

<sup>640</sup> The state-run Entekhab daily newspaper, October 6, 2020

<sup>641</sup> Ibrahim Razzaghi, an economist, the state-run Tabnak website, September 20, 2020

<sup>642</sup> Hamid Reza Imam Gholi-Tabar, an inspector of the Supreme Assembly of Workers' Representatives, the state-run Tasnim news agency, September 25, 2020

<sup>643</sup> The state-run asriran.com, November 25, 2020

<sup>644</sup> The state-run Ayande-ye Eghtesad, September 20, 2020

<sup>645</sup> Mohammad-Reza Mahboubfar, an expert on social harms, The state-run Etemadonline.com, June 22, 2020

<sup>646</sup> Mohammad Reza Mahboubfar, an expert on social harms, The state-run Etemadonline.com, June 22, 2020

<sup>647</sup> Independent Persian, September 27, 2020

<sup>648</sup> Samira Zarei, a representative of the NGOs in Kurdistan Province, the state-run Tasnim news agency, February 8, 2021

<sup>649</sup> The state-run khabarforionline.ir, September 8, 2020

<sup>650</sup> The state-run ISNA News Agency, September 12, 2020

- The majority of 120 workers of Safireh garbage-sorting site in Ahvaz are women heads of households and they risk injury and contracting diseases.<sup>651</sup> They work 8 hours a day and earn a monthly salary of 2 million Tomans (\$85).<sup>652</sup> They had not been paid since the beginning of the Coronavirus outbreak, in February 2020, and were therefore, under tremendous financial pressure.<sup>653</sup>
- The misery index, which shows the sum of inflation and unemployment, was estimated at 46.1 percent at the end of last year (winter 2021). The record of the misery index in winter 2021, including the inflation rate of 36.4 percent and the unemployment rate of 9.7 percent, reached 46.1 percent, which is the highest rate of misery index in the (decade starting from 2011). The inflation rate in Iran is following an increasing and worrying trend. According to the Labor Ministry, the annual consumer price index will reach 50% by the end of August 2021, in which case at least half of the country's provinces are expected to be in the red and alert in terms of the poverty index. By March 2021, the two border provinces of Kermanshah and Kurdistan topped the list in terms of misery index, and the total inflation rate and unemployment rate of these two provinces in the west of the country reached over 58%.<sup>654</sup>

### Nothing has been done for women heads of households in the past decades

Nothing has been done for women heads of households in the past decades. The only measure has been the payment of pensions to only a group of these women as stipulated in the law. But the pension's amount is always lower than what it should be. The occasional increase in the amount of the pension has always been lower than the inflation rate. Which translates into increasing pressure on women heads of households by every passing year. Because offsetting the rising costs of inflation is not commensurate with the rate of increase in pensions. Government officials boast of paying a pension of 200,000 Tomans (\$8) for a single family and a little more than 600,000 Tomans (\$25) for a family of 4 people and more! Given the poverty line of 10 million Tomans (\$427), this amount does not solve any of the problems of women heads of households!<sup>655</sup>

### Where are the oil revenues going?

Before the comprehensive sanctions and the oil embargo imposed on Iran, the clerical regime used to have around 1,500 trillion Rials of oil revenues (more than 13 billion dollars), notwithstanding the taxes and the government's other sources of income. The women's share of these revenues, however, amounted to a meager 200 billion Rials (\$1.74 million).

In the meantime, the wealth of Khamenei's economic institutions run by his headquarters is equivalent to one trillion dollars.<sup>656</sup>

<sup>651</sup> [Women Workers of Safireh Garbage Site Deprived of Minimum Rights](#), articles, NCRI Women's Committee website, June 15, 2020

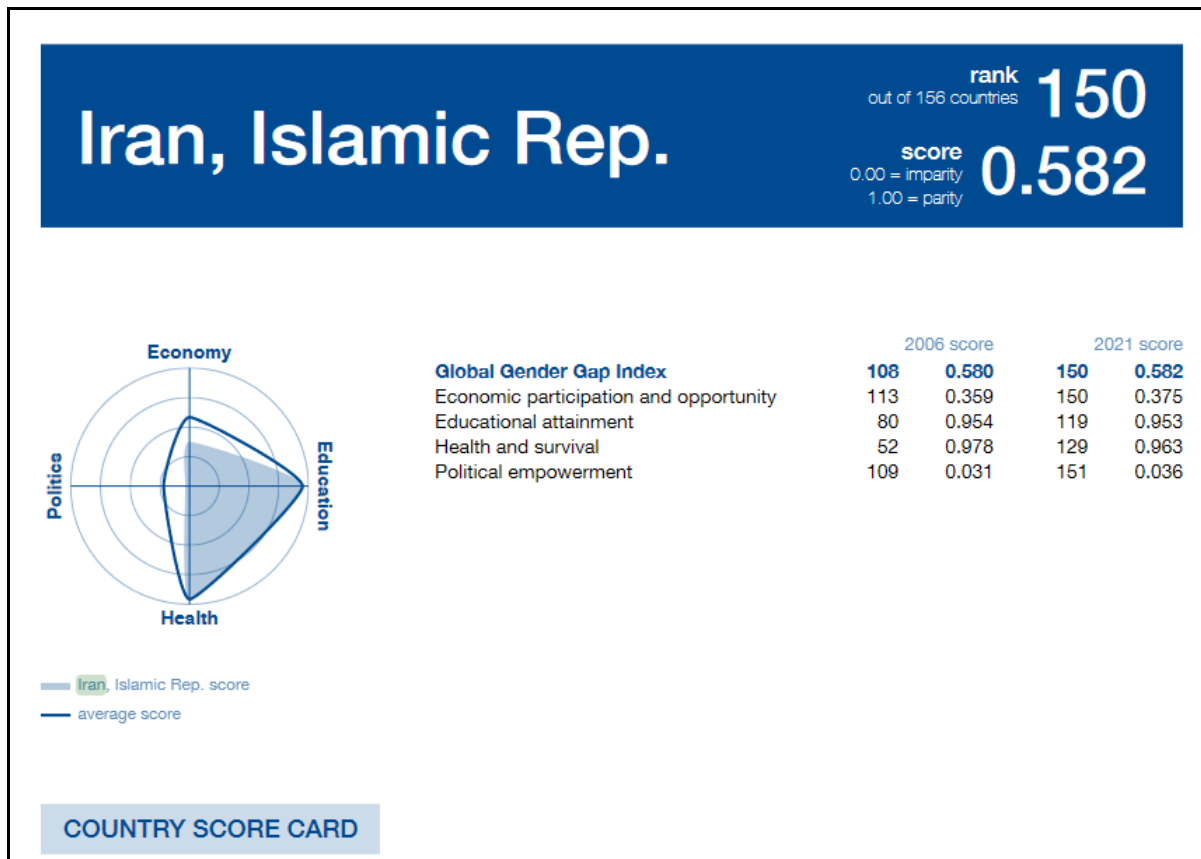
<sup>652</sup> The state-run Jahanesanat.ir, June 2, 2020

<sup>653</sup> The official IRNA news agency, April 30, 2020

<sup>654</sup> The state-run Setareh Sobh daily newspaper, May 11, 2021

<sup>655</sup> Hassan Mousavi Chelek, president of the Iranian Association of Helpers, the state-run Jam-e Jam newspaper, April 10, 2021

<sup>656</sup> The state-run Mostaghel Newspaper, June 1, 2020



The Iranian regime's score card in the Global Gender Gap Report 2021

Also, in the first 6 months of the Persian year 1399 (March-September 2020), steelmakers, petrochemical professionals, and mine owners received 600,000 billion Tomans (\$25,636 million) in rents.<sup>657</sup>

- The total credit for the directorate for Women and Family Affairs slipped from 210 billion Rials (\$1.83 million) in 2018 to 142 billion Rials (\$1.2 million) in 2019, which is a 32 percent budget cut of 70 billion Rials (approx. \$600,000).<sup>658</sup>
- Compare the 142-billion-rial budget of Women and Family Affairs' Directorate with the 250 billion Rials allocated to the *Rahian-e Nour* Central Staff whose mandate is disseminating the official accounts of the Iran-Iraq war and arrange trips for high school students to the former warfront zones.<sup>659</sup>
- The budget allocated to women heads of households in the 1397 (2018) budget was cut by 39% due to insufficient funds, and 88% of women heads of households eligible for Poverty Preventing Plan were excluded from the program,<sup>660</sup> while the budget of some other so-called cultural agencies doubled or remained the same.<sup>661</sup>

<sup>657</sup> The state-run Ressalat Daily, October 15, 2020

<sup>658</sup> The state-run Etemadonline.com, December 26, 2018

<sup>659</sup> Budget Bill of 1398, BBC Persian website, December 26, 2018

<sup>660</sup> Ahmad Maidari, Deputy Minister of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare, the state-run IRNA News Agency, February 12, 2019

<sup>661</sup> Zohreh Ashtiani, secretary of the Family Faction of the mullahs' parliament, interview with the state-run Shahrivand newspaper, July 10, 2018.

- The budget allocated to defense and security affairs was 620 trillion Rials in 1398 (2019), the budget allocated to the state radio and television and other propaganda organs was 5.3 trillion Rials. The Policy-making council for Friday prayer leaders received 3.350 trillion Rials and the giant financial conglomerate of Astan-e Qods-e Razavi was exonerated from paying taxes worth 300 billion Rials.<sup>662</sup>
- In the fiscal Persian year 1400 (2021), again, the budget ratified for the directorate for Women and Family Affairs was 32 billion Tomans (\$1.37 million). Compare this to the 30 billion Tomans ratified for the *Rahian-e Nour* (explained above), 245 billion Tomans (approx. \$10.5 million) ratified for the Ministry of Defense, and 38,564 billion Tomans (\$1,648 million) for the Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC).<sup>663</sup>

**Promoted poor women's access to decent work through active labor market policies (e.g. job training, skills, employment subsidies, etc.) and targeted measures**

The official policy in Iran is tuned to eliminate women from the job market, not providing them equal opportunities for a decent job. So, there is no evidence on promoting poor women's access to decent work. Iran's job market is strictly male-dominated and women have been pushed to the informal sector.

- Women's employment in Iran is insignificant compared to developing countries. Women are constantly denied the right to work and are generally employed in informal, low-paid sectors.<sup>664</sup>
- The unofficial or informal sector of the job market has become feminine because women are cheap labor force and because they need to earn their living, they accept such jobs.<sup>665</sup>
- The official Iranian news agency reported a wide gender gap in the job market: "Women's participation rate in Iran's job market in 2017 was only 16.8% which is very low compared to the male participation rate which was 71.4% in the same year."<sup>666</sup>
- Women make up about 50% of the population, but their economic participation rate is below 15%, said an official in October 2019.<sup>667</sup>
- According to the National Statistics Center report published in April 2021 on employment and unemployment in Iran during winter 2021, the number of employed women dropped down to its lowest in the past five years, i.e., less than 3.5 million.<sup>668</sup>
- About 68% of unemployed persons were women heads of household.<sup>669</sup>
- 85% of the 40-million population of Iranian women do not have paid jobs.<sup>670</sup>

<sup>662</sup> Budget Bill of 1398, BBC Persian website, December 26, 2018

<sup>663</sup> The state-run Eghtesadonline.ir, December 3, 2020; The state-run ISNA news agency, December 2, 2020

<sup>664</sup> The official Iran Estekhdam website, April 4, 2016

<sup>665</sup> Shahindokht Molaverdi, Rouhani's deputy on Women and Family Affairs in the weekly meeting with the state media and press, the state-run ISNA news agency, August 24, 2015.

<sup>666</sup> The official IRNA news agency, January 17, 2019

<sup>667</sup> Ali Zainivand, deputy for political and social affairs in the Governorate of Sistan and Baluchestan Province, The official IRNA news agency, October 3, 2019

<sup>668</sup> The state-run Tel.salamatnews.com, April 2021

<sup>669</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, October 11, 2020

<sup>670</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, May 8, 2021



- The Global Gender Gap Report 2021 puts Iran among the world's ten lowest-ranked countries in terms of income gender gaps, with Iranian woman's income being only 18% of that of a man.<sup>671</sup>
- Iran is among the countries that offer the smallest number of job opportunities to women and have a high unemployment rate. A report by the International Labor Organization, ILO, published on March 8, 2018, indicated that women's unemployment rate in Iran is double that of men.
- The average rate of women's participation in the labor market is 31% among the countries in the Middle East and North Africa group, but seven of the 19 countries (Egypt, Algeria, Iran, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen) in the region have 20% or less and are among the lowest in the world.<sup>672</sup>
- According to the International Labor Organization's estimates, women's participation in the labor force (percentage of female population above 15 years of age) was 17.89% in 2017, 17.72% in 2018, and 17.61% in 2019.<sup>673</sup>
- Pursuant to Paragraph T, Article 80 of the Sixth Development Plan, Rouhani's deputy for Women and Family Affairs was tasked with empowering women heads of households. This program was set for 2017 to 2021. But in spring 2021, there was still no evidence of its implementation and protection of these women.<sup>674</sup>
- The Welfare Organization has set many conditions for the protection of women heads of households. For example, if they are employed, their salaries should be 40% less than the minimum salary set by the Ministry of Labor, otherwise they are considered capable and are not subject to receive Welfare Organization's services. In total, the assistance of the Welfare Organization covers only 250,000 women.<sup>675</sup>

Assuming that all of these 250,000 women are heads of households, the remaining 3,750,000 women heads of households are deprived of even this meagre aid and face deadly poverty.

- Most women heads of households have a low level of education and professional skills, and work in the informal sector of the economy. Their jobs are mostly part-time, uninsured and with lower benefits, and they will be among the first group to be fired during economic crises"<sup>676</sup>

Not only there are no training programs for poor women and women heads of household, but there are not sufficient employment opportunities for women with higher education. Most educated women do not find jobs for their level and field of education; thus they are forced to accept part time jobs in the informal sector with low salaries and no insurance or benefits.

- Massoumeh Ebtekar, Rouhani's deputy for Women and Family Affairs, said, "The number of unemployed educated females are four times greater than unemployed educated males."<sup>677</sup>

<sup>671</sup> World Economic Forum's [Global Gender Gap Report 2021](#), published on March 31, 2021

<sup>672</sup> World Economic Forum's [Global Gender Gap Report 2021](#), published on March 31, 2021

<sup>673</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS>

<sup>674</sup> Welfare Organization official website, March 30, 2020

<sup>675</sup> Welfare Organization's official website, March 30, 2020

<sup>676</sup> Zahra Bonyanian, CEO of a charity organization, the state-run IMNA news agency, December 8, 2020

<sup>677</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, October 5, 2019

- One study indicates that 52 percent of female university and college graduates are “economically inactive”, which is a euphemism used to refer to the unemployed.<sup>678</sup>
- A government official admitted that 38% of women with higher education in Kurdistan Province are unemployed.<sup>679</sup> Another report indicated that highly educated women in the city of Astara, Gilan Province, are working with low monthly salaries of 400,000 Tomans (\$34) to avoid being isolated at home.<sup>680</sup>
- The Special Commission for the Protection of National Production and Monitoring of the Implementation of Article 44 of the Constitution, dated November 21, 2018, reported “the unemployment rate of young educated women reaches 78 percent.”
- Unemployment rates among young people, women, and educated women are alarmingly high, particularly in western provinces. In some provinces, educated women's unemployment rates fluctuate between 63% and 78%.<sup>681</sup>
- A June 2017 study revealed that educated women with BA and BS degrees were hired without legal contracts and insurance for a monthly salary of 150-300 thousand Tomans (\$13-26). The employers sometimes get blank checks from these women so that they would not be able to file complaints against their employers.<sup>682</sup>
- In autumn 2020, educated men's share of the unemployment rate was 28.1%, while women's share was 70.3%. So, educated women experienced the taste of unemployment 42% more than men did. Job opportunities are not equally divided between women and men, and the Coronavirus pandemic has aggravated the situation.<sup>683</sup>
- Students make up 40% of the total population of the unemployed. In the three provinces of Gilan, Mazandaran, and Golestan (northern Iran), the average unemployment rate of university graduates is about 66%.<sup>684</sup>
- According to surveys by the Research Center of the clerical regime's parliament, an average of more than 61% of women were employed in informal jobs in 2018. 84% of women working in the informal sector work in workshops with only one to four employees.<sup>685</sup>
- Out of every 100 working women in Iran, approximately 53 work in the service sector, 26 in the industrial sector and 20 in the agricultural sector. More than 3 million women were engaged in informal employment in the industrial and services sectors in 2019, without insurance or social and legal protections!<sup>686</sup>
- Because of poor economic conditions, many working women are forced to seek jobs in which they are not insured, and they must work in harsh environmental conditions with the lowest wages. Most of them also have higher education.<sup>687</sup>
- Uninsured women working in the workshops suffer from a problem that employers obtain blank checks and promissory notes from them against their consent. Employers exploit them. All these women lack support to safeguard their lives, health, and civil

<sup>678</sup> The state-run Kayhan daily newspaper, June 20, 2017 <http://kayhan.ir/fa/news/106849>

<sup>679</sup> Leila Ajhir, Director General of Women and Family Affairs in Kurdistan, the state-run Fars news agency, November 9, 2019

<sup>680</sup> The state-run salamatnews.com August 17, 2019

<sup>681</sup> The state-run Dana news agency, July 2, 2016

<sup>682</sup> The state-run shahrvand-newspaper.ir, June 28, 2017

<sup>683</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, May 8, 2021

<sup>684</sup> The state-run Alef analytical news website, April 4, 2021

<sup>685</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, June 17, 2020

<sup>686</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, March 8, 2020

<sup>687</sup> Zahra Darvishi, president of the Female Workers' Union, the state-run atiyonline.ir, December 11, 2020

rights. Self-employed women, including peddlers who work in public and in metro stations, suffer from social and occupational insecurity. They suffer from arbitrary arrests and further restriction of their working space. Women working in family businesses can easily be exploited by their male relatives. There is no oversight of workers-employer relationship in these occupations.<sup>688</sup>

- In 2020, the share of graduates with higher education in the unemployed population was 38.9%. Women's share increased by 2.9%, reaching 70.4%.<sup>689</sup>

Sometimes, unemployment is due to lack of funds to pay for new recruitments.

- The secretary general of the House of Nurses revealed that there are at least 30,000 unemployed nurses in Iran due to financial restrictions and the policy of not granting new licenses.<sup>690</sup>
- The budget for recruitment of new nurses in the Persian year 1398 (from March 21, 2019- March 20, 2020), was rejected by the parliament. While half of the nursing graduates remain without jobs, the responsibility of recruiting new nurses is passed from one government agency to the other.<sup>691</sup>
- In recent years, we have had 12,000 nursing graduates every year. In fact, 60,000 people graduated in the last five years, and in the most optimistic case, the Ministry of Health has hired 10,000 of them. So, 50,000 unemployed graduate nurses are looking for work. Because they are unemployed, they accept to work under the exploitive 89-day contracts.<sup>692</sup>

### Supported women's entrepreneurship and business development activities

- The main problem of women entrepreneurs is the lack of access to domestic, foreign, regional and international markets.<sup>693</sup>
- Women who wish to start and are capable of running a business have great difficulties receiving loans for the initial investment because bank managers think that women would not be able to pay back.<sup>694</sup>
- Women lack support for entrepreneurship since they are not trusted by banks and have difficulty in receiving loans. They are required to place deposits.<sup>695</sup>

<sup>688</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, March 8, 2020

<sup>689</sup> Report by the National Statistics Center of Iran, the state-run ISNA news agency, May 12, 2021

<sup>690</sup> Mohammad Sharifi Moghaddam, secretary general of Iran's House of Nurses, the state-run ILNA news agency, January 12, 2019

<sup>691</sup> Mohammad Sharifi Moghaddam, the General Secretary of the House of Nurses, the state-run ILNA news agency, December 31, 2018

<sup>692</sup> Mohammad Sharifi Moghaddam, Secretary General of the House of Nurses, the state-run ILNA news agency, May 11, 2020

<sup>693</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, May 10, 2021

<sup>694</sup> Fatemeh Zolqadr, member of the Labor Committee of the parliament, said, "Many women who wish to start a business, do not have the initial capital despite their capability to run one. When we speak of supporting employment and occupation for women, the first thing is to provide the initial capital, and accordingly, women who wish to start a business must be able to be granted loans... Getting loans is more difficult for women compared to men. Thinking that women would have more problems in paying back their loans compared to men, banks refuse to grant them loans." The state-run ILNA news agency, October 9, 2019

<sup>695</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, November 24, 2019

- Financial institutions consider women as high-risk costumers, and therefore, they make limited resources available to women.<sup>696</sup>
- Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and despite their great efforts to produce goods, women entrepreneurs faced numerous obstacles, including losing their limited access to their traditional markets.<sup>697</sup>
- The lack of a husband's or father's approval to travel, the absence of tax and economic incentives and support, and officials' ignorance about economics are among the reasons no adequate measures have been taken over the past 40 years regarding women's entrepreneurship despite their dignity and capabilities.<sup>698</sup>
- There are many disruptive laws about women's work. If a woman wants to start even a small workshop, legal obstacles will hinder her activity. A male who wants to be economically active can easily access information from his male colleagues about the market situation, government grants, and marketing. But women's access to such networks that can show her the way is minimal. There are plenty of industrial counseling centers available to men. But women, who want to work in various sectors, do not have access to centers that could help them develop and implement their creative ideas.<sup>699</sup>

### **Broadened access to land, housing, finance, technology and/or agricultural extension services**

The regime's MPs have time and again admitted that what they adopt in the parliament has no financial backing to be carried out.<sup>700</sup> It also frequently happens that despite the availability of funds for a project, the contractor just pockets the money and gets away.<sup>701</sup>

In the absence of an accountable census system, there is no way of finding out whether any of the plans the regime talks about, is implemented in practice.<sup>702</sup> This is very much true for the Directorate for Women and Family Affairs which has the smallest budget and funding and the least executive powers. What remains is the evidence from which we can draw conclusions.

- It is a fact that except for a small 4% of super rich families, the whole Iranian population has become extremely poor, and the middle class has diminished altogether.
- It is a fact that shantytowns and slums have expanded to many provinces in Iran, and most of their residents come from villages.

<sup>696</sup> Fatemeh Ghafouri, the head of the Businesswomen's Association in Qazvin, the official IRNA News Agency, July 13, 2020

<sup>697</sup> Tayyebbeh Siavoshi, a former member of parliament, the state-run ISNA news agency, May 10, 2021

<sup>698</sup> Fatemeh Ghafouri, the head of the Businesswomen's Association in Qazvin, the official IRNA News Agency, July 13, 2020

<sup>699</sup> Nasrin Yousefi, an entrepreneur and industrialist activist in Khorasan Province, the official IRNA news agency, May 21, 2018

<sup>700</sup> In remarks made on April 14, 2019, Pezeshkian, deputy speaker of the mullahs' parliament, revealed that the Iranian regime is neither capable nor it wants to compensate for the damages the people of Iran suffered as a result of the devastating floods. He said, "It is impossible for the government to respond to these problems just by-passing legislations... When it gets to action, the government has no money to do it. It cannot dredge or repair the dams."

<sup>701</sup> The state-run BORNA news agency, November 3, 2018

<sup>702</sup> People sarcastically call this "hope-therapy," which refers to the regime's prominent feature of lots of talking and doing nothing.

- A presidential deputy said seven percent of the rural population has been displaced. One of the reasons for such migration is that the income every village man can earn in the village is 40 percent less than what he can earn in a city.<sup>703</sup>
- A sociologist says class difference is so deep that the food and things a poor man can find in a city trash bin is more than what he can earn in his own village.<sup>704</sup>
- The estimates in 2018 and 2019 put the number of people living in slums at 11 million,<sup>705</sup> 16 million,<sup>706</sup> and even 19 million.<sup>707</sup> It was also estimated that 34,000 villages had been abandoned and annihilated.<sup>708</sup>
- Estimates in 2020, however, say that 38 million Iranians live in slums. The number people living in Tehran slums has increased by 60%.<sup>709</sup>

Since the male-female ratio in the Iranian population is 51-49, it can be deduced that between 5.5 and 9 million Iranian women live in the slums.

- Women heads of households are facing many problems due to homelessness and inflation, and lack of jobs and housing. Even among those who have “decent” jobs, some women heads of household live below the poverty line and are deprived of minimum living standards. They are deprived of social support from official institutions.<sup>710</sup>
- Some women heads of households are forced to emigrate to the suburbs and slums where there is no proper accommodation. They are vulnerable to various social ailments such as violence, addiction, selling their babies, and prostitution. Some others live in ruins, dilapidated buildings, underground holes, and water wells, mostly because they are homeless.<sup>711</sup>
- A member of the City Council admitted that wrong policies and lack of proper planning in attending to the problems of villages has led to migration of their inhabitants to major capitals such as Tehran.<sup>712</sup> He says, “Many of those living in the slums and shanty towns, those sleeping on cardboard boxes in the streets and those who panhandle in various parts of Tehran, are people who originally owned lands in their cities and villages, but migrated to the capital and its outskirts because they did not have any jobs or assets.

From these facts, one can conclude that not much is being effectively done as far as extension of services are concerned for women who live in the deprived villages across the country.

<sup>703</sup> The official IRNA news agency, January 18, 2018 <http://www.irna.ir/fa/News/82799767>

<sup>704</sup> The state-run Mehrkhane website, November 9, 2016 <http://mehrkhane.com/fa/news/29640/>

<sup>705</sup> The official IRNA news agency, January 18, 2018 <http://www.irna.ir/fa/News/82799767>

<sup>706</sup> Saeed Reza Jandaghian, a municipal deputy in Tehran, ISNA news agency, July 9, 2019. “There are about 11.4 million people living in slums, according to official figures, but the actual numbers are much higher, and today, 16 million Iranians, one-fifth of the population, live in slums.”

<sup>707</sup> Salman Khodadadi, member of the parliamentary Social Committee, the state-run Ensaf news agency, April 6, 2018 “Official statistics say that we have 11 million people, and if we also count worn-out places and settlements, 19 million marginalized people are living in slums.”

<sup>708</sup> The official IRNA news agency, January 16, 2018 <http://www.irna.ir/fa/News/82797957>

<sup>709</sup> Mohammad Reza Mahboubfar, an expert on social harms, the state-run Etemadonline.com, June 22, 2020

<sup>710</sup> Mohammad-Reza Mahboubfar, a social researcher, the state-run Etemadonline.com, June 22, 2020

<sup>711</sup> Mohammad-Reza Mahboubfar, a social researcher, the state-run Etemadonline.com, June 22, 2020

<sup>712</sup> The state-run Shafaf website, October 9, 2017 <http://www.shafaf.ir/fa/news/443373>

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Introduced or strengthened social protection programs for women and girls (e.g. cash transfers for women with children, public works/employment guarantee schemes for women of working-age, pensions for older women)

Iranian women do not enjoy any social protection, job security or facilities. They are the first to be dismissed from their jobs in any economic ups and downs, and abandoned without any form of protection, pension, or insurance.

- The head of the Presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs has confirmed that “rural women are deprived of social or economic security. There is no secure future for rural women when they are disabled, widowed, or divorced, and when they become sick or elderly, there is no support for them. There are no social security systems to give them support.”<sup>713</sup>
- As for women who live in the cities, they are the last to be employed and the first to be dismissed from offices and factories. They have no job security. Sometimes, employers mistreat female workers for the smallest flaw in their work.<sup>714</sup> Since the job market policy is to hire women on temporary three-month contracts, female workers are basically deprived of job security.<sup>715</sup>

<sup>713</sup> Shahindokht Molaverdi, head of the directorate for women and family affairs, the state-run ISCANNEWS website, October 17, 2016 - <http://www.iscanews.ir/news/686728>

<sup>714</sup> Fatemeh Pourn, Secretary of the Union of Women Workers in Qazvin, interview with the official IRNA news agency, May 3, 2018.

<sup>715</sup> Fatemeh Pourn, Secretary of the Union of Women Workers in Qazvin (a state institution), The official IRNA news agency, May 3, 2018



- Women have the largest share of jobs in the unofficial or informal sector.<sup>716</sup> The majority of women working in the informal sector are women heads of households who work long hours but are deprived of their rights and benefits.<sup>717</sup>
- As it was mentioned earlier, the workshops and businesses in the informal sector are not monitored by the government. So, women who work in this sector must work with low pay under unsafe conditions without receiving any benefits, insurance or social security. Or they are forced to do hazardous jobs such as peddling in the metro stations.<sup>718</sup>
- The government began deducting child benefits from the payrolls of women heads of households in autumn 2017. The decision was implemented abruptly and the amounts previously paid to them were withdrawn from their accounts, at once.<sup>719</sup>
- The Welfare Organization faces “major challenges” in granting job loans to women without guardians or with delinquent guardians.<sup>720</sup>
- Many women heads of households even sell their organs in order to support their families.<sup>721</sup>
- In a video clip posted on the internet, a young woman who is going through the administrative stages for selling her kidney, says, “I work from 6 a.m. until 8 p.m. but my salary is not sufficient. I have to pay for the expenses of my two sisters. I have referred to different places to get loans or any form of assistance, but their answers were negative. Those who responded positively, intended to take (sexual) advantage (of me). People in some government places told me that I do not need help. I can pay all my debts in one month with my looks. If I don't pay my debts in two weeks, I will be taken to jail.”<sup>722</sup>
- In the Persian fiscal year 1398 budget, only 4 trillion Tomans (\$347.8 million) was allocated to the National Welfare Organization which is supposed to provide the basic needs and support services for low-income and needy sectors. This is less than 50,000 Tomans (\$4) per person.<sup>723</sup>
- Welfare Organization officials also revealed that implementation of the Comprehensive Plan for Empowerment of Women requires 322 billion Tomans (\$28 million), which was not granted to them. They also acknowledged that they had no credits for providing support to 245,000 women heads of households, 60,000 families and 77,000 students who are on the Welfare Organization's waiting list.<sup>724</sup>
- No funds were allocated to paragraph D of Article 80 of the Sixth Development Program for the empowerment of women.<sup>725</sup>

<sup>716</sup> Massoumeh Ebtekar, director of Women and Family Affairs Directorate, the official IRNA news agency, April 28, 2018

<sup>717</sup> The official IRNA news agency, May 3, 2018

<sup>718</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, April 20, 2019

<sup>719</sup> Zahra Sa'ii, spokeswoman for the parliamentary Social Commission, the state-run salamatnews.com, March 28, 2018

<sup>720</sup> Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpay, head of the National Welfare Organization, the state-run Tabnak website, February 13, 2018.

<sup>721</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, October 8, 2015 - An official in Kermanshah admitted: “Often we witness women heads of household taking desperate measures and resorting to unconventional methods to provide the needs of their families including selling their kidneys!”

<sup>722</sup> Aparat.com, December 20, 2016 <http://www.aparat.com/v/nSvxE>

<sup>723</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, December 29, 2018

<sup>724</sup> Derakhshani, member of the Social Directorate of the Welfare Organization, the state-run ICANA.ir, December 17, 2019

<sup>725</sup> Farideh Olad Ghobad, member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run ICANA.ir, December 17, 2019

- The Welfare Organization had a one-trillion-Toman deficit (approx. \$87 million) for implementation of paragraph D of Article 80 of the Sixth Development Program.<sup>726</sup>
- The budget for Women's Social and Cultural Council was cut by 18% because of the omission of the plan for strategic researches without providing any clear reason.<sup>727</sup>
- According to the statistics released by financial institutions of the Social Security Research Organization, women accounted for 80% of uninsured employees in 2017.<sup>728</sup>
- Article 29 of the regime's Constitution stipulates that all citizens have the right to social security, but at least 1.9 million women in Iran are completely deprived of this right.<sup>729</sup>
- Among women farmers, only those who are dependent on their husbands are covered by rural insurance. There is no separate insurance for these women.<sup>730</sup>
- According to the social security laws, those who work informally will not be able to use unemployment insurance if they lose their jobs.<sup>731</sup>
- The amount of unemployment insurance payments for those who contracted the coronavirus were as low as 70,000 Tomans (\$3).<sup>732</sup>
- 62% of women in the country are housewives and make up a population of about 20 million, and more than 75% of them do not have independent insurances.<sup>733</sup>
- In 2020, the Iranian regime advertised the possibility of insuring housewives. The monthly insurance premium of the Social Security Organization is 220,000 Tomans for pension services and death after retirement. Housewives who do not have their own income, do not afford to pay this amount. In addition, if the applicant is more than 50 years old at the time of applying, acceptance of the application is subject to having a previous insurance premium equivalent to the additional years of age.<sup>734</sup>
- Due to the lack of social support, women have reached a point of poverty where they look for food in the garbage bins. Those interviewed said that they had daily rate jobs in hotels and suites around the shrine reserved for pilgrims, but have lost their jobs after the Coronavirus outbreak. Other women laid off after during the pandemic worked in small workshops, in kindergartens, or as contract teachers, but were laid off during the pandemic.<sup>735</sup>

### Introduced/strengthened free or low-cost health services for women and girls living in poverty

The following are a few facts indicating the status of medical services provided to the general public in Iran. From this, one can conclude the situation of women and girls who are discriminated against and deprived of decent jobs and adequate income, and particularly those who live in poverty.

<sup>726</sup> Derakhshani, member of the Social Directorate of the Welfare Organization, the state-run ICANA.ir, December 17, 2019

<sup>727</sup> Tayyebbeh Saivoshi, member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run javanonline.ir, January 2, 2020

<sup>728</sup> Differences of male and female workers; the state-run Eqtesad, April 28, 2019

<sup>729</sup> 1.9 million women are not insured; the state-run ILNA news agency, September 24, 2019

<sup>730</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, October 22, 2019

<sup>731</sup> Details of increase in minimum wage in 2020; the state-run Rahbord Moaser, November 10, 2020

<sup>732</sup> Details of increase in minimum wage in 2020; the state-run Rahbord Moaser, November 10, 2020

<sup>733</sup> Hossein Amiri Ganjeh, head of the General Department of Social Security in West Tehran, Insurance fees for housewives and single women in 2020; the state-run ROKNA news agency, May 11, 2020

<sup>734</sup> Insurance for housewives for 220,000 Tomans a month; the state-run Mehr news agency, May 10, 2020

<sup>735</sup> Mansoureh Moussavi, a sociologist, the state-run ISNA news agency, March 17, 2021

- The average annual cost of health care for an urban household in 2019 reached 4,964,000 Tomans (\$431.5). This figure has increased by about 16.1 percent compared to 2018.<sup>736</sup>
- The government and insurance companies should pay between 78% to 80% of medical expenses, people should pay some 15% to 17% of the cost, and the rest should be paid by supplementary insurances. In the current circumstances, however, the share of people's payments is 32.5%.<sup>737</sup>
- The budget for special patients, including cancer patients, has been cut from 234 billion Tomans (\$20 million) in 2017, to 216 billion Tomans (\$18.8 million) in 2018, to only 150 billion Tomans (\$13 million) in 2019.<sup>738</sup>
- 35 percent of AIDS patients in Iran are women who must afford to pay 4 billion Tomans (\$348,000) to receive treatment.<sup>739</sup>
- ICU hospital equipment in developed countries such as the United States is 34.7 beds per 100,000 people. In Iran, however, we have 6.6 beds for this number of people. The world's normal per capita hospital bed is over 6, but in Iran it is 1.7. During the pandemic, many countries have a higher per capita health expenditure than us. In Iran, the per capita health expenditure is \$415 per year, while in the United States it is \$9,800 and in the United Kingdom it is \$4,000. In some countries, \$1 billion is allocated just for PCR testing. In Iran, the total budget for the unemployment insurance fund, health, knowledge-based companies, and etc. is \$1 billion.<sup>740</sup>
- Rural and nomad women have little access to specialist doctors and dentists. Many rural and nomad women die before reaching a medical center when they get sick.<sup>741</sup>
- In some places, like Hassanabad village, there are no adequate roads and patients must ride camels before they can get to normal roads where cars travel.<sup>742</sup>
- Nomadic women have to help themselves because their places of residence are very far from medical centers. Pregnant women barely have any nutritious food or access to medical resources...In the past, women gave birth once every 3 years. These days, they give birth every year. Rural and nomadic women and girls suffer from malnutrition. They do not get annual checkups. So if they have cancer, it metastasizes throughout their bodies before it is diagnosed.<sup>743</sup>
- The lack of mobile phone antennas in 12 villages near Jask, in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, has made it impossible for the residents to communicate with medical centers in emergencies. The lack of even a health center or medical clinic in the area is the reason why the initial measures for scorpion and snake bites are not taken in due time.<sup>744</sup>

<sup>736</sup> The Center for Statistics and Strategic Information of the Labor Ministry, the state-run Fars news agency, November 9, 2020

<sup>737</sup> Iraj Harirchi, deputy Minister of Health, the state-run Shafaqna.com, December 15, 2019

<sup>738</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, February 10, 2019

<sup>739</sup> Dr. Nowzar Nakhaii told a meeting of the working group of women and family in Kerman Province, asriran.com, May 29, 2019

<sup>740</sup> Tahereh Mouhebati, Health Ministry's deputy for legal, parliamentary and provincial affairs, the state-run Mehr news agency, December 12, 2020

<sup>741</sup> Parichehr Soltani, secretary of the working group on rural and nomad women and deprived areas, the state-run ISNA news agency, October 5, 2016

<sup>742</sup> The state-run asriran.com, January 21, 2018

<sup>743</sup> Parichehr Soltani, secretary of the working group on rural nomadic women and deprived areas of the presidential directorate for Women and Family Affairs, the state-run ROKNA news agency, October 6, 2020

<sup>744</sup> Ali Badrouj, chief of Pishani Kandeheh village in Jask county, the state-run ISNA news agency, May 9, 2021

- No budget was approved for the annual ultrasound project for pregnant women and the control of common cancers in rural and nomadic women. These women are in dire need of dental care. Women in rural and nomadic areas have bad teeth due to multiple pregnancies and malnutrition, and dental services are very expensive and they cannot afford it.<sup>745</sup>
- The connecting routes in the area are difficult to cross. In our situation in Sarkuh, we are deprived of the presence of a doctor, nurse or even a health worker. If any of the resident is bitten by a snake or scorpion, or is injured by falling from a mountain or a cliff, we have to travel a long distance to Jask city. The patient will definitely not endure the time needed for this journey, and loses his life.<sup>746</sup>

Most tragic of all is the status of childbirth facilities as corruption has extended to public and private hospitals. There are not enough midwives to care for women during labor. Systematically, hospitals provide more facilities for Cesarean section than for natural child birth. And the government has turned a blind eye on this situation and even condones it.<sup>747</sup>

- A telling example is the case of a pregnant woman in the city of Salmas in West Azerbaijan Province, northwestern Iran, who should have had a C-section, but died during natural delivery because she couldn't pay for a C-section.<sup>748</sup>

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<sup>745</sup> Parichehr Soltani, secretary of the working group on rural nomadic women and deprived areas of the presidential directorate for Women and Family Affairs, the state-run ROKNA news agency, October 6, 2020

<sup>746</sup> Mansour Shahzou'ii, chief of Zahrikar village in Jask county, the state-run ISNA news agency, May 9, 2021

<sup>747</sup> [Common practice of C-sections in Iran, a case of violence against women](#), documents, NCRI Women's Committee website, January 2016

<sup>748</sup> The state-run salamatnews.com, website of the Ministry of Health, September 2, 2015

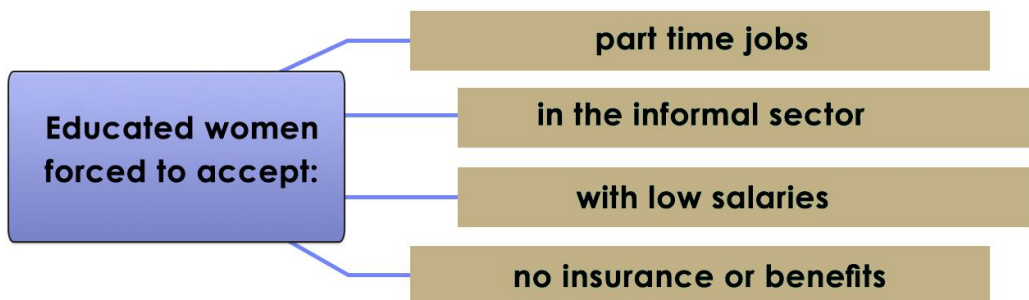
## Not much access to decent work



**NO training programs  
for  
poor women and  
women heads of household**



**Little employment  
opportunities  
for women with  
higher education**



Unemployed



**X4**

= Unemployed



**78%**



**= economically inactive**

**Astara, Gilan Province** **Kurdistan Province**

**Educated women earn  
400,000 tomans (\$34) a month**

**38% of educated women  
are unemployed**



**30,000 nurses are unemployed**  
**The budget for recruitment of new nurses  
was rejected by the parliament**

## Other

It should be stressed that poverty of women and its consequent social ailments are mainly and basically due to official policies and laws which discriminate against women.

- An expert told the press that the government is lagging with respect to economic indices, such as providing jobs and employment for women, mainly due to national policies. He said there are 22 women employed compared to every 100 men with employment. Women's employment rate in Iran is 12 percent, at best.<sup>749</sup>
- A member of parliament said, "women with no guardians" (i.e. women heads of household) have the custody of their children, and due to financial poverty, unemployment, and their consequences, are vulnerable to (social) harms. At the same time, the Welfare Organization cannot take appropriate measures to empower and create jobs for women heads of household, due to budget constraints.<sup>750</sup>
- An official in Kermanshah admitted: "Often we witness women heads of household taking desperate measures and resorting to unconventional methods to provide the needs of their families including selling their kidneys!"<sup>751</sup>
- A woman who has to provide for her three children but has no jobs and has already sold one of her kidneys, has no way but to sell her body.<sup>752</sup>

## 9. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve access to social protection for women and girls?

**Introduced or strengthened social protection for unemployed women (e.g. unemployment benefits, public works programs, social assistance)**

As cited in previous sections, the Iranian regime spends the lion's share of its income on defense, security and propaganda. In other words, it spends the country's revenues to fund wars, terrorism and its proxy groups, and its nuclear and missile programs, an outlaw behavior which provoked international sanctions against it.

In addition, a large part of the country's wealth and revenues is embezzled by the mullahs' supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, the Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and all the hierarchy of officials. Little remains to pay the salaries of government employees, create jobs, and provide support to the vulnerable sectors such as women and youths.

The wealth of Khamenei's economic institutions at his headquarters is equivalent to one trillion dollars.<sup>753</sup>

In the first 6 months of the Persian year 1399 (March-September 2020), steelmakers, petrochemical professionals, and mine owners received 600,000 billion Tomans in rents.<sup>754</sup>

<sup>749</sup> Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpay, head of the National Welfare Organization, the state-run Tabnak website, February 13, 2018. Bandpay is currently the governor of Tehran Province.

<sup>750</sup> Hassan Lotfi, a member of the Social Commission of the mullahs' parliament, May 2018

<sup>751</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, October 8, 2015

<sup>752</sup> Shocking testimonies published on Aparat.com, October 19, 2016

<sup>753</sup> The state-run Mostaghel Newspaper, June 1, 2020

<sup>754</sup> The state-run Ressalat Daily, October 15, 2020



Khamenei controls massive financial empire built on property seizures. (The Setad has become) one of the most powerful organizations in Iran, and has morphed into a business juggernaut that now holds stakes in nearly every sector of Iranian industry, including finance, oil, telecommunications, the production of birth-control pills and even ostrich farming. The organization's total worth is difficult to pinpoint because of the secrecy of its accounts. But Setad's holdings of real estate, corporate stakes and other assets total about \$95 billion, Reuters has calculated.<sup>755</sup>

- Officials of the Presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs boasted that they were going to receive 19% more budget in the new fiscal Persian year 1399 (March 2020-March 2021), amounting to 25 billion Tomans (\$2.17 million).<sup>756</sup> In the meantime, they acknowledge that this is a very small budget compared to other agencies and institutions.
- One of the main criticisms to the 1399 budget bill was omission of the credits for insurance of women heads of households and women with delinquent guardians.
- The articles 19 and 22 of the 14th amendment to the 1399 bill which concerned credits for insurance of women heads of households and women with delinquent guardians have been omitted altogether.<sup>757</sup>
- Again, the budget allocated to the policy-making council for women's seminaries, which is part of the regime's religious propaganda apparatus, is greater than the Directorate for Women and Family Affairs.
- The Welfare Organization has acknowledged that it has 1 trillion Tomans of deficit (approx. \$87 million) for implementation of the Women's Empowerment program.<sup>758</sup>
- The budget for Women's Social and Cultural Council has been cut by 18% because of omission of the plan for strategic research without providing any clear reason.<sup>759</sup>
- The Welfare Organization has no credits to provide support to 245,000 women heads of households, 60,000 families and 77,000 students who are on the Welfare Organization's waiting list.<sup>760</sup>
- In the Persian fiscal year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022), the budget allocated to the Women's directorate was only 32 billion Tomans (approximately \$1.37 million), and it is not certain if all of this amount would actually go to the directorate.<sup>761</sup>
- The Welfare Organization really needs 1,800 billion Tomans to implement programs to empower women. But the budget allocated to this sector is about 320 billion Tomans. Right now, there are people who are waiting their turns but we could not put them in the

<sup>755</sup> Reuters news agency, November 11, 2013

<sup>756</sup> Zahra Javaherian, deputy for planning and coordination in the Presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs, the state-run ISNA news agency, December 11, 2019: "The budget allocated this year to the presidential directorate on Women and Family Affairs is 25 billion Tomans which shows a 19% growth compared to last year, which is of course very small in comparison to many other agencies and institutions."

<sup>757</sup> Zahra Javaherian, deputy for planning and coordination in the Presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs, the state-run ISNA news agency, December 11, 2019; Tayyebbeh Saivoshi, member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run javanonline.ir, January 2, 2020

<sup>758</sup> Derakhshani, member of the Social Directorate of the Welfare Organization, the state-run ICANA.ir, December 17, 2019

<sup>759</sup> Tayyebbeh Saivoshi, member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run javanonline.ir, January 2, 2020

<sup>760</sup> Zahra Javaherian, deputy for planning and coordination in the Presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs, the state-run ISNA news agency, December 11, 2019; Tayyebbeh Saivoshi, member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run javanonline.ir, January 2, 2020

<sup>761</sup> The state-run DiyarMirza.ir website, December 3, 2020

organization's support cycle. Some 40,000 women heads of households waiting in line and we are trying to cover them as well.<sup>762</sup>

**But what does this mean for the people of Iran and particularly for women?**

It means that the government does not have the funds to pay its employees, nurses and hospital staff, teachers, factory workers, etc.

It does not have the funds to recruit more nurses badly needed in a country with shortage of 180,000 nurses. And obviously, it does not afford to provide social protection to anyone, particularly to women. This is why, sale of body organs, sale of infants, child labor, prostitution, addiction and suicides are of high rates in Iran.

There are at least 3.6 million women heads of household in Iran.<sup>763</sup>

One of the Welfare Organization officials confessed that 82 percent of these women are unemployed and live under the "death line." Only 180,000 out of the 3 million in need receive small monthly pensions of only 10 dollars,<sup>764</sup> while the poverty line currently stands at 10 million Tomans (\$427).<sup>765</sup>

So, in real life, in the absence of any social protection, women have to take extreme measures, as a common practice, and sell their organs to provide for their families.

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<sup>762</sup> Fatemeh Abbassi, the Welfare Organization's advisor for Women's Affairs, Behzisti.ir, March 15, 2021

<sup>763</sup> Massoumeh Ebtekar, Director of Women and Family Affairs, the official IRNA news agency, October 7, 2018

<sup>764</sup> Ebrahim Ghaffari, General Director of Welfare Organization of Golestan Province, the state-run Tasnim news agency, February 12, 2017

<sup>765</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, September 25, 2020

EXECUTIVE		RELIGIOUS	
Name of agency	Budget (billion Tomans)	Name of agency	Budget (billion Tomans)
Researchers and Technologists' Support Fund	25	Supreme Leader's Representative Agency in the IRGC	130
Presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs	32	The HQ of Rahian-e Nour	30
Ministry of Sciences, Research, and Technology	123	The Office of Islamic Propaganda of Qom's Seminary School	205
National Emergency Organization	340	The Policy-making Council of Women's Seminary Schools	325
Ministry of Sciences, Research, and Technology	123	The Organization of Islamic Culture and Communications	330
Organization of Jungles, Pastures, and Aquifers	530	Jame'at-el Mustafa Al-Alamiyah	465
National Crisis Management Organization	17.9	Leader's representative agency in universities	176
Health Evaluation Research Center	6	Foundation to protect the heritage and values of the Sacred Defense (Iran-Iraq War)	67
Presidential Directorate for Science and Technology	338	Islamic Propaganda Organization	360
Food and Medicine Organization	356	Supreme Council of Seminary Schools	651
National Foundation of the Elite	85	Services Center of Seminary Schools	100

Comparative chart of budgets allocated to executive affairs (1,852.9 billion Tomans) vs. religious propaganda affairs (2,839 billion Tomans) in the Persian fiscal year 1400.

Budget recipients	Budget (billion Tomans)
The Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)	38,564
The Army	20,115.30
The Ministry of Defense	4,379.53
The Organization of Bassij	2,121
The General Staff of the Armed Forces	396.8
The Defense Ministry's Organization of Research and Innovation	245
The Office of Islamic Propaganda of the Seminary of Qom	205
The Supreme Leader's representatives in the IRGC	30
The Global Assembly of Ahl-e Bait	75
The Global Assembly to Reconcile Religions	43
The Council of Policy Making of Friday Prayer Leaders	35
The Staff to Revive Promotion of Virtue	35
The Institute to public the works of Khomeini	34
Directorate of Women and Family Affairs	32
Rahian-e Nour	30
The Cultural Foundation of Qassem Soleimani	8.5

Comparing the budget allocated to the Directorate of Family and Women's Affairs and other entities in the Persian fiscal year 1400

## Introduced or strengthened non-contributory social pensions

### Women heads of households

One group of women who need to receive non-contributory social pensions and support from the government, are women heads of household.

Living conditions for women heads of household are described as being under the "death line" because even if these women receive pensions, it is only around 100 thousand Tomans (\$5) a month, while the poverty line is 10 million Tomans (\$427) for every family.

The number of women heads of household in Iran is steadily increasing but they face numerous problems due to the economic crisis in Iran and discrimination against women.

- Currently, 3,600,000 women have been officially registered as women heads of household in Iran.<sup>766</sup>
- The field number of women heads of households is estimated to be 5 million.<sup>767</sup>
- Zahra Bonyanian, the director of a charity, revealed that "information about women heads of household is kept confidential."<sup>768</sup>
- The number of women heads of household has more than doubled in a span of 20 years.<sup>769</sup>
- The number of female heads of households in Iran has increased by 1 million over the past four years.<sup>770</sup>
- According to the Welfare Organization, the number of women heads of households has increased by 60,300 every year in the past 10 years, making up 12.1% of the population in 2011.<sup>771</sup>
- The number of families headed by women has increased 58% compared to men over the past 10 years.<sup>772</sup>
- Only 18 percent of these women have some form of occupation, and over 3 million or 82% of women heads of household in Iran are unemployed.<sup>773</sup>
- Only 180,000 women heads of households are consistently receiving aid from the National Welfare Organization and another 100,000 receive social insurances. With regards to job loans to women without guardians or with bad guardians, however, the organization faces major challenges.<sup>774</sup>
- Divorce, accidents, husband's disability, imprisonment and addiction are among the reasons contributing to the rising numbers of women heads of households.<sup>775</sup>
- At least 500,000 or 16% of women heads of households are under 20 years of age.<sup>776</sup>
- There are women heads of households as young as 14 and 15.<sup>777</sup>
- About 48.7% of female heads of households are 60 years of age or older. Old age makes it difficult for them to make a living, and this doubles the economic problem for this group of women.<sup>778</sup>

<sup>766</sup> Massoumeh Ebtekar, head of the presidential directorate on women and family affairs, interview with the official IRNA news agency, October 7, 2018

<sup>767</sup> Sara Fallahi, a member of the parliament, the state-run IMNA news agency, December 8, 2020

<sup>768</sup> State-run IMNA news agency, December 8, 2020

<sup>769</sup> Seyed Hassan Moussavi Chalak, chair of the Social Aid Association of Iran, the state-run Salamatnews.com, May 19, 2018

<sup>770</sup> Problems of 4M women heads of households; the state-run Fars news agency, September 16, 2020

<sup>771</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, January 26, 2013

<sup>772</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, February 12, 2020

<sup>773</sup> Massoumeh Ebtekar, speaking to a meeting of women members of the city and village councils in Semnan Province, the state-run ISNA news agency, July 7, 2018

<sup>774</sup> Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpay, head of the National Welfare Organization, the state-run Tabnak website, February 13, 2018

<sup>775</sup> Fatemeh Zolqadr, member of the women's commission in the mullahs' parliament, the official IRNA news agency, July 2, 2019

<sup>776</sup> Fatemeh Zolqadr, member of the women's commission in the mullahs' parliament, the official IRNA news agency, July 2, 2019

<sup>777</sup> Zahra Rahimi, a civil rights activist and the Executive Director of a non-governmental organization, the state-run ROKNA news agency - February 12, 2020: "The age of women heads of household ranges between 18 and 60 years. However, in provinces where child marriages are common, girls as young as 14 or 15 are also taking care of the family."

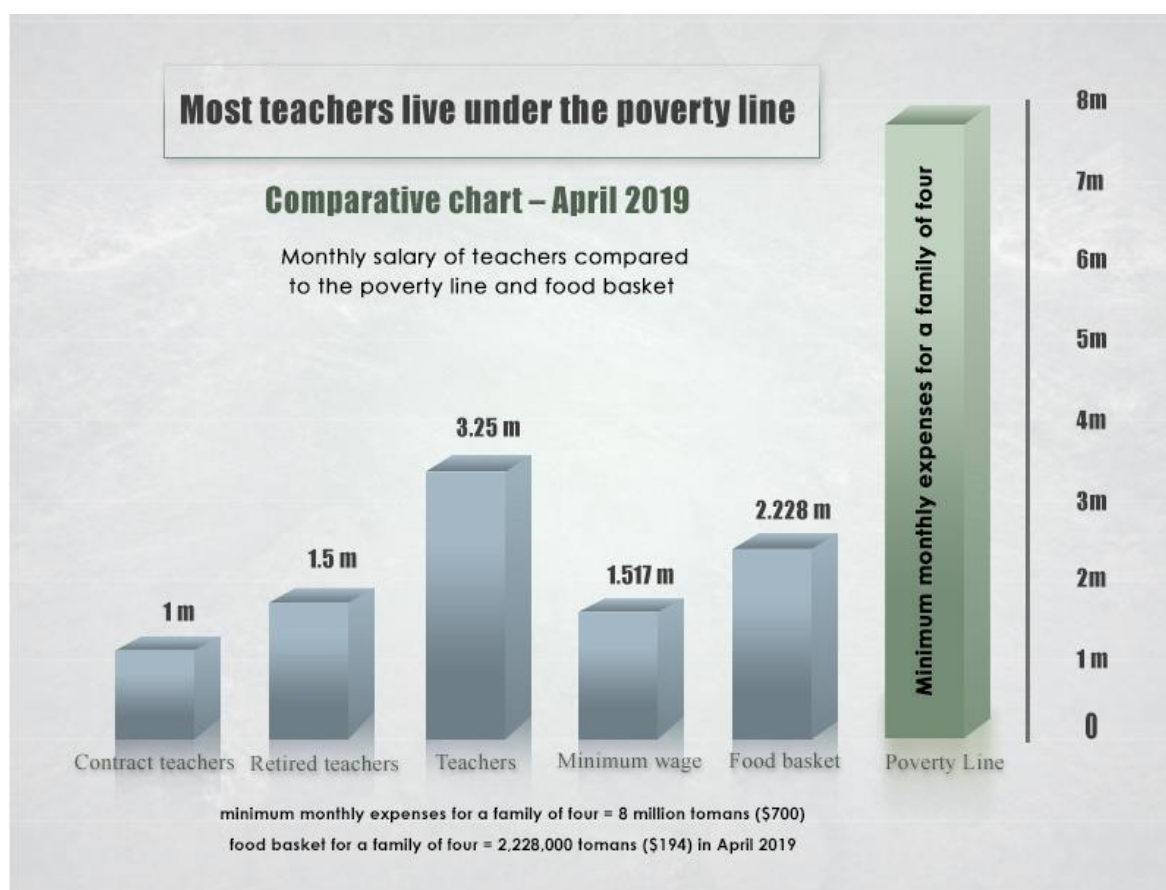
<sup>778</sup> Sociologist Amanollah Bateni, the state-run IMNA news agency, December 8, 2020

- According to a research, the three main problems women heads of household face in Iran are discrimination and inequality, unemployment, and lack of social security.<sup>779</sup>

### Retired teachers

Another group of women eligible for social pensions, are retired teachers. One of the main demands of retired teachers is to raise their pensions to equal the salary of working teachers and improve their basic health care insurance.

- A retired teacher said, “We object to the 2019 budget plan. It is not fair that only two billion Tomans (approx. \$174,000) are considered for equalization of retirement pensions in the budget plan. Officials themselves say that they need at least 15 trillion Tomans (approx. \$1.3 trillion) for equalization of liquidity.”<sup>780</sup>
- It should be noted that the monthly salary of working teachers is also below the poverty line.



Comparing a teacher's salary to the poverty line in April 2019

Improved access to the above for specific populations (e.g. women in informal employment, including domestic workers; migrant and refugee women; women in humanitarian settings; women and girls with disabilities)

<sup>779</sup> Susan Bastani, strategic studies deputy at the directorate for women and family affairs, the official IRNA news agency, May 4, 2019

<sup>780</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, December 20, 2018



## Women in informal employment

Women make up the majority of workers involved in informal employment settings where workers do not receive any benefits or insurance.<sup>781</sup>

- The majority of women working in the informal sector are women heads of households.<sup>782</sup> They often earn their living with great difficulty. The occasional and insignificant support, such as loans and subsidies, or any aid from relatives or acquaintances, do little to improve the living conditions of women heads of household.
- They include divorced and widowed women who head low-income working families, women who have addicted husbands who are at home but do not work, women whose husbands are imprisoned, women who have children from temporary marriages, women who are their family's breadwinner because of their husbands' disability, and girls who are their family's breadwinner.<sup>783</sup>
- Iranian officials admit that giving support to women heads of households has been long overdue despite being on the table for 35 years.<sup>784</sup>
- Another group of women who are forced to work in the informal sector are college graduates who do not find jobs in their own fields. Desperate for an income, they even do not tell the employer that they have a degree.<sup>785</sup>

## Women in humanitarian settings

Another group of women who need to have access to social protection, are women living in disaster hit areas, where the population is hit by earthquake or floods.

The Iranian regime has been very slow in attending to the immediate needs of the disaster-hit populations and has not attempted in any way to compensate for the damages.

The women who have been victims of earthquake or floods need access to non-contributory pensions, but there has been no sign of granting any form of aid to them.

### • Women hit by Earthquakes

After every earthquake, the Iranian regime does almost nothing to restore the residents' housing, health and livelihood. Following are some examples:

- On November 12, 2017, the year's deadliest earthquake of 7.3 magnitude hit vast parts of **Kermanshah Province** in western Iran. The earthquake damaged 10 cities and 1,930 villages, and destroyed more than 100,000 housing units, leaving at least 620 dead and 9,338 people wounded. The cities of Qasr-e Shirin, Sarpol-e

<sup>781</sup> Fatemeh Pournou, Secretary of the Union of Women Workers in Qazvin, the official IRNA news agency, May 3, 2018.

<sup>782</sup> The state-run IMNA news agency, December 8, 2020

<sup>783</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, February 12, 2020

<sup>784</sup> Zohreh Ashtiani, secretary of the family faction of the mullahs' parliament. Interview with the state-run Shahrvand newspaper, July 10, 2018

<sup>785</sup> The state-run Shahrvand daily, June 28, 2017

Zahab and Salas-e Babajani were hit worst. To this date, residents of the afflicted areas continue to live in disastrous conditions.

- Local officials said that some 60 percent of the residents of affected areas had not received trailers and were living in tents. Even the trailers donated by private citizens had not been handed over to those in need. So, they had to live in tents or the ruins of their previous houses. Lack of adequate shelter led to the deaths of a considerable number of children due to high fever, infection and other illnesses caused by the freezing cold of winter.<sup>786</sup>
- Many residents of Kermanshah Province are still living in makeshift homes.
- Mehdi Tahbaz, governor of Sarpol-e Zahab, announced that some 30 percent of those who lived in rented urban housings are now living in temporary arrangements on the streets.<sup>787</sup>
- The earthquake added to the number of women heads of households. Reports on the condition of women in these areas are scarce, but other news from these areas indicate that their situation is grim. A considerable number of married women with children have been committing suicide in these areas.<sup>788</sup>
- Frequent earthquakes measuring 4 to 5.2 on the Richter scale shook cities and villages in different parts of **Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad** Province from May 2 to 13, 2018, leaving hundreds of people injured, inflicting extensive damages. Women in the quake-hit towns and villages protested against government official's failure to attend to their problems.<sup>789</sup>
- An earthquake measuring 5.9 on the Richter scale shook **East Azerbaijan** on November 8, 2019. 30 residential units were destroyed. In the village of Vernkesh, two women and two young girls lost their lives. After two months, people were left homeless in the cold. They do not have a bathroom. They live in tents or barracks with leaking roof. There are 340 families living in this village.<sup>790</sup>
- 60% of earthquake victims in Vernkesh are women.<sup>791</sup> Zahra Abedi, a 10-year-old girl, was still alive after being pulled out from under the rubble, but lost her life due to the lack of a doctor and timely action.<sup>792</sup>
- An earthquake measuring 7.5 on the Richter scale shook the Qotur county and 40 surrounding villages on February 23, 2020. Some 100 people were injured. 3,500 families had their homes destroyed or left homeless. In one month, more than 30 aftershocks occurred in the range of Qotur, Khoy and Salmas. These regions are among the most deprived regions of **West Azerbaijan**. Residents' livestock is in danger of extinction. Rural women collected nylons and made shelters for themselves in sub-zero temperatures. Local sources reported, "The Revolutionary Guards are catching fish from the muddy water. They suggested to the people affected by the earthquake in the villages that whoever wants a tent should pay 35,000 Tomans a night." According to local sources, "The Red Crescent has handed over 400 tents to the municipality and 300 tents to

<sup>786</sup> [Five months on, earthquake survivors lack the minimums](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, April 19, 2018

<sup>787</sup> [Mehdi Tahbaz](#), governor of Sarpol-e Zahab, the state-run ICANA news agency, November 7, 2018

<sup>788</sup> [Suicides among women in Iran tops rates in the Middle East](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, September 9, 2019

<sup>789</sup> The state-run News Network website, May 2, 2018

<sup>790</sup> The official IRNA news agency, December 11, 2019

<sup>791</sup> The state-run Young Journalists Club website, November 9, 2019

<sup>792</sup> The state-run Young Journalists Club website, November 10, 2019

another institution, but these institutions have so far not provided any tents to the quake victims.”

- On February 17, 2021, a magnitude 6.5 earthquake shook the small town of Sisakht in **Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad** Province. 47 people were injured. More than 70% of people's homes were damaged. 200 women heads of households were affected by the earthquake. 3,700 houses were damaged. The city's agricultural sector, especially the fisheries sector and fish farms, suffered 950 billion Rials in damages.<sup>793</sup> 40 schools with 171 classrooms were severely damaged in Sisakht and its surrounding villages in Dena county or need to be repaired.<sup>794</sup> One of the residents of Sisakht posted a video clip on the internet in which he says: “Dear friends, if you hear our voice, here is the Red Crescent building of Dena county, the city of Sisakht. Due to the lack of the smallest amenities such as tents, blankets, food and clothing, this woman was forced to go to the roof to throw herself down from the building. The situation is the same outside and inside the Red Crescent building. People have gathered and are protesting.”

### • Women hit by Floods

A similar situation is true with victims of the flashfloods of spring 2019, who lost their homes, and in the absence of any relief effort on behalf of the government have been relying on public's support and assistance to survive.<sup>795</sup>

- Residents of flood-hit areas were angry at the regime for its failure to attend to their needs. In Lorestan, women and little children had not eaten for several days after the floods. They had not received any assistance. People had no place to go in the cold and slept in cars at night.<sup>796</sup>
- In Khuzestan, 270 villages were evacuated, and 120,000 people were displaced. People lost everything and their farmlands were destroyed. In Bamdej, families lived in train wagons. Locals reported that instead of sheltering people, the Red Crescent of Khuzestan sold them tents for 500,000 Tomans each.<sup>797</sup>

And yet again, 14 Iranian provinces were washed away by massive floods in spring 2020 and 2021 while the regime did not take any effective measure to help people. Obviously, women and children are the prime victims and suffer most during such natural disaster crises.

- Citing the European Commission, the United Nations estimated that at least 12 million citizens across Iran were affected by the devastating floods in spring 2019.
- The European Civil Protection Mechanism (EUCPM) said the incident was the worst natural disaster happening in Iran in 15 years, affecting 2,000 cities and towns in 31

<sup>793</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, March 6, 2021

<sup>794</sup> The official IRNA news agency, March 4, 2021

<sup>795</sup> [Devastating floods in Iran: problems of women in the absence of aid](#), NCRI Women's Committee website, April 22, 2019

<sup>796</sup> [Devastating floods in Iran: problems of women in the absence of aid](#), NCRI Women's Committee website, April 22, 2019

<sup>797</sup> [Devastating floods in Iran: problems of women in the absence of aid](#), NCRI Women's Committee website, April 22, 2019

provinces. ReliefWeb,<sup>798</sup> the specialized digital service of United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said [two million people were in need of humanitarian aid](#) and over half a million people had been displaced from their places of residence.<sup>799</sup>

- On April 9, 2020, massive floods swept through 14 provinces across Iran. In a matter of five days, the flood over-ran 18 provinces. 29 persons lost their lives and 41 people were injured.<sup>800</sup>
- On July 15, 2020, 21 cities in Iran were flooded due to heavy rain in the provinces of Tehran, East Azerbaijan, Ardabil, Gilan, Mazandaran and North Khorasan. As a result of this flood, two people were killed in Ardabil, two in Amol and one in Rezvanshahr. [A 65-year-old woman died in the city of Talesh.](#)
- On September 20, 2020, another flood occurred in Talesh. Seven cities were flooded. 2 people were killed. Roads to 100 villages were blocked. 20 rural houses were completely destroyed and 240 houses were damaged. 100,000 hectares of farms and gardens in Talesh city, which are the local people's source of income, were damaged.
- October 4, 2020, flood in Meshkinshahr destroyed more than 100 residential and commercial units. In the first days of August, floods caused 350 billion Tomans worth of damages in this city.
- The floods in March 2021 inflicted damages on some cities in East Azerbaijan province and destroyed the iron bridges in Urmia, capital of West Azerbaijan Province.<sup>801</sup>
- Floods in northern Kerman Province (southern Iran) in April 2021, left several people injured. Roads, gardens, and agricultural lands suffered extensive damages.<sup>802</sup> Six members of the rescue team drowned. 39 bridges were damaged. The damage caused by floods in Kerman was estimated to be 27 billion Tomans.<sup>803</sup>
- The head of the Relief and Rescue Organization said floods had inundated 14 provinces in the period from April 29, 2021, at 6:30 a.m. until May 5, 2021. He said: "During this period, 14 provinces of East and West Azerbaijan, Isfahan, Tehran, South Khorasan, Razavi Khorasan and North Khorasan, Semnan, Sistan and Baluchestan, Khuzestan, Kerman, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Mazandaran and Yazd were in need of rescue services. 47 villages and 6 cities in eight provinces of Sistan and Baluchestan, Kerman, Yazd, Tehran, Semnan, South Khorasan and Razavi Khorasan and Isfahan had the greatest impact of these rains. We had 11 people missing."<sup>804</sup>
- The IRGC's Khatam al Anbiya Construction Headquarters is one of the regime's agencies that is fully involved in destroying Iran's environment and natural resources. The company announced in September 2020 that it has 10 trillion Tomans' worth of construction plans in progress in West Azerbaijan Province, alone. Building dams is a part of its portfolio of projects.<sup>805</sup>

<sup>798</sup> [Relief Web](#), OCHA services

<sup>799</sup> [Iran floods: Two million people in need of humanitarian aid](#), Relief Web, April 15, 2019

<sup>800</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, April 10, 2020

<sup>801</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, March 24, 2021

<sup>802</sup> The state television, April 16, 2021

<sup>803</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, May 4, 2021

<sup>804</sup> The state-run BORNA news website, May 5, 2021

<sup>805</sup> The state-run Young Journalists Club news agency, September 3, 2020

- The IRGC's Khatam al Anbiya Construction Headquarters has built at least 62 dams across the country; this represents 50 percent of Iran's reservoirs and dams. The company currently has 285 constructive projects in progress.<sup>806</sup>

## Homeless women

Another group of women in Iran who need access to social protection are homeless women. There are educated women among those who sleep in the streets. They have turned to the streets due to poverty and unemployment. The regime's measures to support these women is very limited and ineffective. According to some reports, women have inhuman conditions and are mistreated in warm shelters.

There are various accounts on the number of homeless women in Tehran and other cities, but no official statistics are available on the total number of homeless women in Iran.

- In 2015, Shahindokht Molaverdi, former presidential deputy for women and family affairs, acknowledged that there are at least 5,000 women in Tehran who have no place of residence and sleep in cardboard boxes in the streets.<sup>807</sup> Other sources indicated that the number was around 15,000.<sup>808</sup>
- The state-run media in Iran have also reported on the new phenomenon of "grave-dwellers." They reported of a woman by the name of Shahnaz living in a grave along with her 18-year-old son and 16-year-old twins.<sup>809</sup>
- According to one estimate, the average age of women who sleep in the streets is around 17 and 18.<sup>810</sup> Another report puts the average age at under 15 years.<sup>811</sup>
- A city official was cited as saying some 200 women including pregnant women, disabled women, elderly women, and girl children were living in 100 tents in south Tehran in the severe cold.<sup>812</sup>
- In Ahvaz, capital of the southwestern Province of Khuzestan, the number of women who have no place to sleep at nights is reported to be 2,700.<sup>813</sup>
- In Ahvaz, women are allowed to stay in the shelters only on weekdays from 8 a.m. till 2 p.m. This means that women have to stay out in the height of heat and at nights, they have no place to stay and cannot use these shelters. Some shelters have very strict rules and oblige women to show signed papers from judicial authorities in order to use the warm shelters.<sup>814</sup>
- One of the ways for women to earn their living is resorting to trash bins to find food leftovers.<sup>815</sup>

<sup>806</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, September 25, 2020; The State-run Mehr news agency, September 21, 2020

<sup>807</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, July 11, 2015

<sup>808</sup> The state-run Arya news agency, May 30, 2015: "There are 15,000 women sleeping in the streets of Tehran every night."

<sup>809</sup> The state-run Tabnak website, December 27, 2016

<sup>810</sup> Jahangirifar, Deputy for social services in the Organization of Social Cooperation and Well-being, the state-run Alef website, May 9, 2016

<sup>811</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, September 27, 2017

<sup>812</sup> Head of the Social Committee of Tehran's City Council, the state-run Mizan news agency, January 3, 2017

<sup>813</sup> The state-run IRNA news agency, IRNA.ir/Khuzestan/, November 10, 2018

<sup>814</sup> The official IRNA news agency, November 10, 2018

<sup>815</sup> Mousavi Chalak, deputy of Welfare Organization, the state-run ILNA news agency, October 8, 2016

- In November 2018, it was announced that the number of homeless in Tehran was around 15,000 and the shelters had the capacity for a maximum 5,000 of them.<sup>816</sup>
- According to Ali Sadeghi, a social support deputy at the Tehran Municipality, the capacity of warm shelters in the city to hold homeless women sleeping in cardboard boxes is only 200. The number of homeless women sleeping in cardboard boxes in Tehran was estimated between 3,000 to 5,000.<sup>817</sup>
- There are only two shelters for women in Tehran which could house between 400-500 women every night.<sup>818</sup> But homeless women need to show letters from the Judiciary to stay for limited hours in the shelter. There have also been reports of mistreatment and rape of women in these shelters.<sup>819</sup>
- Around 700,000 people go to the warm shelters in Tehran at nights. This shows a 20% increase compared to the 490,000 last year which included 50,000 women.<sup>820</sup>
- Last year, Tehran's warm shelters received 22,000 women at nights. But this year, for the period spanning from March to October 2020, the warm shelters received 27,000 women at nights. This shows a 20% increase compared to last year during the same period. A 50% increase is predicted for the period from October 2020 to March 2021.<sup>821</sup>

Instead of building more warm shelters or providing non-contributory pensions to the homeless women who sleep on cardboard boxes in the streets, the Iranian regime officials proposed to “castrate homeless women to reduce the dangers and expenses!”<sup>822</sup>

Homeless women include a member of the national Wushu team who became addicted and then homeless due to poverty. Sheida, 26, became an addict because of her family's poverty. Somayyeh became an addict due to poverty. Her child was kidnapped and she lives in a park. Another woman has a 7-year-old daughter. She says they cannot use the shelters because she is an addict. Sara and Najmeh are homeless, too. They take turns to sleep at nights. They say if no one stays on watch, they are raped. They say they don't go to shelters because they are mistreated there. Najmeh has been gang raped several times.<sup>823</sup>

### Women and girls with disabilities

In December 2012, the elementary girls' school of Shinabad village caught fire due to malfunctioning of a kerosene heater. Thirty-seven (37) girls severely burned in the fire, leading to two deaths. Twelve (12) girls with serious injuries and their families were promised compensation which was never delivered by the authorities.

- The girls were first promised to be sent abroad for treatment.<sup>824</sup> This promise was never fulfilled, and the girls were totally deprived of government assistance.<sup>825</sup>

<sup>816</sup> The state-run Tabnak.ir, November 11, 2018

<sup>817</sup> The semi-official Tabnak website, January 14, 2019

<sup>818</sup> The state-run Young Journalists Club, December 14, 2019

<sup>819</sup> The official IRNA news agency, November 10, 2018

<sup>820</sup> Gholam Hossein Mohammadi, deputy mayor of Tehran, the state-run ILNA news agency, October 24, 2020

<sup>821</sup> Malek Hosseini, caretaker of Tehran Municipality's Social Participations Organization, the state-run ILNA news agency, October 25, 2020

<sup>822</sup> The official BORNA news agency, September 6, 2019

<sup>823</sup> [Annual Report 2020](#), documents, the NCRI Women's Committee website, March 2020

<sup>824</sup> Rasoul Khezri, member of parliament from Piranshahr, the state-run Young Journalists Club, August 10, 2016



- The girls' lawyer explained, "The most important issue for these girls is that their treatment be expedited and improved. This must be done abroad. On the other hand, they must receive full compensation (from the government), which has not been paid to them (because they are girls). The girls must receive their full rights. Their mental problems must be attended to. They face problem in receiving their National Card and birth certificate. These problems must be resolved. These girls do not need mercy; they demand their rights."<sup>826</sup>
- All of these girls have reached the age of 18. They have each undergone surgery up to 50 times. They are disturbed due to constant anesthesia and their memory is not working properly and they cannot study for more than 3 hours a day.<sup>827</sup>
- They have to take the college entrance exam and it is very difficult for them to study. These burnt girls requested to have a special quota in the 2021 entrance exam in December 2020, but they have not yet received a scholarship.
- One of the girls, Sima, has attempted suicide 18 times. For several months now, half of her face has become infected and the skin of her nose has stretched and it has become difficult for her to breathe.
- The joints of these girls are getting drier every day. Their hearts ache. Because of the pandemic, they could not go to the hospital they always went to in Tehran. Officials have repeatedly promised them that they would be sent abroad for treatment, but they did not deliver their promise. Officials in Rouhani's government have repeatedly promised to set up a specialized clinic to treat the girls in Shinabad or Urmia, but this never materialized. Every time, they have to travel to Tehran it takes 18 hours. Their treatment costs are very high. The government pays only one million Tomans per month to each of these girls.

Shinabad is now part of Piranshahr, where 50% of schools are still heated by kerosine heaters. Not a single school has been built in this city for 30 years.<sup>828</sup>

Shinabad was not the only fire incident inflicting serious injuries and disabilities on Iranian girl children.

- A similar case came to light in April 2019, when six who had suffered burns in a fire incident at their school in Doroodzan, Fars Province, travelled to Tehran to hold a sit-in protest and demand assistance for their treatment and its high costs. Each of the six girls, now 20 years old, suffered more than 50% injuries in a fire incident 13 years ago at their school in the southern Fars Province. In their case, too, none of the promises for their treatment have been delivered.<sup>829</sup>

<sup>825</sup> [Iran: Victims of fire in girls' school denied government support](#), the website of NCRI Women's Committee, August 12, 2016

<sup>826</sup> Hossein Ahmadi Niaz, the state-run ILNA news agency – March 4, 2018

<sup>827</sup> The state-run khabarforionline.ir, December 5, 2020

<sup>828</sup> The state-run khabarforionline.ir, December 5, 2020

<sup>829</sup> [Doroodzan girls, victims of school fire, hold a sit-in in Tehran](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, May 2, 2019

## Shinabad girls

Victims of 2012 Iran School Fire



The 12 Shinabad victims complain about the process of their treatment, insults and disrespect by some officials, undelivered promises of buying hospital equipment the lack of which has led to the drying of their finger joints, etc.

“The most important issue for these girls is that their treatment be expedited and improved. This must be done abroad. They must receive full compensation (from the government), which has not been paid to them (because they are girls). Their psychological problems need to be taken care of.”

Hossein Ahmadi Niaz, Shinabad girls' lawyer

**Nine-year  
denial of aid  
to burn  
victims**

## Other

### Poverty, cause of various forms of social ills

The feminization of social harms is currently a problem that will lead to serious social crises in the not-too-distant future.<sup>830</sup>

Now social damages have taken over the country and today, no house in Iran is safe.<sup>831</sup>

Poverty is the source and cause of various social ills. Sale of body organs, addiction, prostitution, homelessness, sale of infants and unborn fetuses, and suicide are the most common forms of social ailments afflicting women in Iran.

- Some Iranian regime officials have admitted that wrong policies and lack of proper planning in attending to the problems in rural areas have led to massive migrations to metropolises such as the capital, Tehran.<sup>832</sup>
- Most of the panhandlers, homeless people and inhabitants of slums and shanty towns are from among the population of migrants. Shanty towns are also the source of prostitution, addiction, and violence against women.<sup>833</sup>
- Part of the petty sale of narcotic drugs is done by women who live in shanty towns because these women are at the disposal of their husbands. They gradually conclude that they need to earn money in order to be able to live and they resort to this venture. According to a sociologist, 63 percent of women who are victims of violence live in shanty towns or in unofficial residences.<sup>834</sup>
- Women heads of households are among the most vulnerable. Inflation and high prices put pressure on the low-income strata of society... How much has the wage of workers increased when commodity prices have multiplied? They live their lives under the highest pressures these days, and no system is taking responsibility for their poor conditions. We cannot prevent them from entering the cycle of harm if we do not have the necessary support for women heads of households. There is no definite plan by the trustees to empower this stratum.<sup>835</sup>
- Some women heads of household have taken refuge in city outskirts due to poverty and lack of adequate housing. Those who live in slums or tents do not have proper accommodation Others live in tunnels, holes underneath dilapidated buildings, and water wells, mostly because they are homeless. These women are part of Iran's at least 38 million people who live in shanty towns and slums.<sup>836</sup>
- Before the Coronavirus, the poverty line was 8 million Tomans... Most slum dwellers, day laborers, seasonal workers, peddlers, and so on, have lost 70 to 80 percent of their salaries. It is natural that they go to the city outskirts to seek housing and shelter. Part of

<sup>830</sup> Massoumeh Aghapour Alishahi, a member of the mullahs' parliament, The state-run ICANA news agency, February 23, 2020

<sup>831</sup> The state-run Jahanesanat.ir, September 19, 2020

<sup>832</sup> A member of Tehran's City Council said, "Many of those living in the slums and shanty towns, those sleeping on cardboard boxes in the streets and those who panhandle in various parts of Tehran, are people who originally owned lands in their cities and villages, but migrated to the capital and its outskirts because they did not have any jobs or assets." The state-run Shafaf website, October 9, 2017 <http://www.shafaf.ir/fa/news/443373>

<sup>833</sup> The state-run Mehrkhane website, November 9, 2016

<sup>834</sup> The state-run Mehrkhane website, November 9, 2016

<sup>835</sup> Zahra Sa'ii, a member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run ISNA news agency, July 30, 2019

<sup>836</sup> Mohammad-Reza Mahboubfar, a social researcher, the state-run Etemadonline.com, June 22, 2020

the city outskirts consist of slums; the other part consists of tents or other deficient shelters. Homeless people have built makeshift, unsanitary settlements that generate crime.<sup>837</sup>

### Destitute women rent, sell and abandon their children

With the spread of poverty, more destitute Iranian women have been abandoning or selling their newborns. An MP admitted, "It is impossible for anyone to sell her child unless she is facing severe economic problems."<sup>838</sup> The exact numbers of sale of unborn infants in their mothers' wombs and before birth are not known but their numbers are large enough to make news.<sup>839</sup>

- Homeless pregnant women sell their unborn fetuses to earn some money to survive.<sup>840</sup> Homeless women refer to hospitals in the south and center of the capital. After delivering their baby, they sell them for 100 to 200 thousand Tomans (\$US 9 to 17).<sup>841</sup>
- Women who sleep on cardboard boxes in the streets rent their children for 15,000 Tomans (\$1.30) a day for begging. Or they sell them for 2 million Tomans (\$174).<sup>842</sup>
- Some parents sell their children. Infants are sold between 2 to 25 million Tomans (\$174 - \$2174).<sup>843</sup>
- Some women get pregnant with the aim of making money. Many of these infants and children are later taken advantage of in various crimes.<sup>844</sup>
- In the old days, one would sometimes see leaflets posted on the city walls which read, "Baby for sale." Nowadays, these leaflets are less visible because the sale of babies has found its way to the virtual space. Boys are sold for about 50 million Tomans, and girls about 70 to 80 million Tomans after their birth.<sup>845</sup>
- The Welfare Organization of Alborz Province announced, that 119 infants had been abandoned in the province in the period between March 2015 and December 2016.<sup>846</sup>
- 600 newborn infants were handed over to the Welfare Organization. The organization's social officer said these children and babies were being sold in some parts of the country.<sup>847</sup>
- A one-day-old infant girl was found in the garbage bin of Khomein's hospital by the staff.<sup>848</sup>

<sup>837</sup> Mohammad Reza Mahboubfar, the state-run Etemadonline.com, June 22, 2020

<sup>838</sup> Ahmad Bigdeli, deputy from Khadabandeh, the state-run Daneshjoo news network (snn.ir), June 18, 2018

<sup>839</sup> Shahindokht Molaverdi, Rouhani's deputy for Women and Family Affairs, the state-run ILNA news agency, June 22, 2016

<sup>840</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, August 22, 2015: "In continuation of the meeting, Dr. Chit Chian presented a plan to the governor's office and said: I have personally slept among those who sleep on cardboard boxes in the streets... Unfortunately, in these districts, I witnessed sale of kids. The conditions are so critical that they sell the fetus in the mother's womb before birth for 1 million or 750 thousand tomans."

<sup>841</sup> Tehran City Council's Fatemeh Daneshvar, the state-run ICANA news website, July 4, 2017

<sup>842</sup> Farahnaz Rafii, head of the Red Crescent Volunteers Organization, the state-run Young Journalists Club news agency, February 29, 2016

<sup>843</sup> Pathologist Majid Abhari, the state-run Fars news agency, May 3, 2016

<sup>844</sup> A member of Tehran's City Council, the state-run Shafaf website, October 9, 2017

<sup>845</sup> The state-run Shahrvand newspaper, September 7, 2020

<sup>846</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, January 14, 2017

<sup>847</sup> Habibollah Massoudi Farid, Social Affairs deputy to the Welfare Organization, the state-run ILNA news agency, August 17, 2017

<sup>848</sup> The state-run Khabaronline.ir website, January 16, 2017

- Expressing regret over newborn infants abandoned in one of the suburban areas of Isfahan, Mojtaba Naji, social deputy for the Welfare Organization of Isfahan Province, said, "Some poor families are also forced to leave their babies in the streets."<sup>849</sup>
- An Instagram post offering to surrender children caused public outrage. People could see the faces of children offered for sale on this Instagram account, and choose one. One of the photos belonged to a girl infant who had been offered without asking for money.<sup>850</sup>

### Trafficking of infants of street women

Premature babies born from street women are smuggled out to be sold in other countries. Most of these infants are taken abroad to be sold to organs trafficking gangs, to families or to brothels. These gangs sell baby girls for a price higher than boys and send the babies to unknown destinations.<sup>851</sup>

- "Baby girl or boy delivered the next day" is a simple ad that has a baby price of 38 million Tomans. According to some reports, babies are currently being sold for between 35 and 45 million Tomans in Iran.<sup>852</sup>
- A five-member gang buying and selling babies in Gorgan (capital of Golestan Province) was dismantled. These people took babies after birth and sold them at high prices of at least 45 million Tomans, to families who did not have children.<sup>853</sup>

### Sale of organs

Following is an example of destitute women who have to sell their organs to provide for their family's expenses:

- Donya, 28, has found no way but to sell one of her kidneys and part of her liver.<sup>854</sup> Donya's mother had eight children when she got divorced 15 years ago. She works at a dairy factory in Neyshabur, northeastern Iran, and earns 820,000 Tomans (\$230) a month at best. Donya has a B.A. in physical training but has not found a suitable job. She works as a secretary at a doctor's office. Together with her mother, they earn 1.37 million Tomans (\$385) a month which is still 3 million Tomans (\$840) under the poverty line. Since they are about to lose their housing and have no hope of saving any money, Donya has decided to sell one of her kidneys and part of her liver. It has been two months that Donya has posted an ad on the internet to sell her kidney, but has not found a suitable client.
- Buying and selling child organs is a crime, which is why we do not have exact statistics about it, but it is an issue that happens and we see it in the country.<sup>855</sup>

<sup>849</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, October 24, 2020

<sup>850</sup> The state-run Sputnik website, November 14, 2020

<sup>851</sup> Fatemeh Daneshvar, chair of the social committee of Tehran's City Council, the state-run Rokna.ir, March 8, 2017

<sup>852</sup> [Persian Independent](#), May 17, 2020

<sup>853</sup> Mohammad Saeed Fazel Dadgar, commander of the State Security Force in Golestan Province, The state-run Mehr news agency, May 14, 2020

<sup>854</sup> The state-run Salamatnews.com, December 12, 2017

<sup>855</sup> Habibollah Massoudi Farid, Welfare Organization's Deputy for Social Affairs, the state-run Borna.news, September 6, 2020



- Iran has the record sales of organs due to poverty. Iran is the only legal organ market in the world.<sup>856</sup>
- Statistics of referrals to Zanjan Province's Association of Kidney Patients show that people refer to this association to donate kidneys, or in other words to sell organs. In some cases, the patients offering to sell their organs are very young. Most of the clients are from the middle or lower classes. Most of them are construction or seasonal workers struggling with economic problems. They are willing to do so to continue their lives.<sup>857</sup>
- Hajar, a female head of household with a daughter, is forced to sell one of her kidneys. She has referred to several hospitals but one of the nurses told her that she could not sell her kidney at the moment because of the pandemic. She is now homeless on the streets and because she is divorced from her husband, her daughter is with her husband.<sup>858</sup>

Hossein Ali Shahriari, a member of the parliamentary Health Commission, shamelessly said: "What's wrong with selling organs when you live in poverty and your life can change by receiving 20 to 30 million Tomans (\$850-1,200)?"<sup>859</sup>

### Prostitution

Prostitution is often born in regions which are economically and culturally poor.<sup>860</sup>

Like many other issues, there are no statistics available on the number of prostitutes in Iran. The following information has been provided from one study involving 10,000 sex workers in Tehran which was quickly hushed up by the regime.

- At least 10,000 young women engage in prostitution in Tehran out of poverty. 35% of them are married. 30% of them have high school education and higher; 50% have not completed high school; only a small percentage are illiterate.<sup>861</sup>
- The average price for these sex workers is 60,000 Tomans (\$18). Sixty percent of these women are addicted or have some precedence of addiction. 30 percent of them are women whose husbands are in jail and 15 percent have been in jail, themselves.
- Many of these women who get pregnant either sell their infants, turn them in to welfare organizations, or have abortions.<sup>862</sup>
- Age of sex workers has dropped to 12.<sup>863</sup>
- According to the National Welfare Organization of Iran, 50% of Iranian sex workers are married women who turn to such work because of economic problems.<sup>864</sup>
- Homeless women have to sell their bodies to provide for very simple needs.<sup>865</sup> There are women who have to sell their body to provide for only one meal.

<sup>856</sup> The state-run Bahar website, October 19, 2018

<sup>857</sup> The official IRNA news agency, September 7, 2018

<sup>858</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, April 22, 2020

<sup>859</sup> The state-run Aftabnews.com, June 22, 2020

<sup>860</sup> A sociologist, the state-run Mehrkhane website, November 9, 2016

<sup>861</sup> Mowj news agency, June 11, 2016

<sup>862</sup> Farahnaz Salimi, senior expert in psychology, the state-run aftabnews.ir, June 11, 2016

<sup>863</sup> Shahin Shams Mohammadi, a women's rights activist, the state-run salamatnews.ir, December 29, 2019

<sup>864</sup> The state-run salamatnews.ir, December 29, 2019

<sup>865</sup> The state-run vaghayedaily.ir, July 4, 2016



- Soraya, a homeless woman in southern Tehran, due to hunger, went into a dark grave and gave herself up to three men for a falafel sandwich.<sup>866</sup>
- Some girls sell their bodies to buy a pair of shoes or manteaux.<sup>867</sup>
- There are cases when women have to sell their bodies for only 5,000 Tomans (\$1.5).<sup>868</sup>
- Prostitution is propagated under the religious cover of temporary marriages and is sanctioned by the regime. Many websites and channels are active on the internet under this cover. One of these channels with 6,000 members continued its activities even during the Covid-19 pandemic.<sup>869</sup>
- Saeed Madani, a social harms researcher: "Most prostitutes sell their bodies to meet basic needs such as minimum food, clothing and housing. As such, they are forced to continue working despite the dangers that the coronavirus poses to them. A significant number of prostitutes come from low-income groups who have no savings. They cannot stop working for a while, because their situation is such that themselves and their families will starve if they stop working. Therefore, they risk their lives and endanger their health. Coronavirus is no more dangerous for a prostitute than hepatitis and AIDS."<sup>870</sup>
- Mo'ineddin Saeedi, parliamentary deputy from Chabahar, revealed that 4 years ago, a widow in Sistan and Baluchestan Province had been compelled to sell her body to provide potable water for her children. The miserable woman then committed suicide.<sup>871</sup>
- Prostitution networks have expanded online in recent years facilitating recruitment of thousands of women for brokers. A simple search for "temporary marriages" lists thousands of accounts across Iran.<sup>872</sup>

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<sup>866</sup> The state-run ROKNA News Agency, December 17, 2019

<sup>867</sup> Shocking testimonies published on Aparat.com, October 19, 2016

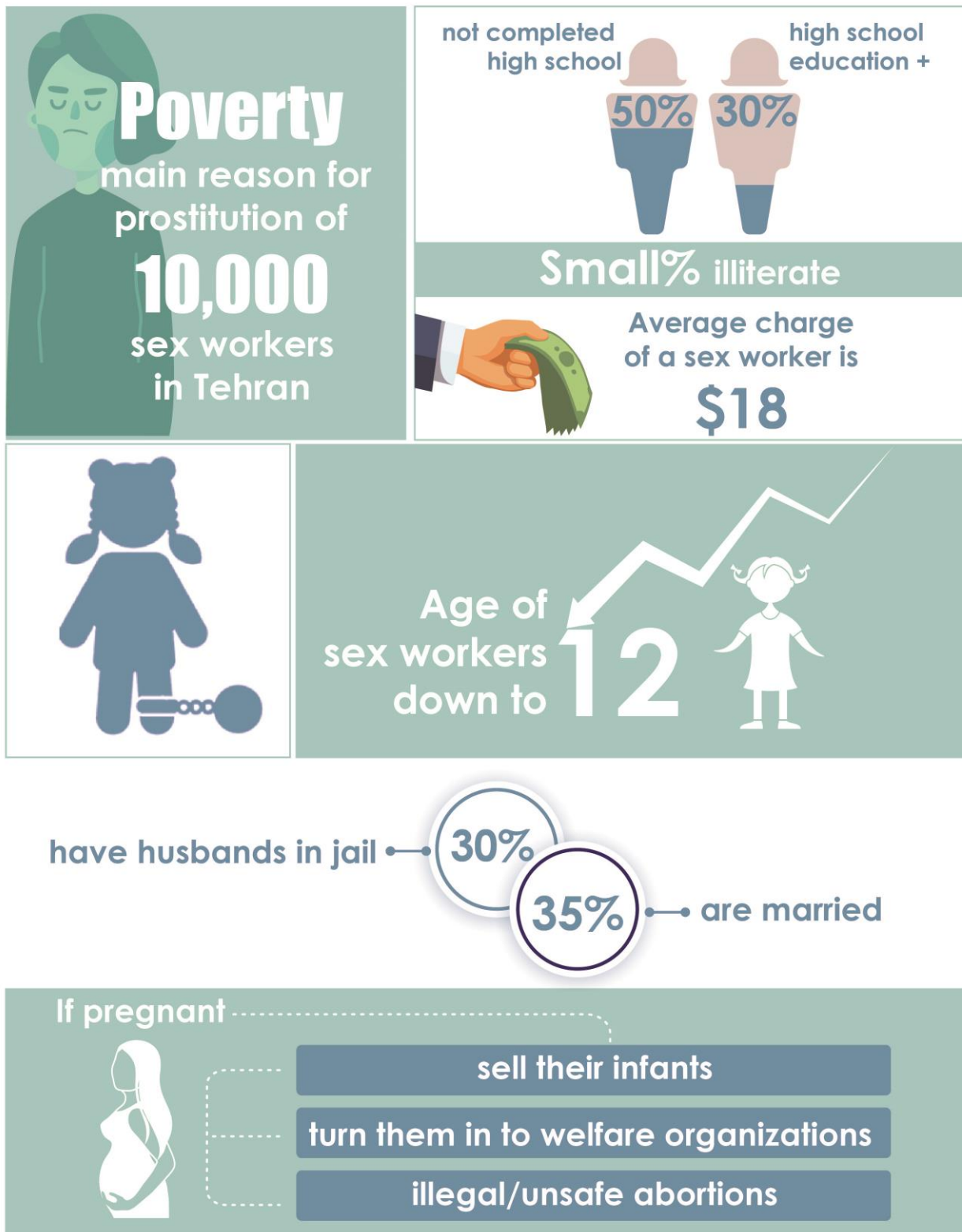
<sup>868</sup> The state-run tebyan.net, June 15, 2016

<sup>869</sup> The state-run didarnews.ir, April 29, 2020

<sup>870</sup> The state-run didarnews.ir, April 29, 2020

<sup>871</sup> [A widow prostitutes to provide water for her children, commits suicide](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, October 23, 2020; The state-run etemadonline.com, October 21, 2020

<sup>872</sup> The state-run didarnews.ir, April 13, 2021



## Suicides

Under the clerical regime, suicides have been on the rise and Iran stands as the first record holder in the Middle East with regards to suicides among women.<sup>873</sup> Under the mullahs' rule, and amid economic and political crises, Iran faces an increase in suicide as part of a pervasive social phenomenon.

- The rate of suicides among women in Iran increased by 66 percent during a five-year period from 2011 to 2015.<sup>874</sup>
- The average international suicide rate is 8 per 100,000 persons. In some Iranian cities the average is much higher. For example, in Masjid Suleiman, the average suicide rate stands at 27.2 and in Kermanshah, at 26.2.<sup>875</sup>
- A government official in the Forensic Medicine Organization announced that between March 21, 2020, and November 20, 2020, the rate of suicide increased by 4.2 percent, compared to the same period in the previous year.<sup>876</sup>
- Psychiatrists who understand the severity of untreated depression in Iranian society, say we must multiply the number of suicide victims by at least 20 or 30 times to identify the actual number of suicide attempts. Unemployment, high prices, and heavy economic pressure are among the main factors contributing to rise in suicides.<sup>877</sup>
- Last Thursday to Friday, in just 24 hours, 84 persons attempted suicides in Tehran, 12 of them fatally.<sup>878</sup>
- Amanollah Gharaii-Moghaddam, a sociologist and university professor, acknowledged that one of the main reasons for suicide in Iranian society is that people distrust government officials. "The environment in today's society is conducive to suicide. There are countless reasons for sadness in the country - from the dress code to the music heard in the media. We do not have just one or two problems; we have unemployment, where 30% of the country's graduates are not working. People do not work in their fields of study. Society is devoid of happiness or hope... The structure in Iran is sick. You cannot force a society to observe rules from 100 years ago. Today, young people see, hear, and read. They observe the world through their computers."<sup>879</sup>

## Poverty a main contributor to suicide among women in Iran

On numerous occasions, the regime's officials and experts have acknowledged that suicides are not fully reported and announced in Iran, and that the figures announced by the Coroner's Office and other government agencies must be considered as minimum.

<sup>873</sup> [Suicide Of Young Women In Iran Indicates Pressure On Women, Girls](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, February 1, 2019

<sup>874</sup> A social pathologist, the state-run Khabar Online, November 3, 2017

<sup>875</sup> Saeed Madani, a social researcher and criminologist, the official IRNA news agency, January 21, 2018

<sup>876</sup> The state-run Etemad Daily, February 18, 2021

<sup>877</sup> The state-run Etemad Daily, February 18, 2021

<sup>878</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, April 17, 2021

<sup>879</sup> Interview with Amanollah Gharaii-Moghaddam, Khat-e Solh Monthly magazine, March 2021

- The Iranian Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine published the annual statistics on suicide in Iran in September 2018. According to this report, more than 1,365 women committed suicide in the Persian year 1396 (March 2017 - March 2018).
- The data published by the Ministry of Health indicated that 73 percent of these suicides are committed by people living in the slums. This shows that economic problems have direct impact on social ills.<sup>880</sup>
- Maryam Abbasi Nejad, the Health Ministry's deputy for prevention of suicide, announced that 100,000 suicides had been registered in the country in the year 1397 (March 2018-March 2019).<sup>881</sup>
- The past few years have seen an increase in suicides. There was a 4 percent to 5 percent annual increase in suicide rates. What is remarkable is that we have a significant change in the range of ages among those who have attempted suicide. Suicide has increased in the last year among those under 18 and over 60.<sup>882</sup>
- An 11-year-old child ends his troubled life with a methadone pill, 12-year-old Zeinab commits suicide in Halilan, and a 13-year-old girl commits suicide to escape forced marriage. Six male and female students hang themselves in Ramhormoz, and 17-year-old Rojin hangs herself from a barn's ceiling in Salmas.

Since October 2020, we have witnessed the growth of suicide among children and adolescents. During October, four 11- and 16-year-old students committed suicide due to economic poverty.

A few days after the incident, Parasto Jalili, a 13-year-old student in a village in Urmia, committed suicide because she did not have a cell phone (to continue her education). A 15-year-old girl hanged herself in Ramhormoz on November 13, 2020.

The suicide of a schoolgirl in the village of Dishmuk in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer Ahmad Province due to being forced to drop out of school and marry was another incident this month. November saw the suicide of a 15-year-old girl in the Welfare Organization's shelter, and the deaths of two girls aged 14 and 16 due to early marriage and domestic violence by the father in the villages of Urmia. On November 30, two girls, aged 8 and 12, hanged themselves in Hormozgan.<sup>883</sup>

- From March 2020 to October 2020, the number of suicide victims went up by 4.2 percent, compared to the same period last year. As many as 15 people die each day due to suicide. Unlike in the past, the current methods of suicide are irreversible.<sup>884</sup>
- Recently, the suicide rate of married and middle-aged people has been added to the statistics, [and we see] a worrying trend... The number of failed suicides is not usually reflected in official statistics, and the number is higher than what is formally announced.<sup>885</sup>

People commit suicide when they have cut off all social ties; detachment from sympathy and solidarity can also lead to suicide. Therefore, Iranians – especially women – are committing suicide because they have no ambition in life. The factors contributing to social isolation and suicide multiply

<sup>880</sup> The state-run Etemad daily, October 14, 2019

<sup>881</sup> [Annual Report 2020](#), documents, NCRI Women's Committee website, March 2020

<sup>882</sup> Taghi Rostamvandi, Deputy Interior Minister and Director of the Social Affairs Organization, the state-run Mehr news agency, February 7, 2021

<sup>883</sup> The state-run Mostaghel newspaper, January 20, 2021

<sup>884</sup> An informed source in the Nation Forensic Medicine Organization, the state-run Etemad daily, January 20, 2021

<sup>885</sup> Khalid Tavakoli, a sociologist in the field of social harms, the state-run ILNA news agency, June 8, 2020

daily. The number of women and girls who committed suicide due to poverty has increased in recent years. The large number of young mothers and pregnant women among victims is a new phenomenon caused by the immense pressure endured by poor and low-income families in Iran.<sup>886</sup>

- A 43-year-old mother hugged her 14-month toddler and jumped off a building in Shahr-e Kord, capital of Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province in south central Iran on November 2, 2017.
- A 40-year-old woman committed suicide with her two children, a 10-year-old daughter and 5-month-old son, on December 25, 2017, in Rezvanshahr, Gilan Province, northern Iran. Eyewitnesses said the mother first threw her daughter off the fifth floor of the building where they lived. Then she jumped out with her 5-month-old son. The mother and her infant son died instantly, while the daughter hit the roof of a car and survived.
- A mother and her 11-year-old daughter ended their lives by consuming aluminum phosphide on August 2, 2019, in Neyriz, Fars Province. The next day, the father of the family also killed himself in a deliberate accident with a semi-trailer truck.<sup>887</sup>
- Four members of a family committed suicide in Yazd on July 28, 2019. The mother of this family ended her life with high dose of insulin injections. Her three children also committed suicide by consuming aluminum phosphide, after informing the emergency, two of whom died.<sup>888</sup>
- In Urmia, a young mother of two who could not purchase meat for her children after months, hanged herself in front of them in mid-March 2019.
- A female municipality worker in Arak attempted self-immolation in protest over large deductions from salaries of employees. Her colleagues prevented her from doing so, but she was fired by the municipality of Arak.<sup>889</sup>
- Elaheh Amiri, the mother of a two-year-old, hanged herself on August 2, 2019, in a village in Saqqez, Iranian Kurdistan.
- A 34-year-old mother hugged her 6-year-old son and jumped from the fourth floor of a building in Tehran's Mehrabad district, ending their lives.<sup>890</sup>
- In Ilam, Mina Shahidi, 38 with three children, killed herself due to the unbearable pressure of poverty on March 16, 2019.<sup>891</sup>
- Parisa Nazari, 25, the young mother of two, committed suicide on March 1, 2019 in Sarpol-e Zahab, one of the cities hardest hit by earthquake in November 2017.
- Leila Ramezani, 24, the pregnant mother of a one-year-old, committed suicide on March 3, 2019 in Salas-e Babajani, a city hit hard and devastated by earthquake in November 2017.
- On February 20, 2019, Pershang Karimi, 22 and pregnant, hanged herself in Sarpol-e Zahab.

<sup>886</sup> [Young mothers, pregnant women among suicide victims in Iran](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, April 3, 2019

<sup>887</sup> [Young mothers, pregnant women among suicide victims in Iran](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, April 3, 2019

<sup>888</sup> The state-run Fararu website, July 28, 2019

<sup>889</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency – July 19, 2019

<sup>890</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, May 22, 2019

<sup>891</sup> Network of Human Rights Defenders, azadegy.de, March 18, 2019

- Fereshteh Kahrarian, 30 and six-month pregnant, doused herself, husband and little child with kerosene and set themselves on fire on March 6, 2019, due to poverty. She subsequently died at a hospital in Kermanshah due to serious burns.
- Zahra Rahmati killed herself and her two young sons, 3 and 6, due to extreme poverty in a village in Kermanshah on February 10, 2019.
- A young woman, Nooshin Manavi, who had set herself ablaze on March 20, 2019, lost her life after two weeks on April 4, 2019, due to the extent and depth of burns. She had a young child.
- A 13-year-old girl by the name of Farideh committed suicide after giving birth to her child.
- A 13-year-old girl, known as Mahsa, committed suicide in Gachsaran by throwing herself off of a bridge.<sup>892</sup>
- A mother in Zarand City committed suicide by ingesting rice pills after giving them to her 9-year-old son.<sup>893</sup>
- Two teenage girls in Gorgan attempted suicide by jumping off of a pedestrian bridge.<sup>894</sup>
- Two 17-year-old schoolgirls in Dezful, Khuzestan, ended their lives by ingesting rice pills.<sup>895</sup>
- A girl of about 18 years old, from Dehdasht, committed suicide and lost her life. She had recently gotten married.<sup>896</sup>
- An 11-year-old schoolgirl from the village of Deh Ghazi in Dishmuk district hanged herself and died. The sixth grader was facing financial problems and suffering from poverty and her father was unemployed and had no source of income.<sup>897</sup>

### The vicious cycle of poverty, early marriages, and suicides

Early marriage of girls under 18 is considered both violence against women and child abuse by international standards. Many early marriages cause irreparable damage. In most cases, young girls drop out of school; many end up divorced and see no choice but to end their lives.

- Between 500,000 to 600,000 children get married every year (in Iran) according to the officially registered data. The main problem is that there are marriages taking place beyond those officially registered.<sup>898</sup>
- Some families force girls as young as 9 or 10 years old to get married with old men just to obtain some money to provide for the rest of the family's needs.<sup>899</sup>
- A sociologist said, "Early marriages make slaves out of girl children. Not only they are subjugated by their husbands, but since they are children and cannot manage their own lives, their husbands' families dominate them."<sup>900</sup>
- There are at least 15,000 young widows under 15 years of age in Iran, according to a report in 2018.<sup>901</sup>

<sup>892</sup> The state-run jouyakhbar.ir, December 31, 2020

<sup>893</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, January 23, 2021

<sup>894</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, January 26, 2021

<sup>895</sup> The state-run shahraranews.ir, January 27, 2021

<sup>896</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, February 2, 2021

<sup>897</sup> The state-run Khabarban news agency, February 15, 2021

<sup>898</sup> Ali Kazemi, advisor to the legal deputy of the Judiciary Branch, the state-run daily Entekhab – March 4, 2019

<sup>899</sup> Massoumeh Agha-Alishahi, member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run ROKNA news agency, May 28, 2018

<sup>900</sup> The official IRNA news agency – September 4, 2019



- It often happens that young women commit suicide to escape forcible marriage.
- A 16-year-old young woman by the name of Ziba set herself on fire to evade her family's insistence that she marries an old man. The young woman was being forced into this marriage by her stepmother.<sup>902</sup>
- On June 5, 2019, in Baneh (western Iran), Souma Khedri, 19, ended her own life because of being compelled into forcible marriage against her own will.
- On May 31, 2019, in Piranshahr, Sara Esmaili, 17, who had been forced to marry a relative ended her own life.
- Delina Rahmani, 18, took her own life after being beaten by his father and the man she was being forced to marry. She shot herself on April 21, 2019.
- On January 23, 2021, Anahita Shahidi, an 18-year-old from Sepidar village, Yasuj city, committed suicide due to her opposition to forced marriage. Anahita's family wanted to force her to marry her cousin. She committed suicide while alone at home.
- On March 18, 2021, Sahar Fakheri, 20, committed suicide using a shotgun in the city of Boyer-Ahmad in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province for opposing the forced marriage.
- In March 2021, a 15-year-old girl committed suicide in Taybad city, located in Razavi Khorasan province. Javad Afereidon, the public relations manager of the city's health network, announced that the young girl had recently gotten married and committed suicide by ingesting rice pills (aluminum phosphide).<sup>903</sup>
- On January 9, 2021, a 28-year-old woman by the name of Sarhad Roshandel from the village of Kalash Lolam in Javanrood county in Kermanshah set herself alight and died of burns. The young woman had been forced the week before to marry a 45-year-old man who already had three wives and five children.<sup>904</sup>

## Child abuse

Child abuse, domestic violence against women, abuse of the elderly and suicides are the first four social harms in Iran.<sup>905</sup>

Most domestic violence in Iran occurs against children and women. Reza Jafari, head of the Social Emergencies, said in March 2018: "Child abuse in Iran has increased fivefold."<sup>906</sup>

In June 2019, Jafari announced that child abuse was the most common domestic violence in Iran.<sup>907</sup>

In many cases, domestic violence leads to mild and severe beatings or eventually murder. Today, violence has become so widespread in Iran that one cannot draw a definite geographic line for it.<sup>908</sup>

An Iranian psychologist, Hashem Varzi, acknowledged, "The types of child abuse in Iran is changing. We are witnessing a rise in the number of child laborers, addicted children, child brides and many other phenomena that have not yet been included in our child abuse statistics."<sup>909</sup>

In June 2020, Abbas Masjedi Arani, head of the National Coroner's Office said, "The number of child abuse cases in Iran in 2019, showed a growth of 12.5% in this field."<sup>910</sup>

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<sup>901</sup> Shahrbanou Imami, member of Tehran's City Council and former member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run ILNA news agency, March 8, 2018

<sup>902</sup> The state-run Khorasan daily, August 26, 2019

<sup>903</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, March 24, 2021

<sup>904</sup> <https://zagrospost.com/34099>

<sup>905</sup> Reza Jafari, the head of Social Emergency, the state-run Fars news agency, April 14, 2019

<sup>906</sup> The state-run Jahanesanat.ir, November 19, 2020

<sup>907</sup> The state-run asreiran.com, June 20, 2019

<sup>908</sup> The state-run Jahanesanat.ir, November 19, 2020

<sup>909</sup> The state-run IRNA news agency, November 22, 2020

The clerical regime is not transparent in dissemination of data, and it blocks public access to accurate statistics. So, to get a sense of what this 12.5% increase means, the figure from a 2018 report on just one province might prove beneficial.

In August 2018, Mehrdad Motallebi, Welfare Organization's social affairs deputy in West Azerbaijan Province, said: "More than 13,000 cases of child abuse were registered by the Social Emergencies of W. Azerbaijan Province from March 2017 to March 2018. This figure is only related to the cases reported to this center."<sup>911</sup>

Some sociologists believe that the increase in child abuse in Iran is due to economic problems and forced marriages. The main factor, however, is the absence of laws and policies to prevent and punish child abuse.

Domestic violence is not considered a crime under the clerical regime's laws. According to the regime's laws, the punishment for killing a child by his/her father could be only 2 years in prison which could be redeemed. The same laws promote violation of children's rights by legalizing child marriage, honor killings, etc.

A bill called the Law to Support Disadvantaged, Defenseless and Abandoned Children was passed by the Iranian regime's Parliament on September 22, 2013, which sanctions marriage between the child and her guardian (stepfather), with the approval of a court. According to this law, fathers and grandfathers are considered owners of their children and their blood and they are not punished if they kill their children.<sup>912</sup>

- 52% of the abused children are girls, and 57% of the abusers are their fathers.<sup>913</sup>
- In a shocking report on rape of young women by their first-degree relatives namely their fathers and brothers, head of the Social Harms Association in Tehran revealed that there were 5,200 incest cases filed with the Justice Ministry. According to this official, the figure does not include cases of rape by uncles, father-in-laws, and other instances of sexual exploitation and assault.<sup>914</sup>
- The incumbent advisor to Khuzestan's Governor revealed that from among 18 girls aging between 12 and 14, who had complained to the Governor's women's office about rape by their fathers and brothers, 12 were under 14 years old. According to the official, the average age of girls raped by their fathers was between 10 and 12, and the age of those raped by their brothers was between 15 and 16.<sup>915</sup>
- A woman sued her husband for torturing and raping their daughter, now 20 years old. The girl, Elmira, said she had been constantly tortured and raped by her father since she was eight years old.<sup>916</sup>
- Following a research done on 400 child laborers, the executive director of the Organization of Social Services in Tehran's Municipality said, "We are going to prove that 90 percent of child laborers get raped."<sup>917</sup>
- Sexual abuse is the greatest ailment among young children sift through garbage.<sup>918</sup>

<sup>910</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, June 20, 2020

<sup>911</sup> The state-run Uromnews.ir, August 7, 2018

<sup>912</sup> Article 301 of the Islamic Punishment Code; [Men allowed to marry their adopted children](#), documents, NCRI Women's Committee website, November 2014

<sup>913</sup> The state-run Salamatnews.com, October 4, 2018

<sup>914</sup> The state-run Young Journalists Club, August 1, 2016

<sup>915</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, November 2003

<sup>916</sup> The state-run Fararu website, June 2, 2019

<sup>917</sup> The state-run Salamatnews.com, November 8, 2017

<sup>918</sup> Elham Fakhari, member of Tehran's City Council, the state-run Salamatnews.com, November 8, 2017

- 21% of street children in Tehran have experienced sexual relations.<sup>919</sup>
- Rana, 19, has been engaged in dangerous and harmful jobs such as making spare parts for cars and working with acid since she was 11. Rana's father is an addict and used to sexually assault her four daughters. The girls were also victimized by other men in the community.<sup>920</sup>
- There have been 16,000 reports of child abuse in just six months. 38% of the abused children are in pre-school and elementary school age, and 12 percent are older.<sup>921</sup>
- Child abuse rose 10 percent in North Khorasan Province in the course of one year targeting mostly girls.<sup>922</sup>
- A 12-year-old girl and her 7-year-old brother who had been stabbed by their father, died on April 27, 2019, shortly after they were taken to hospital in Fardis, one of Karaj counties.<sup>923</sup>
- A seven-year-old girl, Atena Aslani, became victim of sexual violence and murder in Parsabad on June 19, 2017. Atena's father was a street peddler who sold clothes. The state media identified the suspect as Ismail, a local businessman selling paint.
- A 5-year-old girl in Mashhad suffered brain death after being battered by her stepfather. Multiple scars of injury were evident on the girl's abdomen, head, and face upon admission to hospital. After clinical examinations, it became clear that she suffered broken legs, hip, and brain damage.<sup>924</sup>
- A three-year-old girl child went into coma after being beaten by her addicted father. The little girl was taken to a medical center by residents of the village near Marand, in East Azerbaijan Province.<sup>925</sup>
- Three children, including two girl children, were found in the backyard of their house in hot weather being tortured by their father and stepmother. Fatemeh, 12, Omolbanin, 8, and their five-year-old brother, Ali Akbar, were tortured physically and psychologically by an ax, a hammer, hot iron rods, etc. in their home in Taleghan, near Mahshahr, in Khuzestan Province.<sup>926</sup>

<sup>919</sup> Ebrahim Ghafari, the social deputy of the Iranian regime's Welfare Organization, October 13, 2015

<sup>920</sup> The state-run Salamatnews.com, November 8, 2017

<sup>921</sup> Reza Jafari, head of Social Emergency Room, the state-run ILNA news agency, February 25, 2018

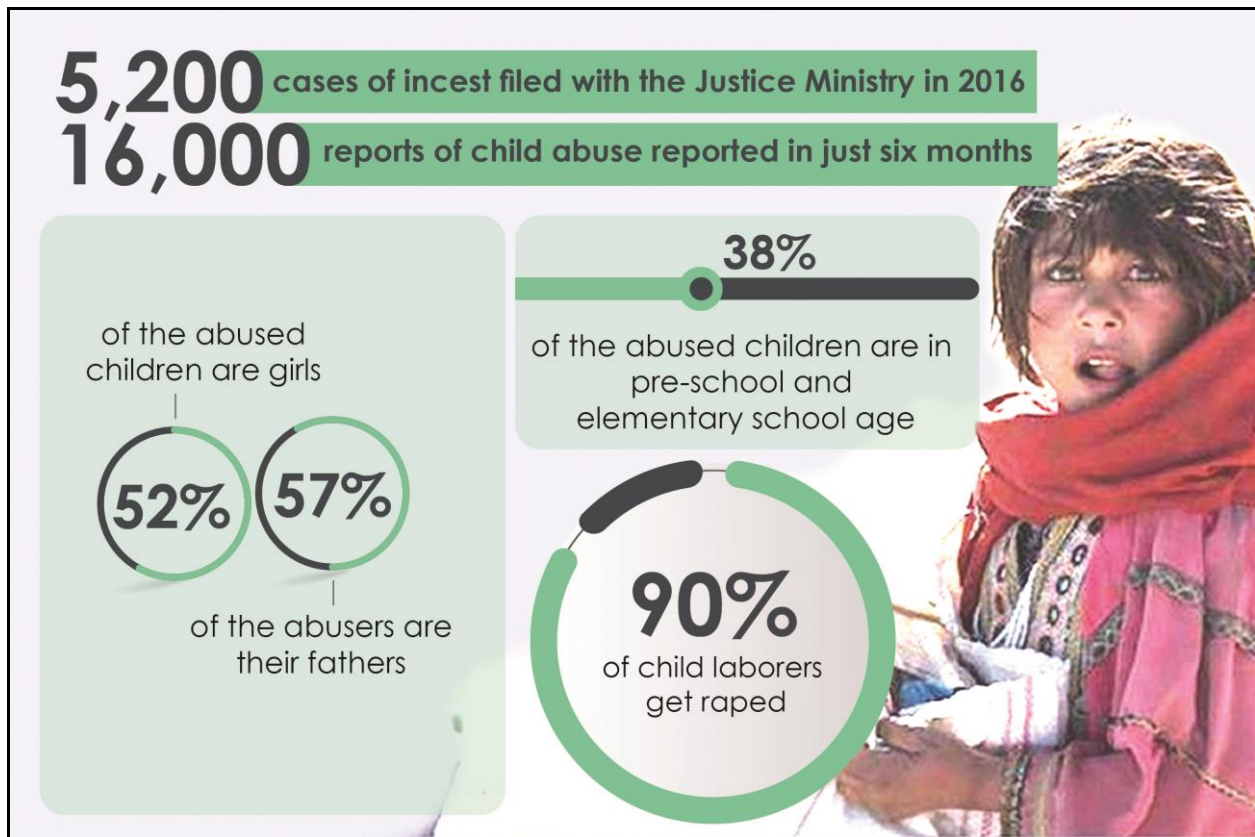
<sup>922</sup> Ali Akbar Sahranavard, the social deputy of the General Welfare Department of North Khorasan Province, the state-run ISNA news agency, April 16, 2019: "Child abuse in 1397 (March 2018- March 2019) has targeted kids between 5 and 11 years old, showing a 10 percent increase compared to the previous year. Girl children made up the majority of victims of child abuse."

<sup>923</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, April 27, 2019

<sup>924</sup> The state-run IRNA news agency, May 3, 2017

<sup>925</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, May 27, 2019

<sup>926</sup> The state-run asriran.com, April 24, 2018



10. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve health outcomes for women and girls in your country?

Promoted women's access to health services through expansion of universal health coverage or public health services

Access to health services is a major problem for the people of Iran due to shortages of hospitals, clinics, doctors, and nurses as well as the high fees charged for medical services. The clerical regime with its irresponsible policies has no intention nor the ability to resolve this crisis. Since many people do not have insurance, they cannot afford to pay for the high cost of their treatment.<sup>927</sup> The problem has been aggravated during the Coronavirus pandemic.

- The health budget for the year 2018 was only increased by 6.4% compared to the prior year, while the Ministry of Health had a deficit of 15 trillion Tomans (\$1.1 million).<sup>928</sup>
- Hospitals have no vacant beds. In many hospitals, patients have to be treated with oxygen capsules in the hallway or yard. Since the medical staff is very tired and weak, if we follow the same procedure, the country will face a catastrophe.<sup>929</sup>
- Of the €1 billion approved in March 2020 from the National Development Fund for the fight against the Coronavirus, only about 30 percent has been paid to the Ministry of Health as of September 23, 2020.<sup>930</sup>

<sup>927</sup> The state-run taadolnewspaper.ir, January 17, 2019

<sup>928</sup> The state-run Bartarinha website, January 27, 2018

<sup>929</sup> Minoo Mohraz, a member of the National Coronavirus Combat Task Force, the state-run Jahanesanat.ir, September 26, 2020

- The regime's Minister of Health, Saeed Namaki, also complained on his Instagram account, saying, "I have not received anything but a small share of the one billion (Euros) that the leadership agreed months ago to pay from the Development Fund."<sup>931</sup>
- According to the budget of the Persian fiscal year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022), the budget of the regime's parliament is 632 billion Tomans (\$27 million) and the budget of boosting the defense power is 866 billion Tomans (\$37 million).<sup>932</sup>
- However, only 150 billion Tomans (approx. \$6.5 million) has been considered for the public health budget, even during the Covid-19 pandemic. This budget must cover all health expenditures including hygiene, treatment, research, and development in health affairs and higher education.<sup>933</sup>

The situation is even worse for women due to their special needs, and there has been no considerable measures reported on improvement or expansion of women's access to health services and coverage. This issue has been dealt with in length in a previous section in answer to question 5 on gender-responsive social protection floors to ensure that all women have access to essential health care, childcare facilities and income security. However, we will briefly review some examples of women's lack of access to medical and health services in this section, too.

### Rural areas

In underdeveloped rural areas, poverty, malnutrition, and heavy work contribute to health problems among inhabitants, especially women and children.

- There is one medical center for every 3 to 4 villages and most villagers have problems receiving medical care.<sup>934</sup>
- For 105,000 women living in the cities of Farouj and Shirvan in North Khorasan Province, there is only one mammography machine in Shirvan's hospital. Occasionally, the women of two other cities are also added to the clients.<sup>935</sup>
- Rural and nomad women have little access to specialist doctors and dentists. Many rural and nomad women die before reaching a medical center when they get sick.<sup>936</sup>
- Unfortunately, the people of the villages in this region are extremely deprived of health facilities and medicine. In Sistan and Baluchestan province, the distance between two cities or villages is several kilometers and it takes at least 3 hours to reach the next town or village.<sup>937</sup>
- Based on the statistics of the Medical Sciences University of Zahedan, there are 65 health centers in Sistan and Baluchestan, of which 43 centers are active. On the other hand, WHO statistics show that these centers have not been successful in controlling

<sup>930</sup> Iraj Harirchi, Deputy Health Minister, speaking on the national TV, September 23, 2020

<sup>931</sup> The state-run Alef.ir, September 23, 2020

<sup>932</sup> The state-run qudsonline.ir, April 28, 2021

<sup>933</sup> The state-run Mashreq website, December 22, 2020

<sup>934</sup> Moussa Reza Servati, member of the Social Committee of the Parliament, the state-run Mehr news agency, December 31, 2016

<sup>935</sup> The official IRNA news agency, August 21, 2019

<sup>936</sup> Parichehr Soltani, secretary of the working group on rural and nomad women living in underprivileged areas, the state-run ISNA news agency, October 5, 2016

<sup>937</sup> Somayyeh Sadat Mir-Jafari, a senior midwifery expert on rural women in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, the state-run ICANA news agency, September 22, 2019

contagious diseases and making sure of the community's health. Due to the lack of manpower, sufficient space and necessary infrastructure, their information in this field is not updated. Currently, the deaths of pregnant mothers is one of the main concerns in this region.<sup>938</sup>

- Infant mortality is still an issue in Iran. The mortality of female infants is more than male infants due to cultural issues. On the other hand, infant mortality and postpartum mortality have not yet been eradicated in Iran.<sup>939</sup>
- In remote villages and deprived areas of Sistan and Baluchestan province to the south and east of Kerman to Khuzestan and Hormozgan, many villagers die every year due to snake bites and scorpion bites. Many pregnant women die. The lack of roads, the lack of doctors and midwives in health centers, the lack of medical equipment needed to help pregnant women or new mothers, or people with snakes or scorpion stings in rural health centers, practically lead to the death of villagers whose voices and images are often not seen or heard.<sup>940</sup>

### Urban areas

There is not an acceptable situation in the urban areas, either.

- Urmia is the capital of West Azerbaijan Province in northwestern Iran with more than 73,000 inhabitants.<sup>941</sup> Kowthar Gynecology and Obstetrics Hospital in Urmia is the only specialized maternity hospital in this city.
- It has only 62 beds and lacks the necessary medical facilities for pregnant women. The situation in this hospital is the same as it was 30 years ago, and pregnant women face lots of difficulties at the time of delivery due to lack of facilities and low sanitation in this hospital.<sup>942</sup>
- This case found its way to the media, but it should be considered that the same situation is true for many hospitals in all small cities and towns.
- There are only 1.8 beds per 1,000 Iranians. No adequate investment has been made to provide hospital beds. The distribution of beds is not balanced per capita.<sup>943</sup>

### Women in humanitarian settings

Reports from earthquake-hit areas show that many deaths are caused by lack of access to hospitals, medical clinics and health services.

- At least four women and girls were killed after a 5.9-magnitude earthquake struck northwestern Iran on November 8, 2019. One of the victims was the ten-year-old Zahra Abedi who lived in Varnakesh village. Her father, Asghar Abedi, says, "Zahra was trapped

<sup>938</sup> Alim Yar-Mohammadi, MP from Zahedan, the state-run ICANA news agency, September 22, 2019

<sup>939</sup> Shahla Kazemipour, a demographer and sociologist, the state-run ISNA news agency, October 16, 2019

<sup>940</sup> The state-run Shahrvand newspaper, May 9, 2020

<sup>941</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, July 7, 2018

<sup>942</sup> [Kowthar Maternity Hospital in Orumieh lacks minimum medical facilities](#), NCRI Women's Committee website, July 7, 2018

<sup>943</sup> Mohammad Naeem Amini-Fard, a member of the parliamentary health commission, the state-run ICANA news agency, August 31, 2019



under the rubble. Immediately, we pulled her out from under the rubble. My daughter was unconscious, but she was breathing. I quickly took her to (the nearby) Chaldoran. The electricity was cut off there and no one could help Zahra. We could not save her.”<sup>944</sup>

- Doctors visit Varankesh village in East Azerbaijan Province two days a week. On the night of the earthquake, no doctor was in the village. So, Zahra's father had to take her to the nearby town of Turkmanchay, but there was also a power outage and, consequently, Zahra died. One of the villagers said, “If we had a doctor, maybe Zahra would still be alive with us today.” Another villager who lost his wife and niece in this earthquake, said his niece, 12, died on the way to hospital. “If there were a hospital, no one would have died.”<sup>945</sup>
- On February 23, 2020, an earthquake at a magnitude of 5.7 degrees on the Richter scale shook the Qotur District and its surrounding regions. The earthquake left more than 100 residents wounded, residential homes destroyed, and about 3,500 families homeless in Qotur and 40 surrounding villages. Earthquake-stricken women have been left without tents in the cold winter months in villages of West Azarbaijan Province. Instead of helping the people, the IRGC extorted 35,000 Tomans for one tent a night.<sup>946</sup>
- An earthquake with a magnitude of 6.5 on the Richter scale shook the small city of Sisakht on the night of February 17, 2021, and caused damage to the lives of a large part of the populace, including 200 women heads of households. Forty-seven people were injured, and irreparable damage was done to the houses of the city's residents. The Governor of Dena announced that day that more than 70% of people's homes had been damaged. Water, electricity and gas were cut off in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in Sisakht.<sup>947</sup>

There were similar examples in the earthquake in Kermanshah on November 12, 2017:

- Sanitation was literally non-existent in the areas affected by the earthquake.
- Pregnant women faced the most difficult conditions. The number of miscarriages surged. Most of them also suffered infection due to the difficult conditions of living in tents for months.
- In the first month after the earthquake, 11 pregnant women and 39 pre-school children died in the quake-stricken areas of Kermanshah Province.<sup>948</sup>
- The state-run news agencies published a story on January 24, 2018, reporting the death of a two-year-old girl in Kermanshah, western Iran. Sarina died on January 18, 2018, after catching the flu.<sup>949</sup> More than 70 days after the earthquake, her father says the authorities failed to provide his family a trailer or any form of shelter and the little Sarina died due to the freezing winter cold.
- Sarina's father, Mr. Zahabi, explained, “High fever and repeated seizures worsened Sarina's condition and the clinic in Sarpol-e Zahab did not have a specialist doctor. On January 17, she lost consciousness and we took her to the city's hospital, but they did not have adequate facilities and doctors and they

<sup>944</sup> The state-run Young Journalists Club, November 10, 2019

<sup>945</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, November 8, 2019

<sup>946</sup> [Earthquake-stricken women extorted by IRGC in cold winter](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, March 1, 2020

<sup>947</sup> The state-run IRNA news agency, February 28, 2021

<sup>948</sup> Ibrahim Shakiba, head of the Health Center of Kermanshah, the state-run ISNA news agency, December 5, 2017

<sup>949</sup> [Iran: Toddler earthquake victim dies due to freezing cold](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, January 25, 2018

could not do anything for Sarina. They told me to take her to a hospital in Kermanshah.”<sup>950</sup>

- Most of the earthquake survivors do not have access to clean potable water due to broken pipelines. In some areas, water is contaminated, and shortage of chlorine is a major problem.
- Most areas are not drained of wastewater and their garbage is not collected. As a result, the areas surrounding the temporary residences of earthquake survivors are extremely contaminated.
- Strong odor, insects and rodents take over the areas and snakes and scorpions are prevalent in the ruins of the buildings, jeopardizing the survivors’ health and safety.
- Local officials say some 30 percent of the live stocks were killed in the earthquake. No action was taken to remove the corpses of animals and the garbage. Many sewage structures were damaged and there was a threat of dangerous diseases spreading.
- More than 2.5 years after the [Kermanshah earthquake](#), a large number of people still live in makeshift trailers or sheds in Kermanshah province, including Sarpol-e Zahab. People in these trailers do not have even basic living standards and are often deprived of water and electricity. The government has not taken any formal action to help these people. In a short video report from one of the neighborhoods in the city of Sarpol-e-Zahab, several women offered some insights into their daily challenges.
- One of the women said, “Today is April 21, 2020. Here is the Nirouy-e Entezami neighborhood of Sarpol-e Zahab. It’s been 891 days since the earthquake, but we still live-in trailers. There are several families here. We have been without water and electricity for three days now. They [local officials] don’t want us to stay here anymore because of the conditions. I have a one-month old baby, whom I had to leave at home with one of my relatives. My husband is unemployed, and we have zero income. I don’t know what to do now. It’s very hot outside, and the situation is really difficult.”
- Turan Hemmati, another woman who introduced herself, lives in one of these makeshift trailers. “We are here, and we have no facilities,” she said, adding that her husband is ill and that they have no income.

**Expanded specific health services for women and adolescent girls, including sexual and reproductive health services, mental, maternal health, HIV services**

### Reproductive health

The laws on reproductive health have stripped Iranian women of their fundamental rights to make choices about their own bodies and lives, and view them as baby-making machines.

- In May 2014, the mullahs’ supreme leader Ali Khamenei announced the general population policies:
  1. Promotion of dynamism, growth and youthfulness of the population by increasing the fertility rate.
  2. Removal of obstacles to marriage, facilitating and promoting marriage and having more children, lowering the legal age for marriage, etc. <sup>951</sup>

<sup>950</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, January 24, 2018

- The parliament passed a bill banning any surgery intending to permanently prevent pregnancy and vowing to punish perpetrators.<sup>952</sup>
- The parliament also passed another bill in late April 2014 to “increase fertility rate and prevent population decline.” According to this bill, all measures related to abortion and vasectomy and all advertisements for birth control and reduction of pregnancy were banned and their perpetrators punished.<sup>953</sup>
- On March 16, 2021, the clerical regime’s parliament adopted the Population Growth and Family Plan.<sup>954</sup> A similar plan was enforced on June 18, 2013, with the aim of increasing the fertility rate to at least 2.5 children per woman, but Iranians families lack the financial, psychological, and emotional means to raise more children.
- Articles 2-4 of the new plan require the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development and the government to provide families housing or land after the birth of a third child.
- Article 5 instructs the Ministries of Oil and Energy to consider the number of children in a home when determining low-consumption subscribers for water, electricity, and gas bills.
- Article 28 warns the media outlets and relevant agencies not to broadcast any program that conflicts with the population increase program.
- According to Article 37, the Islamic Development Organization is charged with monitoring marriage-matchmaking centers and institutions, including cyberspace, to enforce behavior that complies with the regime’s general policies.
- Articles 44 to 59 oblige the State Security Forces, the Ministry of Intelligence, and all security agencies to prevent abortion, and to monitor all sales of abortion drugs or related consultations, even in cyberspace.
- The plan concludes by threatening violators with imprisonment, fines, and deprivation of social rights in Article 71.<sup>955</sup>

## Infant mortality

A considerable part of infant mortality occurs in underprivileged areas and villages, because there rarely are any medical centers in these areas.<sup>956</sup>

The following figures must be considered as being the minimum due to lack of an effective data collection system in Iran and lack of transparency on the part of the government.

- Infant mortality rate in Iran is five times greater than in developed countries. Every year, 15,000 infants and some 300 mothers die during delivery.<sup>957</sup>
- The infant mortality rate has reached 9.6 per thousand live births.<sup>958</sup>

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<sup>951</sup> Khamenei.ir, May 20, 2014

<sup>952</sup> The state-run ICANA news agency, August 10, 2014

<sup>953</sup> The state-run Kayhan daily newspaper, April 13, 2014

<sup>954</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, March 17, 2021

<sup>955</sup> The state-run Ekhtebareh website, March 27, 2021

<sup>956</sup> Iraj Khosronia, head of the GI Specialists’ Association, the state-run Tabnak website, February 2, 2017

<sup>957</sup> Ali Akbar Sayyari, deputy Minister of Health, the state-run asriran.com, January 21, 2018

<sup>958</sup> Seyyed Alireza Marandi, President of the Medical Sciences Academy, the state-run Tasnim news agency, April 16, 2019

## Women with AIDS

Experts in Iran have explicitly confessed that official statistics must be multiplied by 5 and sometimes by 7, to find the actual number of AIDS victims. For women, the numbers must be multiplied by 10 because many women are unaware of this virus.

- The number of AIDS victims among women has increased ten folds in the past two years.<sup>959</sup>
- 47 percent of the 70,000 HIV positive patients in Iran are women. The population of addicted women or women involved with narcotic drugs has tripled over the past several years.<sup>960</sup>
- The age of AIDS patients has dropped to 16 in recent years, and the rising trend of contraction of this disease had inclined towards women and teenage girls.<sup>961</sup>
- All women suffering from AIDS complain from lack of special medical centers. For example, there are not enough dental clinics or gynecologists. These patients have problem receiving medical treatment for mouth and dental illnesses, and for gynecology and childbirth. A number of them speak of being mistreated by the medical community. Patients say doctors rarely accept them, so they have to conceal their illness.<sup>962</sup>
- In October 2019, at least 300 residents of a village including hundreds of women, children and infants contracted AIDS.<sup>963</sup>
- Residents of Chenar Mahmoudi village say that a health clinic agent used disposable syringes multiple times to take diabetes test from them. This led to the sudden outburst of HIV virus and contraction of the disease by so many people. Some residents say as many as 500 people have been affected. Some residents refused to have the test fearing they would also contract the disease. One of the victims was a six-month baby who contracted a skin disease after being injected. Her lips chapped and her mouth foamed.<sup>964</sup>
- The number of people living with AIDS in Iran is rising. Minoo Mohraz, the AIDS Research Center director, announced in 2018 that the number of Iranian women living with AIDS had increased tenfold in the last two years.<sup>965</sup>
- Kazeruni, Head of the HIV Prevention Office, announced that “18% of people living with AIDS are women”.<sup>966</sup> More than 60% of these women became infected after sharing needles and injection methods while using drugs. More than 21% of the women with HIV/AIDS cases were infected by their husbands. Moreover, approximately 1.6% of HIV transmission occurs from mother to child.<sup>967</sup>

<sup>959</sup> Minoo Mohraz, head of the AIDS Research Center, the state-run khabaronline.ir, May 19, 2018

<sup>960</sup> Reza Mahboubi, deputy director of the Interior Ministry's Social Affairs Organization, the state-run ISNA news agency, August 20, 2019

<sup>961</sup> Massoud Mardani, member of the National AIDS Committee, the state-run Shafaqna.com, July 30, 2015

<sup>962</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, February 21, 2018

<sup>963</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, October 2, 2019

<sup>964</sup> [Hundreds including women, children infected with HIV in Chenar Mahmoudi](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, October 4, 2019

<sup>965</sup> The state-run Migna website, December 30, 2018

<sup>966</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, May 29, 2019

<sup>967</sup> [The number of Iranian women living with AIDS has increased tenfold](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, November 29, 2020

- The Coronavirus pandemic has negatively affected people living with HIV.<sup>968</sup>

### Ensured access to prevention, treatment, and palliative care for non-communicable diseases (heart disease, chronic respiratory diseases, diabetes, and cancers)?

The cost of treatment for heart disease, chronic respiratory disease, diabetes, and cancer are far beyond what most Iranian women can afford since they are not covered by insurance:

- The cost of heart surgery in Iran is the world's highest.<sup>969</sup>
- The cost of changing a heart valve has increased from 3 to 12 million Tomans (\$300 to \$1,200). This while insurance companies do not cover this operation.<sup>970</sup>
- Open heart surgery costs between 60 to 65 million Tomans (\$2,777) depending on the number of days hospitalized; angioplasty between 9 to 10 million Tomans (\$427) per vessel, angiography 7 million Tomans (\$300), specialized echo 370 to 380 thousand Tomans (\$16), and normal echo 200 thousand Tomans (\$8.5).<sup>971</sup>
- The monthly expenses for the medications for CF patients are 4.5 million Tomans (\$391).<sup>972</sup>
- At this stage, the price of Creon first reached 400 thousand and then 600 thousand Tomans (\$25), and now in less than one or two years, it has reached over 800 thousand and 900 thousand Tomans (\$38)!<sup>973</sup>
- The yearly expenses for treatment of Asthma is between 1.8 and 2.4 million Tomans (\$240).<sup>974</sup>
- The cost for the treatment of a diabetic patient is 2 million Tomans (\$174) a year.<sup>975</sup>
- Every year, some 13,000 women suffer breast cancer, the cost of whose treatment is on the rise, while there is no screening system in the country to detect and prevent cancer.<sup>976</sup>

In the meantime, there is no ensured access to medical care for anyone in Iran. There are numerous cases where people are not admitted to hospital for treatment or not released until they pay for hospital expenses.

- A 35-year-old woman from Mashhad had a natural delivery which is free according to the law, but she and her newborn were held for five days by the hospital until her husband, a seasonal worker, paid the hospital's expenses.<sup>977</sup> They charged the poor couple 1.2 million Tomans, i.e. 380,000 Tomans (\$33) for every day of stay at hospital.

<sup>968</sup> Persian Deutsche Welle, November 7, 2020

<sup>969</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, December 23, 2008

<sup>970</sup> The state-run salamatnews.com, January 2014

<sup>971</sup> Private website of Dr. Khalil Forouzannia, December 26, 2020

<sup>972</sup> The official IRNA news agency, October 13, 2018; the official IRNA news agency, October 13, 2018

<sup>973</sup> The state-run Fars news agency, November 4, 2020

<sup>974</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, May 3, 2014; the state-run Fars news agency, May 3, 2015

<sup>975</sup> Ali Rabbani, the state-run ILNA news agency, August 14, 2018

<sup>976</sup> Salem Khabar website, October 13, 2019

<sup>977</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, January 24, 2018

- A homeless woman, 22, was hospitalized for a severe case of influenza. The hospital refused to dismiss her because she could not pay for the hospital fees. The hospital charged the homeless woman for 5.5 million rials (\$153) and another 1.7 million rials (\$50) for pharmaceuticals.<sup>978</sup>
- On June 10, 2016, Ms. Hakimeh Mohammadi was hospitalized in Shariati Hospital for lung infection and breathing complications. However, the hospital did not allow her to receive any treatment since she was an Afghan citizen residing in Iran and did not have any health insurance. As a result, this innocent woman died after a couple of days. Then, the hospital refused to hand over the body to her family for burial, unless her family pays for the expenses of hospitalization.<sup>979</sup>

### Strengthened comprehensive sexuality education in schools or through community programs

The Iranian regime does not allow sex education in schools or through community programs. This was one of the reasons, they opposed the United Nations Education 2030 agenda.<sup>980</sup>

### Gathered data on the health status of marginalized groups of women such as women with disabilities, lesbian, bisexual and transgender women, ethnic minorities, indigenous women, etc.

- According to statistics released by the mullahs' parliament in 2017, more than 11 million disabled people live in Iran, with women accounting for 35% of this population.
- The number of disabled women who have to earn their living was 39,372, almost twice as much as disabled men in the same situation.<sup>981</sup>
- Annually, 100,000 people are added to the number of disabled persons in Iran.<sup>982</sup>
- Disabled people make up about 3-5% of the population of unemployed in each region. The number of unemployed disabled women is twice the number of men. Only one-sixth of women with disabilities might have an opportunity in the job market. While others cannot even afford to pay for their own transportation. This situation also makes them incapacitated for their medical and healthcare expenses which is an immediate basic necessity for any person with disabilities.<sup>983</sup>
- Women with disabilities are 1.5 times more likely to suffer violence, harassment, abuse and discrimination than men with disabilities.<sup>984</sup> Disabled women are forced to accept and tolerate cruel behavior and relationships because of their physical and social limits.

<sup>978</sup> [Iran: Homeless woman forced to stay in hospital until she pays for fees](#), NCRI Women's Committee website, December 22, 2015

<sup>979</sup> [Death of uninsured Afghan woman](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee, June 10, 2016

<sup>980</sup> [Education 2030 Framework for Action \(SDG4\) and Iranian officials' hysteric reactions to it](#), NCRI Women's Committee website, Special Report, June 2017

<sup>981</sup> [Disabled women disregarded under inhumane policies in Iran](#), NCRI Women's Committee website, December 1, 2018

<sup>982</sup> The state-run fararu.com, October 18, 2019

<sup>983</sup> [Iran: Unemployment of disabled women is twice as much as men's](#), NCRI Women's Committee website, December 16, 2016

<sup>984</sup> [Iran: Mentally retarded woman raped in a government center](#), NCRI Women's Committee website, September 7, 2017



- Poverty of the family, lack of decent homes, lack of urban services and appropriate transportation services for the disabled, and lack of educational facilities required for the disabled contribute to exclusion of people with disabilities from society.<sup>985</sup>
- In 2004, the Iranian regime passed a law entitled 'Disabled Persons' Rights' that remained unimplemented. In 2017, a general bill on this issue was again passed by the mullahs' parliament, the implementation of which was made contingent on the adequacy of the government budget and, therefore, was not enforced.

### Provided post-abortion care services and decriminalized abortion

Abortion is essentially illegal in Iran, unless it is done for medical purpose to save the life of mother when the fetus is less than 19 weeks old.<sup>986</sup>

There are also numerous reports on the arrest and imprisonment of the doctors, nurses and midwives involved in illegal abortions.

- A Health Ministry official said between 300 to 500 thousand illegal abortions are carried out in Iran, every year, adding that from the 1,000 abortions that are carried out in Iran every day, only ten are legal.<sup>987</sup>
- In Iran, 2,000 abortions are performed daily, and the number is about one-third of all births in the country. Spontaneous abortions are tens of times more common than medical abortions.<sup>988</sup>
- According to the announcement of the Deputy Minister of Health, 600,000 illegal abortions are performed annually in the country, which means 2,000 abortions per day.<sup>989</sup>

### Other

#### Depression

Depression is one of the widespread health problems in Iran. Again, there are no accurate statistics available.

- According to one source, some 13.5 percent of the Iranian population suffer from depression. (This amounts to over 10 million people.) 16% of Iranian women and about 10 percent of Iranian men have been reported to be depressed.<sup>990</sup>
- The regime's Health Minister, however, stated that 6.4 million people are depressed in Iran, and women have a greater share of depression.<sup>991</sup>

<sup>985</sup> [Iran: Disabled woman has to feed from the trash bin](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, September 25, 2017

<sup>986</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, July 21, 2013; the state-run salamatnews.com, August 30, 2016

<sup>987</sup> Mohammad Baqer Larijani, educational deputy to the Health Minister, the state-run Fars news agency, August 20, 2019

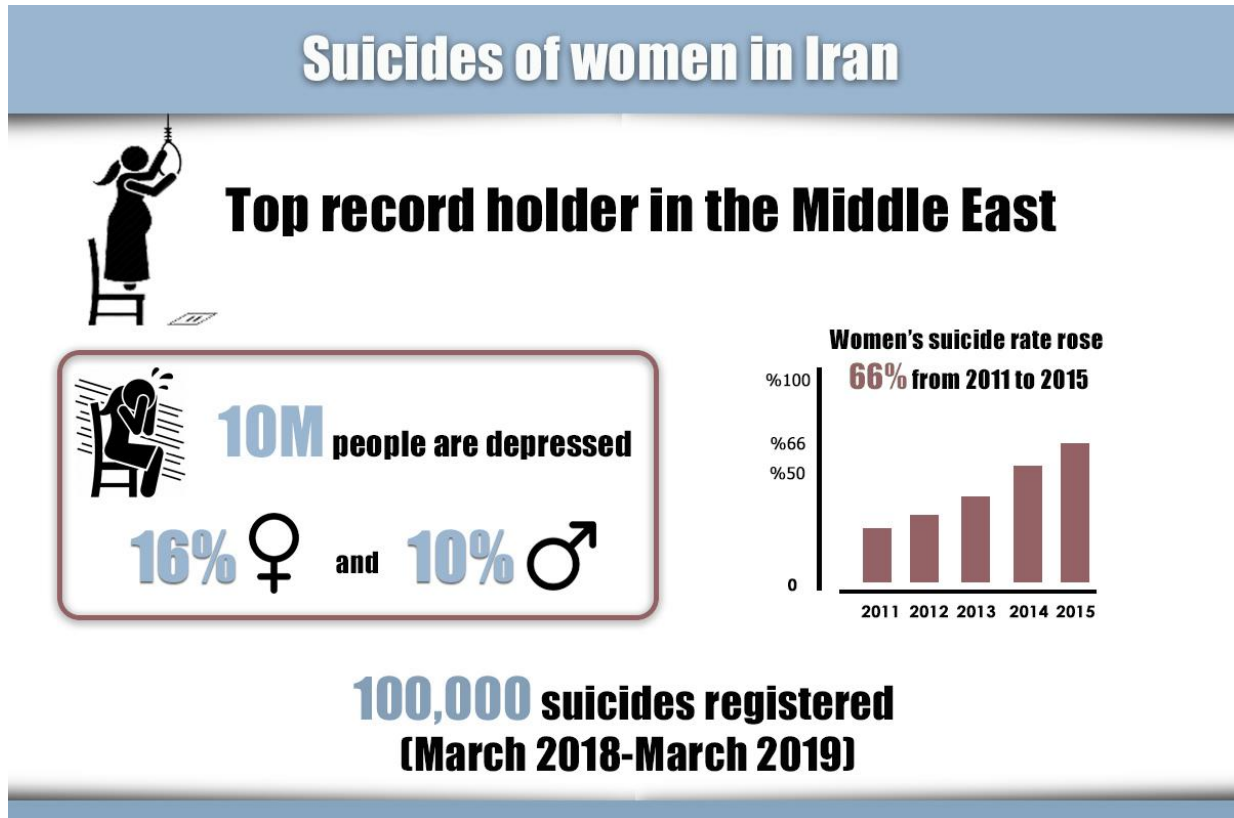
<sup>988</sup> Deutsche Welle, August 19, 2020

<sup>989</sup> Kobra Khazali, head of the Women's Social Council, the state-run Tasnim news agency, August 15, 2020

<sup>990</sup> Arash Mirabzadeh, secretary of the Scientific Association of Psychiatrists, the state-run ILNA News Agency – September 19, 2017

<sup>991</sup> The state-run hamshahrionline.ir, April 9, 2017

- Depression in Iran is increasing exponentially at a rate of 12.5% per year. In Tehran alone, nearly 34% of people suffer from overt depression. On the other hand, unofficial statistics show that 50% of Iranians suffer from depression. What many people have in common is that they are sadder than usual and have feelings of failure and hopelessness about the future.<sup>992</sup>



### Suicides

Under the clerical regime, suicides have been on the rise and Iran stands as the first record holder in the Middle East with regards to suicides among women.

Increasing pressure and restrictions imposed on Iranian women in addition to various obstacles to their employment and social activities, the marriage laws and widespread poverty, are some of the main causes of growing depression and despair among women in Iran, leading to a growing rate of suicides among women.

- Mohammad Mehdi Tondgouyan, deputy youths' affairs in the Ministry of Sports and Youths, for the first time revealed the figures on suicide in Iran on August 19, 2018. He said 4,992 persons had committed suicide in Iran from March 2017 to March 2018, adding, "Two-thirds of those inclined to commit suicide are women and one-third are men."

<sup>992</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, March 13, 2021

- The Greater Tehran Province had the highest rate of suicide in the country. On the average, most suicides occur in the age ranges of 25-34, and 35 and above, but that under-17 suicides have been occurring for several years. According to the latest figures, 212 youngsters under the age of 17 committed suicide.<sup>993</sup>
- The Iranian Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine published the annual statistics on suicide in Iran in September 2018. According to this report, more than 1,365 women committed suicide in the Persian year 1396 (March 2017 - March 2018).
- Maryam Abbassi Nejad, head of the Health Ministry's Plan to Prevent Suicides, said 100,000 suicides were registered in Iran during the Persian Year 1397 (March 2018-March 2019).
- In recent years, a shocking number of young mothers and pregnant women are committing suicide in Iran due to growing poverty among the populace.<sup>994</sup>
- The structure of the social system is frustrating, and this frustration is causing people in the community, especially young people, to commit suicide in order to break free from social norms. Suicide is scientifically directly related to social crises and the rate of suicide.<sup>995</sup>
- A government official in the Forensic Medicine Organization announced that between March 21, 2020, and November 20, 2020, the rate of suicide increased by 4.2 percent, compared to the same period in the previous year.<sup>996</sup>
- According to psychiatrists, to understand the severity of untreated depression in Iranian society, we must increase the number of suicide victims by at least 20 or 30 times to identify the actual number of suicide attempts. Unemployment, high prices, and heavy economic pressure are factors contributing to increased suicides.<sup>997</sup>

## 11. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls?

**Undertake constitutional amendments and/or other appropriate legislative action to ensure the protection and enforcement of the rights of girls and women to, within and through education and throughout the life cycle**

The Iranian regime has not undertaken any constitutional amendment or legislative action to ensure the protection and enforcement of the rights of girls and women to, within and through education and throughout the life cycle.

Principle 30 of the Iranian Constitution stipulates: "The government is obliged to provide free elementary and high school education for all members of the nation and facilitate free higher education for all until the country is self-sufficient." However,

<sup>993</sup> Mohammad Mehdi Tondgouyan, deputy youths' affairs in the Ministry of Sports and Youths, the state-run ILNA news agency, August 19, 2018

<sup>994</sup> [Suicides among women in Iran tops rates in Middle East](#), NCRI Women's Committee website, September 9, 2019

<sup>995</sup> Morteza Pedrian, a sociologist and university professor, the state-run Borna.news, June 27, 2020

<sup>996</sup> the state-run Etemad Daily, February 18, 2021

<sup>997</sup> the state-run Etemad Daily, February 18, 2021

- Education in Iran is neither free nor mandatory.<sup>998</sup>
- Schools and universities are formally asking for tuition from students, which further contributes to school drop outs since more than 80 percent of the populace are living below the poverty line.
- 37 percent of Iranian students drop out of school before getting their diploma, and only 7 percent of high school graduates are admitted to universities.<sup>999</sup>
- More girls are deprived of education compared to boys.<sup>1000</sup>
- The number of girls deprived of education in Iran is three to four time greater than boys.<sup>1001</sup> What is meant by “deprived of education” is any girl or boy between 6 and 18 years of age who is not present in the national education cycle.<sup>1002</sup>
- In many border provinces, high schools cover only 50 percent of girls in high school level. This means that between 40 to 50 percent of girl students remain out of school.<sup>1003</sup>
- Early marriages contribute to girls dropping out of school. However, the bill to increase the age of marriage for girl children in Iran was rejected in December 2018 by the Legal and Judicial Committee of the parliament for containing “religious and social deficiencies” and for contradicting “the teachings of Islam.”<sup>1004</sup>
- They do have elementary schools in rural areas. But since high schools need to have several teachers just for one level to teach various lessons, there is not such a possibility to provide these services to the students living in villages. In other words, it is not considered economical for the ministry!<sup>1005</sup>
- 30 to 40 percent of students dropped out of school due to lack of access to educational facilities.<sup>1006</sup>
- 4,500 students have dropped out of school in this province. The highest number of school dropouts belong to girls.<sup>1007</sup>
- According to the statistics of previous years, about 19% of girls drop out of senior high school, 8% in junior high school and 2% in primary school. One of the problems in the field of girls' education is at high school level which is a disaster.<sup>1008</sup>
- The number of primary school dropouts in 2020 was 210,000. These are the students who were unable to attend classes, in person or virtual.<sup>1009</sup>

<sup>998</sup> Ali Bagherzadeh, deputy Minister of Education and head of the Literacy Movement Organization, the state-run Salamatnews.com, April 25, 2018

<sup>999</sup> The head of the Association of Skills Training Schools, the state-run Fars news agency, November 4, 2017

<sup>1000</sup> Shahindokht Molaverdi, former director of the presidential directorate on Women and Family Affairs, October 2016

<sup>1001</sup> Massoumeh Ebtekar, director of the presidential directorate on Women and Family Affairs, the official IRNA news agency, September 16, 2019

<sup>1002</sup> Massoumeh Ebtekar, director of the presidential directorate on Women and Family Affairs, the state-run ANA news agency, September 17, 2019

<sup>1003</sup> Rezvan Hakimzadeh, the Education Ministry's deputy for elementary schools, The state-run ILNA news agency, September 9, 2017

<sup>1004</sup> Allahyar Malekshahi, chair of the Legal and Judicial Committee of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run Fars news agency, December 23, 2018

<sup>1005</sup> Farahnaz Mina'ipour, the Education Ministry's advisor in women's affairs, the state-run salamatnews.ir, October 6, 2019

<sup>1006</sup> Behrouz Mohebbi, a member of the parliament, the state-run ILNA news agency, April 2, 2021

<sup>1007</sup> The Department of Education of Khuzestan Province, the state-run ILNA news agency, December 16, 2020

<sup>1008</sup> Farahnaz Mina'ii-pour, director general of the Ministry of Education's Women and Family Affairs Office, the official IRNA News Agency, November 23, 2019

<sup>1009</sup> Rezvan Hakimzadeh, Education Ministry's deputy for primary education, the state-run ILNA News Agency, January 13, 2021

- 3.5 million students will not be able to use the virtual educational “SHAD” network in the coming academic year. They do not have the necessary tools for virtual education or are deprived of the Internet.<sup>1010</sup>
- More than 40,000 students have dropped out of school in Razavi Khorasan Province. The number of dropouts in the province has more than doubled compared to last year.<sup>1011</sup>
- The high cost of tablets and smartphones and the financial inability of families to buy them have increased the number of students left out of the “SHAD” educational messengers from 3.5 million to 5 million, and there is no information on their access to television. Groups of students on the outskirts of large cities and rural areas are at serious risk of dropping out because due to lack of access to e-learning, they have virtually no contact with their teachers and classrooms.<sup>1012</sup>
- Although it is said that about 12 thousand billion Tomans of budget is needed to provide the tablets needed by students, but the Parliamentary Integration Commission has approved only 800 billion Tomans of credit for this purpose.<sup>1013</sup>

### **Taken measures to increase girls' access to, retention in and completion of education, technical and vocational education, and training (TVET) and skills development programs.**

The latest estimates put the number of illiterates in Iran around 11 million, i.e. 13 percent of the population, two-thirds of whom are women and girls. The number of absolute illiterates in the country is 8,800,000.<sup>1014</sup>

According to the World Bank, the number of illiterate people in Iran is 11.6 million.<sup>1015</sup>

This shows a 1.5-million increase at least in seven years considering the figure of 9,483,028 in 2011, announced by the National Statistics Center (NSC). Approximately two-thirds of this illiterate population are women and girls.

The growing number of illiterates in Iran is unfortunately a good indication that the ruling regime has not taken any measures to increase girls' access to, retention in and completion of education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and skills development programs.

- There are more than 15 million school-age children and youths in Iran, but the student population is only 13 million. This means that at least 2 million Iranian students, including a large number of girls, have not been able to go to school and are deprived of the basic education.<sup>1016</sup>
- A total of 4.23 percent of students dropped out of school in 2017-2018 academic year. Girl students constituted 4.17 percent of it, meaning that there is a whopping gap between girls' and boys' dropouts. Girls are more vulnerable relative to boys.<sup>1017</sup>

<sup>1010</sup> The state-run Tejaratnews.com, October 14, 2020

<sup>1011</sup> Director General of Education of Razavi Khorasan, the official IRNA news agency, April 14, 2021

<sup>1012</sup> The state-run rouydad24.com, February 2, 2021

<sup>1013</sup> The state-run rouydad24.com, February 2, 2021

<sup>1014</sup> The state-run salamatnews.com, September 26, 2018

<sup>1015</sup> Radio Farda, April 13, 2019

<sup>1016</sup> The state-run salamatnews.com, September 26, 2018

<sup>1017</sup> Abbas Soltanian, deputy for mid-level education in the Ministry of Education, the state-run ILNA news agency, June 25, 2018

- In some Iranian provinces, the percentage of illiteracy is over 30 percent and a considerable number of children under 17 do not have the opportunity to continue their education.
- Drop-out of girls older than 6 years of age is widespread in the provinces of Sistan and Baluchestan, Khuzestan, Western Azerbaijan, and Eastern Azerbaijan, comprising the country's highest rates of illiteracy.<sup>1018</sup>
- More than 98 percent of girls in Kurdish villages and other parts of Iran drop out of school and stay home after finishing elementary education without having any professional or artistic plans or activities.
- Many rural families bring their daughters out of school because they do not afford to pay for their tuition.<sup>1019</sup>
- In November 2017, all the girl students in the Zilalii region in Boyer Ahmad, had to quit their school because there was no separate school for girls and their families did not afford to pay for their transportation to a segregated school in another place.<sup>1020</sup>
- Shortage of resources leads to Iran's nomad students dropping out of school. Between 46 to 50 percent of nomad students drop out of school after finishing their elementary education. Factors such as living in distant places, severe cold, and lack of transportation to school, make education conditions extremely difficult for nomad girls especially in Sistan and Baluchestan Province (southeastern Iran) and in some instances lead to the students dropping out of school.<sup>1021</sup>
- At least 25,000 school-aged children in Tehran, are working instead of attending school.<sup>1022</sup>

### **Strengthened educational curricula to increase gender-responsiveness and eliminate bias, at all levels of education**

Gender-based bias is inherent to the educational system in Iran and is promoted by the government and religious authorities. Iranian leaders and officials opposed signing the Education 2030 Framework of Action (SDG4) because it seeks gender equality and equal opportunities for girls and future women of Iran.<sup>1023</sup>

- Women are systematically deprived of studying in at least 77 fields of study and accordingly deprived of working in the related fields.<sup>1024</sup>
- Not only are there all-women universities, banning young women from enrolling in certain fields, but there were even attempts by some officials to segregate kindergartens and pre-schools,<sup>1025</sup> and separate textbooks for grade schoolgirls and boys.<sup>1026</sup>

<sup>1018</sup> The state-run Khabaronline.ir, November 18, 2015

<sup>1019</sup> The state-run IRNA news agency, December 25, 2016

<sup>1020</sup> The state-run Tnews website, November 12, 2017

<sup>1021</sup> Mohammad Reza Seifi, director of the Office of Nomads' Education, the state-run Mizan news agency, January 28, 2018

<sup>1022</sup> Director-general of Tehran's Department of Education, the state-run ANA news agency, October 2015

<sup>1023</sup> [Education 2030 Framework of Action and Iranian officials' hysteric reactions to it](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, July 2017

<sup>1024</sup> [Countless obstacles before women's education and employment](#), Special Report, February 2016, website of the NCRI Women's Committee, women.ncr-iran.org



- A girl named Aida, ranked eighth in the country, was not admitted for a master's degree in medical physiology at the University of Tehran, but a boy, ranked thirteenth got admitted to Tehran University. Because Aida was a girl. In 2020, women suffered more than ever from gender quotas in the selection of university nominees, and their voices of protest found their way to the media outlets. Since the 2000s, the admission quota for women have been reduced or eliminated for in some fields of study. Women's quota in technical majors such as mining or mechanical engineering is zero. 58% of the participants in the 2020 nationwide college entrance exam were women, according to statistics published by the Evaluation Organization. 53.6% of those who passed the entrance exam are also girls.<sup>1027</sup>
- In the 2020 nationwide college entrance exam, the admission capacity for girls was 120. One of the girls, Sarah, said: "How is it possible for a boy with a rank of 3,000 to study physiotherapy but I fail?"<sup>1028</sup>
- More than half of the participants in the 2020 nationwide college entrance exam were girls. But this superiority has not affected (admission to) the fields allocated just to men. There are many examples of women being removed from the educational scene. The most controversial issue that caused a stir in May 2020 was the requirement for young women to have the husband's permission to attend school and continue their education. Page 33 of the Dental Assistant Admission Test Guide indicates a new obligation making it imperative for women to have the husband's consent to take the course even after passing the admission test.<sup>1029</sup> Appendix 3-6 of the same guide contained a pledge form for married women who pass the admission test. According to this pledge, the husband's consent was required for his wife to be able to serve at any place designated by the Ministry of Health after the end of the training course.
- Despite having a better rank, they have not been accepted in their favorite fields. A large group of women, despite their ability and talent, had to simply give up their ambitions in education and employment due to lack of adequate financial resources and were forced to get married, become a housewife and have children.<sup>1030</sup>

Such cases, along with part-time employment and early retirement on the one hand, and the public's insistence on promoting motherhood and its priority over a woman's personal life and emphasizing traditional women's roles, have exacerbated instances of gender discrimination in education, economy and politics.

Mina Jafari, a lawyer, asserts: "A woman is deprived of many of her basic rights as soon as she gets married. When you talk about the husband's consent for a woman to take a medical course, you are in fact talking about part of the country's civil law which introduces the man as the head of the family, because he used to be in charge of the house. Now that living styles have changed

<sup>1025</sup> Habibollah John-Nessari, acting commander of the State Security Force Special Units, the state-run Aftabnews.ir - October 2, 2019: "Why is it that today, in the kindergartens of the capital, our mothers and sisters put the hand of a 5-year-old girl in the hand of a boy, and under the excuse of having a party, they play music and have the kids dance together? We must know that today the enemy has targeted our religion."

<sup>1026</sup> Habibollah John-Nessari, acting commander of the State Security Force Special Units, the state-run Aftabnews.ir – October 2, 2019

<sup>1027</sup> The state-run Etemadonline.com, November 8, 2020

<sup>1028</sup> The state-run Khabaronline.ir, November 3, 2020

<sup>1029</sup> The state-run Etemadonline.com, August 8, 2020

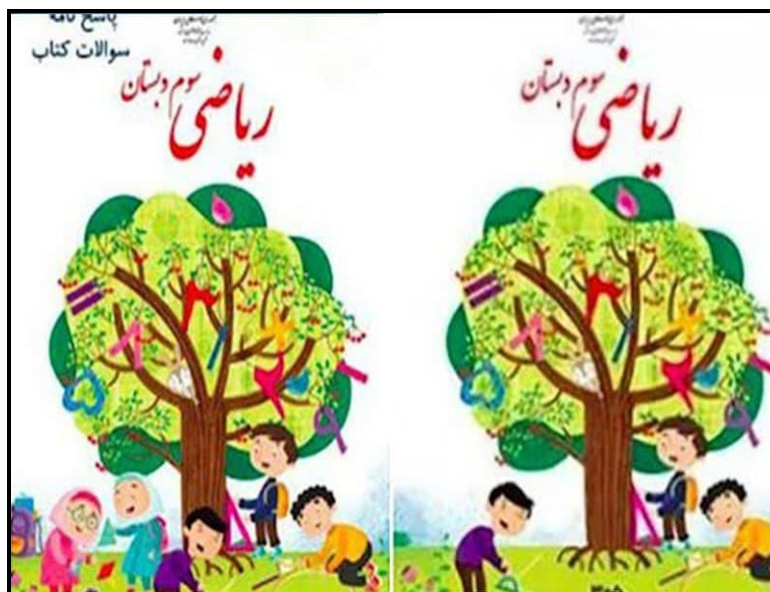
<sup>1030</sup> Persian Independent website, November 11, 2020

and as a matter of fact, in many families, most of the economic burden is on women, the role of men has not changed in the text of the law."<sup>1031</sup>

- At Allameh University's School of Literature, Foreign Languages, and Theology, the number of girls is much higher than that of boys, but the space of the self-service cafe for girls is small compared to their population. The number of seats is less than the number of students. Girls at Allameh University do not have the right to eat anything if they are hungry after 5 p.m., because the girls' buffet closes at 5 p.m. and the men's buffet does not sell anything to women. If the girls sit in the boys' buffet, they will be summoned to the disciplinary committee. The girls of this university say that gender segregation in public spaces in the university can lead to more serious segregation and discrimination. In October, at least 15 female students were summoned to the disciplinary committee on the grounds of not observing the mandatory veil. In this university, the entrance of men and women is separated.<sup>1032</sup>

**Revised and developed non-stereotypical educational curricula, textbooks and teaching materials to eliminate traditional gender stereotypes, address gender-based violence against women and girls**

- 70 percent of the textbooks in the elementary schools in Iran are male-oriented including the images, names, roles, tools, etc.<sup>1033</sup>
- Comparative pictures from the third grade math textbook (picture below), published in 2019 and 2020, show that the girls have been removed from the cover of the book. Nasim Bahari, the illustrator of the book's cover, wrote on her Instagram page: I drew this design for the third grade math textbook a few years ago. The original design was completely censored and one of the girls was not allowed to be on the tree! Officials from the Ministry of Education even said somewhere that "it looks like one of the girls on the cover is walking towards one of the boys to hug him," so "correct the design."<sup>1034</sup>



<sup>1031</sup> The state-run Etemadonline.com, May 11, 2020

<sup>1032</sup> The state-run Dideban website, March 21, 2020

<sup>1033</sup> Seyed Javad Hosseini, caretaker Minister of Education, the state-run ISNA news agency, July 31, 2019

<sup>1034</sup> The state-run HamshahriOnline.ir, September 10, 2020

- There is no law preventing teaching of violence in children's books. As it can be seen in the picture below, a shepherd has hanged the dog protecting the herd for his complicity with the wolf. In another picture, the mice have handcuffed and hanged a cat. Such pictures teach and promote use of violence, animal abuse and suicide.<sup>1035</sup>



As such, there are no grounds for revising or developing non-stereotypical educational curricula, textbooks, and teaching materials to eliminate traditional gender stereotypes, address gender-based violence against women and girls.

#### Provided gender equality and human rights training for teachers and other education professionals

The Iranian regime considers gender equality and human rights as western ideas. As a result, they have never attempted and would never do so to provide the opportunity for teaching gender equality and human rights at schools or train the teachers and other education professionals in this regard.

#### Integrated age-appropriate education on women's human rights, gender equality and peace education into school curricula at all levels

The following example clearly shows what the regime has done towards integrating women's human rights, gender equality and peace education into school curricula at all levels:

- In the months leading to the Iranian regime's presidential elections in spring 2017, Education 2030 document turned into an issue of wrangling among the regime's internal

<sup>1035</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, May 24, 2016

factions. Finally, on June 13, 2017, the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution (SCCR) meeting presided by the mullahs' president Hassan Rouhani decided to stop implementation of the agenda in education and instead consider the Fundamental Reform Document of Education (FRDE) adopted under Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in December 2011, as the benchmark for all educational affairs in the country.

- In a meeting with teachers on May 7, 2017, Khamenei blasted the Agenda 2030 and said, "The UNESCO 2030 education agenda and the like are not agendas that the Islamic Republic of Iran should have to surrender and submit to."<sup>1036</sup>
- The reason for such opposition to the UN Agenda 2030 on education was vividly expressed in an article published by the state-run Tasnim news agency which wrote:
- "In the (Education) 2030 Framework for Action, there are references to terms such as global citizenship and gender equality... the adoption and implementation of this document would transform national education in many ways. Among them, one can point to the omission of sexual stereotypes, teaching of sex education to children, and omission of some Quranic concepts and values from textbooks to promote peace and non-violence."<sup>1037</sup>
- Not only the Fundamental Reform Document of Education (FRDE) devised and implemented by Iranian regime does not attempt to eliminate inequalities, create a culture of tolerance, or promote peace and non-violence, it seeks to preserve and enhance the fundamentalist views of the ruling regime, promoting war, violence and terrorism as well as gender, religious and ethnic discriminations.<sup>1038</sup>
- Under the pretext of "modesty," the FRDE seeks to enforce the veil, gender segregation and regulations against women by frequently repeating this term in its articles.<sup>1039</sup>

**Promoted safe, harassment-free and inclusive educational environments for women and girls, including use of technology and internet**

#### **Inclusive educational environments for women and girls**

- In some mixed-gender schools or girls' schools with male teachers, schoolgirls are deprived of physical education. In deprived regions, girls play in a corner during the physical education hour.<sup>1040</sup>
- Girls do not have access to secondary educational centers. This is while the secondary educational centers like libraries, cultural centers, and the centers for the education of children and youths have been designed for use by both sexes.<sup>1041</sup>

<sup>1036</sup> Khamenei.ir website, May 7, 2017

<sup>1037</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, May 7, 2017

<sup>1038</sup> [Education 2030 Framework for Action \(SDG4\) and Iranian officials' hysteric reactions to it](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, Special Report, June 2017

<sup>1039</sup> [Education 2030 Framework for Action \(SDG4\) and Iranian officials' hysteric reactions to it](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, Special Report, June 2017

<sup>1040</sup> Minister of Education Mohammad Bat'haii, the state-run ISNA news agency, September 17, 2017

<sup>1041</sup> Minister of Education Mohammad Bat'haii, the state-run ISNA news agency, September 17, 2017

## Increased access to skills and training in new and emerging fields, especially STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and digital fluency and literacy

Access to skills and training in new and emerging fields, especially STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and digital fluency and literacy has not increased in any way. On the contrary, there have been numerous reports indicating restriction of women's access to basic education and existing fields, along with demands for tuition which deprive students from low-income families from continuing their education.

### Restriction of education fields for women

- The efforts by the Iranian regime to eliminate women from higher education were intensified in 2012, when women were officially banned from studying in 77 fields of study.<sup>1042</sup>
- Women were deprived of most of mathematical and technical sciences with 36 fields.
- In 2013, on the order of the Minister of Education, gender segregation was intensified and the number of universities with only male or female students increased to 29.<sup>1043</sup>
- In 2014, some 47 universities rejected female students in various fields. Gender-based quotas strongly favored male students. The number of gender-based majors reached 215, as a result of government policies.<sup>1044</sup>
- In 2018, about 60 percent of those who enrolled for the national university entrance exam were female. In the same year's master's test, about 51 percent of volunteers were men and 49 percent women, and in the doctoral exam, about 57 percent were male and only 43 percent women.<sup>1045</sup>

### Failure to provide access to skills and training

Under the clerical rule, the quality of education has deteriorated, and students constantly protest the low quality of education and lack of labs and equipment to advance their studies. Instead of attending to the labs and equipment, university authorities spend their time, energy and funds on monitoring the outfits and head covering of female students.

- Girl students of the University of Qom expressed their protest on October 18, 2016, against discriminations and deprivations in the university policies.<sup>1046</sup>
- They said all the educational accommodations at the Technical School of Massoumiyeh are exclusively at the disposal of male students and even on special occasions, the school's main educational services are granted to male students. They also complained of the extremely low quality of education at the Technical School.
- On April 23, 2018, young women participated in an act of protest at the College of Environment in Karaj, to protest transformation of the college into a training center for environmental protection guards.<sup>1047</sup>

<sup>1042</sup> The state-run Tabnak website, August 9, 2012; the state-run khabaronline website, August 7, 2012

<sup>1043</sup> The state-run khabaronline website, August 14, 2012; the state-run Tasnim news agency, April 16, 2013

<sup>1044</sup> Daneshjoonews.com and the state-run Tabnak website, August 6, 2014

<sup>1045</sup> The state-run Tabnak.ir, August 2, 2018

<sup>1046</sup> [Monthly report](#) of the NCRI Women's Committee, October 2016

<sup>1047</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency – April 22, 2018



- Students of Jondishapur School of Dentistry in Ahvaz (southwestern Iran) held a protest rally on September 26, 2017 against lack of educational space.
- Girl students of the Medical School of Azad University in Shahrood (northeastern Iran) refused to attend their exam on July 24, 2017 and protested against bad educational conditions.
- Iranian students have been also protesting universities' demand for tuition which deprives students from low-income families from continuing their education.
- Students of Tehran's Allameh Tabataba'i University staged a protest on April 29, 2018 and spoke out against the policy of Rouhani's government to obtain tuitions from college students. They held placards which read, "No to college tuitions", "Allameh U is an economic firm", etc.
- Masters students of the University of Urmia held a three-day protest, February 14-17, 2018, against the policy of demanding tuition from students.
- Students of Tehran's University of Art also held a protest on February 17, 2018, against the policy of receiving tuition from students.
- On May 9, 2018, the students of Urmia University spread empty table cloths on the ground in protest to a plan for charging students for course units.

**Ensured access to safe water and sanitation services and facilitated menstrual hygiene management, especially in schools and other education/training settings**

- Three young girls drowned while drinking water from a *Hootag* (water ditch). The tragic incident took place in Chabahar, in the deprived Sistan and Baluchestan Province, on May 29, 2019.<sup>1048</sup> In the absence of pipelines and even tankers, people in this region dig ditches to collect rain as a water reservoir for both humans and animals. Monireh Khedmati, Maryam Khedmati and Sierra Delshab were studying in the second and third grade.
- In the rural areas, most girls drop out of school before reaching the age of menstruation.

**Strengthened measures to prevent adolescent pregnancies and to enable adolescent girls to continue their education in the case of pregnancy and/or motherhood**

Adolescent pregnancies out of marriage are considered a taboo under the prevalent culture in Iran. So, if a teenage girl gets pregnant out of marriage, it is considered the end of life for her. If not killed by her brother or father, she would be rejected by her family and community, let alone continuing her education. This is a cultural issue which has been further promoted and strengthened under the ruling clerical regime under the pretext of Islam.

Likewise, sex education and measures to prevent adolescent pregnancies are not applicable.

But adolescent and teenage pregnancies are widespread due to large number of early marriages which are the main cause of girls' leaving school and discontinuing their education.

According to article 1210, the age of maturity for a girl is 9 lunar years and for a boy 15 lunar years. In addition, article 1041 of the Civil Code sanctions marriage of girl children under 13 years of age with the consent of father.

<sup>1048</sup> The official IRNA news agency, May 29, 2019



The number of early marriages of girl children in Iran has seen a delirious rise in recent years.

- Ali Kazemi, advisor for the legal deputy of the Judiciary Branch, announced on March 4, 2019, that in the course of just one year (March 2018-March 2019), some 500,000 to 600,000 child marriages had taken place in Iran.<sup>1049</sup>
- Zahra Kasaii-pour, the general director of women and family affairs in the Markazi Province, announced that 109 girls under the age of 15 had got married in this Province in the six-month span from April to August 2020. She said that during the same period, 109 young women under the age of 18 had become pregnant.<sup>1050</sup> Kasaii-pour added, "Since 2017 up until last year (2019), some 1,157 girls under 15 years got married. From 2016 until 2019, there were 1,055 under-18 pregnancies."
- According to the quarterly report of the National Statics Center of Iran (NSC), more than 7,000 girls under 14 years of age have got married in Iran from April to June 2020. The figure published by the NCS on the number of young women married between 10 and 14 years of age was exactly 7,323. During the same period, the marriage of one girl under 10 years had also been registered.<sup>1051</sup>
- If schools find out that a girl has got married, they expel her from school and she can only continue her education in night classes with adults.<sup>1052</sup>

### Ensure women's participation in management of educational institutions

Principally, women's participation is not ensured in any field including management, economy and politics. However,

- In 2016, a government official acknowledged that 2 million girls had graduated from Iran's universities in the past 20 years, comprising over 60 percent of college graduates, but unemployment rate among women had increased.<sup>1053</sup>
- Likewise, the advisor to the Minister of Science, Research and Technology in women's affairs, said only 16% of the faculty members of universities are women despite 40% of Ph.D. graduates being females.<sup>1054</sup>
- According to Nahid Khodakarami, a member of Tehran city council %60 of students passed the universities entrance exams in Iran and most of the university graduates are women, but there is not even a single female minister in the cabinet.<sup>1055</sup>
- Among 123 university presidents in Iran, there are only 2 women at this position. Only 1.62% of the university presidents are women.
- Among 320 faculties of universities that declared their managers on their official websites, 314 are men and 6 are women that is only 1.87% share for women.

<sup>1049</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, March 5, 2019

<sup>1050</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency – November 24, 2020

<sup>1051</sup> The NCS report – November 30, 2020

<sup>1052</sup> The state-run Taghrib news agency, December 17, 2018

<sup>1053</sup> Sussan Bastani, deputy for strategic studies in Rouhani's presidential directorate for Women and Family Affairs, interview with the state-run ISNA news agency, February 13, 2016

<sup>1054</sup> Elaheh Hejazi, advisor to the Minister of Science and Higher Education in women's affairs, the state-run ANA news agency, January 29, 2017

<sup>1055</sup> The state-run hamshahrionline.ir, December 27, 2020

- According to the posted information about professors on Rokh Nama website, e.g. for Tehran University there are only 30 women among 469 professors in various majors, which shows a share of 6.4% for women at these positions.<sup>1056</sup>
- Although not all university faculty professors are accessible, the following examples provides an overview on this issue. There are 50 professors in the faculty of law and political science in the same university, where women occupy only 3 seats, i.e. 6%.<sup>1057</sup>
- Amir Kabir polytechnic University faculty includes 644 individuals, where women occupy only 38 seats which is equal to 5.9% share for women.
- However, given that most technical, engineering, and military disciplines are banned for women, thus, this figure sharply drops in specific Universities that are devoted to these majors. Therefore, 33% women participation in faculty in different universities as the minister claims is dubious. In another example, the scientific board in Abadan Oil Industry University contains 74 members, 3 of whom are women, which is almost 4% share for women.<sup>1058</sup>
- Another example is that the 64 faculty members of the University of Science of Technology in the field of electronics, bioelectronics, power, control, and telecommunication are all men.
- The reference website for Universities introduces 1,568 men and 64 women as the important scientific people, women constitute a 4% share in this group.

## Other

### The education system in Iran is sick

Seyyed Mohammad Javad Abtahi, member of the Education and Research Committee of the mullahs' parliament, declared on September 25, 2018, that the number of illiterates in Iran had reached 11 million, a figure which indicates "numerous flaws in the country's educational system." Abtahi said, "We should be ashamed that the average age of social crimes has dropped to 11 or 12." **"There is no doubt that the educational system in Iran is sick and is threading away from standard education,"** he added.<sup>1059</sup>

### Privatization of education is the cause of this situation

During the school year, many videos were released of children climbing hills to access the Internet; children in the middle of the barren desert facing the camera asking the authorities to think about them. What will this educational injustice bring to this generation?

The issue of justice in education in Iran has been around for years. Educational conditions were already difficult before the Covid-19 pandemic. From studying in trailers in the south and west of the country, to the lack of a suitable teacher for disadvantaged areas, and the lack of basic facilities in small schools such as blackboards or even toilets. Now, the lack of access to the equipment needed for virtual education has been added to the existing problems. And it's taking its toll.

<sup>1056</sup> Profile- A comprehensive picture of Tehran University's Scientific Activities, [profile.ut.ac.ir](http://profile.ut.ac.ir)

<sup>1057</sup> Tehran University's School of Political Law, profile of the faculty, [lawpol.ut.ac.ir](http://lawpol.ut.ac.ir)

<sup>1058</sup> Website of the Petroleum University of Technology, [put.ac.ir](http://put.ac.ir)

<sup>1059</sup> The state-run [salamatnews.com](http://salamatnews.com), September 26, 2018

It cannot be said with certainty that the current situation has affected only the students of the underprivileged areas, because financial poverty is no longer limited to the deprived areas. It could be said that this situation is the product of change in the government's approach and **privatization of education**.<sup>1060</sup>

### The government is refusing its constitutional responsibility

During the pandemic, education has faced severe problems and difficulties, especially in small and remote cities. The society's lower classes do not have the possibility to use the virtual education and classes.

The pandemic has drastically reduced the already low quality of education. Now that everything has become virtualized during the pandemic, students do not afford to have access to the internet and use many of its tools. Overall, people who do not have the money to pay for the internet and its facilities are practically deprived of education.

It is clear that public education services are constitutionally the responsibility of the government. The Iranian government, however, has been refusing to take control of the country's education, medical care, and housing.

The president says every student costs 4 million Tomans for the government and 1 million for the private sector, that is, the government is officially a business and individuals are seen as a car or a property.<sup>1061</sup>

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<sup>1060</sup> The state-run [asriran.com](http://asriran.com), February 20, 2020

<sup>1061</sup> Seyyed Majid Hosseini, a Tehran University professor, the state-run [tahlilbazaar.com](http://tahlilbazaar.com), November 24, 2020





## FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE, STIGMA AND STEREOTYPES

### 12. In the last five years, which forms of violence against women and girls has your country prioritized for action?

The ruling regime in Iran has no priority for dealing with violence against women. As a matter of fact, they have been foot dragging for nearly a decade in the adoption of the bill on violence against women. On September 17, 2019 after 8 years from introduction of the bill they finally announced that the bill was approved by the Judiciary. But the bill has not yet been adopted by the parliament as a law as of June 2021.<sup>1062</sup>

As a result, violence against women has spread and intensified without being criminalized, to the extent that the regime's experts and officials have had to acknowledge the gravity of the situation. One of the regime's experts, Mohammad Reza Mahboubfar, acknowledged in November 2020, that the rate of domestic violence against women in Iran is the world's highest.<sup>1063</sup>

Following are some the statements and remarks by the regime's officials and experts.

- Iran has one of the highest statistics on violence against women.<sup>1064</sup>
- Domestic violence against women is pervasive in society. Clearly, we see many forms of violence against women in society.<sup>1065</sup>
- Today, we see that violence (against women) has become institutionalized.<sup>1066</sup>
- Domestic violence against women in Iran saw a 20% rise from March 2017 to March 2018.<sup>1067</sup>
- 66 per cent of Iranian women experience domestic violence in their lifetime.<sup>1068</sup>  
(Although the given figure is double the world average of one-in-every-three women (or 33%), it must be considered a blatant mitigation of the reality.)

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<sup>1062</sup> The state-run fa.Shafaqna.com, May 23, 2021

<sup>1063</sup> The state-run Jahanasanat.ir, November 19, 2020

<sup>1064</sup> VAW expert Parastoo Sarmadi, the state-run ILNA news agency, September 18, 2018

<sup>1065</sup> Parvaneh Salahshouri, head of women's faction in the mullahs' parliament, the state-run IRNA news agency, November 25, 2017

<sup>1066</sup> Parvaneh Salahshouri, member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run ILNA news agency, September 18, 2018

<sup>1067</sup> Reza Jafari, head of the Social Emergencies, interview with the official IRNA news agency, July 18, 2018

<sup>1068</sup> Fatemeh Ghassempour, head of the Research Center on Women and Family in Tehran, the state-run ISNA news agency, November 16, 2018

- After road accidents and street fights, the main reason for women referring to the Coroner's Office in Tehran is being battered by their husbands.<sup>1069</sup>
- Most victims of domestic violence are women between 20 and 35 years of age.<sup>1070</sup>
- In a shocking revelation, Mohammad Reza Mahboubfar stressed, "Less than three months since the beginning of the Persian year 1399 (i.e., from April to June 2020), the statistics on violence in the country has exceeded the total of all the past years."<sup>1071</sup>
- Afsaneh Mirzaii, head of the Social Emergencies of the Welfare Organization in Isfahan Province: Most reports in 2020 concerned domestic violence. Domestic violence against women had a considerable rise and child abuse increased 27%. Since the lockdown and the ensuing economic problems, many businesses have not been active. This has contributed to disputes within families and an increase in violence.<sup>1072</sup>

### Violence perpetrated by state actors

Of course, when the regime's experts and officials speak about violence against women, they focus on domestic violence. While in Iran, the main forms of violence against women are carried out by state agents and sponsored by the state.

### Enforcing the mandatory *Hijab*

The most common and widespread form of violence against women in Iran is the state-sponsored measures to force Iranian women to observe their *Hijab*. A female MP once acknowledged that there are long-lasting psychological consequences for women who are dealt with by the Guidance Patrols.

Parvaneh Salahshouri told a parliamentary session, "The anxiety and fear caused by the Guidance Patrol affects some young women and girls for long years, leaving undesirable psychological consequences. As an MP, I have seen cases when the girl's cover was not that bad but such unprincipled approaches have caused psychological problems for the person which has led to other ailments."<sup>1073</sup>

- A report by the Office of Cultural Studies of the Research Center of the mullahs' parliament (Majlis), published 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.<sup>1074</sup>
- The report confirms that Iranian women observe the veil only through coercion and harsh restrictions.<sup>1075</sup>

<sup>1069</sup> Tehran's forensic officials, January 2017

<sup>1070</sup> Ali Hadizadegan, head of the Coroner's Office of Mashhad, The state-run Fars news agency, November 23, 2017

<sup>1071</sup> The state-run Jahanesanat.ir, November 19, 2020

<sup>1072</sup> The state-run IMNA news agency, May 1, 2021

<sup>1073</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, November 28, 2017

<sup>1074</sup> The official website of the clerical regime's parliament, ICANA.com, July 2018

<sup>1075</sup> [The compulsory veil in Iran – regime admits most women defy](#), website of NCRI Women's Committee, July 31, 2018



## Iran holds the world record in domestic violence against women



At least 8 family murders take place every day. The previous average of 450 honor killings per year is estimated to have surpassed 2,500 in 2020. Violence against women is not criminalized in Iran

## Violence against Women is institutionalized in Iran



**%66 of Iranian women experience domestic violence**

**Most victims are between 20 and 35**

**100 marriages of under-15 girls are registered every 24 hours**

**Every year 15 women are executed**

- The Iranian regime spends exorbitant sums of money to pay for 27 government and state agencies as well as 301 associations in charge of enforcing the veil and monitoring Iranian women's observance of the mandatory *Hijab* or veil.<sup>1076</sup>
- One of the regime's top officials revealed that the Assembly to Promote Virtue and Forbid Evil has 30,000 members in 26 provinces who send their reports every six months directly to the supreme leader.<sup>1077</sup>
- The Commander of the State Security Force (SSF), Hossein Ashtari, announced in September 2016 that, "Some 2,000 women who wear improper clothing are arrested every day in Tehran and some other provinces."<sup>1078</sup>

Obviously, these arrests are not peaceful. The video clips substantiating violent treatment of women on the streets by guidance patrols and SSF agents, bring to life the horror Iranian women experience and watch for in every moment of their lives. Following are just a few examples which documented

<sup>1076</sup> [A network of 27 state agencies suppresses Iranian women by enforcing the mandatory Hijab](#), documents, NCRI Women's Committee website, July 9, 2020

<sup>1077</sup> Mostafa Izadi, one of Khamenei's deputies in the General Staff of the Armed Forces, the official IRNA news agency, September 30, 2019

<sup>1078</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, September 29, 2016

by films. In thousands of other cases every day, the State Security forces and vice patrols brutalize women out of the public eye.

- Maryam Shariatmadari, 32, a student of Computer Sciences at Tehran's Amir Kabir University, was pushed off a telecoms box by a State Security Force officer and hurt in the knee on February 23, 2018, when she was protesting mandatory *Hijab* by removing her shawl.
- On April 18, 2018, at least four SSF Guidance Patrols attacked four young women in a park, beating and shoving them around for improper veiling. One of the young women who had a heart condition went unconscious as a result of the beatings.<sup>1079</sup>
  - In response to the public outrage, Hossein Rahimi, Tehran's Chief of Police, declared, "We powerfully defend our agents."
  - On April 30, 2018, SSF Commander Hossein Ashtari announced that the officer involved had been granted a plaque and honored at the SSF command headquarters.
  - Finally, in November, the Prosecutor of the Armed Forces' Judiciary Organization turned down the complaint filed by two of the victims, saying their evidence for incriminating the officers was insufficient.
- Another case was reported on June 22, 2019, when a young woman, 15, was violently arrested by SSF plainclothes agents in a park in Tehran for not observing the veil during a water-gun game with her friends.<sup>1080</sup>
- In late October 2019, a young woman walking without the veil in a park in Shahr-e Ray was brutalized by an SSF agent. The video clip of this incident was posted on the internet.<sup>1081</sup>
- Security forces arrested a woman in Najafabad. A videotape showing a woman riding a bicycle without covering her hair circulated in the social media on October 19, 2020. The Governor of Najafabad said they had also identified and arrested the persons who filmed and disseminated the video.<sup>1082</sup>

<sup>1079</sup> [Young woman badly brutalized in Tehran by Guidance Patrols](#), website of NCRI Women's Committee, April 21, 2018

<sup>1080</sup> [Violent arrest of a young woman by plainclothes agents causes outrage](#), website of NCRI Women's Committee, June 26, 2019; The state-run Fars news agency, June 24, 2019

<sup>1081</sup> [Security Force beats up young woman walking without the compulsory veil](#), website of NCRI Women's Committee, October 30, 2019

<sup>1082</sup> The state-run Fars news agency, October 20, 2020



### Campaigns to enforce the mandatory Hijab

In the past couple of years, the clerical regime's State Security Force has implemented four Nazer (Observers) plans to monitor women's behavior in their cars, in shopping centers and even in apartment complexes and report those who do not properly observe the veil. During these campaigns, thousands of security forces take to the streets to harass and arrest Iranian women and girls under the pretext of "moral security" and dealing with "improper veiling."

- Acting SSF commander Qassem Rezai announced: "The State Security Force has planned and executed four Hijab and Chastity plans. In Nazer 1 Plan, the SSF deals with individuals who violate the veiling code in their cars. The Nazer 2 Plan deals with women who remove their veil or do not properly observe it in shopping malls and major stores. Nazer 3 and 4 Plans focus on women who do not observe the veil in recreation areas, walks and in the cyber space."<sup>1083</sup>
- Nazer 4 Plan, the latest of the four Hijab campaigns, expanded the control of the mullahs' Cyber Police (FATA). They monitor social media accounts on modelling, photography and art.<sup>1084</sup>

<sup>1083</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, September 20, 2020

<sup>1084</sup> [Women arrested for removing Hijab in photos posted on social media](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, June 20, 2020

- The Deputy Public Prosecutor of Razavi Khorasan, Ghanbari Rad, announced that a significant number of women had been identified, summoned, and arrested in the province because they had “removed their hijab on social media.” According to Ghanbari Rad, some of the women were sent to prison with criminal security orders waiting for their sentences; others were released on bail.<sup>1085</sup>
- The State Security Force confiscates the national identity cards of women whom they deem as “improperly veiled.” Without the national identity card, these women are deprived of all social services.
- Drivers who receive text messages saying, “Car owner! Someone dropped her veil in your car,” must immediately report to one of the centers of the Security Police. It makes no difference in which city you are when you receive the text, and if the breach took place in another city. The owner and the person who drives the car must refer to a Security Police Center and if the removal of the veil was verified, they must sign written pledges.<sup>1086</sup>
- The clerical regime has set up a garrison in Qom to organize and coordinate all members of the Bassij force who are involved in “promoting virtue and forbidding evil.”<sup>1087</sup>
- Tehran’s Chief of Police, Hossein Rahimi, brandished a new threat against Iranian women: “The State Security Force (police) in Tehran has received a new mandate to deal with motorcyclists who break the rules.”<sup>1088</sup>

## Death penalty

Iran is the only country in the world that executes so many women.

- As of June 2021, 118 women have been executed during Rouhani’s tenure since August 2013.<sup>1089</sup> This is an average of 15 Iranian women executed every year.<sup>1090</sup>
- The majority of the women executed are themselves victims of domestic violence and discriminatory family laws. Many act in self-defense against mistreatment by their husbands and a system that miserably fails to protect them.<sup>1091</sup>
- The death sentences are issued at the end of unfair, closed-door trials coupled with torture to force prisoners into making confessions.
- In a letter published on July 27, 2019, political prisoner Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee, addressed the issue of women convicted of murder and sentenced to death: “In meeting women convicted of murder, I learned that a large percentage of them had murdered their husbands ---instantly or based on a pre-meditated plan—after years of being humiliated, insulted, battered and even tortured by them and because of being deprived of their right to divorce. Although, they consider themselves criminals but are convinced that if any of their repeated appeals for divorce had been granted, they would not have committed such a crime.”<sup>1092</sup>

<sup>1085</sup> The official IRNA news agency, June 15, 2020

<sup>1086</sup> The state-run Mashreqnews.ir, June 10, 2020

<sup>1087</sup> The state-run Young Journalists’ Club, November 17, 2020

<sup>1088</sup> The state-run Aftabnews.ir, June 14, 2020

<sup>1089</sup> [List of women executed under Rouhani](#), documents, NCRI Women’s Committee website

<sup>1090</sup> [Annual Report 2021](#), documents, NCRI Women’s Committee website, March 2021

<sup>1091</sup> [Eleven women imprisoned on death row held in Qarchak Prison](#), news, NCRI Women’s Committee website, October 24, 2018

<sup>1092</sup> [Mounting repression of women in Iran, in step with growing discontent](#), Monthly Report NCRI Women’s Committee, July 2019

## Mistreatment of political prisoners

Political prisoners are systematically brutalized and mistreated to be forced into making false confessions, cooperating with the regime, or giving their information.

- On January 24, 2018, political prisoners Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee and Atena Daemi were brutalized and forcibly transferred from Evin Prison to the Qarchak Prison in Varamin (a.k.a. Shahr-e Ray), in breach of the principle of separation of prisoners of different categories.
- In June 2019, it was reported that political prisoner Ameneh Zaheri Sari was brutalized in the notorious Sepidar Prison of Ahvaz.
- Saba Kord Afshari, 20, was arrested and imprisoned on June 1, 2019, and tortured for months to cooperate with the regime. IRGC interrogators even arrested her mother to further pressure her. Once they failed, they gave her a prison sentence of 24 years for removing her veil while walking in public. Her sentence was later commuted to 9 years.<sup>1093</sup>
- Kurdish activist Zahra Mohammadi was violently arrested in Sanandaj on May 23, 2019 and tortured for months to force her into making false confessions against herself. She was temporarily freed on December 2, 2019 on a heavy bail of 700 million Tomans (\$61,000). Kurdish political prisoner Zahra Mohammadi has a Master's degree in Geopolitics from the University of Birjand. She was sentenced to five years in prison by the Revision Court of Kurdistan Province on February 13, 2021.
- The regime also handed down many flogging sentences of 74 to 148 lashes for women activists in 2019, including for Atefeh Rangriz, Parisa Rafii, Nahid Khodajoo, Marzieh Amiri, Nasrin Javadi, and Sepideh Farhan among others.<sup>1094</sup>
- At least in one case, 74 lashes were carried out for Sufi woman Elham Ahmadi before releasing her from prison, on August 13, 2019.<sup>1095</sup>

There were also reports of harassment, mistreatment, flogging, and various other forms of pressure on apolitical prisoners in various prisons:

- A woman received 100 lashes in Lakan Prison of Rasht before being released after serving 15 years in prison. The flogging was reported on April 29, 2021, by Ensiyeh Daemi, sister of political prisoner Atena Daemi.<sup>1096</sup>
- In May 2021, the authorities of the Central Prison of Tabriz called back 32-year-old Ameneh Rahimi to prison after the expiration of her leave despite her becoming paralyzed due to a stroke during her prison leave. She is very ill, not able to speak or eat.<sup>1097</sup>

<sup>1093</sup> [Saba Kord Afshari sentenced to 24 years for refusing video confessions](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, August 27, 2019

<sup>1094</sup> [Monthly Report](#) of the NCRI Women's Committee, August 2019

<sup>1095</sup> [Monthly Report](#) of the NCRI Women's Committee, August 2019

<sup>1096</sup> [Inhuman treatment of prisoners in the women's wards of Iranian prisons](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, May 3, 2021

<sup>1097</sup> [Inhuman treatment of prisoners in the women's wards of Iranian prisons](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, May 3, 2021

- Fatemeh Alizadeh, 53 from Kermanshah, was in critical conditions the day before she died in March 2020 in the Central Prison of Urmia, and despite notifying the prison's medical staff, they did not take any action to save her life.<sup>1098</sup>
- Instead of providing medical care and treatment to a 60-year-old woman Shahin Solhjoo, suffering from herpes zoster, Tabriz Prison authorities made her sleep out in the yard in the cold nights of autumn.<sup>1099</sup>
- Some 300 female prisoners were relocated to the Central Prison of Urmia from across West Azerbaijan Province on October 23, 2020. The Central Prison of Urmia is plagued with the coronavirus. The women's ward was already overcrowded with 200 inmates.<sup>1100</sup>

The clerical regime systematically violates the principle of separation of crimes, by detaining political prisoners and prisoners of conscience among common and dangerous criminals. This is a deliberate decision and a routing policy of the regime intended to facilitate murder of these prisoners at the hands of dangerous criminals. Prison authorities can easily entice and hire dangerous convicts to attack, injure and kill the regime's political opponents.

There were many reports on women activists being brutalized in their prison cells.

- Labor activist Neda Naji was beaten up in Qarchak Prison at least once on July 6, 2019, and a second time along with three other inmates, Yasaman Aryani, Atefeh Rangriz and Sepideh Qolian, on July 26, 2019.<sup>1101</sup>
- In another case on February 8 and 9, 2019, all prisoners of wards 1 and 2 of Qarchak Prison were brutalized, pepper gassed and deprived of food and water for demanding medical treatment for a sick inmate.<sup>1102</sup>
- On June 3, 2020, political prisoner Zahra Safaei was attacked in Qarchak Prison by several prisoners hired by the Ministry of Intelligence and threatened with death.<sup>1103</sup>
- Two dangerous prisoners hired by the head of Qarchak Prison attacked Zahra Safaei on August 27, 2020, and beat her on the head and face. Other prisoners interfered and stopped the assailants.<sup>1104</sup>
- On September 14, 2020, two mercenary prisoners in Qarchak Prison attacked Parastoo Mo'ini and Forough Taghipour in a pre-planned attack using a flask containing boiled water and tried to burn them. Other prisoners intervened and did not allow them to succeed in their attempt.<sup>1105</sup>

<sup>1098</sup> [200 women in Central Prison of Urmia go on hunger strike in protest](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, March 29, 2020

<sup>1099</sup> [Tabriz prison authorities make 60-year old woman sleep in the cold](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, October 19, 2020

<sup>1100</sup> [Some 300 female prisoners relocated to the Central Prison of Urmia](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, October 28, 2020

<sup>1101</sup> [Monthly Report](#) of the NCRI Women's Committee, July 2019

<sup>1102</sup> [Qarchak Prison Guards Attack and Injure Female Prisoners](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, February 8, 2019

<sup>1103</sup> [Lives of women political prisoners in danger in Qarchak Prison](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, August 22, 2020

<sup>1104</sup> [Political prisoner Zahra Safaei brutalized by dangerous inmates in Qarchak Prison](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, August 28, 2020

<sup>1105</sup> [Political prisoners in Qarchak Prison attacked by boiling water](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, September 15, 2020



- In mid-October 2020, Qarchak prison authorities locked the gates on political prisoners to prevent them from attending the workshop.
- A mercenary agent attacked Zahra Safaei and Golrokh Iraee in Qarchak Prison on November 2, 2020, and threatened them with death.<sup>1106</sup>
- On December 13, 2020, the head of Qarchak prison, Soghra Khodadadi, along with 20 male and female prison guards, attacked Ward 8 and beat political prisoners in this ward with shockers and batons.<sup>1107</sup>
  - Political prisoner Zahra Safaei was hit in the head with a baton. Her arms were all bruised from wrist to elbow.
  - Parasto Mo'ini, who had gone to help Golrokh Iraee and her mother, Zahra Safaei, was taken from her hair and dragged to the ground. The prison guard was about to take her out of the ward, but other prisoners intervened and rescued her. Both legs of Parastoo Mo'ini were bruised. She also had chest pain from being hit with a shocker.
  - The prison guards also severely beat Forough Taghipour, grabbed her by the arms and legs, and threw her from one side of the cell to the other.
  - Marzieh Farsi, who is ill and under the care of a doctor, was beaten and injured in the chest.
  - Saba Kordafshari was also injured in the mouth and her shoulders and back were bruised.
  - Maryam Ebrahimvand was injured in the leg and back and bruised.
  - Several guards grabbed Golrokh Iraee's hair and dragged her to the ground, taking her away, stating that she should be transferred to the IRGC's intelligence detention center, ward 2a Evin.
  - None of the women who were seriously injured were treated after the brutal attack.
- On October 21, 2020, in the Kermanshah Correctional Center, special guards cracked down on prisoners who were peacefully gathering to protest harsh prison conditions imposed on them. They beat the prisoners with batons and used tear gas and pepper spray. Two prisoners were severely beaten, dragged on the ground, and transferred to solitary confinement. Many prisoners suffered from shortness of breath because of inhaling tear gas and pepper spray.<sup>1108</sup>

### Violent relocation and sending prisoners to exile

- Kurdish political prisoner Zeinab Jalalian was abruptly relocated from Kermanshah Prison to the Prison of Yazd on November 9, 2020. The security guards did not offer any explanation.<sup>1109</sup> This was the fourth time in six months when Zeinab Jalalian was being relocated from one prison to the other.  
A team of security forces first appeared in the Prison of Khoy on April 28, 2020, and took her away without presenting the reason. On May 2, it became evident that she had been taken to several prisons and finally to Qarchak Prison in Varamin.

<sup>1106</sup> [Zahra Safaei and Golrokh Iraee attacked in Qarchak, threatened to death](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, November 4, 2020

<sup>1107</sup> [More details on the attack on political prisoners in Qarchak Prison](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, December 19, 2020

<sup>1108</sup> [Special Guards raid defenseless women jailed in Kermanshah Prison](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, October 23, 2020

<sup>1109</sup> [Zeinab Jalalian transferred from Kermanshah Prison to an unknown location](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, November 11, 2020

Ms. Jalalian contracted the COVID-19 while incarcerated in Qarchak Prison. Despite suffering from asthma, she was abandoned without medical treatment.

Ms. Jalalian started a hunger strike on June 20, 2020, demanding to be returned to the Prison of Khoy and to receive medical treatment. Nevertheless, she was brutalized and transferred to the Prison of Kerman on June 25, 2020.

She was confined in a solitary cell for three months in the Central Prison of Kerman in legal limbo. After much persecution, she was relocated to the Prison of Kermanshah on September 24, 2020.

- Political prisoner Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee was forcibly sent to exile to the Prison of Amol, in northern Iran, on January 24, 2021, without finding the opportunity to take her personal belongings and warm clothing.<sup>1110</sup>  
She had just been back to Qarchak Prison after 43 days of interrogation at the IRGC Intelligence Ward 2A in Evin Prison in Tehran.<sup>1111</sup> She had been violently moved out of Qarchak Prison on December 13, 2020, to be sent to Ward 2A of Evin.<sup>1112</sup>  
Conditions in Amol Prison are horrible. Some 50 prisoners are detained in two rooms in the women's ward. Most of them are convicted on drug-related charges and some have hepatitis. There is no quarantine to hold the new arrivals and there is high risk of contracting the virus in this prison.
- Political prisoner Maryam Akbari Monfared was forcibly and abruptly removed from the women's ward of Evin Prison and sent to exile to the Prison of Semnan on March 9, 2021. Her cellmates protested and intervened to prevent her relocation. But prison guards violently broke into the ward and took her away by force.<sup>1113</sup>
- Political prisoner Atena Daemi was abruptly moved from Evin Prison to Lakan Prison of Rasht at night on March 16, 2021. Atena Daemi had not been informed in advance, and she was not allowed to pack her belongings or contact her family. Prison guards put cuffs on her hands and feet and took her away from the women's ward of Evin Prison.<sup>1114</sup>
- Kurdish political prisoner Sakineh Parvaneh was taken away by force from the Prison of Quchan at 10 p.m. on December 13, 2020, and sent to exile in the Central Prison of Mashhad.<sup>1115</sup> This was the second time she was being moved from one prison to another. On October 27, 2020, she was moved out of the women's ward of Evin in Tehran and sent to the Prison of Quchan.<sup>1116</sup>
- Student activist Sepideh Farhan was abruptly taken away from Evin to Qarchak Prison on December 5, 2020. She was arrested during the nationwide protests in December 2017-January 2018 in Tehran and was serving a 2-year sentence in Evin Prison.<sup>1117</sup>

<sup>1110</sup> [Political prisoner Golrokh Iraee banished from Qarchak to Amol Prison](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, January 25, 2021

<sup>1111</sup> [Golrokh Iraee back in Qarchak Prison after 43 days of interrogation](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, January 24, 2021

<sup>1112</sup> [Golrokh Iraee brutalized and taken by force to Ward 2A of Evin](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, December 14, 2020

<sup>1113</sup> [Political prisoner Maryam Akbari Monfared banished to Prison of Semnan](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, March 10, 2021

<sup>1114</sup> [Atena Daemi banished abruptly to Lakan Prison in Rasht](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, March 17, 2021

<sup>1115</sup> Female political prisoner Sakineh Parvaneh moved to Central Prison of Mashhad, news, NCRI Women's Committee website, December 16, 2020

<sup>1116</sup> [Fundamental rights of female political prisoners in Iran violated](#), monthlies, NCRI Women's Committee website, October 2020

<sup>1117</sup> [Two activists arrested in Mahshahr and Tehran, two prisoners relocated to Qarchak](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, December 10, 2020

- Mojgan Keshavarz was abruptly transferred out of Evin and taken to Qarchak Prison on December 5, 2020. Mojgan Keshavarz, is 38 and mother of a 10-year-old girl. She is sentenced to 23.5 years in prison for protesting the mandatory Hijab.<sup>1118</sup>
- Yasaman Aryani and her mother, Monireh Arabshahi, were sent from Evin Prison to exile in Kachouii Prison of Karaj on October 21, 2020. They were serving their sentence of 9 years and 7 months in Evin for protesting the mandatory Hijab.<sup>1119</sup>
- Saba Kord Afsahri was transferred out of the women's ward of Evin Prison and sent to exile in Qarchak Prison on December 9, 2020.<sup>1120</sup> Ms. Kord Afshari is sentenced to 24 years' imprisonment for protesting the mandatory Hijab. On January 26, 2021, prison guards took her by the hair and dragged her on the floor to move her from Ward 8 to Ward 6 where inmates convicted of dangerous crimes are detained.<sup>1121</sup>

### Denial of medical treatment to political prisoners

One of the clerical regime's common methods of torturing political prisoners and killing them is denying them medical treatment and preventing their access to hospitals, doctors and their medications. Over the past year, a female Arab political prisoner lost her life in Sepidar Prison of Ahvaz after prison authorities ignored her pleas for treatment.

- Makkieh Neissi - On the night of Monday, December 14, 2020, Makkieh Neissi was taken to the quarantine ward of Sepidar Prison in Ahvaz as she was crying out loud from pain, pleading to be taken to a civic hospital. The prison guards and authorities, however, did not take her to hospital and abandoned her in the ward without attending to her. On Tuesday morning, December 15, prisoners in the quarantine ward confronted her lifeless body.<sup>1122</sup>  
Makkieh Neissi, 35 was married with three children. She was among hundreds of Arab women who were arbitrarily arrested, tortured, and detained after an attack on an Armed Forces' parade in Ahvaz on September 22, 2018.
- Fatemeh Mosanna - Evin Prison authorities deprived political prisoner Fatemeh Mosanna from receiving urgent medical treatment for more ten months, before granting her a medical leave.<sup>1123</sup>  
As a result of prison conditions, Fatemeh Mosanna, 53, suffers from GI disorders, liver problems, intestinal colitis, and nervous migraine headaches. She started suffering from intestinal bleeding in on August 19, 2020, when she fainted in the ward. She was not able to walk on her own. She was sent to Tehran's Taleghani Hospital, but her hands and feet were cuffed to the bed throughout the week she stayed there. After 6 days, she was

<sup>1118</sup> [Two activists arrested in Mahshahr and Tehran, two prisoners relocated to Qarchak](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, December 10, 2020

<sup>1119</sup> [Evin Prison authorities transfer political prisoners to ordinary prisons](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, October 22, 2020

<sup>1120</sup> [Two women's rights activists in Iran sentenced to 15 years in prison](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, December 12, 2020

<sup>1121</sup> [Saba Kord Afshari violently moved from Ward 8 of Qarchak to Ward 6](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, January 27, 2021

<sup>1122</sup> [Denial of medical treatment to prisoners in Kachouii and Sepidar prisons](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, December 18, 2020

<sup>1123</sup> [Political prisoner Fatemeh Mosanna deprived of urgent medical treatment](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, January 25, 2021

returned to Evin Prison's quarantine before completing her tests. In the quarantine ward, she was deprived of having access to her regular medicines. She repeatedly fell unconscious because of severe pain in her digestive tract. Every time, however, Evin's Assistant Prosecutor, Amin Vaziri, prevented her access to proper medical treatment. A doctor from Tehran's Taleghani Hospital, urged the forensics office to examine her and verify that she could not bear prison conditions and that she deserved to be granted medical leave. Because of the advanced stage of her illness, the doctor said, it is not possible to treat her in the stressful conditions of prison.

She was finally sent on a two-month medical leave on May 5, 2021.

- Raheleh Ahmadi - Political prisoner Raheleh Ahmadi is in dire health and on the verge of paralysis.<sup>1124</sup>

Raheleh Ahmadi is the mother of Saba Kord Afshari. She was arrested to put pressure on her daughter. She is sentenced to 31 months in prison.

After Saba was sent to exile to Qarchak Prison, Ms. Ahmadi suffered various nervous disorders but remained deprived of medical treatment.

A December 13, 2020, a report from Evin said that she needed a walker to walk as she suffered rupture in her discus. The prison clinic's doctor says her immobility is due to nervous pressure and she must be examined by a neurologist. Ms. Ahmadi must be urgently granted medical leave to receive treatment.

Raheleh Ahmadi has been imprisoned since February 15, 2020. She suffers from thyroid malfunctions which affect her immune system, making her more vulnerable to COVID-19.

- Somayyeh Kargar, a Kurdish citizen from Ilam, was arrested on October 18, 2020, at her home in Tehran. A graduate student of philosophy from the University of Tabriz, she was incarcerated and interrogated in the notorious Ward 2A of Evin Prison for 4 months until being transferred to Ward 8 of Qarchak Prison in mid-February.<sup>1125</sup>

Throughout her imprisonment, Somayyeh Kargar was deprived of her urgently needed medications because of a rare eye disease she has. Her eyesight was seriously at risk. She needed others' help to do her daily work. She was finally released temporarily on bail on April 28, 2021.

- Detained nurse Bahareh Soleimani was imprisoned in the women's ward of Evin Prison deprived of medical treatment and the medications she needed.<sup>1126</sup>

Bahareh Soleimani, 43, suffered from lung complications due to COVID-19 infection since she had been attending to patients since the beginning of the outbreak. Intelligence Ministry forces arrested her on October 16, 2020, and detained her in solitary confinement in the IRGC Intelligence Ward 2A in Evin Prison. She was released temporarily on bail on February 24, 2021. Ms. Soleimani was deprived of access to her medicines and medical treatment throughout her detention.

- Retired teacher Massoumeh Asgari was arrested for participating in a teachers' protest in Tehran in August 2018, and sentenced to five years in prison.

After one year, she was sent on medical leave upon the forensics office's certification that she needed to be treated for the various illnesses she has. But she was returned to the

<sup>1124</sup> [Political prisoner Raheleh Ahmadi in dire health, might be paralyzed](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, January 16, 2021

<sup>1125</sup> [Arbitrary arrests in Iran target female civil and student activists](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, October 24, 2020

<sup>1126</sup> [Arbitrary arrests in Iran target female civil and student activists](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, October 24, 2020

women's ward of Evin Prison on November 22, 2020, before completing her treatment, to serve her remaining four years. Again on December 20, 2020, she received certification for conditional release indicating that she could not remain in prison because of her illnesses. But prison authorities have not granted her leave.<sup>1127</sup>

Massoumeh Asgari is a single mother with a 15-year-old son. She suffers from various physical and psychological illnesses. She recently had an accident breaking her leg at 8 points. She cannot walk on her own and uses a walker and a wheelchair.

- Political prisoner Hadiseh Sabouri is imprisoned in the women's ward of Evin Prison in Tehran. She is deprived of accessing medical services and treatment.<sup>1128</sup>

Ms. Sabouri was arrested during the protests in August 2018 in Tehran's Aryashahr district. Hadiseh Sabouri, 44, is married with three children. She suffers from various illnesses. In 2015, she underwent a surgical operation and part of her intestine was removed.

- Zahra Jamali is serving a 3.5-year sentence in the women's ward of Evin Prison. She has a cyst in one of her ovaries and a painful tumor in the sole of her foot. Evin Prison authorities prevent her from going to a medical center where she can be treated.<sup>1129</sup> Ms. Jamali was arrested and imprisoned because of her remarks during the funeral of political prisoner Alireza Shir Mohammadi who was murdered by dangerous criminals in the Great Tehran Penitentiary on June 10, 2019.

### Violent arbitrary arrests

The arrest and imprisonment of people for their political or religious beliefs is contrary to the international law. Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion."

The clerical regime ruling Iran, however, has numerous agencies to clamp down on the public, each of which acts independently to arrest anyone who opposes the regime. The State Security Force (SSF), the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the paramilitary Bassij, and even the disciplinary committees at the universities are components of a vast network that cracks down on the Iranian people's freedom of thought, expression and gathering.

These agencies arrest women in public or at home, often without presenting legal warrants and by use of brute force and violence.

In the majority of cases, including those of political prisoners Atena Daemi and Golrokh Ebrahimi, the IRGC Sarallah Corps filed complaints as complainant. Then it sent a team of its own agents to make the arrest and then interrogate and determine the charges in subsequent stages. This organ also influences the stage of issuing verdicts without any effort to conceal its role.

Following are a few examples reported in social media:

- Political prisoner Atena Daemi who is currently incarcerated in Evin prison for her activities in defense of human rights and against the death penalty, shared part of her

<sup>1127</sup> [Retired teacher Massoumeh Asgari called back to women's ward in Evin](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, November 27, 2020

<sup>1128</sup> [Political prisoner Hadiseh Sabouri denied medical care in Evin Prison](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, September 22, 2020

<sup>1129</sup> [Zahra Jamali and Giti Pourfazel latest female detainees in Iran](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, August 26, 2019

arrest experience.<sup>1130</sup> In part of a letter leaked out of prison, she wrote, “They attacked our house today, November 26, 2016... Three agents who arrest women on the streets for being mal-veiled, invaded my privacy and watched me while I was not wearing a veil! “According to the law, they must have sent me a subpoena and waited at least five days for me to report in to the prison. Even if I did not go, prison agents or agents of the Directorate of Implementation of Sentences were the ones who could come and arrest me, not the Revolutionary Guards’ Sarallah Corps...”

“We opened the door and asked to see their written warrant; they did not show any but roamed into the house... Again, I asked them to show their warrant, but they attacked me. A woman started beating me and when my younger sister intervened, she pounded her in the chest. A male guard used pepper gas against an unarmed and defenseless woman. They arrested me without letting me call and say goodbye to my parents who were on a trip.

“They took me away, to the Evin, blindfolded and handcuffed. On the way, they kept threatening me that they would file spurious charges against me. They said, ‘We will cook up some soup for you (a Persian proverb) so that you would forget thinking about coming out of prison!’”

- Maryam Payab, a civil activist from Behbahan, was temporarily released from Sepidar Prison in Ahvaz on January 13, 2020, pending trial and after posting a bail of 1 billion Tomans (\$87,000). Ms. Payab was shot in the back during protests in November 2019. After undergoing surgery and while she was being treated for her injury at a hospital in Behbahan, security forces arrested her on December 19, 2019, and transferred her to Ahvaz’s Detention Center. She was later transferred to Sepidar Prison. On October 22, 2020, Maryam Payab was sentenced to one year in prison and 74 lashes on charges of disturbing public order.<sup>1131</sup>
- Roghayeh Bigdeli, a resident of Karaj and one of the detainees of the nationwide protests in November 2019, was arrested and beaten by security forces on January 11, 2020. She was later sentenced to 2 years suspended imprisonment and 2 years of exile in the city of Zanjan.<sup>1132</sup>
- Amnesty International said it had evidence that Iranian security forces used sexual violence against women in peaceful protests after Tehran admitted it accidentally shot down a Ukrainian airliner. According to the report, published on January 15, 2020, “The organization received shocking allegations of sexual violence against at least one woman arbitrarily arrested by plainclothes security agents and detained for several hours in a police station. According to an informed source, while in detention, the woman was taken to a room where she was questioned by a security official who forced her to perform oral sex on him and attempted to rape her.”<sup>1133</sup>

<sup>1130</sup> Letter by Atena Daemi from the women’s ward of Evin Prison, November 26, 2016; [Atena’s voice cannot be silenced with oppression and injustice](#), news, NCRI Women’s Committee website, December 1, 2016

<sup>1131</sup> [Women arrested during November 2019 protests receive jail sentences](#), news, NCRI Women’s Committee website, October 26, 2020

<sup>1132</sup> Roghieh Bigdeli

<sup>1133</sup> [Iran: Scores injured as security forces use unlawful force to crush protests](#), Amnesty International, January 15, 2020



## Inhumane and cruel punishments for dissidents

- A Kurd student, Zamaneh Zivieh was sentenced to 50 lashes by the Saqqez Penal Court on charges of disrupting public order. She was arrested on November 6, 2017. On December 7, after going to court, her lawyer realized that the civil rights activist was sentenced to 50 lashes and \$507 fine.
- In January 2019, Elham Ahmadi, detained in Qarchak Prison of Varamin, was sentenced to 148 lashes by the Criminal Court. She was tried for publishing an audio file that spoke about the catastrophic situation of Qarchak Prison and the lack of medical treatment of sick prisoners.
- In July 2019, Sepideh Farhan was sentenced to one-year imprisonment and 74 lashes for “disrupting public order through participation in illegal gatherings” and to five years in prison for “association and collusion to act against national security.”
- Nasrin Javadi (Azam Khezri), a female labor activist who was arrested on International Labor Day in Tehran, was sentenced to 7 years in prison and 74 lashes. Her trial was held at the Revolutionary Court in Tehran on August 6, 2019 for the charges of “association and collusion against national security”, “propaganda against the state”, and “disrupting public order.”
- Marzieh Amiri, a journalist was sentenced to 10 years and 6 months in prison and 147 lashes.<sup>1134</sup>
- Atena Daemi, confined in Evin Prison, is sentenced to another 2 years and 74 lashes for a case opened for her while in jail. The decree was handed down on July 1, 2020, to her lawyer.<sup>1135</sup>

## Inhuman, cruel and degrading punishments for ordinary citizens

- The Supreme Court ruled on February 3, 2017, that a woman must be blinded in one eye. The unidentified woman was found guilty of splashing acid two years before in the face of another woman in Kohgiluyeh.<sup>1136</sup>
- The Criminal Court of Lorestan Province sentenced a man and a woman to stoning on February 3, 2017. The woman was identified as S.M.<sup>1137</sup> The verdict was issued for their public dissemination of a video clip showing the illicit relationship between a clergy and a woman in Gerab, Koohdasht.
- More than 30 young men and women were arrested at a graduation party in Qazvin and subsequently punished with 99 lashes. The General Prosecutor of Qazvin sentenced each of the youths to 99 lashes and the verdicts were carried out on the same day.<sup>1138</sup>
- The Criminal Court of Gorgan (northern Iran) issued flogging sentences for 20 people, including eight women, for attending a private mixed-gender yoga class. Each of the participants were sentenced to 50 lashes.<sup>1139</sup>

<sup>1134</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, August 24, 2019

<sup>1135</sup> [Iran Supreme Court turns down Atena Daemi's appeal to rescind ruling](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, February 25, 2021

<sup>1136</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, February 3, 2017

<sup>1137</sup> The state-run Kashkan website, February 3, 2017

<sup>1138</sup> The state-run Alef website, May 26, 2016

<sup>1139</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, September 30, 2019

- A married woman and man who were charged with having an illegitimate relationship were sentenced to flogging, exile and forced labor. They were each sentenced to 100 lashes. The woman was sentenced to one year of forced labor in a welfare center while the man was sentenced to exile to a city in the province of Sistan and Baluchistan.<sup>1140</sup>
- The Zanjan Public and Revolutionary Prosecutor said that a woman identified by her initials as A.M, was charged with assistance in murder and having an illegitimate relationship and was sentenced to 20 years of prison and 99 lashes.<sup>1141</sup>
- Judges condemned a man and a woman to flogging, exile and forced labor at a psychiatric institution for having illicit relations. They were sentenced each to 99 lashes. The young woman was sentenced to one year of forced labor in a home for mentally ill patients.<sup>1142</sup>
- A young man and a woman were each sentenced to 99 lashes for going out together despite the woman's marital status; they both denied the charges leveled against them but were sentenced to lashes, anyway.<sup>1143</sup>
- On November 11, 2019, a woman was sentenced to 99 lashes of flogging on charges of murder and having illicit relationships.<sup>1144</sup>
- Tahmineh Danesh, has been jailed for 12 years. The 40-year-old prisoner and mother of three was arrested in 2005 on the charges of murder and adultery. She was also sentenced to 90 lashes which was carried out in three consecutive days, every other day.<sup>1145</sup>
- On September 19, 2017, Leila Bayat received 80 lashes in Tehran. She was an asylum seeker but was deported to Iran in March by Norway. She was arrested in 2007 with three of her friends for drinking alcohol and was sentenced to 80 lashes. The inhumane sentence was carried out after she was deported.
- A woman identified as Shima was sentenced to 15 years jail and 74 lashes for robbery.<sup>1146</sup>



Layla Bayat who was lashed 80 times

<sup>1140</sup> The state-run Tabnak.ir, July 6, 2017

<sup>1141</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, August 7, 2017

<sup>1142</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, October 9, 2017

<sup>1143</sup> The state-run Javan website, November 28, 2018

<sup>1144</sup> The state-run Eghtesadonline.ir website, November 12, 2019

<sup>1145</sup> Mafnews.de, June 13, 2017

<sup>1146</sup> The state-run Sharq daily, October 28, 2020

## Intimate partner violence/domestic violence, including sexual violence and marital rape

### Obscure statistics

The figures presented by various officials and agencies on violence against women vary and are at times, conflicting. At the same time, they show the gravity of the situation.

- In January 2017, Tehran's forensic officials announced that an average of 52 women refer to the Coroner's Office every day.<sup>1147</sup>
- In September 2017, Tehran's Coroner's Office announced that it had registered the names of 12,159 women, victims of violence, in only four months from March to July 2017.<sup>1148</sup>

This is an average of 101 referrals by women per day and almost double the figure announced nine months earlier by the same agency.

- In March 2017, an official of the National Welfare Organization said they had registered 11,000 women as victims of domestic violence.<sup>1149</sup>

It is not clear whether they are talking about Tehran or the whole country and over what span of time. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that these are not the same women who referred to the Coroner's Office in Tehran.

- In June 2017, the Coroner's Office of Razavi Khorasan Province announced 7,000 women had been battered by their husbands in one year.<sup>1150</sup>

Again, this number must be added to the previous numbers.

- In February 2018, a Social Emergencies official announced 14,599 cases of violence against spouses had been reported in six months.<sup>1151</sup>

It could be assumed that he is talking about the period from August 2017 to January 2018, which is an average referral of 81 women per day.

- In June 2018, Tehran's Chief Coroner announced that most of the medical examinations done at the Coroner's Office were related to family quarrels and most of those who went for medical examination were women.
- In 2016, the number of victims of family quarrels and domestic violence was 77,280 (including 74,180 women and 3,100 men) and in 2017, this number reached 81,729 (including 77,059 women and 4,670 men).<sup>1152</sup>

Here, we see that the daily average of referrals by women to Tehran's Coroner's Office is 203 for 2016, and the average daily referrals by women in 2017 is 211, which are four times the 52 referrals announced 1.5 years earlier for the same period.

- In the Persian year 1397 (March 2018-March 2019), 35,411 women referred to the Coroner's Office of Tehran Province. That's an average of 100 women every day.<sup>1153</sup>

<sup>1147</sup> Tehran's forensic officials, January 2017

<sup>1148</sup> The Coroner's Office in Tehran, the state-run Mehr news agency – September 23, 2017

<sup>1149</sup> Habibollah Massoudi Farid, the state-run khabaronline.ir, March 4, 2017

<sup>1150</sup> The state-run Mashreq news website, June 26, 2017

<sup>1151</sup> Reza Jafari, interview with the state-run ILNA news agency, February 25, 2018

<sup>1152</sup> Chief Coroner Shojaii, the official IRNA news agency, June 9, 2018

- A 2015 study on violence against pregnant women showed that the prevalence of domestic violence against pregnant women was 48%.<sup>1154</sup>
- The number of women who filed complaints against domestic violence rose 5.8% in 2017 compared to 3.2% increase in the preceding year.<sup>1155</sup>

### Iran holds the highest rate of domestic violence against women

More recent reports place Iran as the world's top record holder of domestic violence against women.

- From every 20 women in Iran, one is exposed to domestic violence by her husband. But less than 35 percent of the cases of domestic violence are reported to the Police or Social Emergencies.<sup>1156</sup>
- Amanollah Qaraii Moghaddam, a sociologist: "Some time ago, chair of the Social Aid Association, announced that 40% of domestic violence in the world is carried out in our country... Sexual domestic violence is the worst form of domestic violence."<sup>1157</sup>
- Iran holds the world record on domestic violence... Today, the country is engulfed in social ailments and no house is safe in Iran.<sup>1158</sup>
- Less than three months since the beginning of the (Persian year) 1399 (i.e. from April to June 2020), the statistics on violence in the country has exceeded the total of all the past years.<sup>1159</sup>
- Honor killings are on the rise more than any other time. Honor killings in the country have recently had a meaningful growth compared to the same period last year, and family murders top the country's crises. It is estimated that at least 8 murders take place in Iran every day. The continuation of this trend could increase the average of 450 honor killings per year to 2,736 cases in 2020.<sup>1160</sup>

### Domestic violence

Women who are victims of rape are punished by the regime. Since legal testimony by women is regarded only half the weight accorded to the testimony by men, victims of rape and sexual abuse are deprived of access to justice, and furthermore subjected to prosecution for adultery, which is defined as sexual relations outside of marriage.

- As a case example, a 32-year-old woman by the name of Nahid was sentenced to 15 years in prison and 99 lashes on the charge of "illicit relations" with a man who drugged, raped, filmed and blackmailed her in 2011.<sup>1161</sup>

<sup>1153</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, April 24, 2019

<sup>1154</sup> VAW expert Parastoo Sarmadi, the state-run ILNA news agency, September 18, 2018

<sup>1155</sup> Chief Coroner Shojaii, The official IRNA news agency - June 9, 2018

<sup>1156</sup> The state-run Borna.news website, October 13, 2019

<sup>1157</sup> aasoo.org, June 30, 2020, citing Borna.news

<sup>1158</sup> Mohammad Reza Mahboubfar, an expert on social ailments, the state-run Jahanesanat.ir, November 19, 2020

<sup>1159</sup> Mohammad Reza Mahboubfar, an expert on social ailments, the state-run Jahanesanat.ir, November 19, 2020

<sup>1160</sup> Mohammad Reza Mahboubfar, an expert on social ailments, the state-run Jahanesanat.ir, November 19, 2020

<sup>1161</sup> The state-run Rokna.ir, February 18, 2017

Ironically, Nahid's husband, who cut off the man's head, was cleared of murder charges and freed on the grounds that the man who had raped his wife was punishable by death, anyway.

In other cases, when a woman complains to the court and local judiciary officials against being abused by her husband, the authorities advise her to go back home, without investigating the case or providing any form of social protection for the abused woman. Following are a few examples:

- Neighbors in Mashhad accidentally discovered a 30-year-old woman, Azam, and her two daughters, 5 and 8 years old, and rescued them.<sup>1162</sup> They had been tortured for 21 days by their husband and father while being deprived of food and water. Azam's husband had broken her nose and cut her rectum with a knife. He confessed that he had intended to kill his wife and children, throw them into a well, and burn them in fire. It was later revealed that the woman had repeatedly complained to judicial authorities to seek help but every time she had been sent back to her abusive husband.<sup>1163</sup>
- Ashraf Sadat Hosseini, 56, was attacked by her husband on December 18, 2020. Using a machete, he stabbed her to death. When her son arrived home to her aid, she did not have a pulse and her body was drenched in blood. Ashraf had complained to the police several times about her husband's brutal attacks during her difficult life. In a recent incident, Ashraf's husband hit her on the head with a heavy vase and broke her rib cage. However, the husband was released on bail. After his release, Ashraf went to the police station to protest but received this answer: "What should be done? He is your husband and there is nothing we can do!"<sup>1164</sup>



Ashraf Sadat Hosseini, 56, before and after her husband's lethal attack

<sup>1162</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, April 23, 2016

<sup>1163</sup> [Legal gaps and lack of support for women led to torture](#), website of NCRI Women's Committee, April 27, 2016

<sup>1164</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, December 28, 2020





Azam's condition when found at her home in Mashhad

- Another example is Mona who explains her experience as the following: "When he hit me for the first time, I was shocked, but I immediately contacted 110 (emergency police). When the police came, they said 'we cannot enter your house. You must come down.' I told the police, that my husband would escape if I opened the door. But the police said: 'How should we know that you are telling the truth?' "My husband had broken my arm, fractured my finger and it was bleeding. My head had swollen, and my lip was torn and bleeding. There was also a scratch near my eye. I told the police to come and see my situation and the wall that he banged my head against. They said 'No, we are not allowed to enter the house and to your floor. You must come down.' "When I filed my complaint, I asked the police to sign as a witness, but he said, 'I have not seen him beat you.' The neighbors, too, they usually do not intervene either and do not testify. The police did not arrest my husband even temporarily."<sup>1165</sup>
- Sara, a manager of a computer programming company, after several years of enduring violence, contacted the police and told them about the type of treatment she had received. She says: "The Police told me that they would not intervene in family quarrels unless there is beating involved. I said yes, I was beaten. He battered me. Then they asked: 'Do you have the report of the Coroner's Office?' I did not. They said, 'we cannot follow up in this way.' I said this is not his first time. Couldn't you do something? They said, 'do you have any witnesses?' But I didn't."

<sup>1165</sup> Aasoo.org, June 30, 2020



- M. is 33 with a Ph.D. in political sciences. Recounting her experience, she says: "If you are battered, you must get in touch with the Social Emergencies, because only their report is counted as evidence, otherwise when you file a complaint, because you do not have two male witnesses, the assailant gets exonerated. Even if you show the letter of the Coroner's Office, with photos and documents, still they are not sufficient to convict the assailant."<sup>1166</sup>
- A young woman by the name of Roya told police agents: My husband hit me with an iron rod. He imprisoned me at home for two weeks and did not let me contact my family. Roya's husband is 60 years old. He said: I was angry at my wife and I beat her. Roya, 30, was poor and she was forced to marry a man twice her age.<sup>1167</sup>
- An 80-year-old man beat his 22-year-old wife (picture below) with a hot rod because she did not do her work in the farm. The woman's body was wounded all over and bore bruises of the hot rod.<sup>1168</sup>



## Honor killings

Instead of creating protective mechanisms, the Iranian regime's laws promote violence against women. The Punishment Law has four chapters dealing with the most personal sexual issues. Using a repulsive language, Articles 224 to 261 of the Islamic Punishment Law, adopted in April 2013 prescribe fierce punishments such as stoning, execution and flogging for sexual offenses. Articles 637 and 638 of the State Punishment Book also focus on sexual offenses punishable by flogging. The State Punishment Book is a supplement to the Islamic Punishment Law, ratified in June 1996 and amended in December 2017.

The responsibility of the regime's officials in honor killings becomes evident where the law institutionalizes extra-judicial executions by family members.

Article 630 of the State Punishment Book stipulates that a woman can be instantly murdered if her husband finds her while having sexual relation with another man.

Article 630: Whenever a man finds his wife during adultery with another man and is sure of his wife's consent in doing so, he can instantly kill both of them.

Also Article 301 of the Punishment Law states that retribution for the murderer, i.e. execution, is applicable only if the murderer is not the father or paternal grandfather of the victim.

It must be noted that the adoption of such laws as well as unfair trials come into play after a plethora of miseries and misfortunes the mullahs' regime has imposed on the people of Iran for 42 years.

<sup>1166</sup> Aasoo.org, June 30, 2020

<sup>1167</sup> The state-run khabaronline.ir, April 30, 2020

<sup>1168</sup> The state-run asriran.com, June 28, 2020

Rampant poverty, inadequate education, limited access to information, and promotion of a misogynous culture by all media, text books, radio and television, and even movies, coupled with the common practice of violence in the streets and the scenes of public flogging and execution to create an atmosphere of terror and repression and fend off popular uprisings, lead to circumstances which legitimize honor killings and make murderers out of fathers and brothers. Following are token examples:

- A young woman who had been hanged by her husband died in hospital after 24 hours in coma on March 2, 2019.<sup>1169</sup>
- Monireh Abu (Mehrnia), 35 and eight months pregnant, was hanged by her husband, Mohammad Mahmoudi during a family quarrel. The 8-month-old embryo also died while Monireh died in a health center after one day in coma. Monireh Abu Mehrnia had previously left her husband but returned home only three months earlier. Her husband fled after hanging his wife.
- A man hanged his wife in Sonqor, Kermanshah Province, on March 7, 2019. The young woman, Maryam Mohebi, had two children. After returning home, Maryam encountered her husband's insults, harassment, and abuse as to why she was late and subsequently she was hanged by her husband only because she was late.<sup>1170</sup>
- Kowsar Gol Soghanloo, 15, from Piranshahr, died after her husband set her on fire on February 19, 2020. She had been married at the age of 14.<sup>1171</sup>
- Hadith, 11, from Khoy, was strangled to death by her father using a belt on March 18, 2020. The father had already researched the punishment for murdering his child and knew that the law would not impose a severe punishment on him for murder. He had also repeatedly threatened to kill Hadith's mother.<sup>1172</sup>
- Hajareh Hussein-Bor, 20, from Sistan and Baluchestan, was murdered by her husband on May 4, 2020. She had been forced to marry at the age of 16 and had a 2-year-old son. Hajareh was beaten repeatedly several times by her husband and burned with a hot wire, but no one paid attention to her complaints.<sup>1173</sup>
- Romina Ashrafi, 13, from Talesh, was killed when her father beheaded her with a sickle on May 21, 2020, while she was asleep. She had run away with a boy who was planning to marry her but was arrested. The judge sent her home, despite pleas that her father had been abusing her.<sup>1174</sup>
- Fatemeh Barahi, 19, was beheaded by her husband on June 14, 2020, in Abadan. She had married her cousin the year before as part of a forced marriage. Fatemeh fled to Mashhad to escape the life that had been forced on her and moved in with one of her friends. Her husband found her, took her back to Abadan, and killed her.<sup>1175</sup>
- On June 14, 2020, another woman named Mina was killed by her ex-husband.<sup>1176</sup>

<sup>1169</sup> [Innocent young woman hanged by her husband dies in hospital](#), NCRI Women's Committee website, March 5, 2019

<sup>1170</sup> [Acid attack, honor killing, and suicides take toll on Iranian women](#), NCRI Women's Committee website, March 16, 2019

<sup>1171</sup> Kurdish Hengaw website, February 23, 2020

<sup>1172</sup> The state-run Etemadonline.com, March 18, 2020

<sup>1173</sup> [Honor killings in Iran – Cruel murders of young women by father, husband](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, May 26, 2020; Iran Global, May 10, 2020

<sup>1174</sup> The state-run Didarnews website, May 21, 2020

<sup>1175</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, June 16, 2020; the state-run khabarfori.com, June 20, 2020

<sup>1176</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, June 24, 2020

- Reyhaneh Ameri, 22, from Kerman, was killed by her father with an ax on June 15, 2020. Reyhaneh's father had already tried to kill her 3 years earlier; he broke her arms and legs, but her sisters managed to intervene just in time. The Kerman prosecutor called the murder "unintentional".<sup>1177</sup>
- In June, another young girl was killed by her brother in Abadan.<sup>1178</sup>
- Somayyeh Fathi, 18, from Kurdistan, was killed by her father and brother on June 18, 2020, with aluminum phosphide pills, known as rice pills. Somayyeh was married and pregnant. Neither of her killers was arrested or interrogated.<sup>1179</sup>
- In June 2020, a woman from Zarand was brutally murdered by her husband, an addict. The video of her torture was posted on the state-run Rokna news agency on June 20, 2020.<sup>1180</sup>
- A young woman from Maragheh was set on fire by her husband on July 23, 2020, and died in Tabriz Hospital on July 27, 2020. The woman had filed for divorce several times, but the regime's judicial authorities ignored her requests.<sup>1181</sup>
- A 20-year-old girl from Kuhdasht went into a coma on July 14, 2020, after her father hit her with a hammer. After committing the crime, the father, who had also killed his wife, committed suicide.<sup>1182</sup>
- The body of 15-year-old Fatemeh Moradi, a resident of Kolah Kaboud village in Ravansar, was discovered on July 17, 2020.<sup>1183</sup>
- Parang Ghazi, from Mahabad, was killed on July 19, 2020, after being beaten by her husband. She had a master's degree in English.<sup>1184</sup>
- Fatemeh Ghozati, 16, died after her step-uncle threw her out of an 11<sup>th</sup>-floor window of their building on July 23, 2020. The mother witnessed the crime, and despite her and Fatemeh's stepfather's complaints, the killer was released on bail and continued his threats to the family. The regime's Judiciary described the murder as a suicide.<sup>1185</sup>
- Fatemeh Kebriaii, 28, was killed by her husband on August 15, 2020. She had been planning to divorce him for a year. She fled his abuse and lived with her father 50 days before she was murdered. Under the pretext of trying to reconcile, the husband dragged Fatemeh home and, at the end of a particularly violent fight, hit Fatima against the wall so hard that her skull broke. She died after being in a coma for several days. Fatemeh had graduated from university with a degree in architecture.<sup>1186</sup>
- Leila, from the village of Sepidar in Boyer Ahmad, was shot dead by her husband in August. He had previously tried to kill Leila with an ax, had been arrested and imprisoned but was released just a few minutes before the murder on a coronavirus leave.<sup>1187</sup>
- A pregnant woman living in Esfarayen died, along with her unborn baby, in the hospital on August 28, 2020, after being severely beaten by her husband.<sup>1188</sup>

<sup>1177</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, June 16, 2020; the state-run khabarfori.com, June 20, 2020

<sup>1178</sup> The state-run khabarfori.com, June 20, 2020

<sup>1179</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, June 24, 2020

<sup>1180</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, June 20, 2020.

<sup>1181</sup> The state-run ROKNA News Agency, June 27, 2020

<sup>1182</sup> The state-run ROKNA News Agency, July 14, 2020

<sup>1183</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, July 17, 2020

<sup>1184</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, July 23, 2020

<sup>1185</sup> The state-run Bahar news agency, June 14, 2020

<sup>1186</sup> Iran wire website, August 15, 2020

<sup>1187</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, August 27, 2020

<sup>1188</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, August 28, 2020

- A woman from a village near Shazand City was stabbed after she had an argument with her husband on August 31, 2020. She died after arriving at the hospital.<sup>1189</sup>
- Fatemeh Hawasi, 16, from Qal'eh-Shahin, Sarpol-e-Zahab district, was shot dead by her brother on August 31, 2020.<sup>1190</sup>
- Maryam Atmani, from Urmia, who had been set on fire by her husband a week earlier, died of burns on September 19, 2020. She was the mother of two young children.<sup>1191</sup>
- On the same date, another woman was killed by her husband in Zanjan.<sup>1192</sup>
- Sarina Ghafouri, 25, was killed by her brother in May 2020. She made a living by sewing and lived with her 5-year-old daughter. Sarina's brother, who had beaten her many times to prevent her from remarrying, eventually killed her.<sup>1193</sup>
- Vafa Abdullahzadeh, 43, was shot dead in front of her home in Sardasht in the evening of December 7, 2020. She had recently divorced. Even her family had cut her out of their lives. A source reported that Vafa was killed by her brothers.<sup>1194</sup>
- A 22-year-old girl from a village near Dehloran was suffocated to death by her brother.<sup>1195</sup>
- A 35-year-old woman, mother of two, was stabbed to death by her husband in Mashhad in the presence of her 3-year-old child on December 4, 2020.<sup>1196</sup>
- After a forced marriage, Sargol Habibi became the mother of two children, aged 4 and 6. She had been seeking a divorce, which was refused by her husband. She was finally tortured and mutilated by her brothers after having been accused of having a secret relationship with a man she had loved for years. The killers were released on bail!<sup>1197</sup>
- A 26-year-old woman was killed in Dalahou, Kermanshah Province, after being beaten by her husband.<sup>1198</sup>
- A criminal in Qom killed his brother's wife after being released from prison.<sup>1199</sup>
- Maryam Jafari, 25, was killed in Dalahou in August 2020 after being beaten by her husband.<sup>1200</sup>
- Azadeh Morovvati, 21, from Dehgolan, Kurdistan Province, was killed by her husband after experiencing four stab wounds.<sup>1201</sup>
- Four months after the mysterious disappearance of Mahboubeh, a young woman, in Tehran's suburbs, her husband confessed to killing her with a lantern and burying her body in a mountain crevice.<sup>1202</sup>
- A 30-year-old woman in Abadan was shot dead by her brother in front of her 12-year-old son on November 23, 2020.<sup>1203</sup>

<sup>1189</sup> The state-run Iran Daily, August 31, 2020

<sup>1190</sup> Kurdish Hengaw website, September 7, 2020

<sup>1191</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, September 20, 2020

<sup>1192</sup> The official IRNA news agency, September 19, 2020

<sup>1193</sup> Persian BBC website, May 28, 2020

<sup>1194</sup> Kurdish Hengaw website, December 8, 2020

<sup>1195</sup> Kurdish Hengaw website, December 8, 2020

<sup>1196</sup> HRANA news agency, December 9, 2020

<sup>1197</sup> The state-run Mostaghel newspaper, December 12, 2020

<sup>1198</sup> HRANA news agency, December 13, 2020

<sup>1199</sup> The state-run Iran daily, December 13, 2020

<sup>1200</sup> Kurdish Hengaw website, December 14, 2020

<sup>1201</sup> Kurdish Hengaw website, December 14, 2020

<sup>1202</sup> HRANA news agency, December 15, 2020

<sup>1203</sup> HRANA news agency, December 19, 2020

## Honor Killings on the Rise in Iran



Hajareh Hosseinbor  
20, with a child



Romina Ashrafi, 13,  
beheaded by a sickle



Hadith, 11, strangled



Donya Miri, 20



Reyhaneh Ameri, 22,  
killed with an ax

**At least**  
**8 murders**  
of women take place in Iran **every day**

Honor killings account for about  
**20% of all murders**



**It also accounts for**  
**50% of all homicides**

The average **450** killings per year  
**was expected to rise to 2,736 in 2020**

- The wife of a former director of Kerman's Suspending Organization was shot dead by her husband. The incident took place on December 19, 2020.<sup>1204</sup>
- A young woman in Tehran, who was set on fire by her husband a week before, died on December 20, 2020.<sup>1205</sup>

<sup>1204</sup> HRANA news agency, December 21, 2020

<sup>1205</sup> HRANA news agency, December 22, 2020

- The body of Sheida (Azam), 21 years old, was discovered on December 16 in one of the villages of Isfahan Province. Her father had suffocated her under the pretext of honor.<sup>1206</sup>

Honor killings have been on the rise in a strange way in recent times.<sup>1207</sup>

Experts in Iran acknowledge that the previous statistics on honor killings in Iran have never been comprehensive, transparent or accurate. The institutions and organizations dealing with these figures, such as the Social Emergencies and the Police, do not have access to the data and no official figures have been announced in this regard.

Estimates in 2019, however, showed that the average number of honor killings in Iran is between 375 and 450 per year. Honor killings account for about 20% of all murders. It also accounts for 50% of all homicides.<sup>1208</sup>

Family murders top the country's crises. It is estimated that at least 8 murders take place in Iran every day. The continuation of this trend could increase the average of 450 honor killings per year to 2,736 cases in 2020.<sup>1209</sup>

## Sexual harassment and violence in public places, educational settings and in employment

### Sexual harassment and violence at the workplace

Iranian women face widespread sexual violence and harassment at their workplace. This is not a cultural issue, but the direct result of the misogynistic dictatorship of the mullahs' regime in Iran. Widespread poverty and unemployment of Iranian women and lack of any social and legal support as well as the state's imposition of various sexual discriminations and segregations are the main causes contributing to the abuse of women at workplace.

While the system tries to keep women away from participating in and influencing the society, employers take advantage of the situation and try to benefit from this cheap and defenseless labor force in the worst possible way. In most cases, the violence is exerted by employers or influential people and the victim has to keep silent, fearing to lose her job.

- In Iran, there is no special law on sexual harassment especially at the workplace and even Article 637 in the old Penal Code, where the offender could pay the victim a fine for the offense, was removed from the latest legislation.<sup>1210</sup>
- The Iranian regime's laws criminalize men only for the highest degree of sexual abuse, i.e. rape. But based on these laws, if a woman can prove sexual harassment or aggression, she will most likely be fired if the aggressor is the employer or the superior. There is no protection for the victim under the misogynist laws of the mullahs' regime.
- On the other hand, if the woman fails to prove her claim, she is also considered to be a criminal offender for the charge.
- In a limited survey carried out on 82 working women in Tehran, sexual harassment at work environment was calculated to be 75%.<sup>1211</sup> Prevention of sexual harassment at work

<sup>1206</sup> HRANA news agency, December 22, 2020

<sup>1207</sup> Mostafa Eghlima, President of the Iranian Scientific Social Welfare Association, The state-run Khabarfori.ir, June 20, 2020

<sup>1208</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, December 7, 2019

<sup>1209</sup> Mohammad Reza Mahboubfar, a social ills expert, The state-run Jahanesanat.ir, November 19, 2020

<sup>1210</sup> The state-run Tabnak.ir, June 28, 2018



environment is generally the duty of the employer but in Iran, by using the anti-women laws, employers deliberately criminalize victims. In the best-case scenario, the law enforcement and judicial institutions evade from their duties and throw the responsibility of proving the crime on the shoulder of victims.

- According to a recent finding, 40 percent of working women in Iran are sexually harassed at the workplace. The same research indicates that 90 percent of Iranian women have experienced some form of sexual harassment during their lifetime.<sup>1212</sup>
- According to a survey done with 59 female reporters, 90% of them have been sexually harassed at least once while doing their job.<sup>1213</sup>
- A survey done around the year 2005, questioning 300 female students of Kharazmi University, found that 90% of these women had experienced some form of sexual harassment in public places.<sup>1214</sup>

Another issue is the lack of supervision in this regard. In Iran, the smaller the factories, the more violent, intense and widespread is the violence.

In manufacturing workshops, which are mostly enclosed and inadequate in underground spaces, the risk of sexual harassment and violence against women is higher, while these manufacturing workshops are the main places for women to be employed.

In addition, the lower the level of professionalism and job position of women in different occupations and the less family support they have, they are more likely to be subjected to harassment at the workplace.

Sexual harassment of women in the workplace is to such an extent that they even leak into the state-run media and show that even young women and girls who work at medical offices and large companies are harassed by their employers and fearful of losing their jobs they are inevitably forced to remain silent and obey.

### Girl child laborers

Based on the reports and video clips posted on social media in February 2019, girl child laborers who work in the streets to earn meager amounts of money, are physically and sexually abused by municipality agents.<sup>1215</sup> The population of child laborers is estimated to be 7 million.<sup>1216</sup>

- A social worker said the girl child laborers are sexually abused in addition to being brutalized. "Two of the labor child girls who work at the intersection, were forced into a car by municipal agents. One of the agents told one of the girls to unbutton her clothes. This girl even told us that when she was taken to the police station, she was separated from other kids and forced to take off her clothes."<sup>1217</sup>

<sup>1211</sup> The [www.bbc.com/persian](http://www.bbc.com/persian), October 11, 2017

<sup>1212</sup> Aliyeh Shekarbeigi, sociologist and head of the Association of Sociologists, Meidaan.com, October 1, 2019

<sup>1213</sup> Abbas Abdi, head of the journalists' Association of Tehran Province, Iran daily, February 7, 2020

<sup>1214</sup> The state-run Iran newspaper, October 1, 2019

<sup>1215</sup> [Girl child laborers among the most innocent victims of mullahs in Iran](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, June 12, 2019

<sup>1216</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, September 27, 2017; [Power and wealth monopoly behind plight of Iran's child laborers](#), IranNewsWire.org, December 26, 2018

<sup>1217</sup> [Labor child girls are physically and sexually abused by city agents](#), the website of NCRI Women's Committee, February 6, 2019

- One of the girl child laborers talked about sexual abuse of her friend by municipal agents. She said, “One day, when I saw Sara, I asked her, ‘Why are you upset?’ She said municipal agents caught me and mistreated me... They pulled my scarf and touched me. When I screamed, he stepped away. But when I went to the office of the municipality and told my story, they did not believe me. They said I was making up the story so that they would let me go.”<sup>1218</sup>
- A research done on 400 child laborers, it was revealed by an official of Social Services in Tehran’s Municipality that some 90% of child laborers are sexually abused.<sup>1219</sup>
- Most of these children have diseases, but their illnesses are not a priority among their problems, because most of them are sexually abused.<sup>1220</sup>

### Rape in public places

An increasing number of rape accounts kept mushrooming in different parts of Iran, including the rape and murders of 6 and 7-year-old girl children.

- A seven-year-old girl became victim of sexual violence and murder in Parsabad. Parsabad is a city in Ardabil Province, in northwestern Iran.<sup>1221</sup>
- Atena Aslani went missing on June 19, 2017. Atena’s father was a street peddler who sold clothes. On the day of the incident, Atena left her father as he was talking to a customer, and never returned.  
Atena’s life-less body was found on July 10, 2017, in a parking lot inside a plastic barrel. She had been raped before being murdered. The state media identified the suspect as Ismail, a local businessman selling paint.
- Setayesh Ghoreishi, 6, was raped and killed by acid on April 10, 2016 in Kheirabad village in Varamin.
- A nine-year-old girl was molested and raped by her teacher, a married 30-year-old man with two children. This happened in Ghareh Mohammad village in Zanjan Province.<sup>1222</sup>
- The dean of students at the University of Zanjan was caught while sexually assaulting one of the girl students in this university.<sup>1223</sup>
- The rapes of 41 women and girls in Iranshahr, in southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan, was the most horrific case stirring controversy across the country in June 2018. The victims were between 18 and 30 years of age assaulted by a gang of four men, linked to the city’s wealthy and influential families, the Bassij and IRGC.<sup>1224</sup>
- In December 2018, news broke out on the molestation of at least four students in a school in Isfahan.<sup>1225</sup>

<sup>1218</sup> [Labor child girls are physically and sexually abused by city agents](#), the website of NCRI Women’s Committee, February 6, 2019

<sup>1219</sup> The executive director of the Organization of Social Services in Tehran’s Municipality, the state-run Salamatnews.com – November 8, 2017; [Iran state media confess to rape of girl child laborers](#), the website of the NCRI Women’s Committee, November 9, 2017

<sup>1220</sup> Elham Fakhari, a member of Tehran’s City Council, The state-run ILNA news agency, June 12, 2019

<sup>1221</sup> [Seven-year-old girl, victim of sexual assault and murder](#), website of the NCRI Women’s Committee, July 24, 2017

<sup>1222</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, January 30, 2016

<sup>1223</sup> The state-run Fararu website, June 15, 2008

<sup>1224</sup> [Rapes of 41 women and girls in Iranshahr stir controversy across Iran](#), monthlies, the NCRI Women’s Committee website, June 2018

<sup>1225</sup> The state-run Tabnak.ir, December 3, 2018

- In March 2021, a Bassij agent raped two little girls, only 7 and 8 years old, in one of the villages of Gonbad Kavus, northern Iran. One of the members of the village council confirmed that the rapes had taken place in the sentry office of Golestan Dam. He added, "Following the incident, the inhabitants of the village beat up the (assailant) man. Eventually, the State Security forces (SFF) intervened and took Khan-Ahmadi (the assailant) to the judicial authorities."<sup>1226</sup>

### Rape of the mentally disabled

Violence against the disabled ranks fourth among the domestic violence groups in Iran.<sup>1227</sup>

Although there are no accurate figures available on the rape and sexual harassment of the mentally and physically disabled women in Iran, experts estimate that they are raped twice as much as other women in Iran.<sup>1228</sup>

Some of them do not see, hear, or move and are sitting on a wheelchair; others are mentally disabled. But all of them are vulnerable to various forms sexual abuse or rape, or physical violence at home. In many cases, the disabled woman just gives up on following her legal complaint because she cannot speak with the language of adults, or she even did not see her assailant.<sup>1229</sup>

These forms of harassment are usually not reported in Iran. The institutions in charge do not publish their statistics, and in this way, the way remains open for the abusers.

- A 30-year-old woman had been living in at a government-run welfare center for several years. An aid worker revealed that she had been repeatedly raped by one of the workers at the facility.<sup>1230</sup> It was also found out that this was not the first case of rape by the assailant but he had also assaulted two other mentally disabled women in the center.<sup>1231</sup>

In the absence of any bills or laws criminalizing rape or any form of violence against women in Iran, the victims of rape and violence do not enjoy any form of social or legal support.

On the one hand, the assailants' ties to power centers and government agencies help them escape punishment. On the other hand, the victimized women are considered as accomplices in the crime and are charged, themselves. Something that dissuades most women from reporting or filing suits if they are raped or battered.

<sup>1226</sup> [Acquitting a Bassij agent of rape charges outrages Iranian public](#), articles, NCRI Women's Committee website, March 26, 2021

<sup>1227</sup> Reza Jafari, former chief of the Social Emergencies of the Welfare Organization, Labor Ministry's website, July 29, 2019

<sup>1228</sup> Soheil Mo'ini, activist for the rights of the disabled and executive director of Bavar Association, Radio Zamaneh, October 20, 2020

<sup>1229</sup> Soheil Mo'ini, activist for the rights of the disabled and executive director of Bavar Association, Radio Zamaneh, October 20, 2020

<sup>1230</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency – September 3, 2017

<sup>1231</sup> [Mentally retarded woman raped in a government center](#), the website of the NCRI Women's Committee, September 7, 2017

## Status of women with disabilities



Women account for **35%** of over **11million** disabled people in Iran



Disabled women are forced to accept and tolerate cruel behavior and relationships because of their physical and social limits.



## Violence against nurses and students

Violence against women and girl children is not limited to sexual harassment but also includes physical punishment and abuse. Here are some examples:

- In October 2016, school authorities in the southern Iranian village of Mokhtarabad in South Roodbar, Kerman, struck eight lashes to at least 10 girl students and expelled them from school because their parents did not afford to pay 30,000 toumans (approx. \$8.5) demanded by the school's principal.<sup>1232</sup>
- Studies on violence against women at the workplace, show that 72.6% of nurses faced violence at their jobs.<sup>1233</sup>
- Nurses become directly face to face with the patients and their companies and are often insulted and even brutalized. At least 28 nurses were brutalized in 2017.<sup>1234</sup>
- An official of the Nursing System Organization said the lack of security for the hospitals' medical staff has turned into a national crisis. He said: There is no week without two or three violence cases against nurses in medical centers. Many of these cases are never registered or reported.<sup>1235</sup>
- On April 23, 2021, a video of a nurse being beaten by a high-ranking city and hospital security official in Dezful was posted on YouTube and social media. The publisher of this video explains that one of the high-ranking officials of the city intended to use the Covid-19 vaccine quota of the medical staff of this hospital, which met with resistance from the head nurse of the hospital. So, the security forces intervene and physically assault the nurse.<sup>1236</sup>
- Two doctors and the nurses in the Covid-19 ward of a hospital in Dargaz were beaten by the companions of the patient who died of Covid-19.<sup>1237</sup>

## Child, early and forced marriages

Early marriages of girls under 18 is considered both violence against women and child abuse by international standards.

The law in Iran, however, sets the legal age of marriage for girls at 13 and sanctions marriage under 13 years of age with the consent of father and confirmation of maturity by a court judge.

As a result of this law and particularly because of widespread poverty of the people, early and forced marriage of girl children has become common in Iran.

Some of the most common consequences of child marriages in Iran include dropping out of school, child widows, child women heads of households, suicides and prostitution.<sup>1238</sup>

Here are acknowledgements by state officials and experts:

<sup>1232</sup> [Girl children whipped at school](#), website of NCRI Women's Committee, October 12, 2016

<sup>1233</sup> VAW expert Parastoo Sarmadi, the state-run ILNA news agency, September 18, 2018

<sup>1234</sup> [Female nurses in Iran entangled in a web of damaging problems](#), articles, NCRI Women's Committee website, February 27, 2019

<sup>1235</sup> Vahid Nassiri, parliamentary legal deputy of the Nursing System Organization, the state-run khabaronline.ir, October 7, 2020

<sup>1236</sup> YektaPress.com, April 23, 2021

<sup>1237</sup> The state-run IMNA news agency, May 1, 2021

<sup>1238</sup> [Annual Report 2021](#), documents, NCRI Women's Committee website, March 2021

- New data released by the Iranian census organization indicates that 234,000 marriages of girl children under 15 years of age were officially registered from March 2017 to March 2018 (Persian year 1396). 194 of these were marriages of girl children under 10 years old.<sup>1239</sup>
- Another official admitted that between 500,000 to 600,000 children get married every year (in Iran) according to the officially registered data. The problem is that more marriages are taking place without being officially registered.<sup>1240</sup>
- Early marriages are on the rise due to the regime's new policy of granting a larger number of marriage loans, girls are literally being sold under the name of marriage, and the number of early marriages is growing by the day. Based on the data obtained from the Central Bank, in the six-month period from March to September 2019, the number of early marriages of girls under 15 years of age increased four folds compared to the same period in the previous year.<sup>1241</sup>
- There are statistics in 2019 that children under the age of 15, especially girls under this age, have used this loan, and this number has quadrupled compared to last year.<sup>1242</sup>

These new figures are considerably higher than what had been announced by various government officials and experts in previous years:

- 180,000 early marriages take place in Iran every year.<sup>1243</sup>
- Some 37,000 girl children under 15 years of age got married from March 2017 to March 2018.<sup>1244</sup>
- Some 43,000 girls under 15 were married in the Persian year 1396, from March 2017 to March 2018.<sup>1245</sup>
- Based on the statistics of the National Statistics Center, last year (March 2016-March 2017) there were 36,422 marriages of girls under 15 years of age.<sup>1246</sup>
- The largest number of registered marriages of 10-14 girl children was in 2014 which amounted to 40,229.<sup>1247</sup>
- In Iran, one in five marriages involves child marriage which is considered violence against women.<sup>1248</sup>
- According to the quarterly report of the National Statics Center of Iran (NSC), more than 7,000 girls under 14 years of age have got married in Iran from April to June 2020. The number published by the NCS on the number of young women married between 10 and

<sup>1239</sup> The state-run Iran daily newspaper – October 30, 2019

<sup>1240</sup> Ali Kazemi, advisor to the legal deputy of the Judiciary Branch, the state-run daily Entekhab – March 4, 2019

<sup>1241</sup> Mohammad Mehdi Tondgouyan, deputy Minister of Sports and Youths, the state-run Mehr news agency, December 30, 2019

<sup>1242</sup> Mohammad Mehdi Tondgooyan, Deputy Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs, The state-run ISNA News Agency, December 10, 2019

<sup>1243</sup> Batool Salimi Manesh, a social researcher, the official IRNA news agency, August 5, 2018

<sup>1244</sup> Parvaneh Salahshouri, head of the women's faction in the mullahs' parliament, the state-run IRNA news agency - May 8, 2018

<sup>1245</sup> The statistics and monitoring director of the Social and Cultural Council of Women and Family, the state-run salamatnews.com, July 24, 2018

<sup>1246</sup> Zahra Ayatollahi, the state-run ISNA news agency – March 10, 2018

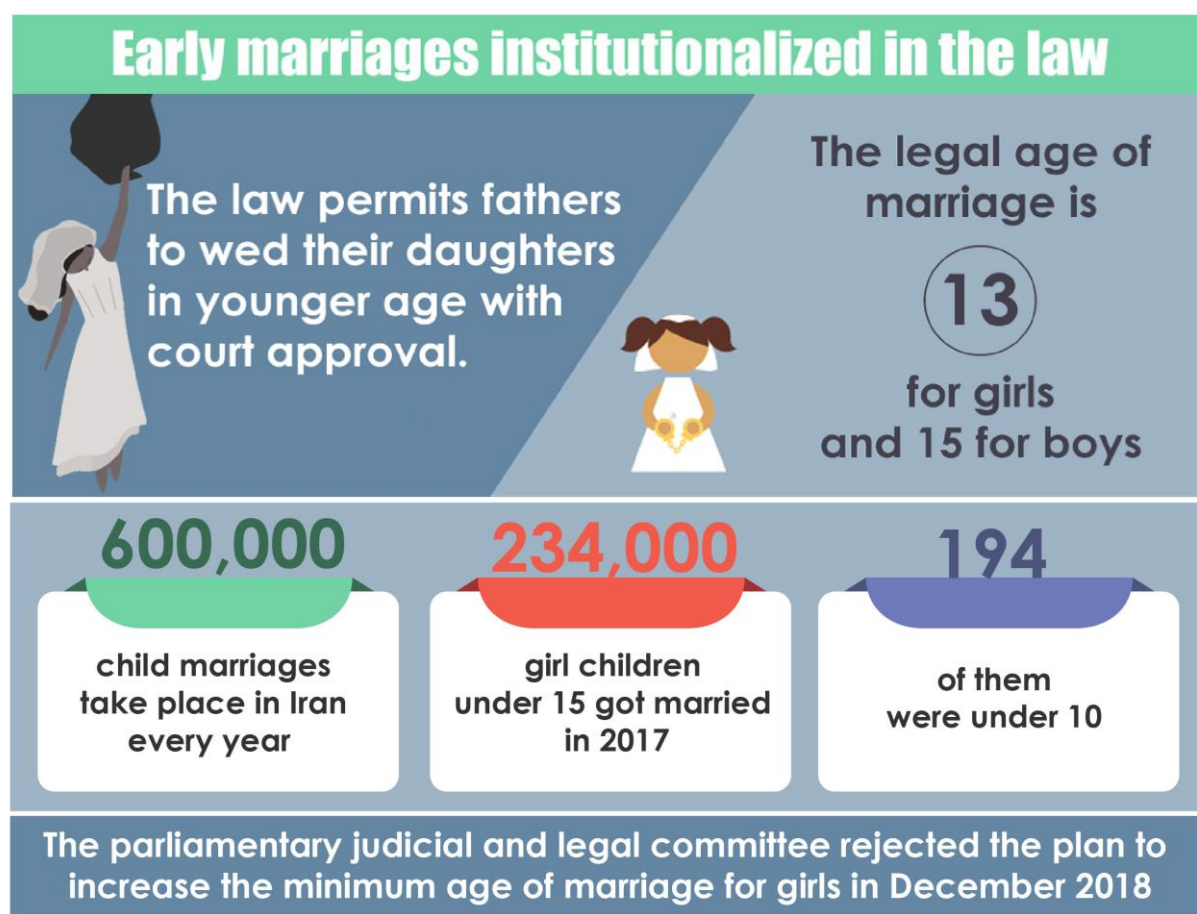
<sup>1247</sup> Batool Salimi Manesh, a social researcher, the official IRNA news agency, August 5, 2018

<sup>1248</sup> [Forced marriage in Iran: girls' lives are traded to escape poverty](#), articles, NCRI Women's Committee website, November 26, 2020



14 years of age was exactly 7,323. During the same period, the marriage of one girl under 10 years has also been registered.<sup>1249</sup>

- The above statistics reached 9,058 in summer 2020, showing 23% increase compared to spring.<sup>1250</sup> The 23% increase in the marriages of 10-14-year girls in just three months sounds the alarm bells with 2% increase compared to last year.<sup>1251</sup>
- The number of births registered for under-15 mothers was 364 in summer 2020 which was higher than the statistics for spring 2020.<sup>1252</sup>
- The number of divorces for girls between 10 and 14 years was registered as 188 in summer 2020.<sup>1253</sup>



The Razavi Khorasan Province (eastern Iran) has the largest number of early marriages, while East Azerbaijan Province (northwestern Iran) ranks second.<sup>1254</sup>

They are followed by the provinces of Sistan and Baluchestan, West Azerbaijan, and Kermanshah which are national record holders with around 4,000 annual marriages of girl children under 15.<sup>1255</sup>

<sup>1249</sup> [Child marriages in Iran: Over 7,000 girls under 14 got married in 3 months](#), articles, NCRI Women's Committee website, December 2, 2020; The National Statistics Center report, November 30, 2020

<sup>1250</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, February 5, 2021

<sup>1251</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, February 5, 2021

<sup>1252</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, February 5, 2021

<sup>1253</sup> Ali Amiri-Rad, the governor of Khoda-Afarin, The state-run ROKNA news agency, October 14, 2020

<sup>1254</sup> The official IRNA news agency, August 5, 2018

<sup>1255</sup> The state-run website of Young Journalists Club, July 5, 2018

Early marriages are also common practice in the province of Ardabil. Out of a of 12,000 marriages in 2018 in this province, 37 percent (i.e. 4,400) have been girls between 10 to 14 years old.<sup>1256</sup>

The most tragic consequence of the regime's marriage law is the marriage of girls under 13.

Following are official acknowledgements in this regard:

- The number of under-10 girls married was 220 in 2011; 187 in 2012; 201 in 2013; 176 in 2014; and 179 in 2015. The actual figures are probably higher because of unregistered marriages.<sup>1257</sup>
- In Razavi Khorasan Province, the average marriage age for girl children in Zaweh village is 11.<sup>1258</sup>
- In East Azerbaijan Province, the marriage age for girls in Zainub village is under 10.<sup>1259</sup>
- Some families force girls as young as 9 or 10 years old to get married with old men just to obtain some money to provide for the rest of the family's needs.<sup>1260</sup>
- An 11-year-old girl in Bushehr was forced to marry a 90-year-old man in exchange for 21 million Tomans (\$897).<sup>1261</sup>
- In mid-September 2020, an 11-year-old girl in Ahvaz was forced to marry a man, 35, to end a family dispute, according to the cease-blood tradition (*Khoon-bas*).<sup>1262</sup>
- During the year spanning from March 2020 to March 2021, at least 24 girls under 14 years of age were married in the small Asadabad county, in Hamadan Province.<sup>1263</sup>
- Of the 284 marriages registered in Khoda-Afarin county, in East Azerbaijan Province, in 2019, 54 were marriages of girls under 15 years old.<sup>1264</sup>

Another tragic outcome is the phenomenon of child widows. According to official statements:

- There are some 24,000 widows under 18 years of age in Iran, and most of the early marriages end up in divorce.<sup>1265</sup>
- March 2018: There are 15,000 young widows under 15 years of age in Iran.<sup>1266</sup>
- January 2019: There are 14,000 child widows under 18 years of age in Iran.<sup>1267</sup>

Again, the contradiction in the statistics announced by various sources does not reduce the tragedy of the increasing number of child marriages every year. The unfortunate but impossible conclusion could be that at least 10,000 under-15 child widows died from 2018 to 2019!!

<sup>1256</sup> Behzad Sattari, general director of the Welfare Organization in Ardabil, the state-run daily Entekhab – March 4, 2019

<sup>1257</sup> Batool Salimi Manesh, a social researcher, the official IRNA news agency, August 5, 2018

<sup>1258</sup> Ali Baghdar Delgosha, advisor in youths' affairs to the Governor of Razavi Khorasan Province, told a meeting at the School of Literature of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad on May 14, 2018. Zaweh is located in Razavi Khorasan Province in northeastern Iran.

<sup>1259</sup> Amir Taghizadeh, cultural and youth affairs deputy in the General Department of Youths and Sports in East Azerbaijan Province, the state-run ISNA news agency, May 24, 2018

<sup>1260</sup> Massoumeh Agha-Alishahi, member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run ROKNA news agency, May 28, 2018

<sup>1261</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir newspaper, June 16, 2020

<sup>1262</sup> [Call for registration of cease blood tradition promotes misogyny, violence in Iran](#), articles, NCRI Women's Committee website, October 25, 2020; The state-run rouydad24.com, September 8, 2020

<sup>1263</sup> Zohreh Bakhtiari, deputy for social affairs in the Welfare Organization of Hamadan Province, the state-run ISNA news agency, March 8, 2021

<sup>1264</sup> Ali Amiri-Rad, the governor of Khoda-Afarin, The state-run ROKNA news agency, October 14, 2020

<sup>1265</sup> Hassan Mousavi Chelek, President of the Relief Society, the state-run Salamatnews.com, July 24, 2018

<sup>1266</sup> Shahrbanou Imami, member of Tehran's City Council and former member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run ILNA news agency, March 8, 2018

<sup>1267</sup> Kamil Ahmadi, social researcher, the state-run ISNA news agency, January 16, 2019

### 13. What actions has your country prioritized in the last five years to address violence against women and girls?

#### Introduced or strengthened violence against women laws, and their enforcement and implementation

The clerical regime made efforts in 2020 to address violence against women and children, only after delirious rise in honor killings across the country.

However, the bill on the rights of children passed after 10 years fails to provide sufficient protection for Iranian children, particularly girls, and specifically fails to criminalize child abuse by parents and child labor by government agencies.<sup>1268</sup>

The bill proposed to protect women against violence has not been adopted by the mullahs' parliament. This bill is also very weak, failing to define and criminalize "violence against women," provide practical support for battered women, or address many modern forms of violence against women such as sex-slavery, trafficking of women, etc.<sup>1269</sup> Furthermore, the bill appears to protect only a certain group of women not all women who need support against violence.

Otherwise, the measures taken were in the opposite direction.

#### The bill to eliminate violence against women

The bill entitled "Provision of Security for Women against Violence" was proposed to the clerical regime's parliament in 2011. It contained five chapters and 81 articles. By 2013, its articles had been increased 92. The bill sought to provide protection and support to all women over 18 and married women over 13.<sup>1270</sup>

But the parliamentary Committee on Bills found some faults with the bill, deliberations on the bill were brought to halt, and ultimately it was pushed out of the agenda with the termination of presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

In step with surge in violence against women, the bill was again activated in 2015.

"The bill initially called, 'Elimination of Violence Against Women', was first renamed as 'Provision of Security for Women (PSW).' For two and a half years, the bill was supposed to come back to the parliament, but it got stuck in a labyrinth incomparable to any other bill or plan."<sup>1271</sup>

In 2017, the bill was renamed, "Provision of Security for Women." 41 of its 92 articles were removed ostensibly because they ran parallel to the articles of the Islamic Punishment Code and the Penal Prosecution Procedure. And even then, the mullahs' parliament rejected the bill.

On August 24, 2017, Zabihollah Khoda'ian, legal deputy to the Judiciary, expressed his opposition to the adoption of the PSW bill because 70 percent of the articles of the bill were "criminalizing" and "setting prison sentences for even the slightest tensions between couples."<sup>1272</sup>

The Judiciary's cultural deputy, Hadi Sadeqi, also asserted, "The PSW bill against violence is apparently drafted to support women, but in essence it strikes the greatest blow to women and

<sup>1268</sup> [Children's Rights Bill Fails to Protect Girls](#), documents, NCRI Women's Committee website, September 2020

<sup>1269</sup> [What was the Fate of the bill to prevent Violence Against Women in Iran](#), documents, the NCRI Women's Committee website, February 2020; [Bill to protect women against violence faces hopeless situation in Iran](#), articles, the NCRI Women's Committee website, February 1, 2021

<sup>1270</sup> Shahindokht Molaverdi, former head of the Directorate on Women and Family Affairs, The state-run Sharq daily, January 18, 2021

<sup>1271</sup> Parvaneh Salahshouri, member of parliament, the official IRNA news agency, September 18, 2018

<sup>1272</sup> The official IRNA news agency, August 26, 2017

families. When a woman sends her husband to jail, then that man can never be a husband for her again, and the woman must accept the risk of getting divorced in advance.”<sup>1273</sup>

These remarks and others by Iranian Judiciary officials indicate that they do not take it seriously that domestic violence and violence against women have a destructive impact on the foundations of families which will in turn lead to drastic social ailments.

A glance on cases of death-row female prisoners, women’s suicide, runaway girls and growing divorce rates in Iran which have already jeopardized the foundations of the family shows that in the majority of cases, these women were initially victims of violence and domestic violence.

In the next round of deliberations on the PSW bill, Gholam-Hossein Mohseni Eje’ii, first deputy minister and spokesman of the mullahs’ Judiciary Branch, said the bill had too many faults, it could not be reformed, but had to be completely overhauled and re-written.<sup>1274</sup>

Explaining the reason for rejection of the bill and the need for re-writing it, he said the bill would “weaken the authority of men in the family.”<sup>1275</sup>

In September 2019, the Judiciary passed the bill to the government.<sup>1276</sup> The overhauled bill was renamed as “Protection, Dignity and Provision of Security for Ladies Against Violence.” Another 15 articles of the bill were removed and its objective and focus totally changed, rendering it ineffective in preventing and eliminating violence against women.<sup>1277</sup>

In the first place, the final bill revised by the Judiciary does not present any basic definition of violence against women. Consequently, it does not criminalize violence against women. The deterrent mechanisms and the punishments for committing violence against women have not been defined, and the bill instead contains some articles of the Punishment Law.

The Judiciary’s re-written bill has changed the term “violence” to “misdemeanor,” thus eliminating the focus of the original bill on crimes involving violence against women in order to protect them against violence in all public and private places including the family, school, university, work place, streets, and even on the cyberspace. Parts of the articles dealing with these issues have been removed.<sup>1278</sup>

Articles 26-30 in the previous bill which dealt with sexual crimes, including sexual exploitation of women, rape and sexual violence have been totally removed.<sup>1279</sup>

A good number of the articles in this bill do not concern violence against women, but focus on the mullahs’ religious interpretations, some punishing women who are victims of violence. Article 48, for example, states: “Anyone committing behavior which, contrary to the regulations, leads to forcible removal of a woman’s veil is going to be sentenced to the sixth-degree (maximum) imprisonment or payment of cash fine.”<sup>1280</sup>

<sup>1273</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, June 27, 2018

<sup>1274</sup> The official IRNA news agency, February 17, 2019

<sup>1275</sup> Ashraf Geramizadegan, a legal advisor to the presidential directorate on Women and Family Affairs, the state-run ILNA news agency, September 18, 2018

<sup>1276</sup> [Provision of Security for Women bill finalized by Judiciary after 8 years](#), news, the NCRI Women’s Committee website, September 19, 2019

<sup>1277</sup> [What was the Fate of the bill to prevent Violence Against Women in Iran](#), documents, the NCRI Women’s Committee website, February 2020

<sup>1278</sup> Shima Qusheh, jurist and women’s rights activist, the state-run rouydad24.com, September 30, 2019

<sup>1279</sup> Shima Qusheh, jurist and women’s rights activist, the state-run rouydad24.com, September 30, 2019

<sup>1280</sup> Articles 45-50 of the bill for the “Protection, Dignity and Provision of Security for Mesdames Against Violence” concerns religious precepts such as any deliberate touch in public between a man and a woman’s bodies, proposing sexual relations out of marriage, inviting women to mixed-gender parties, etc. none of which are considered violence against women.

The original bill intended to facilitate filing complaints by women who are victims of violence; the Judiciary's bill again requires the victim to go through the difficult judicial process to prove her claim.<sup>1281</sup>

The bill contains "general, ambiguous, abstract, and vague terms and statements which are open to interpretation" thus creating "the opportunity for personal interpretation and analyses."<sup>1282</sup>

Another controversial part of the bill is using the term "ladies" instead of "women," excluding single women, young girls, victims of social harms, vulnerable women, run-away girls, victims of human trafficking, etc. from any protection that this bill could presumably provide.<sup>1283</sup>

In addition, the spokesman for the Judiciary asserted that the bill only protects the rights of women who abide by the law, regulations, and religious values, excluding the respectable married women who oppose the regime's numerous restrictions on women.<sup>1284</sup>

Most of the text of the bill has been devoted to a series of general statements, like "educating people" and "building the culture," which are ambiguous terms producing no concrete guarantees and no deadlines for practical enforcement and implementation of the bill and does not specify the duties of those in charge of this.<sup>1285</sup>

Furthermore, no financial investments have been considered in the bill to prevent violence or build shelters for victims of violence.

The National Committee of Protection, Dignity and Provision of Security for Ladies Against Violence is in charge of implementing the bill. All members of the committee are men except for Massoumeh Ebtekar who is the director of the Presidential Directorate for Women and Family Affairs. In addition to government officials, three members of the NGOs and two members of the Seminary of Qom are also members of this committee.

It took 16 months for the government to finish its deliberations and pass the bill to the parliament on January 14, 2021, for final examination.<sup>1286</sup> But then the parliament did not acknowledge the receipt of the bill for five months. Since it took so long for the government to pass the bill to the parliament, they proposed their own plan.<sup>1287</sup> This led to some skirmishes between the government and the parliament, until the parliament acknowledged the receipt of the bill which has not yet been adopted and turned into a law.

It seemed that the government was in no rush to examine the bill. This was proved by Mrs. (Massoumeh) Ebtekar's tweet after Romina Ashrafi was murdered by her father,<sup>1288</sup> indicating that the bill was not on the government's agenda and it had been forced to examine the bill only after this bitter incident. It seems that in the absence of such incident victimizing a young girl, the government would not have worried about ratifying the bill in the final months of its administration.<sup>1289</sup>

<sup>1281</sup> Shima Qusheh, jurist and women's rights activist, the state-run rouydad24.com, September 30, 2019

<sup>1282</sup> Shahindokht Molaverdi, presidential deputy on citizens' rights affairs, the state-run jamaran.ir, October 2, 2019

<sup>1283</sup> Shahindokht Molaverdi, presidential deputy on citizens' rights affairs, the state-run jamaran.ir, October 2, 2019

<sup>1284</sup> Shahindokht Molaverdi, presidential deputy on citizens' rights affairs, the state-run jamaran.ir, October 2, 2019

<sup>1285</sup> Shahindokht Molaverdi, presidential deputy on citizens' rights affairs, the state-run jamaran.ir, October 2, 2019

<sup>1286</sup> [Bill to protect women against violence faces hopeless situation in Iran](#), articles, the NCRI Women's Committee website, February 1, 2021

<sup>1287</sup> Mohsen Dehnavi, member of the board of directors of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run IRNA news agency, December 16, 2020

<sup>1288</sup> [Honor killings in Iran – Cruel murders of young women by father, husband](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, May 26, 2020

<sup>1289</sup> Shahindokht Molaverdi, former head of the Directorate on Women and Family Affairs, The state-run Sharq daily, January 18, 2021

Considering the various other concerns and priorities of the parliament, it is a far-fetched expectation that the parliament would examine the bill by the end of Rouhani's term (in July 2021), pass it to the Guardians' Council and return it to the government.<sup>1290</sup>

### Bill to Protect Children and Adolescents Fails to Protect Girls

The murder of Romina Ashrafi on May 21, 2020,<sup>1291</sup> which was pursued by other ghastly honor killings had a heavy impact on the public opinion both inside Iran and abroad. One week later, the mullahs' president, Hassan Rouhani, ordered expedition of the adoption of relevant bills. The bill adopted by the clerical regime on social grounds, to ebb the public's outrage and mislead the domestic and international public opinion, was nonetheless devoid of any executive guarantees.<sup>1292</sup> The Bill to Protect Children and Adolescents was hastily adopted on June 7, 2020, after 11 years of foot-dragging. The bill does not contain any sign of change of the policies or laws which violate children's rights in Iran. The Judiciary had already omitted the limited content of the bill in favor of young women.

The Bill to Protect Children and Adolescents falls short of providing any mechanism to ensure sufficient funding to attend to the needs of child laborers or child widows.

It also fails to address the clerical regime's laws which set the legal age of marriage for girls at 13 and the legal age of criminal accountability for girl children at 9.

The bill also does not contain any provisions ensuring assistance to low income and poor families to improve the situation of their children.

As is the case with most of the bills adopted by the clerical regime's parliament on social issues, the Bill to Protect Children and Adolescents for the most part contains definitions and generalities.

### Bill to increase the legal age of marriage for girls

Child marriage has been institutionalized by the mullahs' regime in Iran by setting the legal age of marriage for girls at 13.

Early marriages take place while persons under 18 years of age are not permitted to do any business. Poverty is the most important factor leading to early marriages.<sup>1293</sup>

The parliamentary women's faction first proposed the bill to increase the age of marriage in December 2016.<sup>1294</sup> According to the drafted bill, Article 1401 of the Civil Code on the minimum age of marriage had to be amended, banning all marriages under the age of 13 for girls and 16 for boys. The legal age of marriage was proposed to be raised to 16 for girls and 18 for boys.<sup>1295</sup>

The parliamentary judicial and legal committee rejected the plan in December 2018. The committee's chair said, "Raising the legal age of marriage is contrary to the general policies of the state."<sup>1296</sup> Mohammad Dehghani, a member of this committee, had already declared, "The plan is

<sup>1290</sup> Shahindokht Molaverdi, former head of the Directorate on Women and Family Affairs, The state-run Sharq daily, January 18, 2021

<sup>1291</sup> [Honor killings in Iran – Cruel murders of young women by father, husband](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, May 26, 2020

<sup>1292</sup> [Children's Rights Bill Fails to Protect Girls](#), documents, NCRI Women's Committee website, September 2020

<sup>1293</sup> Farshid Yazdani, one of the officers in charge of the associations supporting children, the state-run Iran daily newspaper – October 30, 2019

<sup>1294</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, January 23, 2019

<sup>1295</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, March 11, 2019

<sup>1296</sup> Allahyar Malekshahi, Chairman of the parliamentary Judicial and Legal Committee, interview with the state-run Fars News Agency, November 26, 2018



being deliberated by the Committee, and we are opposed to it because we cannot oppose the sacred Islamic law.”<sup>1297</sup>

The Iranian census organization has released new statistics on early marriages in Iran. According to the new data, 234,000 marriages of girl children under 15 years of age were officially registered by this organization from March 2017 to March 2018 (Persian year 1396). 194 of these were marriages of girl children under 10 years old.<sup>1298</sup>

Ali Kazemi, advisor to the legal deputy of the Judiciary Branch, announced in March 2019, that between 500,000 to 600,000 girl children get married every year (in Iran). This figure relates to officially registered marriages and does not include those which were not officially registered.<sup>1299</sup>

The latest news is that after the Iranian regime facilitated granting marriage loans, the applicants for these loans increased 90 folds in the first five months of the year compared to the same period in the previous year.<sup>1300</sup>

A government expert asserted that poor families are literally selling their daughters, and according to the Central Bank's figures, the number of early marriages of girls under 15 in six months increased four times the under-15 marriages throughout the previous year.<sup>1301</sup>

### Efforts to legalize cease blood tradition, a gross violation of the rights of women and girls

The cease blood tradition (*Khoon bas*) is a kind of nomadic ransom for resolving individual disputes and tribal wars, according to which in the event of murder, desecration, assault and any deviation and deviance of the inhabitants, the elders of the tribes intervene and sacrifice innocent women and girls to end the conflict between the men of the tribes.<sup>1302</sup>

This custom means that to end a bloody quarrel between two tribes, a woman from the killer tribe is given to the tribe of the slain victim, which the Arabs call a "faslieh" woman, and in other tribes it is called a "*Khoon bas*." Girls who find themselves in this situation and marry in this way are in fact victims of the mistakes of the men of the tribe.

Since mid-summer 2002, there has been a proposal to register this backward misogynistic tradition as a "valuable cultural heritage" among regime officials and the media.

### The plan for punishment of acid attack assailants

On May 13 and 20, 2019, the Iranian regime's parliament adopted a plan on punishment for acid attacks and giving support to the victims, without limiting or banning the sale and purchase of acid, itself.

According to this bill, the person who commits the crime of splashing acid is sentenced to execution or retribution in kind. The accomplices in this crime are sentenced to imprisonment between 5 and 25 years. If the assailants are not arrested, the government must pay compensations to the victims but when the assailant is arrested, the victim has the right to ask for retribution.<sup>1303</sup>

<sup>1297</sup> Mohammad Dehghani, member of the judicial and legal committee of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run Fars news agency, November 27, 2018

<sup>1298</sup> The state-run IRNA news agency, January 6, 2019

<sup>1299</sup> The state-run daily Entekhab, March 4, 2019

<sup>1300</sup> Tayyebah Siavoshi, a member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run Sarpooosh.com, December 29, 2019

<sup>1301</sup> Mohammad Mehdi Tondguyan, deputy Minister of Sports and Youths, the state-run Sarpooosh.com, December 29, 2019

<sup>1302</sup> [Call for registration of cease blood tradition promotes misogyny, violence in Iran](#), articles, NCRI Women's Committee website, October 25, 2020

<sup>1303</sup> The official IRNA news agency – May 20, 2019

Experts say the act is incomplete without imposing a total ban or limit on sale and purchase of acid, because like other cold arms, acid can destroy and burn.<sup>1304</sup>

In October 2014, a wave of acid attacks was carried out against women in Tehran and Isfahan after incitement by Friday prayer leaders and took toll on dozens of women. The assailants were never arrested and punished, and acid attack became a common practice for personal revenge.

Sigal Mandelker, the Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence at the U.S. Treasury Department, said the Ansar-e Hezbollah, which is a state-backed institute, attacks and persecutes the Iranian people and has been linked to the acid attacks against women in Isfahan.<sup>1305</sup>

### The plan for registration of children with foreign fathers

The law determining the citizenship of children born to Iranian women married to non-Iranian men, was approved on September 24, 2019, and finalized on June 2, 2020. Article One of this law states that "Children born to Iranian women legally married to non-Iranian men, either before or after the enactment of this law, can become a citizen of Iran if their mother requests their citizenship and the Intelligence Ministry and the IRGC Intelligence recognize that the person does not have any security problem. If the Iranian mother does not apply for citizenship, the child can apply for citizenship after reaching the age of 18."<sup>1306</sup>

According to this law, applying for birth certificates requires the mother to have an Iranian birth certificate which is a problem in most cases.

Since civil law does not explicitly provide the mother with sufficient ancestry to transfer citizenship based on blood to the child, and subsequent supplementary laws also provide a conservative approach to recognizing the citizenship of sons and daughters from the father.<sup>1307</sup>

One of the problems in the implementation of this law is that the provinces that have a large number of non-Iranian citizens have not even started receiving documents. The provinces concerned are Sistan and Baluchestan, Razavi Khorasan, Tehran, and Qom.

Sistan and Baluchestan and Razavi Khorasan which are the main province involved in this issue, have not even started receiving documents and the law has not been implemented in these provinces.

By January 2021, only Tehran has issued 130 ID cards.<sup>1308</sup>

<sup>1304</sup> The state-run Salamatnews.com - May 20, 2019

<sup>1305</sup> [USAdarFarsi](#), June 7, 2018

<sup>1306</sup> The state-run Ekhtebare.com, October 14, 2019

<sup>1307</sup> Payman Haghighat-Talab, director of research of Dyaran Association, the state-run Sharq newspaper, January 11, 2021

<sup>1308</sup> Payman Haghighat-Talab, director of research of Dyaran Association, the state-run Sharq newspaper, January 11, 2021

Monitored violence against women seeking asylum, being a refugee, internally displaced or stateless, widowhood, migration status, heading households, living with HIV/AIDS, being deprived of liberty, and being trafficked or in prostitution, women in situations of armed conflict, geographical remoteness and human rights defenders.

### Violence against human rights defenders

The persecution and suppression of opponents and human rights defenders is one of the worst forms of violence against women in Iran carried out by full support of the government and under careful supervision of the Judiciary.

The Iranian regime's security and judiciary agencies arbitrarily and violently arrest opponents and human rights defenders in Iran for exercising their freedom of speech and opinion. Those arrested are brutalized even on the way to prison.

In the next stage, they are confined in solitary cells without standing trial. They endure great pressure and various forms of psychological and physical torture under interrogation. Often, they are not allowed to contact their families and inform them of their place of detention. They are also deprived of access to a lawyer and visits.

These brave women who dare to oppose the mullahs' savage regime or defend human rights, are deprived of the due process of law. In unfair trials and without having access to a lawyer, they are sentenced to disproportionate prison sentences.

On numerous instances, prisoners have to endanger their health by going on hunger strike as a last resort to achieve their demands.

The Coronavirus pandemic aggravated the already abysmal conditions in Iranian prisons. The mullahs' regime deliberately refused to provide the minimum equipment to prisons to fight the virus. The authorities did not grant leaves to prisoners and particularly political prisoners even until the end of the pandemic.

But even the Covid did not stop the regime from its practices of arbitrary arrests, forced disappearances, torture, mistreatment of prisoners, and issuing heavy jail sentences for opponents and human rights defenders, sending many more to overcrowded and unsanitary jails.

In fact, the clerical regime found an effective weapon in the COVID-19 to torture and physically eliminate its political opponents and the bothersome human rights defenders.

By violating the principle of separation of crimes, the regime sent political prisoners to exile and confined them in prisons together with common and dangerous criminals. It thereby prepared the grounds for their physical elimination. In some instances, prison authorities hire dangerous prisoners to murder their political opponents.

A common practice by the Iranian authorities is torturing political prisoners by depriving them of medical treatment. The method proved even more efficient during the pandemic. Prisoners infected by the virus were detained in contaminated sub-standard quarantines, and left unattended as a bid to torture and murder them.

- The United Nations released a World Report on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders in December 2018, by Mr. Michel Forst, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders.<sup>1309</sup>
- The report emphasized that "since December 2017, the situation for human rights defenders in Iran has become significantly more dangerous, as scores of protestors were

<sup>1309</sup> [World Report on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders](#), December 2018

arrested, detained, charged and even killed in anti-government protests which swept across the country.”

- The report added that Iran “has also intensified its crackdown on women.”
- “Scores of women defenders are persecuted for their legitimate work. Hoda Amid, Najmeh Vahedi and Rezvaneh Mohammadi were arrested and arbitrarily detained in unknown locations in September 2018 in retaliation for their involvement in workshops on equal marriage rights and other peaceful activities related to women’s rights. Atena Daemi and Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee are detained for fighting for women’s rights, opposing child labour, and opposing the death penalty. They are being kept in ‘quarantine’ and have restricted contact with the outside world.
- “The State views human rights defenders as threats to national security. Therefore, there is no national law or policy to protect human rights defenders, and the rights of the Declaration are not respected.”
- The report also mentions that “defenders have been subjected to torture, including mock executions, beatings, sleep deprivation and denial of access to adequate medical care; arbitrary arrest and detainment followed by unfair trials; violent dispersal of peaceful protests; travel bans and harassment of human rights defenders’ family members including their children.”
- Amnesty International issued a statement on September 3, 2018, warning that the arrests of lawyers and women’s rights activists in Iran signal intensifying crackdown on civil society.<sup>1310</sup>
- AI wrote, “These latest arrests are a blatant attempt to silence those advocating for human rights in Iran... The arrests of human rights lawyers are part of an attempt by the authorities to prevent them from being able to defend their clients, who are often human rights defenders or individuals who face the death penalty, including for crimes committed as a child.”
- At least 104 women were arrested from March 2016 to February 2017 for participating in protest gatherings and other peaceful activities in defense of fundamental human rights.<sup>1311</sup>
- At least 600 women activists, dissidents and opponents were arrested and detained in Iran from January 2017 to February 2018, an estimated 500 during the uprising in January and afterwards.<sup>1312</sup>
- At least 40 women were arrested from March 2018 to February 2019, and prison sentences were issued for at least 50 other women.<sup>1313</sup>
- In recent years and particularly after the November 2019 uprising in Iran, the clerical regime embarked on several waves of arbitrary arrests among human rights defenders and particularly, the supporters of its main opposition force, the People’s Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI/MEK).

<sup>1310</sup> [Iran arrests of lawyers and women’s rights activists signal intensifying crackdown on civil society](#), Amnesty International, September 3, 2018

<sup>1311</sup> [Annual Report](#) of the Women’s Committee of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, March 2017

<sup>1312</sup> [Annual Report](#) of the Women’s Committee of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, March 2018

<sup>1313</sup> [Annual Report](#) of the Women’s Committee of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, March 2019

- PMOI political prisoner **Zahra Safaei**, 57, was arrested along with her daughter, Parastoo Mo'ini, on February 24, 2020. They were interrogated and pressured to appear on TV and make confessions against themselves.

After completion of their interrogations, they were sent to the notorious Qarchak Prison in mid-April and detained among common criminals.

Ms. Safaei was threatened to death by dangerous inmates in Qarchak in the months of June, August, November and December 2020. She was also battered several times by prisoners hired by the prison's warden.

She suffered a heart stroke while in detention and more recently has been suffering from pain in the kidneys. Her health has deteriorated in Qarchak Prison but the prison authorities prevented her dispatch to a civic hospital for treatment.

On January 23, 2021, Zahra Safaei was sentenced to 8 years in prison. Her daughter, Parastoo, and her son, Mohammad Massoud Mo'ini, were sentenced to 6 years' imprisonment, each.

- PMOI political prisoner **Parastoo Mo'ini**, 20, was arrested on February 24, 2020, and sent to Qarchak Prison. On September 14, 2020, Parastoo Mo'ini and Forough Taghipour were attacked by two hired inmates who attempted to pour boiling water on their heads and faces. But their cellmates prevented the assailants from doing so.

Ms. Mo'ini also contracted the Coronavirus while in detention in Qarchak. She was once again badly brutalized and injured on December 13, 2020, during a vicious raid on their ward.

- PMOI political prisoner **Forough Taghipour**, 25, and her mother, Nassim Jabbari, were arrested on February 24, 2020. Mrs. Jabbari, 58, was released on bail in mid-March, but Forough remained in detention and under interrogation. In mid-April, she was sent to Qarchak Prison.

Forough Taghipour and Parastoo Mo'ini have been under tremendous pressure. Inmates hired and incited by the warden of Qarchak have harassed and attacked them several times.

Forough Taghipour contracted the COVID-19 while in detention in Qarchak. On January 5, 2020, a Tehran court convened and arraigned Forough Taghipour and her mother of their charge of "propaganda against the state." But the judge also threatened to hand down a verdict for Moharebeh (waging war on God). Ms. Taghipour rejected this charge and announced that she was not guilty.

- PMOI political prisoner **Nejat Anvar Hamidi**, 62, was incarcerated in March 2019 to serve her 15-year sentence in Sepidar Prison of Ahvaz. She suffers from Thyroid malfunction, high blood pressure, and blood lipid. Her vision is also at risk. Sepidar Prison authorities have deprived her from receiving her medications. After the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, she contracted the virus and was quarantined but was deprived of medical care.



- PMOI political prisoner **Massoumeh Senobari** is 33 with one child. She was arrested on February 24, 2019 and taken under interrogation. Her calf bone broke under savage torture during interrogation. The sole of her foot fractured and her vision turned blurry among other consequences she suffered due to torture.



She has been sentenced to a total of 8 years in prison and is presently detained in the Central Prison of Tabriz among common criminals. She contracted the COVID-19 in prison.

Ms. Senobari also suffers from a heart disease, but prison authorities have prevented granting her a medical leave or even giving her the medicines provided by her family. Recently, she has been suffering from pain in the breast due to a mass suspected of being cancerous. The authorities of the Prison of Tabriz have not allowed her sonography and medical examination.

- PMOI political prisoner **Nahid Fat'halian** is a retired teacher. Security forces arrested her on April 14, 2020 and took her to women's ward of Evin Prison after several days of interrogation. Ms. Fat'halian actively participated in aiding flood-stricken people in spring 2019. The Revolutionary Court of Tehran convened her trial on September 16, 2020. Mrs. Fat'halian contracted the Covid-19 in Evin Prison in early June 2021. She has been sent to a separate room without proper nutrition or medical care.



- PMOI political prisoner **Aghdas Pour Eshragh**, 64 and a teacher, was arrested in Narmak district of Tehran on July 26, 2020. She was detained and interrogated in the notorious Intelligence Ministry Ward 209 of Evin Prison. Two sisters of Ms. Pour Eshragh have been killed in struggle against the regime. Soghra Pour Eshragh was executed in 1983 and Massoumeh Pour Eshragh was killed in March 2003.
- PMOI political prisoner **Maryam Nassiri**, 62, was arrested on August 17, 2020, in Qal'eh Hassan Khan (Tehran Province). She was detained and interrogated under torture in solitary confinement at Ward 209 of Evin Prison. In October, she was relocated to Qarchak Prison. Mrs. Nassiri is a lawyer and mother of four. She was imprisoned for three years in the 1980s for supporting the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI/MEK).

- PMOI political prisoner **Shokouh-oz Zaman Majd**, 61 from Neyshabur, is detained in the Central Prison of Mashhad. She was taken to jail on March 5, 2021, without prior notice, and without being allowed to take her necessary personal items. She has to serve 2 years in prison on charges of "propaganda against the state" and supporting the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran.



Political prisoner Shokouh oz-Zaman Majd had been previously detained for seven months but released on bail.

Shokouh oz-Zaman Majd has contracted the Covid-19 and is in dire health conditions as she is deprived of essential medical care and treatment.

- Ms. **Farangis Mazloun**, the mother of political prisoner Soheil Arabi, was arrested on July 22, 2019. She was imprisoned and tortured in solitary confinement in Evin Prison for several months in 2019 for following up on the case of her imprisoned son. On July 8,



2020, Mrs. Mazloum was sentenced to 5 years in prison for “assembly and collusion against national security” through alleged contact with the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI/MEK), and to another 1 year for “propaganda against the state.”

The decision was made in her absence and without a trial. The Appeals Court subsequently commuted her sentence to 18 months on August 25, and informed her lawyer on October 20, 2020.



- PMOI political prisoner **Khadijeh (Yalda) Imamdoust**, 47, is an athlete and a champion marathon runner. Intelligence agents arrested Ms. Imamdoust at her home in Isfahan on May 31, 2020. She was incarcerated for two months in Dowlatabad Prison of Isfahan where she was interrogated while held in solitary confinement. She is charged with “propaganda against the state.”
- PMOI political prisoner **Zeinab Hamrang**, a retired teacher, was arrested in the city of Khoy on August 31, 2020. Mrs. Hamrang who is 45 and from the city of Ardabil, was travelling with her daughter to West Azerbaijan. She was moved to Evin Prison in Tehran on September 5, 2020, to serve her prison sentence. She has been sentenced to 6 years in prison for alleged “assembly and collusion against national security” and “propaganda against the state.”
- Mrs. **Sedigheh Morsali**, 55 from Qom, **Marzieh Farsi** from Tehran, and **Somayyeh Bidi** from Karaj were also among the political prisoners detained for supporting the PMOI/MEK.
- Political prisoner **Somayyeh Qoraishi** has been jailed since autumn 2020 in the Central Prison of Urmia.



Urmia's Revolutionary Court sentenced Somayyeh Qoraishi to 18 months in prison for "cooperating with the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI/MEK)" and readily took her to the Central Prison of Urmia to serve her sentence in the women's ward. Somayyeh Qoraishi, from Urmia, had been initially arrested and detained last summer, but was temporarily released on bail after a month.

- Kurdish political prisoner **Sakineh Parvaneh**, 29, was arrested in autumn 2019 for visiting her family in Soleimaniya, in the Iraqi Kurdistan. Security forces interrogated her for 10 days. Subsequently, she was sent to the Intelligence Ministry detention center in Ward 209 of Evin Prison for further interrogations. She was transferred to the women's ward in mid-February 2020.

In March, she was badly brutalized by prison guards. She was handcuffed and shackled and sent to exile in Qarchak Prison. After 4 days of solitary confinement, she was sent to Aminabad Psychiatric Hospital in Shahr-e Rey. According to a report on April 21, 2020, she was returned to Qarchak and detained in the quarantine ward with a bruised and swollen face. Again, on May 9, she was sent back to Evin Prison where she was severely beaten.

On May 25, 2020, the Revolutionary Court of Tehran sentenced her to 5 years in prison, in protest to which Sakineh Parvaneh went on hunger strike.



In June, several inmates convicted of dangerous crimes and enticed by the prison's warden, attacked, and brutalized her in Ward 3 of Qarchak Evin.

She started another hunger strike on June 18, demanding an end to her own and her family's harassment. On July 4, 2020, Sakineh Parvaneh was transferred with a battered and bruised body from Qarchak Prison to the quarantine ward of Evin Prison where she ended her hunger strike.

On October 27, 2020, Sakineh Parvaneh was sent to exile to the Prison of Quchan. During her detention, she was deprived of having visitations with her family. On October 30, sensing that she was possibly being transferred to a prison in Isfahan, Sakineh went on hunger strike and sewed her lips on the eighth day. On November 9, 2020, she was sent to solitary confinement. After 20 days, she ended her hunger strike on November 20.

Finally, on the night of December 13, 2020, she was sent to exile to the Central Prison of Mashhad, a.k.a. Vakilabad Prison. On May 22, 2021, she started another hunger strike in protest to being deprived of medical treatment and her continued deportation to Mashhad Prison.

- **Saba Kord Afsahri** was first arrested on August 2, 2018, during a peaceful protest against high prices. She spent three months in legal limbo in Qarchak Prison before being sentenced to a year in prison and transferred to Evin. After her release, she conveyed the voices of the political prisoners and prisoners of conscience she had met in Evin.



She was arrested again on June 1, 2019. This time, she was sentenced to 24 years in prison for opposing the mandatory Hijab. On December 9, 2020, she was sent to exile to Qarchak Prison. On December 13, she was injured during the vicious Guards' attack on Ward 8.

On January 26, 2021, prison guards took her by the hair and dragged her on the floor to move her from Ward 8 to Ward 6 where inmates convicted of dangerous crimes are detained.

Saba Kord Afshari suffers from a stomach ulcer and other GI problems. She has been also deprived of medical treatment. A couple of times, she was sent to a civic hospital but returned before being tested. Saba Kord Afshari went on strike from May 8 to 17, 2021, demanding her sick mother's release from Evin.



- **Mojgan Keshavarz** is 38 and mother of 10-year-old girl. She is sentenced to 23.5 years in prison for protesting the mandatory veil. Mrs. Keshavarz was abruptly transferred out of Evin and taken to Qarchak Prison on December 5, 2020. She was also injured during the Guards' attack on Ward 8 on December 13, 2020.
- **Yasaman Aryani** was arrested on August 2, 2018, for participating in a protest in Tehran against high prices, and spent 7 months in prison. She was arrested again on April 10, 2019, for protesting the mandatory Hijab and was sentenced to 9 years and 7 months in prison. Initially, she was imprisoned in Qarchak Prison where she was attacked and brutalized by dangerous inmates several times. She was subsequently sent to the women's ward of Evin. On October 21, 202, she and her mother, Monireh Arabshahi, were abruptly moved out of Evin and sent to exile to the



Kachouii Prison in Karaj where Yasaman contracted the Covid-19. She was left unattended and deprived of medical treatment.

- **Fatemeh Davand**, 42 with three children, was arrested during the protests in November 2019 in the city of Bukan, Kurdistan Province. She was temporarily released on bail until final disposition of her case. Then the Bukan City Court sentenced her to five years and five months in prison and 30 lashes. On August 6, 2020, she was summoned to Urmia Central Prison to serve her sentence. Her request to be conditionally released with an electronic bracelet was rejected. So, she started a hunger strike on November 12, 2020, to protest the decision but she was transferred to a high security ward in Urmia Prison. She was finally conditionally sent on leave on May 11, 2021, with an electronic bracelet.
- Retired teacher **Massoumeh Asgari** was arrested for participating in a teachers' protest in Tehran in August 2018 and sentenced to five years in prison. After one year, she was sent on medical leave upon the forensics office's certification that she needed to be treated for the various illnesses she has. But she was returned to the women's ward of Evin Prison on November 22, 2020, before completing her treatment, to serve her remaining four years.



Again, on December 20, 2020, she received certification for conditional release indicating that she could not remain in prison because of her illnesses. But prison authorities have not granted her leave. Massoumeh Asgari is a single mother with a 15-year-old son. She suffers from various physical and psychological illnesses. She recently had an accident breaking her leg at 8 points. She cannot walk on her own and uses a walker and a wheelchair.

- **Maryam Akbari Monfared**, the mother of three girls, was arrested on December 31, 2009. In June 2010, the Revolutionary Court of Tehran sentenced her to 15 years in prison for *Moharebeh* on the alleged charge of "membership in the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran," a charge which Mrs. Akbari has never accepted. She has been in prison without a single day of leave since the day she was detained. She suffers from Thyroid malfunction and joint rheumatism.



On August 31, 2020, a court hearing was convened in her absence, levelling new charges against her.

On March 9, 2021, Maryam Akbari Monfared was abruptly moved from Evin Prison and sent to exile in the Central Prison of Semnan where she is detained in the general ward in violation of the principle of separation of crimes.

Maryam Akbari Monfared is under maximum pressure of the Ministry of Intelligence in Semnan Prison. Her case is being followed up directly by the Intelligence Ministry. No one, even the assistant prosecutor who oversees the cases of political prisoners, is allowed to interfere in Maryam Akbari's case. The Intelligence Ministry does not allow granting any of her requests. She is deprived of the most fundamental rights of a prisoner, including having access to newspapers, medical treatment and prison leave. She has very limited time to make her daily calls which are done in the prison's Security Office and in the presence of a prison guard.

Maryam Akbari's sister and brother were executed during the massacre of political prisoners in summer 1988. Another two of her brothers were executed during the mass executions in the early 1980s.

- Kurdish political prisoner **Zeinab Jalalian**, 38, was sentenced to death in 2009 on the charge of Moharebeh through "membership in Pejak." The verdict was commuted to life in prison in 2011. Ms. Jalalian has been in jail without any leaves since 2007 when she was arrested in Kermanshah. She suffers from various illnesses including asthma, pterygium, an oral thrush condition, and GI complications. As a way of torture, the Ministry of Intelligence has deprived her of medical treatment. She is presently under various forms of psychological pressure and deprived of her rights as a prisoner to express remorse and collaborate with the Intelligence Ministry. The ministry's agents also pressured her while she was in Qarchak Prison to cooperate with them.



Zeinab Jalalian was serving her sentence in Khoi Prison, when she was abruptly taken away on April 27, 2020, without any explanations. On May 2, she was taken to the quarantine ward of Qarchak Prison. Ms. Jalalian contracted the Covid-19 while in detention in Qarchak. Despite her asthma condition, she was left unattended. On June 25, 2020, she was brutalized and transferred to the Prison of Kerman and confined in a solitary cell for three months. After much persecution, she was relocated to the Prison of Kermanshah on September 24, 2020. For the fourth time in six months, she was transferred to the Central Prison of Yazd on November 9, 2020. This was the fourth time in six months when Zeinab Jalalian was being relocated from one prison to the other. Zeinab Jalalian in dire health conditions, suffering from short breath and heavy coughs. The Ministry of Intelligence did not allow her treatment in a civic hospital and yet she was deprived of even basic medical services in Yazd Prison. She does not enjoy the basic rights of any prisoner. Her occasional phone calls home are very short and she can only speak in Farsi. She is also deprived of visitations. The doctors working at the dispensary of the Central Prison of Yazd have openly told Zeinab Jalalian that they do not have sufficient resources to attend to her and that she must be taken to a civic hospital as soon as possible.

- **Fatemeh Mosanna** and her husband, Hassan Sadeqi, and her two children were arrested on January 28, 2013 as they were holding a memorial ceremony for Mr. Sadeqi's father who was a member of the opposition People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI/MEK), and had just passed away. Her daughter was detained for three days and her underage son was detained and interrogated for about 1.5 months. The couple were later sentenced to 15 years in prison, each. Their business and residence were also confiscated by the regime's Judiciary. Mrs. Mosanna has been deprived of having visits with her imprisoned husband for more than a year.



Fatemeh Mosanna, 53, has been suffering from intestinal bleeding since mid-August and is not able to walk on her own. The first time, they took her to a hospital, her hands and feet were cuffed to the bed. She was returned to prison after six days without completing her medical tests. Evin Prison authorities deprived her from receiving urgent medical



treatment for more than five months. She was finally taken to a civic hospital on February 11, 2021, following serious deterioration of her health, intestinal pain and bleeding, but returned to prison after five days without completing her treatment. She was deprived of access to her regular medicines.

A doctor from Tehran's Taleghani Hospital, urged the forensics office to examine her and verify that she could not bear prison conditions and that she deserved to be granted medical leave. Because of the advanced stage of her illness, the doctor said, it is not possible to treat her in the stressful conditions of prison.

As a result of prison conditions, Mrs. Mosanna suffers from GI disorders, liver problems, intestinal colitis and nervous migraine headaches. She has repeatedly fallen unconscious because of severe pain in her digestive tract. Every time, however, Evin's Assistant Prosecutor, Amin Vaziri, prevented her access to proper medical treatment.

Finally, on May 5, 2021, Fatemeh Mosanna was granted a two-month medical leave on bail.

Fatemeh Mosanna was arrested in 1982 and imprisoned for three years with her mother, when she was only 13. They were charged with "waging war on God" through supporting the opposition. People's Mojahedin Organization. Fatemeh's three brothers and a sister-in-law were executed by the clerical regime in 1980s.

- Political prisoner **Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee** is presently detained in exile in the Prison of Amol. Some 50 prisoners are detained in two rooms in the women's ward of Amol Prison. Most of them are convicted on drug-related charges and some have hepatitis. There is no quarantine to hold the new arrivals and there is high risk of contracting the virus in this prison.



Mrs. Ebrahimi Iraee was serving her sentence in Qarchak Prison when she was viciously brutalized on December 13, 2020, moved out of the ward, and sent to the IRGC Intelligence Ward 2A in Evin Prison. She was under interrogation in relation to trumped up charges in a new case until January 24, 2021, when she was briefly returned to Qarchak Prison.

Immediately afterwards and without prior notice, she was sent to exile to Amol Prison. She was imprisoned for 3 years since 2016 when she was arrested for writing an unpublished story against the cruel punishment of stoning. During this time, she was violently transferred to Qarchak Prison. She was returned to Evin only after an 81-day hunger strike. She was released in April 2019, but arrested again on November 9, 2019 and transferred to Qarchak Prison to serve 25 months of imprisonment.

Golrokh Ebrahimi and Zahra Safaei were assaulted and threatened to death by an incited and hired inmate in Qarchak Prison on November 2, 2020.

- Political prisoner **Atena Daemi** was abruptly sent to exile to Lakan Prison of Rasht on March 16, 2021. Ms. Daemi had not been informed in advance, and she was not allowed to pack her belongings or contact her family. Prison guards put cuffs on her hands and feet and removed her from the women's ward of Evin Prison.



Atena Daemi, 32, must have been released on July 4, 2020, after completing her 5-year prison term. But she was sentenced again to a total of 5 years of imprisonment and 74 lashes because of trumped up charges filed against her by the Ministry of Intelligence and the Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

Children's rights activist, Atena Daemi was first arrested on October 21, 2014, and detained for 16 months for participating in a protest gathering outside the UN Office in Tehran, a protest against execution of Reyhaneh Jabbari, and other peaceful activities. On November 26, 2016, she was violently arrested again without showing any warrants and taken to Evin Prison to serve her sentence. During this period, she started a 54-day hunger strike in March 2017 which ended successfully when the prison sentences for her two sisters were rescinded.

Atena Daemi has suffered various illnesses during her years of incarceration, including numbness of her limbs, kidney infection, hormonal imbalance, and she is suspected of having multiple sclerosis and cancer.

- **Marjan Davari**, 52, arrested on September 24, 2015, was detained for almost two years in illegal limbo.

Ms. Davari, a researcher, translator and writer, was first interrogated at the Intelligence Ministry Ward 209 of the Evin Prison for three months and held in solitary confinement without having access to legal counsel.

She was subsequently transferred to the women's general ward in Evin on January 3, 2016. In February 2017, she was transferred to Qarchak Prison, in Varamin.

Tehran's Revolutionary Court sentenced her to death on March 12, 2017, but the Supreme Court commuted her sentence to life imprisonment on January 6, 2018.

She is still detained in Qarchak Prison on charges of "spreading corruption on Earth," "collusion and complicity against the state," and insulting the mullahs' supreme leader, among others.

She was sentenced to death for translating books on theosophy and metaphysics, and for teaching the same in an institute in 2017. In 2020, Tehran's Revolutionary Court commuted her sentence to 75 years in jail, 25 years of which will be implemented.



### Holding prisoners in illegal limbo

Another common practice by the Iranian regime to pressure female political prisoners is holding them in illegal limbo.

A prisoner held in illegal limbo is someone whose interrogation has been completed and the Ministry of Intelligence has filed suit against her, but her trial has not been held. Sometimes, her court convenes but no sentence is issued for a long time.

Detaining a prisoner in limbo gives her interrogators an open hand to make any decision at any time on her fate or harass her by any conceivable method.

This practice has been rejected by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and many other international laws.



## Introduced or strengthened free and quality services for survivors of violence (e.g. shelters, help lines, dedicated health services, legal, justice service, counselling, housing)

In a country said to be the world's top record holder of domestic violence against women, there are only 34 shelters for some 40 million women. In several reports published in 2020, VAW experts and activists revealed shocking details on the absence of quality services for survivors of violence. For example, in Iran's most populated Tehran Province, there are only two or three shelters with the maximum capacity of 30 beds, while thousands of women refer to these shelters.

- There are only 34 safe shelters in provincial capitals throughout the country.<sup>1314</sup>
- 85,420 women had filed complaints with the Coroner's Office last year against their violent husbands.<sup>1315</sup>
- Today, violence in Iran has become omnipresent across the country and one cannot draw a geographic line for it.<sup>1316</sup>
- Reports from Isfahan, Alborz, Golestan, Ilam and North Khorasan Provinces also indicate that there has been from 50% to ten-fold rise in the number of contacts with the Social Emergencies since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of these contacts are related to child abuse, wife battering, and violence against the disabled.<sup>1317</sup>
- Women can come with their daughters and under-8 sons. But if their sons are older than 8, they will be sent to the centers of street children or pseudo-family centers.<sup>1318</sup> As a result, from March to August 2019, only 2,000 of the 10,000 women who contacted the 123 Social Emergency Line were admitted to safe shelters across the country.
- 2,311 persons referred to the safe shelters in 2019.<sup>1319</sup>
- According to the available statistics, 1,630 persons referred to the safe shelters from April to September 2020. This is while some provinces do not have any safe shelters. With the outbreak of the Coronavirus, women, girls, the elderly, and the disabled have become more and more victims of domestic violence. But in many of these cases, they have not filed any complaints. So, the available statistics do not reflect the depth of the tragedy.<sup>1320</sup>
- Two safe shelters are active in Tehran Province which are run by the government. One with a capacity of 10 beds, and the other with a capacity of 5 beds. Women battered by their husbands or fathers can come to these shelters with an order from a judge. There have been some cases, however, where the judge rules to return the victim to the violent perpetrator, without considering the opinion of the social workers or relevant experts. As a result, the victimized women end up back in the cycle of violence.<sup>1321</sup>

<sup>1314</sup> Mahmoud Aligou, Deputy for social affairs of the Welfare Organization, the state-run Shahrvand daily, June 20, 2020

<sup>1315</sup> Abbas Majedi Arani, head of the General Coroner's Office, the state-run Baharnews.com, June 20, 2020

<sup>1316</sup> www.borna.news, October 13, 2019

<sup>1317</sup> www.aasoo.org, June 30, 2020

<sup>1318</sup> Deputy for social affairs of the Welfare Organization, the state-run behzisti.ir, December 30, 2019

<sup>1319</sup> Mahmoud Aligou, director general for victims of social harms and head of the Social Emergency Department in the Welfare Organization, women.gov.ir, January 21, 2021

<sup>1320</sup> Mahmoud Aligou, director general for victims of social harms and head of the Social Emergency Department in the Welfare Organization, women.gov.ir, January 21, 2021

<sup>1321</sup> Mehdi Khanekeh, deputy for social affairs in the Welfare Organization of Tehran Province, the state-run ISNA news agency, February 16, 2021

- We have three safe shelters in Tehran Province, two of which are government-run and the other is run by a non-government section. Each shelter can accept 10 mothers.<sup>1322</sup>
- The following case is a vivid example of the fate of survivors of violence: Azam who had been tortured 21 days by her husband, was transferred with her two daughters to a government welfare center. The Welfare Organization's social affairs deputy in the Razavi Khorasan Province said the two daughters of Azam will stay with their mother in this center until they reach a better psychological condition. Then, they will be transferred to a children's house where they can stay, permanently if they want. Azam, however, will not be permitted to stay in such centers, permanently.<sup>1323</sup>  
Azam's husband who tortured her to the verge of death was released on a petty 20-million-toman bail (approx. \$1,740).<sup>1324</sup>

**Introduced or strengthened strategies to prevent violence against women and girls (e.g. in the education sector, in the media, community mobilization, work with men and boys)**

A number of Iranian sociologists and social researchers have underscored the escalation of domestic violence against women in Iranian society, indicating that poverty and class differences, and discrimination are among the most important factors contributing to violence against women. Some say the legal, judicial and disciplinary structures are such that they allow men to use force against women.

- Ahmad Bokharaii, director of social damages group affiliated with the Sociology Association, says, "Regardless of the existing cultural backgrounds promoting male domination (under the mullahs' rule), the legal, judicial and disciplinary structures are such that men allow themselves to imply force and commit violence against women... Between March 2017 and March 2018, there were 300 media reports on murders within the family and the statistics show that more than 80 percent of the victims were women."<sup>1325</sup>
- Another social expert said male domination and its relevant prejudices have grown in the younger generation and based on the culture promoted (under the mullahs' misogynous rule), men consider domestic violence against women as a right they are entitled to.<sup>1326</sup>
- From every 20 women in Iran, one is exposed to domestic violence by her husband. But less than 35 percent of the cases of domestic violence are reported to the Police or Social Emergencies.<sup>1327</sup>
- Amanollah Qaraii Moghaddam, a sociologist: "Some time ago, chair of the Social Aid Association, announced that 40% of domestic violence in the world is carried out in our country... Sexual domestic violence is the worst form of domestic violence."<sup>1328</sup>
- Iran holds the world record on domestic violence... Today, the country is engulfed in social ailments and no house is safe in Iran.<sup>1329</sup>

<sup>1322</sup> Farzaneh Amir Yazdani, director of Safe Shelters Project in the Office of the Affairs of Victims of Social Ailments in the Welfare Organization, the Welfare Organization's website, Behzisti.ir, December 16, 2020

<sup>1323</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, April 25, 2016

<sup>1324</sup> [Tortured woman to stay without social protection](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, April 26, 2016

<sup>1325</sup> The official IRNA news agency - July 18, 2018

<sup>1326</sup> The official IRNA news agency - July 18, 2018

<sup>1327</sup> The state-run Borna.news website, October 13, 2019

<sup>1328</sup> aasoo.org, June 30, 2020 citing Borna.news

- Less than three months since the beginning of the (Persian year) 1399 (i.e. from April to June 2020), the statistics on violence has exceeded the total of all the past years.<sup>1330</sup>
- Honor killings are on the rise more than any other time. Honor killings in the country have recently had a meaningful growth compared to the same period last year, and family murders top the country's crises. It is estimated that at least 8 murders take place in Iran every day. The continuation of this trend could increase the average of 450 honor killings per year to 2,736 cases in 2020.<sup>1331</sup>
- According to the 2019 statistics of the National Statistics Center, the Coroner's Office conducted physical examinations on 18,624 women battered by their husbands. This shows 5 units increase compared to 2018, reaching 14% in 2019.<sup>1332</sup>



<sup>1329</sup> Mohammad Reza Mahboubfar, an expert on social ailments, the state-run Jahanesanat.ir, November 19, 2020

<sup>1330</sup> Mohammad Reza Mahboubfar, an expert on social ailments, the state-run Jahanesanat.ir, November 19, 2020

<sup>1331</sup> Mohammad Reza Mahboubfar, an expert on social ailments, the state-run Jahanesanat.ir, November 19, 2020

<sup>1332</sup> The state-run rouydad24.com, May 6, 2021

## Monitoring and evaluation of impact, including evidence generation and data collection, including regarding particular groups of women and girls

### Data collection

The Iranian regime does not have an accountable census and data collection system. Furthermore, the regime is not transparent in providing the data. Officials usually speak by percentages without mentioning exact figures. On rare occasions when they provide figures, the figures are insufficient or conflicting. The remarks made by a few officials are helpful in getting a picture of the situation:

- The last national survey on violence against women in Iran was conducted in 2000... Since then, no national research on violence against women has been carried out. If done, the results have been kept confidential and not publicly announced.<sup>1333</sup>
- Domestic violence is not clearly seen in society because unfortunately a woman who is subjected to such violence, rarely speaks out about it. This is why many women suffer from it.<sup>1334</sup>
- 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... Women and mothers who are subjected to violence or are constantly brutalized cannot manage their families, properly.<sup>1335</sup>
- Statistics on domestic violence against women is not reported, registered or published in the media, so there is nowhere you can find the exact data.<sup>1336</sup>
- Women generally do not complain about the violence they experience and the government's data does not accurately reflect the reality.<sup>1337</sup>
- From every 20 women in Iran, one is exposed to domestic violence by her husband. But less than 35 percent of the cases of domestic violence are reported to the Police or Social Emergencies.<sup>1338</sup>
- Amanollah Qaraii Moghaddam, a sociologist: "Some time ago, chair of the Social Aid Association, announced that 40% of domestic violence in the world is carried out in our country... Sexual domestic violence is the worst form of domestic violence."<sup>1339</sup>
- Iran holds the world record on domestic violence... Today, the country is engulfed in social ailments and no house is safe in Iran.<sup>1340</sup>

<sup>1333</sup> In 2014, the presidential deputy on women and family affairs, Shahindokht Molaverdi revealed that 32 volumes of books containing the outcome of a national research done on domestic violence against women "have been lost" and no copies of them can be found "in the Ministry of Interior or the directorate for women and family affairs."

<sup>1334</sup> Parvaneh Salahshouri, head of women's faction in the mullahs' parliament, the state-run IRNA news agency, November 25, 2017

<sup>1335</sup> Tayyebbeh Siavoshi, member of the women's faction of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run donya-e-eqtesad.com, July 17, 2018

<sup>1336</sup> Kamel Delpasand, sociologist and a researcher in social sciences, interview with the official IRNA news agency, July 18, 2018

<sup>1337</sup> Ali Hadizadegan, Chief Coroner of Mashhad, The state-run Fars news agency, November 23, 2017

<sup>1338</sup> The state-run Borna.news website, October 13, 2019

<sup>1339</sup> aasoo.org, June 30, 2020, citing Borna.news

<sup>1340</sup> Mohammad Reza Mahboubfar, an expert on social ailments, the state-run Jahanesanat.ir, November 19, 2020

- Less than three months since the beginning of the (Persian year) 1399 (i.e. from April to June 2020), the statistics on violence in the country has exceeded the total of all the past years.<sup>1341</sup>
- Honor killings are on the rise more than any other time. Honor killings in the country have recently had a meaningful growth compared to the same period last year, and family murders top the country's crises. It is estimated that at least 8 murders take place in Iran every day. The continuation of this trend could increase the average of 450 honor killings per year to 2,736 cases in 2020.<sup>1342</sup>
- According to the 2019 statistics of the National Statistics Center, the Coroner's Office conducted physical examinations on 18,624 women battered by their husbands. This shows 5 units increase compared to 2018, reaching 14% in 2019.<sup>1343</sup>

#### 14. What strategies has your country used in the last five years to prevent violence against women and girls?

- Public awareness raising and changing of attitudes and behaviours
- Work in primary and secondary education, including comprehensive sexuality education
- Grassroots and community-level mobilization
- Changing the representation of women and girls in the media
- Working with men and boys
- Perpetrator programs

#### Perpetrator programs

The Iranian regime does not have any perpetrator programs. The assailants are rarely arrested, and in the case of government officials, they are granted impunity.

In the meantime, the regime's officials and clerical authorities often incite violence against women. One of the most vivid examples of this was in the case of chain acid attacks on women in 2014.

#### Zahra Navidpour

On January 6, 2019 the lifeless body of Zahra Navidpour was found in her mother's residence in Malekan, a small city in East Azerbaijan Province. Zahra had been raped repeatedly by the city's deputy. Her death was initially announced as suicide, but the circumstances were suspicious. Zahra Navidpour, 28, was looking for a job after her father's death, when she was offered a job by Salman Khodadadi, the city's deputy in the parliament, and lured into his office in Tehran where she was raped.

Holding audio recordings and other incriminating documents at hand, Zahra filed a suit against Khodadadi but due to the latter's collusions with the court, she faced an unfair trial and a presiding judge who was intent to incriminate her.



<sup>1341</sup> Mohammad Reza Mahboubfar, an expert on social ailments, the state-run Jahanesanat.ir, November 19, 2020

<sup>1342</sup> Mohammad Reza Mahboubfar, an expert on social ailments, the state-run Jahanesanat.ir, November 19, 2020

<sup>1343</sup> The state-run rouydad24.com, May 6, 2021

In a verbal encounter in the parliament building, Khodadadi threatened to kill Zahra and her family “overnight without anyone knowing.”

Zahra’s death projected as suicide seemed suspicious, so the coroner’s office was supposed to perform autopsy on her, but security forces stole and secretly buried her body in a village before the autopsy.

In the wake of Zahra’s death, Tehran Province’s Criminal Court convicted Salman Khodadadi of adultery “without use of violence” and sentenced him to 99 lashes in addition to two years of internal exile and deprivation of holding elected or appointed positions.

Khodadadi objected the verdict and his case was undertaken by one of the branches of the Tehran Supreme Court.

Later, in October 2019, Tehran’s Supreme Court branch accepted the convict’s objection. While rejecting the charge of “rape,” the Supreme Court did not uphold the preliminary ruling because Khodadadi suffers from diabetes and injects insulin. The case was turned back to the Criminal Court of Tehran to be re-examined.<sup>1344</sup>

### Farinaz Khosravani

On May 4, 2015, a young woman by the name of Farinaz Khosravani threw herself off the fourth floor of Tara Hotel in Mahabad, Iranian Kurdistan, to escape rape by an agent of the Intelligence Department, Morteza Hashemivand.<sup>1345</sup>

Khosravani was 26 and lived in Mahabad. She had a Bachelor’s degree in Computer Sciences but worked in a hotel to provide for her family’s expenses.

The lawyer of Khosravani family announced, “To this day, the result of Farinaz’s case has remained unclear and no convictions have been ordered by the court.”<sup>1346</sup>

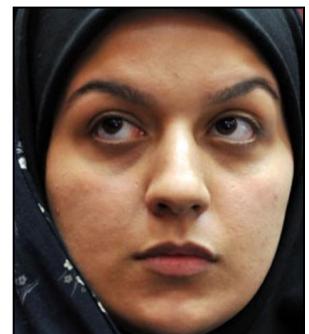


### Reyhaneh Jabbari

Reyhaneh Jabbari, 26, was executed at dawn on October 25, 2014 in Gohardasht Prison in Karaj, west of Tehran. She had already spent 7 years in prison.<sup>1347</sup>

Jabbari, a decorator, was 19-years old when charged with murdering Morteza Sarbandi, a 47-year old married doctor who had three children and was a former employee of the Ministry of Intelligence (MOIS). Jabbari defended herself against the MOIS employee’s attempt to rape her.

Ahmad Shaheed, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Iran, had at the time described her death sentence as inadmissible and unfair. He cited credible documents that proved Jabbari was innocent of premeditated murder charges. The UN Special Rapporteur emphasized if Jabbari’s claims are true, she is twice a victim: once by the individual who intended to rape her; and second, by the judicial system that must protect individuals against sexual and physical aggression.



<sup>1344</sup> The state-run Fararu website – October 15, 2019

<sup>1345</sup> [Girl commits suicide to save herself from rape, another crime against women by mullahs](#), website of the NCRI Women’s Committee, May 8, 2015

<sup>1346</sup> [Case of Farinaz Khosravani remains under legal consideration](#), website of the NCRI Women’s Committee, June 22, 2015

<sup>1347</sup> [Special report: Reyhaneh Jabbari’s execution](#), website of NCRI Women’s Committee, November 26, 2014



## Incitements provoking acid attacks

In 2014, where a systematic wave of acid attacks on women in Tehran and Isfahan left dozens of women disfigured for the rest of their lives, the Iranian police and judiciary failed to arrest any perpetrators.

A stark reality is that the Iranian authorities are the ones who incite such attacks against women. Following are a number of their remarks preceding the acid attacks:

- Ahmad Khatami, member of the Assembly of Experts' board of directors: "Blood must be spilled in order to resolve the issue of hijab."<sup>1348</sup>
- Yousef Tabatabai-Nejad, Friday prayer leader of Isfahan: "To confront 'mal-veiling' we must raise a 'wet stick' and resort to force."<sup>1349</sup>
- MesbahYazdi, a high-ranking mullah in Bojnourd close to Khamenei, said: "Prohibiting vice cannot be established with kindness."<sup>1350</sup>
- Mullah Ahmad Alam ol-Hoda, Mashhad Friday prayer leader: "Mal-veiled women are vicious as wolves. The sin of improper veiling is worse than theft and murder."<sup>1351</sup>
- Referring to women who oppose the mandatory Hijab, Habibollah Sha'bani, Khamenei's representative in Hamadan Province and the Friday prayer leader of Hamadan, declared, "The State Security Force should not allow criminals to feel safe in society."<sup>1352</sup>
- Yousef Tabatabaii-Nejad urged the authorities to grant greater powers to the State Security Force (SSF) to deal with Hijab offenders. Tabatabaii-Nejad said: "The social atmosphere must be made unsafe for these people whose number is scarce. But they must not be allowed to be relaxed in streets and parks while breaking the norms."<sup>1353</sup>

## 17. Has your country taken any action in the last five years to address violence against specific groups of women facing multiple forms of discrimination?

YES/NO

For more than four decades of religious dictatorship, ethnic and religious minorities have been the target of systematic repression, security, and judicial crackdowns. They have also been deprived of the freedom to engage in certain social activities. The regime discriminates against Christians and Baha'is, as well as the Muslim Sunni minority and Gonabadi Dervishes.

Not only the Iranian regime has not addressed violence against specific groups of women facing multiple forms of discrimination but has systematically used violence against them.

<sup>1348</sup> The state-run Aftab daily, May 6, 2011 <http://aftabnews.ir/vdcgzn9qtak9xu4.rpra.html>

<sup>1349</sup> The state-run asriran.com, November 23, 2011 <http://www.asriran.com/fa/news/191466/>

<sup>1350</sup> The state-run Fars news agency, October 23, 2014 <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=1>

<sup>1351</sup> Ahmad Alam al-Hoda's personal blog <http://omolbnin4.blogfa.com/post/169/>

<sup>1352</sup> The state-run Fars news agency, October 22, 2020

<sup>1353</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, October 2, 2020

### Sufi women

Eleven Gonabadi dervish women were taken to Qarchak Prison. Shokoufeh Yadollahi, Sepideh Moradi, Maryam Farsiabi, Nazila Noori, Sima Entesari, Shima Entesari, Shahnaz Kiani, Maryam Barakouhi, Elham Ahmadi, Avisha Jalaledin and Sedigheh Safabakht were brutalized during the crackdown on the dervishes' protest gathering in Tehran on the night of February 19 which carried through morning of February 20, 2018.

They were detained since under inhumane conditions, without access to their lawyers. Some needed urgent medical care for injuries sustained from beatings at the time of arrest.

These women have suffered a range of health problems in custody, due to ill-treatment by security forces, including head injuries, broken arms and vaginal bleeding. They also have been denied adequate treatment for pre-existing medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes and high blood pressure.

- Shokoufeh Yadollahi was badly brutalized during arrest and subsequently under torture as a result of which she lost her sense of smell and needs to be treated urgently. A six-month denial of medical care led to an increase in the level of infection in her blood and endangered her life.
- Shima Entesari, who suffers from asthma, experienced severe breathing difficulties requiring supplemental oxygen.
- Dr. Nazilla Noori who had been through vicious torture, was hospitalized but deprived of having a company, receiving visitors or phone calls.
- Sepideh Moradi suffered injuries in the hand, elbow and fingers while being arrested during the Sufis' protest in Tehran. Her legs got burnt due to security forces' use of tear gas. Ms. Moradi was denied medical care.
- Ms. Shahnaz Kian Asl (Kiani) was transferred to the dispensary of Qarchak Prison of Varamin on May 19, 2018 upon insistence of inmates but was returned to the ward without receiving medical care. She suffered from diabetes and her symptoms had aggravated due to malnutrition. A new mass had appeared in her chest area and she contracted ulcer and GI inflammation but had not been cared for at the dispensary.
- "Women prisoners of conscience from Iran's Gonabadi Dervish religious community are being subjected to verbal abuse, including sexual slurs, and denied proper medical treatment by doctors and other health professionals at Shahr-e Rey prison on the outskirts of Tehran," Amnesty International said in a statement issued on May 25, 2018. Philip Luther, Amnesty International's Research and Advocacy Director for the Middle East and North Africa, asserted, "Deliberately denying medical treatment to any prisoner is unlawful, cruel and inhuman and can amount to torture. These women from Iran's Gonabadi Dervish community should not even be imprisoned in the first place. It is deplorable that the Iranian authorities are seeking to intimidate and torment them further."
- Sufi women went on hunger strike for 16 days from June 17, 2018, in the wake of their being attacked and beaten up by special prison guards using batons and shockers on June 13.
- The Revolutionary Court sentenced Nazilla Noori, Avisha Jalaledin, Sima Entessari, Shima Entessari, Elham Ahmadi and Sedigheh Safabakht each to five years in prison.
-



- Maryam Farsiabi was tried and sentenced to a six-month jail and a two-year ban from traveling abroad.
- Sepideh Moradi was sentenced to five years' imprisonment in absentia on August 8, 2018 by Tehran's Revolutionary Court. She was also banned from leaving the country for two years, and from engaging in any social or political party or group or any activity in the social media.
- Shokoufeh Yadollahi was sentenced to five years in jail. She was in critical conditions due to lack of medical treatment in prison.
- Ms. Shahnaz Kian Asl due to her dire health conditions and Ms. Massoumeh Barakoohi on the orders of the 15th Branch of the Revolutionary Court, were released.

## Bahai's

The situation of the Baha'i community in Iran has been deteriorating.

Followers of the Baha'i faith are systematically harassed and persecuted under the clerical regime in Iran. They are denied equitable access to employment, education, political office and exercise of their economic, social and cultural rights.

The government has subjected Baha'is to measures such as the destruction of cemeteries, arbitrary arrests, raids on homes and confiscation of property, dismissals, and denial of civil rights.

Dozens of Baha'i students are expelled from universities and deprived of continuing their education every year.

- In the time span from March 2017 to February 2018, at least 47 Baha'i women were arrested.<sup>1354</sup>
- At least 16 Baha'i female students were denied admission to universities in 2019 despite successfully passing the competitive National University Exam with high marks.<sup>1355</sup>

<sup>1354</sup> [Annual Report 2018](#), the website of the NCRI Women's Committee, March 2018

<sup>1355</sup> [Annual Report 2020](#), the website of the NCRI Women's Committee, March 2020

- After being arrested in November 2018, Shahrzad Nazifi, a Baha'i citizen and motocross champion and trainer in Iran, has been deprived along with her family of participating in any competition or training others in this field without any official judicial verdict.<sup>1356</sup> Ms. Nazifi's daughter, Nora Naraghi, who is also a top moto-crosser, has been deprived of any athletic activities along with her mother because of her faith.
- Mazdak Etemadzadeh, an attorney at law who has represented some Baha'is issued a short report on the conditions of Baha'i women's detention and prosecution.<sup>1357</sup>
- According to the report, every defendant has only 4 minutes to defend herself in the court which is a violation of the legal procedures. The defendants are charged with proselytizing Baha'ism. According to Etemadzadeh,
  - Sheida Ghodousi from Gorgan, was sentenced to 11 years in prison;
  - Farah Tebianian, Pouneh Sanaii, Mona Amri Hessari, Parisa Shahidi, Mojdeh Zohouri, Parivash Shojaii, Tina Mohebaty and Hana Aghighian from Gorgan as well as Bitah Hedayati and Hana Koushki from Gonbad-Kavous were sentenced each to 9 years in prison;
  - Rofia Pakzadan, Soudabeh Mehdinejad, Mitra Nouri, Shiva Rohani, Maryam Dehghan and Nazi Khalkhi from Gorgan as well as Shohreh Samimi and Kameli Bideli from Minoudasht were each sentenced to 6 years in prison.
  - The report also indicated that Baha'is are tortured because of their faith. The tortures include: suspension (by hands from ceiling), dragging on the ground while handcuffed, keeping the prisoner under rain for a long period, interrogations during the night, threatening to harass young girls and accusing them of illicit relationships, aggressive body search during transfer to the detention center, and severe beatings.<sup>1358</sup>
- In 2020, at least 26 Baha'i women have been sentenced to prison terms simply for believing in the Baha'i faith. Most of the sentences are for more than 6 years. At least 26 women were summoned to security centers or courts for being Baha'is, and 17 Baha'i women were barred from education.
- On June 26, 2020, officers from the Karaj Bureau of Properties visited a Baha'i retirement home and tried to seize the property, a place of care for elderly Baha'i people with disabilities for the past 20 years. The retirement home had been operating with a permit and official approval of the Welfare Organization. However, in recent years, the license was not renewed because the retirement home's officials are Baha'is.
- On January 25, 2020, Firoozeh Shafizadeh, living in the village of Khutbehsara in Gilan Province, was arrested at her home. Firoozeh, a Baha'i who has a doctorate in pharmacy, had many opportunities to work abroad, but 2 months ago, she moved to Karaj to work in the village and help the needy.
- Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran sentenced a Baha'i woman to 8 years' imprisonment on the charge of forming a group to empower women. The court examining the charges of Atesa Ahmadii Rafsanjani convened in March 2021 and issued its verdict for her efforts to register a non-governmental organization for the empowerment of women. Security forces had arrested Ms. Ahmadii on January 20, 2019, and imprisoned her in ward 241 of Evin Prison belonging to the Judiciary's counterintelligence. She was temporarily released from prison on a 200-million Toman (\$17,400) bail after 45 days. This Baha'i woman has been sentenced to 4 years in prison

<sup>1356</sup> [Annual Report 2020](#), the website of the NCRI Women's Committee, March 2020

<sup>1357</sup> Open letter by Mazdak Etemadzadeh, [AdianCommittee.wordpress.com](#), July 16, 2016

<sup>1358</sup> Open letter by Mazdak Etemadzadeh, [AdianCommittee.wordpress.com](#), July 16, 2016

on the charge of “formation of a group to act against national security” through requesting an NGO license from the Interior Ministry, to 3 years in prison for “assembly and collusion to act against national security”, and to one year in prison on the charge of “propaganda against the state.”

- The clerical regime's security forces ransacked the residences of at least 19 families residing in Baharestan county in Isfahan, central Iran, on April 25 and 27, 2021. They arrested nine Baha'i women during violent raids on the Baha'i community in Baharestan which started at 6 a.m. and lasted until 1 p.m. The nine Baha'i women were Roya Azad-Khosh, Maryam Khorsandi, Sara Shakib, Firouzeh Rastinejad, Sanaz Rasteh, Azita Rezvani, Mojgan Pour-Shafi, Nasrin Khademi, and Noushin Hemmat. Ms. Maryam Khorsandi has been undergoing chemotherapy and security forces did not allow her to take her medications with her. Ms. Azita Rezvani has contracted the Covid-19 and was under treatment at home.
- Security forces arrested Sholeh Ashouri on May 5, 2021, and took her to an undisclosed location. The agents broke into Mrs. Ashouri's house in Hendijan, a city in Khuzestan Province when her husband was not home.
- The Revolutionary Court of Borazjan, in Bushehr Province, handed down 61 years and six months of prison for five Baha'i women on May 19, 2021. Mmes. Maryam Bashir, Faranak Sheikhi, Hayedeh Ram, Minoo Bashir, and Dorna Isma'ili, who reside in Shiraz and Borazjan, received jail terms of 12 years and six months, each.

## Christians

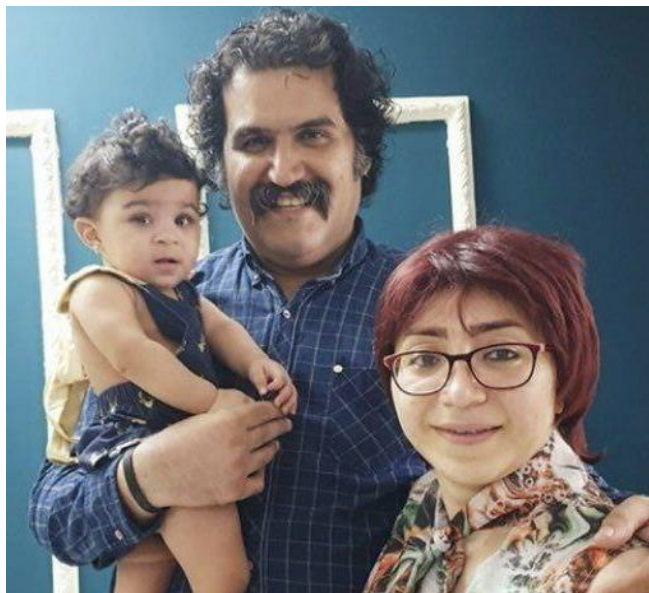
Christian converts from Islam are seriously discriminated against. Considering that the Christian population in Iran is 300,000 at most, they experience disproportionate levels of arrests and detention, and high levels of harassment and surveillance.

In Iran, Christians are forbidden from discussing or practicing their faith publicly. Christian ceremonies, conducted in home churches, are typically raided and participants arrested.

- Fatemeh Mohammadi (Mary), a Christian convert and student at Azad University of North-Tehran, was banned from attending school on December 21, 2019. She was previously beaten by the guidance patrol in Tehran on July 9, 2019 and sentenced to six months in prison on the charge of Christian activity. She was arrested again on January 12, 2020, after she participated in a ceremony commemorating victim of the Ukrainian plane shot down by the IRGC. She was transferred to Tehran's Vozara Detention Center and subjected to physical and sexual torture. She was sent to the courtyard and forced to sit on the asphalt floor in front of the toilets in the freezing cold weather. She was then questioned by three male interrogators. Mary Mohammadi was denied food during the first 24 hours of her detention. In addition to beating her, female officers conducted a physical examination and forced Mary to remove all her clothing and do repeated squats. The officers threatened to strip her by force if she did not do it herself.
- On July 1, 2019, four Christian's women, along with their spouses, were arrested by agents of the Ministry of Intelligence. Maryam Fallahi, 35, Marjan Fallahi, 33, Khatoun Fathollahzadeh, 61, and Fatemeh Talebi, 27, were arrested along with their husbands.



- On January 6, 2018, a court in Tehran issued a five-year prison sentence for Ms. Shamiram Essavi on the charge of acting against national security for launching home churches.
- Two Christian's women, Shima and Shokufeh Zanganeh, were both arrested at their homes by the Ministry of Intelligence agents on December 2, 2018. Thirteen plainclothes agents raided and inspected the homes of these two Christian women and seized some of their personal documents and transferred them to an unknown location.
- Christian Kurdish woman, Massoumeh Taqinejad, 30, from Kermanshah in western Iran, was arrested and detained along with her son, Artin, in a raid by intelligence forces on her residence in Karaj, on July 2, 2018. This Christian Kurdish woman was charged with "proselytizing Christianity" on the internet.
- On September 11, 2017, Sara Nemati and Mehrdad Houshmand, a Christian couple, were arrested for participating in a funeral in Behesht-e Zahra, in which they practiced Christian rituals.
- Anousheh (Veronica) Rezabakhsh and her son were arrested on February 20, 2017, and taken to a detention center in Urmia, capital of West Azerbaijan Province.
- At least 15 Christian women were summoned, detained, and imprisoned in 2020.
- An Iranian regime court issued an inhumane ruling to separate a 2-year-old toddler from her Christian parents (pictured below), Maryam Fallahi and Sam Khosravi. The 2-year-old, named Lydia, was born Muslim but adopted by a Christian couple when she was only 10 weeks old. On September 23, 2020, the Revision Court of Bushehr ruled that since the little girl had been born Muslim, she could not be adopted by a Christian couple. Maryam Fallahi and her husband, Sam Khosravi, had been among seven Christian converts who were arrested by Intelligence agents on July 1, 2019.





## Kurds

Kurdish activists including women are systematically imprisoned and mistreated.

- In the time span from March 2017 to February 2018, at least 47 Kurdish women were arrested.<sup>1359</sup>
- Shetaw Faroughi from Marivan was transferred to the Central Prison of Sanandaj on March 24, 2018. She was arrested with her two children on March 3, 2018, at Tabriz Airport, upon return from Istanbul where she had visited her husband. Her children, 12 and 5, were released after three days.<sup>1360</sup>
- Kurdish political prisoner Zeinab Jalalian, 38, was sentenced to death in 2009 on the charge of Moharebeh through "membership in Pejak." The verdict was commuted to life in prison in 2011. Ms. Jalalian has been in jail without any leaves since 2007 when she was arrested in Kermanshah. She suffers from various illnesses including asthma, pterygium, an oral thrush condition, and GI complications. As a way of torture, the Ministry of Intelligence has deprived her of medical treatment. She is presently under various forms of psychological pressure and deprived of her rights as a prisoner to express remorse and collaborate with the Intelligence Ministry. The ministry's agents also pressured her while she was in Qarchak Prison to cooperate with them. (Her case has been explained in more details in a previous section on human right defenders.)
- A Kurdish woman activist, Parvin Advaii, was arrested at home during a raid by agents of the Intelligence Department of Marivan, Iranian Kurdistan, on July 27, 2019.
- Civil activist Iran Rahpaykar continues to remain in limbo in the detention center of Sanandaj, capital of the Iranian Kurdistan Province, despite passage of 1.5 months since her arrest. She has been taken to the Department of Intelligence for interrogation several times.
- Sara Zahmatkesh, 24, a women's rights activist and a social sciences expert from Paveh, was arrested on April 21, 2019, by agents of the intelligence department of Paveh and taken to an unknown location. No information is available on her fate. Ms. Zahmatkesh headed the Jiar-Tin Women's Association.
- Sahar Kazemi, a Kurdish civil rights and environmental activist and a sports coach from Sanandaj, was arrested at her home in Sanandaj, on August 9, 2018. She was sentenced to five years in prison in mid-February 2019.
- Sorayya Khedri was arrested in Sanandaj on September 13, 2018.
- Kurdish activist woman, Ronak Aghaii, was taken to the Prison of Mahabad on April 4, 2018, to serve her jail sentence of six months.
- Shahnaz Sadeghifar, 32, and her 17-year-old daughter, Aynaz Zare'e, were arrested in October 2019 by the IRGC Intelligence. They were interrogated for 2 months and subjected to psychological pressure and torture to make false confessions against themselves. They were subsequently transferred to the Central Prison of Urmia.

<sup>1359</sup> [Annual Report 2018](#), the website of the NCRI Women's Committee, March 2018

<sup>1360</sup> [Wife, two children of Kurdish activist arrested](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, March 9, 2018

On July 26, 2020, the Revolutionary Court of Urmia sentenced Mrs. Sadeghifar to 15 years in prison which was commuted to 5 years on February 20, 2021.<sup>1361</sup>

In August 2020, Aynaz Zare'e was infected with the coronavirus in the women's ward of the Central Prison of Urmia.<sup>1362</sup>

On November 16, 2020, the first branch of the Penal Court of Urmia for children and adolescents sentenced Aynaz Zare'e to five years in prison. But she was later released from jail on November 25, after spending 15 months in prison.<sup>1363</sup>

- Ms. Gelaleh Vatandoust, a lawyer, was summoned to the Department of Intelligence of Marivan on February 22, 2021, and interrogated there for several hours for criticizing violations of women's rights in Iran and the government's failure to create jobs in Kurdistan on social media.
- Anisa Jafari-Mehr, a Kurdish activist educator was arrested in the city of Eslamabad-e Gharb, in Kermanshah Province, western Iran. On November 23, 2020, intelligence agents raided and ransacked her residence without presenting a legal warrant. They confiscated her personal belongings including her laptop, smartphone, and some of her books. Her family said the agents were armed and they handcuffed their daughter at the time of arrest.
- Kurdish political prisoner Zahra Mohammadi was sentenced to five years in prison by the Revision Court of Kurdistan Province on February 13, 2021. Zahra Mohammadi was arrested on May 23, 2019, for teaching Kurdish language to children. She was under savage interrogations for six months and pressured to appear on TV and make false confessions. Her interrogators threatened to arrest her family members if she did not collaborate with them. She was finally released on a 700-million-toman (\$61,000) bail on December 2, 2019. Zahra Mohammadi has a Master's degree in Geopolitics from the University of Birjand.
- The Revolutionary Court of Sanandaj sentenced women's rights activist Hajar Saeedi to five years of jail sentence suspended for four years. The court convened in the absence of her lawyer. Hajar Saeedi is accused of participating in illegal gatherings and having contact with labor activists.
- Kurdish political prisoner Sakineh Parvaneh, 29, was arrested in autumn 2019 for visiting her family in Soleimaniya, in the Iraqi Kurdistan. On May 25, 2020, the Revolutionary Court of Tehran sentenced her to 5 years in prison, in protest to which Sakineh Parvaneh went on hunger strike. She is presently detained in exile in the Central Prison of Mashhad. Ms. Parvaneh has been brutalized viciously during her time in detention. She was once sent to a psychiatric hospital, and returned to prison with bruised face after several days. Ms. Parvaneh has been on hunger strike several times to protest her unfair verdict, prison conditions, her forced exile, etc. (Her case has been explained in more details in a previous section on human right defenders.)
- The Department of Intelligence of Sanandaj arrested conservationist Faranak Jamshidi at her home in Sanandaj, on June 28, 2020. A member of the Green Society of Kurdistan, she was interrogated and pressured for making false confessions. She is charged with "acting against national security" and "propaganda against the state."

<sup>1361</sup> [Detention of Female Civil Activists, Pressure on Political Detainees in Iran](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, August 6, 2020

<sup>1362</sup> [Imprisoned Kurdish teenager Aynaz Zare'e infected with coronavirus](#), news, NCRI Women's Committee website, August 27, 2020

<sup>1363</sup> [Annual Report 2021](#), documents, NCRI Women's Committee website, March 2021

The warrant for her arrest was extended five times and her release prevented. During this period, she contacted her family only twice. After 4.5 months, she was released temporarily on a 200-million-Toman (\$17,400) bail on November 10, 2020. The First Branch of the Revolutionary Court of Sanandaj convened on January 23, 2021, and sentenced her to 4 years in prison on the charge of “membership” in a Kurdish opposition group.

- Savin Mahmoudian Rad, 23 from a village in Sardasht, was arrested by the IRGC Intelligence in December 2019. She was detained in solitary confinement and interrogated in the detention center of the IRGC's Mahdi Corps in Urmia. After two months of questioning, she was transferred to the Central Prison of Mahabad on January 26, 2020.
- Dayeh Zeinab Esmaili, 58, and a member of Kurdistan's Mothers for Reconciliation, was sentenced to 6 years in prison on the charge of “membership in Kurdish parties and propaganda against the state.”
- Forces of the Intelligence Department of Paveh arrested four young Kurdish women on September 16, 2020. They were Bahar Ahmadi, Nargess Mohammadi, Elham Moradi, and Negin Veissi.
- Fariba Ahmadi in Naghadeh and Rojin Mohammadpour were arrested on January 19, 2021, and Gelavij Abdollahi from Naghadeh was arrested on January 12, 2021.
- Azimeh Nasserli was arrested in Bukan on January 9, 2021 and transferred after several days to the detention center of the IRGC Intelligence in Urmia.
- Roya Jamali, an environmental activist and member of the Green Society of Kurdistan, was arrested during a raid on her home by agents of the Department of Intelligence of Sanandaj on February 2, 2021. Roya Jamali has two children and suffers from multiple sclerosis (M.S.).
- Nazanin Atabaki and Nasrin Yazdani were summoned to the Security Police of the State Security Force of Kermanshah and subsequently arrested on January 16, 2021. The two are solo singers in the all-women Gelaris musical band. They were interrogated and subsequently released temporarily on bail until final disposition of their case.
- Arezou Mostafaii, 17, was summoned to the Department of Intelligence of Marivan and arrested on February 4, 2021. She was battered and injured under interrogation. She was released after 3 days on February 6, after signing a pledge. She bore bruises and scars on her face and arms.
- A young Kurdish poetess, Taraneh Mohammadi, was kidnapped by intelligence agents on January 11, 2021. After being insulted, humiliated and harassed, she was told that they would cut her tongue if she continued her activities. One of the who spoke Farsi told her that they would cut her tongue. Taraneh's posts and poems were mostly about human rights of the Kurds, women's rights, children, and violence against women, including forced marriages.





## PARTICIPATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE INSTITUTIONS

### 18. What actions and measures has your country taken in the last five years to promote women's participation in public life and decision-making?

The Iranian regime is not an advocate of women's participation in public life and decision-making, rather it promotes marginalization of women.<sup>1364</sup> Even when it speaks of women's participation, it is in response to public and international pressure.

Therefore, the policies of the Iranian regime are not devised to promote women's participation, eliminate discrimination against women in government or non-government institutions, compensate for their underrepresentation in trade unions, or implement capacity building, skills development for women.

At the same time, for a regime that persecutes religious and ethnic minorities it is inconceivable to encourage participation of minority and young women in public life and decision making.

### Reformed constitution, laws and regulations that promote women's participation in politics, especially at decision-making level, including electoral system reform

According to the Constitution of the clerical regime, women cannot be elected as the president, cannot be judges, or employed in the army and in the main branches of the police force.

From the regime's religious perspective, women can only guide women, therefore women cannot be appointed to the high assembly of experts. The heads of the three government branches should also be elected from among men.<sup>1365</sup>

These laws have not been reformed to this date.

Article 115 of the Iranian Constitution states: The President of the Republic must be elected from among the religious and political *Rejal*.<sup>1366</sup>

The Guardians Council has reiterated that the word *Rejal* refers exclusively to men and no woman can be elected as President.<sup>1367</sup>

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<sup>1364</sup> [Iran's 11th Majlis Pushes for Marginalization of Women Through its Population Growth Plan](#), articles, website of the NCRI Women's Committee, April 10, 2021

<sup>1365</sup> The state-run Javanonline newspaper, November 4, 2015

<sup>1366</sup> Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Research Center of the parliament, [http://rc.majlis.ir/fa/content/iran\\_constitution](http://rc.majlis.ir/fa/content/iran_constitution)

As recent as the 12<sup>th</sup> presidential elections in 2017, all the 137 women who had registered as candidates were disqualified.<sup>1368</sup> Subsequently, Interior Minister Abdul Reza Rahmani Fazli announced that women are not included among presidential candidates and that the Council of Guardians had turned down all registration requests.<sup>1369</sup>

Similarly, membership of the Assembly of Experts is exclusively for men. Although this has not been written out clearly in the law, it is implied, and no woman has been appointed to the assembly in the past 40 years.

All 16 women who had signed up as candidates for the Assembly of Experts election on January 26, 2016, were disqualified.<sup>1370</sup>

According to Articles 105 and 109 of the Constitution, women cannot be leaders, either. In addition, according to Article 20 on women's political rights, leadership is a duty that is only granted to men.

### **Adoption of temporary special measures, such as quotas, reserved seats, benchmarks and targets to promote women's participation in public life and decision making**

Despite a 2012 instruction by the Islamic Countries' Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference for Iran to consider a 25% quota for women in the parliament to compensate for women's small presence,<sup>1371</sup> the Iranian regime has refused to do so.

In fact, Iran ranks embarrassingly low even in the Middle East with regards to women's political participation.<sup>1372</sup> It ranks 16 among 19 Middle East countries and 150 among 156 countries in the world. Only Congo, Syria, Pakistan, Iraq, Yemen and Afghanistan rank lower.<sup>1373</sup>

The average number of seats allocated to women in the Iranian regime's parliament stands at 5.6 percent in 2020 compared to the world's average of 24.3%.<sup>1374</sup>

In April 2019, the Iranian parliament voted down a proposal to allocate a one-sixth quota of parliamentary seats to women by a vote of 110 to 79 on April 16, 2019.

Ironically, one of the MPs said in the debate that setting a quota for women would be against Article 9 of Principle 3 of the Constitution against discrimination.<sup>1375</sup>

<sup>1367</sup> [Why the Iranian regime does not join the CEDAW?](#) website of the NCRI Women's Committee, March 5, 2016

<sup>1368</sup> [Disqualification of female candidates went unheeded](#), Shahindokht Molaverdi, presidential deputy for women and family affairs, May 5, 2017

<sup>1369</sup> [Disqualification of female candidates went unheeded](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, May 5, 2017

<sup>1370</sup> The state-run Aftabnews website, January 26, 2016

<sup>1371</sup> Shahnaz Sajjadi, member of the Ministry of Justice's central Lawyers Guild, The state-run ISNA news agency, October 21, 2015

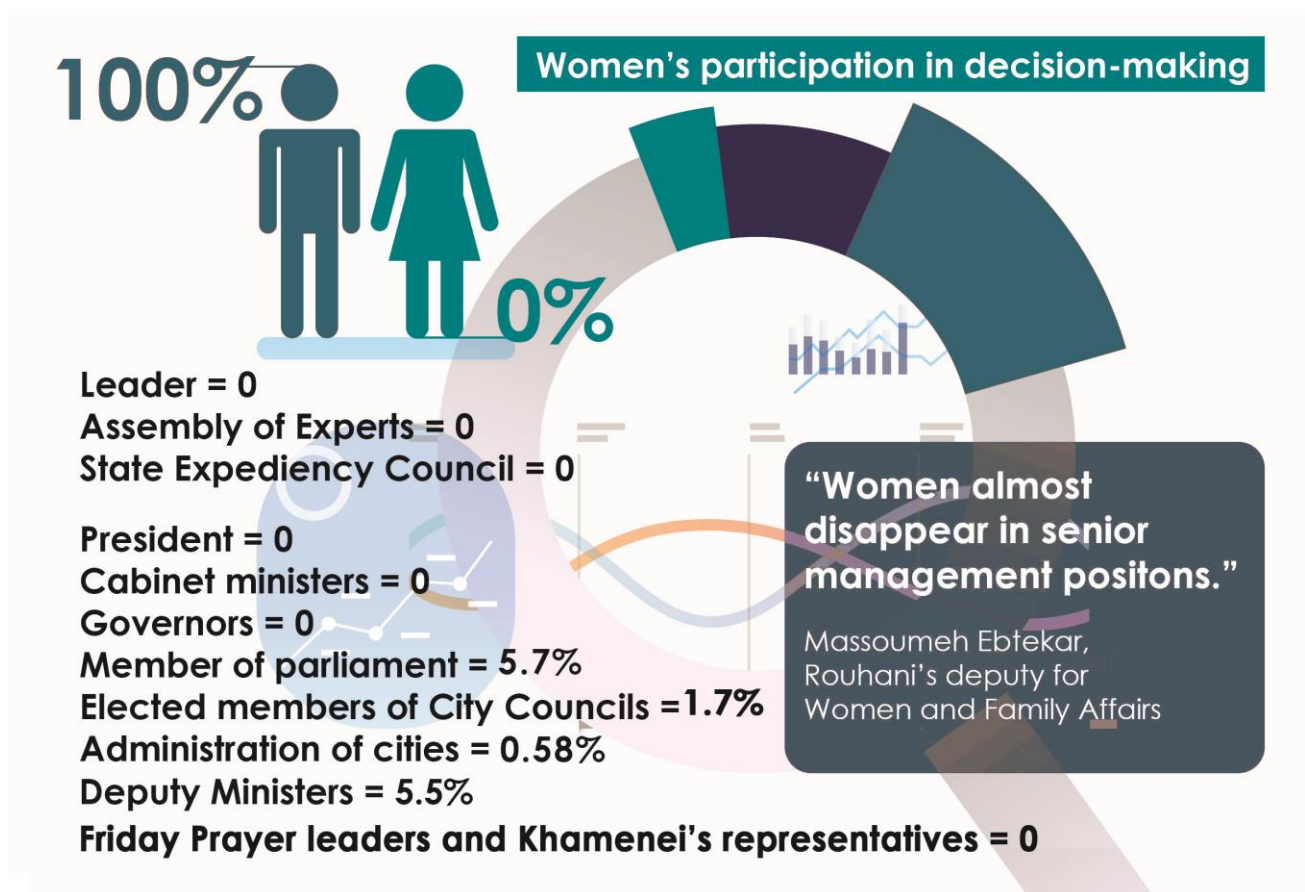
<sup>1372</sup> Shahnaz Sajjadi, member of the Ministry of Justice's central Lawyers Guild, The state-run ISNA news agency, October 21, 2015

<sup>1373</sup> [Global Gender Gap Report 2021](#)

<sup>1374</sup> [Iran's 11th Majlis Pushes for Marginalization of Women Through its Population Growth Plan](#), articles, website of the NCRI Women's Committee, April 10, 2021

<sup>1375</sup> Shahab Naderi, member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run ICANA news agency, April 17, 2019





Ensured that organizations such as political parties and trade unions, which may not be subject directly to obligations under the Convention, do not discriminate against women

Not applicable in the case of Iran, because there are no legal and genuine political parties or trade unions in the country.

Collected and analyzed data on women's political participation, including in appointed and elected positions

According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap report 2021, Iran ranks 150 among 156 countries preceding only the Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria, Pakistan, Iraq, Yemen, and Afghanistan.

The global gender gap index for Iran is 0.582, denoting a wide gender gap where men's benefits are twice as much of women's.

The hierarchy of decision-making and political power in Iran is completely male-dominated with no opportunity for women's participation.

The Supreme Leader is a man, the president is a man, the Guardians Council is comprised of 12 men and no women, the State Expediency Council is made up of 44 men, and all the 33 Cabinet ministers are men.

Women's presence in the cabinet has always been among the promises made in the presidential election campaigns, but Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was the only president who managed to appoint a

woman, Marzieh Vahid Dastjerdi, as Minister of Health (2009-2012), who was relieved of her duties after three years.

Presently, Laya Jonaidi, Shahindokht Molaverdi and Massoumeh Ebtekar are the only women who have non-minister roles in the 12<sup>th</sup> cabinet, as assistants and deputies to Hassan Rouhani, the mullahs' president, and do not enjoy executive powers.

Shahindokht Molaverdi, who served as head of the presidential directorate for women and family affairs, during Rouhani's first term, repeatedly complained about not having any executive powers to advance her directorate's projects.<sup>1376</sup>

Massoumeh Ebtekar, Rouhani's deputy in Women and Family Affairs, once acknowledged that "women almost disappear in senior management positions."<sup>1377</sup>

In eleven rounds of elections in Iran since the mullahs took power 40 years ago, only 12 women held positions of mayors.<sup>1378</sup>

According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2020, the average women's political participation in the parliament stood at 0.298.<sup>1379</sup>

The Global Gender Gap Report 2021 indicates that Iran ranks 151 among 155 countries with regards to women's political participation with a score of 0.036.<sup>1380</sup>

There were only 17 women among 290 members of the 10<sup>th</sup> parliament, making up a mere 5.8% participation for women.

The current 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament has 276 members, only 16 of whom are women, comprising 5.7% of the members in the Parliament in 2021.<sup>1381</sup>

### NCRI Women's Committee study in June 2017

An NCRI Women's Committee study in June 2017 indicated:

- There are 31 provincial governors (*Ostandar*) and no woman is among them.
- There are 430 posts for governors of counties (*Farmandar*). Only five women were appointed as county governors.<sup>1382</sup>
- According to earlier reports from 2013 to 2015 by official sources, women held only 13 out of 2,653 positions as provincial governors, governors, district governors, and mayors in the administration of Iranian cities and provinces. The breakdown is as the following:
- The number of female provincial governors (*ostandar*): Zero from 31<sup>1383</sup>
- The number of female governors (*farmandar*): 4 out of 440 governors (about 0.9%). However, with the death of the Governor of Turkeman, the number of women governors decreased to 0.7%.<sup>1384</sup>

<sup>1376</sup> In an interview which was published by the Tnews.ir, on August 24, 2015, Shahindokht Molaverdi revealed that "since we do not have an executive status, we have not yet found any desirable, effective relationship with other systems and provinces, and have faced serious obstacles from the beginning."

<sup>1377</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, October 31, 2017

<sup>1378</sup> The state-run Jamejamonline.ir, August 22, 2017

<sup>1379</sup> Global Gender Gap Report 2020, page 189

<sup>1380</sup> [Global Gender Gap Report 2021](#), page 19

<sup>1381</sup> [Iran's 11th Majlis Pushes for Marginalization of Women Through its Population Growth Plan](#), articles, website of the NCRI Women's Committee, April 10, 2021

<sup>1382</sup> The state-run Borna.news, May 23, 2017

<sup>1383</sup> The state-run Raja News website – March 6, 2014

<sup>1384</sup> The state-run Ham Ava website – April 19, 2015; the state-run Mashregh news website – October 6, 2015

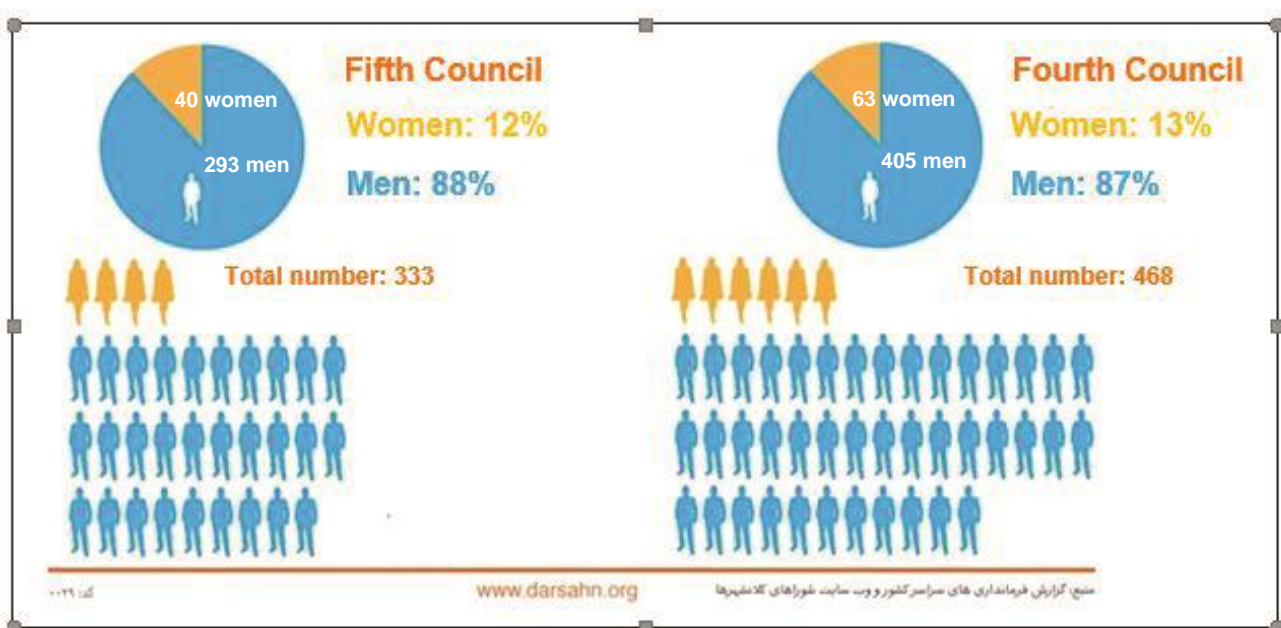
- Two female mayors out of a total number of 1,148 of mayors run small towns of Louleman in the Province of Gilan, and Kalat in the Province of Sistan and Baluchestan. These small towns are not even registered in the list of cities.<sup>1385</sup>
- The number of female district governors (*bakhshdar*): 7 out of 1034<sup>1386</sup>

A report published by the Iranian parliament on the city councils' elections, accounting only for the main cities, claims that women constitute some 12% of the city councils and concludes a 1% drop in women's participation.<sup>1387</sup>

Another state-run news outlet studied Iranian women's participation only in provincial centers estimating a 36.4% drop and setting the current number of women at 42.<sup>1388</sup>

The NCRI Women's Committee compiled the latest elections outcome in more than 500 Iranian cities and towns from the statistics published in the state-run media in Iran and concluded that: In a total of 500 large and small cities, only 64 women were elected as members of City Councils compared to 3,724 male members. That amounts to a meager 1.7% participation for women in the City Councils.<sup>1389</sup>

**A study by the state-run press on the outcome of the elections for the City Councils<sup>1390</sup>**  
**Women's participation compared in the fourth and fifth major City Councils**



<sup>1385</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency – December 15, 2013

<sup>1386</sup> The state-run Ham Ava website – April 19, 2015

<sup>1387</sup> The state-run Darsahn-e Majlis va Showraha, June 6, 2017 <http://www.darsahn.org/1396/03/16/zanan-dar-kalanshahrha>

<sup>1388</sup> The state-run Iran newspaper, May 29, 2017

<sup>1389</sup> [A study of Iranian Women's Participation as governors, mayors, and members of city councils](#), NCRI Women's Committee website, June 2017

<sup>1390</sup> The state-run Darsahn-e Majlis va Showraha, June 6, 2017, based on reports from governors' offices and websites of the city councils of major capitals; <http://www.darsahn.org/1396/03/16/zanan-dar-kalanshahrha>

### NCRI Women's Committee study in March 2021

The latest study by the NCRI Women's Committee prepared for the 65<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in March 2021, came up with the following data:<sup>1391</sup>

- **Provincial Governors (*Ostandaran*):** 31 Iranian Governors are all men, which is equal to 0% women participation in provincial governance.
- **Provincial Officials:** The 1,174 provincial officials include only 77 women; 31 of these women are heads of the women and family offices of each province. Therefore, even including these ceremonial positions, women comprise less than 7% in the provincial administrative positions.
- **Municipalities:** The mayors of 31 provincial capitals are all men. There are only 2 women as mayors out of 339 mayors in Iran. These 2 women run the 302<sup>nd</sup> and 319<sup>th</sup> towns in terms of their population. In total, women have a share of 0.58%, or about half a percent, of the mayors in Iran.
- **City officials and governmental organizations in provincial capitals:** The information obtained from 30 provincial capitals that their official websites were accessible indicate that out of 830 officials in these 30 cities only 25 were women. This figure is equivalent to 3.11% that indicates the marginal share of women participation in Iranian regime officials even in its fifth tier. It must be noted that even these 25 women work as assistants or consultant in women affairs.
- **City Councils:** The information mainly obtained from the official websites of provincial capitals indicate that there are only 38 women out of 321 members of city councils. Therefore, women participation in this category of political officials is equivalent to 11.83%.

#### Women's participation in various levels of decision making in the government:

Level of decision making	No. of women	No. of Men	%participation
Provincial governors	0	31	0
Mayors of provincial capitals	0	31	0
Mayors of other cities and towns	2	337	0.58
City officials in provincial capitals	25	805	3.11
Provincial officials	77	1097	7
City Council members	38	283	11.83

<sup>1391</sup> [Report to CSW65, Women in Iran](#), documents, website of the NCRI Women's Committee, March 2021

## Other

### Exclusion of women also applies to the realm of judgement

The guidelines for appointment of judges in the judiciary system states: “Judges should be elected from among men...”

As for female judges, after the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the instruction was to observe principles of *Sharia* in implementing Article 162 on the appointment of judges. Therefore, no woman was allowed to sit on the bench after the revolution when the mullahs seized power.

In 1983, a law was passed indicating the circumstances for becoming a judge. According to the new law, judges who issue verdicts must be chosen from among qualified MEN.

In 1984, the law was reformed, and it was stipulated that women can be appointed to some advisory posts.

### 19. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to increase women’s access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through information and communication technologies (ICT)?

This is not applicable to Iran as no freedom of expression exists for neither men nor women, and access to the internet is restricted.

### 20. Do you or the state track the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting)?

There is no gender-responsive budgeting in Iran. Rather, the small amount of budget occasionally allocated to needy women is usually deleted from the budget planning.

As the Iranian regime spends the greater portion of the country’s wealth on funding wars, terrorism and proxy groups, and its nuclear and missile programs, and a good portion of the country’s funds and revenues is embezzled by the ruling hierarchy, including the supreme leader Ali Khamenei, and the Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), little remains to pay the salaries of government employees, create jobs, and provide support to the vulnerable sectors.

Not only there is no chance for gender-responsive budgeting, but issues of women and girls do not have any priority in the Iranian regime’s budgeting and planning.<sup>1392</sup>

In addition, the regime does not espouse gender equality and empowerment of women.

### Fiscal Persian Year 1398

For example, in the fiscal year 1398 (March 2019-March 2020), the Iranian regime allocated 62 trillion Tomans to security and intelligence, 3,351 billion Tomans to religious propaganda, but only 14.2 billion Tomans to the Directorate of Women and Family Affairs, and 138 billion Tomans to support women heads of households.<sup>1393</sup>

<sup>1392</sup> [Issues of women and children are overlooked](#), website of the NCRI Women’s Committee, December 27, 2017

<sup>1393</sup> Budget Bill of 1398, BBC Persian website, December 26, 2018

As a result of such budget policy 88 percent of women heads of households who were eligible to receive subsidies from the Poverty Preventing Plan were excluded due to lack of funds.<sup>1394</sup> The Labor Ministry supports only 40 daycare centers for female employees who have young children, but the budget for this limited support was also cut from 1.56 to 1 billion Tomans in the 1398 budget.

### Fiscal Persian Year 1399

In the Persian fiscal year 1399, the situation was worse. Although the Directorate on Women and Family Affairs boasted of receiving a budget of 25 billion Tomans which was 10.8 billion Tomans more than in the previous year,<sup>1395</sup> but other budgets for women were totally eliminated, including the budget for insurance of housewives, and the budget for insurance of women heads of households.<sup>1396</sup> No budget was allocated for empowerment of women.<sup>1397</sup> All this, while the exchange rate for Iran's currency, Rial, has dropped even further bringing down the value of the allocated budget for the women's directorate from \$2.17 million to \$1.6 million. Every 10 Rials is equal to 1 Toman.

### Fiscal Persian Year 1400

Despite the abysmal living conditions of the majority of the populace in Iran, particularly during the pandemic, the clerical regime allocated the lion's share of the budget of the Persian year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022) to the armed forces and other suppressive agencies. Following is a table listing some of the organs receiving a budget in the year 1400:

<sup>1394</sup> Ahmad Maidari, Deputy Minister of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare, the state-run IRNA News Agency – February 12, 2019

<sup>1395</sup> Zahra Javaherian, deputy for planning and coordination in the Presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs, the state-run ISNA news agency, December 11, 2019

<sup>1396</sup> Zahra Javaherian, deputy for planning and coordination in the Presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs, the state-run ISNA news agency, December 11, 2019; Tayyebah Saivoshi, member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run javanonline.ir, January 2, 2020

<sup>1397</sup> Farideh Olad Ghobad, member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run ICANA.ir, December 17, 2019





The budget of the Iranian regime's armed forces for Persian year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022) published by the state-run Diyarimirza.ir website, December 3, 2020

The contents of this graphic is contained in the Table of the Budget of 1400

Budget recipients	Budget (billion Tomans)
The Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)	38,564
The Army	20,115.30
The Ministry of Defense	4,379.53
The Organization of Bassij	2,121
The General Staff of the Armed Forces	396.8
The Defense Ministry's Organization of Research and Innovation	245
The Office of Islamic Propaganda of the Seminary of Qom	205
The Supreme Leader's representatives in the IRGC	30
The Global Assembly of Ahl-e Bait	75
The Global Assembly to Reconcile Religions	43
The Council of Policy Making of Friday Prayer Leaders	35
The Staff to Revive Promotion of Virtue	35
The Institute to public the works of Khomeini	34
<b>Directorate of Women and Family Affairs</b>	<b>32</b>
Rahian-e Nour	30
The Cultural Foundation of Qassem Soleimani	8.5

**Notes:**

- The Global Assembly of Ahl-e Bait is an agency tasked with export of Islamic fundamentalism abroad.
- The Global Assembly to Reconcile Religions is in charge of export of Islamic fundamentalism abroad.
- Rahian-e Nour is an agency in charge of taking students to tour the fronts of the Iran-Iraq War (1981-1988).
- Qassem Soleimani was the regime's No. 2 man killed in January 2020. He was in charge of advancing the regime's policy of meddling in other countries and export of terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism.

**22. Does your country have a valid national strategy or action plan for gender equality?**

The Iranian regime's general planning and macro policies have been listed in a document called the "20-year Prospect Document" and "the Sixth Development Program."

Under the clerical regime, all issues concerning women are dealt with in the context of family. For example, the presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs, the parliamentary faction on family and women, etc.

Likewise, in the Sixth Development Program, the general policies concerning women are outlined in articles 101 and 102 promoting family as an institution.

Article 101 of the Sixth Development Program states that all executive agencies are obliged to implement the goals listed in the 20-year Prospect Document and the Sixth Development Program to implement gender equity in their agencies.

Article 102 of the same program instructs the government to promote and strengthen a society centered around family, childbearing, and raising good children. It further seeks to bring down the average age of marriage, increase the average number of children per family to 2.5, and turn marriage and childbearing into a value.

None of the 11 paragraphs of Article 102 focuses on gender equality.

**23. Does your country have an action plan and timeline for implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (if a State party), or of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review or other United Nations human rights mechanisms that address gender inequality/discrimination against women?**

No. The Iranian regime is not a state party of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women.

Nor does it have any action plan or timeline for implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, or the recommendations of the UPR or other UN human rights mechanisms.

In its submission for the UN Universal Periodic Review, 34th session of the UPR Working Group, November 2019, **Amnesty International** wrote:

Iran rejected 31 of the 56 recommendations it received regarding women's rights, including those calling for ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, raising the minimum age of marriage to 18 years and eliminating the practice of forced and early marriage, criminalizing domestic violence, and reforming discriminatory laws. Iran has failed to make progress on the 25 recommendations it accepted, including to prevent and punish discrimination and violence against women, and enhance their participation in political decision-making processes.

Amnesty International's research shows that women face entrenched discrimination in family law and criminal law. Iran's legal system puts women in a subordinate status relative to men. Under the penal code, the testimony of a woman is accorded half the value of that of a man. The age of criminal responsibility is set at nine lunar years (eight years and eight months) for girls but at 15 lunar years (14 years and six months) for boys.

Women are also discriminated against under the Civil Code, notably in matters relating to marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance.

Iran has failed to criminalize gender-based violence, including domestic violence and marital rape. A bill to protect women against violence has been stalled since 2012.

Under Iranian law, women and girls as young as 9 who are seen in public without a headscarf can be sentenced to prison, flogging or a cash fine. Millions of women and girls face daily harassment and abuse at the hands of state agents enforcing Iran's strict Islamic dress code for women and girls. Women peacefully protesting against degrading forced hijab (veiling) laws have been violently arrested and sentenced to imprisonment.

Child marriage continues to be permitted under the law. A proposed amendment to Article 1041 of the Civil Code that would have raised the age of marriage for girls from 13 to 16 was rejected by the parliament's judicial and legal committee in December 2018.

**24. Is there a national human rights institution in your country?**

No. Iran's clerical regime has claimed drafting a bill to establish a National Human Rights Institution, which is supposedly on its way to be reviewed and adopted. The bill contains no direct reference to the rights of women and fails to provide any concrete guarantees for the observance of human rights in Iran. Rather, it relies on the same agencies that are themselves, the prime violators of human rights in Iran.<sup>1398</sup>

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<sup>1398</sup> Website of Abbas Akhoundi, former Minister of Roads and Transportation, April 10, 2019 <https://www.abbasakhoundi.ir/archive/ID/1232>





## PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

28. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child?

**Taken measures to combat negative social norms and practices and increased awareness of the needs and potential of girl children**

Unfortunately, the clerical regime in Iran has not taken any effective measures to combat negative social norms and practices, or increase awareness of the needs and potential of girl children. But, there were opposite measures.

Early marriages are the worst negative social practice violating the rights of Iranian girl children, and the worst form of oppression of Iranian girl children.<sup>1399</sup> So, the first step to protect the rights of girl children in Iran is to raise the legal age of marriage which is 13 and ban early marriages.

But the regime's parliament rejected the bill proposing to increase the age of marriage.<sup>1400</sup>

Furthermore, the bill passed on the rights of children and adolescents in June 2020 fails to recognize the rights of girl children and address the legal age of marriage and their criminal accountability at age 9. It also fails to criminalize recruitment of children by government agencies and child abuse by parents.<sup>1401</sup>

According to the bill to Protect Children and Adolescents, a parent who kills his child would be sentenced to between 2 to 5 years in prison. This article is backed by Article 1179 of the Civil Code according to which the parents' physical abuse of the child is permissible provided that it does not exceed the "norms." The bill also falls short of providing any mechanism to secure sufficient funds to attend to the needs of child laborers or child widows.

While the children's bill did not produce any sign of change in the regime's policies violating children's rights, there were attempts by members of the parliament to revive and officially register the medieval cease-blood tradition as a "valuable cultural heritage."<sup>1402</sup> The cease blood tradition (*Khoon bas*) is a nomadic ransom to end a bloody quarrel between two tribes. As a result, a woman from the killer tribe is given to the tribe of the slain victim, serving as their slave for the rest of her life. She is not allowed to visit her family anymore.

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<sup>1399</sup> Amendment to Article 1041 of the Civil Code allows the father to wed his daughter even before 13 years of age after receiving endorsement of a judge.

<sup>1400</sup> [Marriage age increase rejected by Iran parliament](#), the NCRI Women's Committee website, December 25, 2018

<sup>1401</sup> [Children's Rights Bill Fails to Protect Girls](#), documents, the NCRI Women's Committee website, September 2020

<sup>1402</sup> [Call for registration of cease blood tradition promotes misogyny, violence in Iran](#), articles, the NCRI Women's Committee website, October 25, 2020

- Institutionalized in the clerical regime's laws, the legal age of marriage for Iranian girl children is 13 years, and they can be given to marriage even younger if the father and a judge decide that they are mature enough.<sup>1403</sup>
- In view of the bankrupt economic situation in Iran, rampant unemployment, and 80% of the population living under the poverty line, forced marriage of girl children has turned into the only way for many families in Iran to reduce their expenses or earn some income.
- Forced early marriage is also the most significant contributor to school dropouts among girl children in Iran.
- In addition to creating various mental and physical problems for young girls, forced early marriages of girl children in Iran have paved the way for a plethora of social ills such as early divorces, child widows, domestic violence against women, and murder.<sup>1404</sup>
- A proposed amendment to Article 1041 of the Civil Code that would have raised the age of marriage for girls from 13 to 16 was rejected by the parliament's judicial and legal committee in December 2018.<sup>1405</sup>
- The Iranian census organization released new statistics on early marriages in Iran. According to the new data, 234,000 marriages of girl children under 15 years of age were officially registered by this organization from March 2017 to March 2018 (Persian year 1396). 194 of these were marriages of girl children under 10 years old.<sup>1406</sup>
- Ali Kazemi, advisor to the legal deputy of the Judiciary Branch, announced in March 2019, that between 500,000 to 600,000 girl children get married every year (in Iran). This figure relates to officially registered marriages and does not include those which were not officially registered.<sup>1407</sup>
- The latest news is that after the Iranian regime facilitated granting marriage loans, the applicants for these loans increased 90 folds in the first five months of the year compared to the same period in previous year.<sup>1408</sup>
- A government expert asserted that poor families are literally selling their daughters, and according to the Central Bank's figures, the number of early marriages of girls under 15 in six months increased four times the under-15 marriages throughout the previous year.<sup>1409</sup>

<sup>1403</sup> Amendment to Article 1041 of the Civil Code allows the father to wed his daughter even before 13 years of age after receiving endorsement of a judge.

<sup>1404</sup> [Early marriages of girl children in Iran have dire consequences](#), the NCRI Women's Committee website, July 6, 2018; [Child marriages and girl children who become widows](#), the NCRI Women's Committee website, August 15, 2017

<sup>1405</sup> [Marriage age increase rejected by Iran parliament](#), the NCRI Women's Committee website, December 25, 2018

<sup>1406</sup> The state-run IRNA news agency, January 6, 2019

<sup>1407</sup> The state-run daily Entekhab, March 4, 2019

<sup>1408</sup> Tayyebbeh Siavoshi, a member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run Sarpooosh.com, December 29, 2019

<sup>1409</sup> Mohammad Mehdi Tondguyan, deputy Minister of Sports and Youths, the state-run Sarpooosh.com, December 29, 2019





### Strengthened girls' access to quality education, skills development and training

Access to quality education, skills development and training has not been strengthened in recent years but further weakened. Lack of government funding and budget cuts have had a great impact on Iranian children's education.

In the past few years, Rouhani's government ordered shutdown of many schools in rural communities to cut down on budget. Many public schools charge tuitions and many families no longer afford to send their children to school. Obviously, girls are the first children to be deprived of schooling.

On the other hand, Going unpaid for months, Iranian teachers are preoccupied by making their ends meet rather than providing quality education.<sup>1410</sup>

Following are some facts:

- Each year the budget allocated to the Ministry of Education can only cover teachers' salaries and the day to day expenses of this ministry. The teachers' salary is still two-folds under the poverty line.<sup>1411</sup>
- The living conditions for teachers, over 50% of them women, are far below acceptable standards. According to the Minister of Education, teachers have always had a second job

<sup>1410</sup> Seyyed Mohammad Javad Abtahi, a member of the Parliamentary Education and Research Commission, the state-run Salamatnews.com, September 26, 2018

<sup>1411</sup> Mojgan Bagheri, the state-run salamatnews.com, September 26, 2018

to earn a living. If a teacher wants to live just on his/her salary, to be honest, he/she cannot even have a middle-class life.<sup>1412</sup>

- 69% of the teachers are taxi drivers as a second job and 54% of them don't have enough income and no time left for themselves.<sup>1413</sup>
- The average monthly income of teachers and Education Ministry staff was nearly 5 million Tomans (\$213) in 2020, half way below the poverty line of 10 million Tomans. But teachers do not receive this meager salary for months after months under various pretexts.<sup>1414</sup>
- On April 12, 2021, a group of young teachers held a protest gathering outside the mullahs' parliament. They expressed their grievances over salaries less than 3 million Tomans (\$128) when the poverty line stands at 10 million Tomans. Part of their statement said: "While living conditions become worse every day, the salary of young teachers with B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. degrees is exactly 2,500 Tomans (10 cents)."<sup>1415</sup>
- On April 19, 2021, in Ardabil, literacy movement teachers held a gathering outside the Department of Education in this city in northwestern Iran. The protesters have 10 years of work experience and they have passed the employment exam. The Education Ministry, however, has not employed them, yet.<sup>1416</sup>
- On May 9, 2021, young teachers from various cities converged in Tehran and held a protest outside the mullahs' parliament. They are protesting the Education Ministry's failure to employ them. Most of these teachers are young women.<sup>1417</sup>



Young teachers protesting outside the Iranian regime's parliament in Tehran on May 9, 2021

<sup>1412</sup> Mohammad Batha'ii, Minister of Education, the state-run Tasnim news agency, March 3, 2019

<sup>1413</sup> Vahid Mahmoudi, an economist and a university professor, the state-run Tasnim news agency, March 3, 2019

<sup>1414</sup> The state-run Kargozin Khabar website, April 2020

<sup>1415</sup> The state-run Fars news agency (fna.ir), April 13, 2021

<sup>1416</sup> [Watch the leading role of Iranian women in protests across Iran](#), news, the NCRI Women's Committee website, April 20, 2021

<sup>1417</sup> [Women partake in protests by social security pensioners, teachers, students](#), news, the NCRI Women's Committee website, May 9, 2021

## Implemented policies and programmes to reduce and eradicate child, early and forced marriage

The UN General Assembly resolution on December 18, 2019, urged the Iranian regime “to address the concerning incidence of child, early and forced marriage, as recommended by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.”<sup>1418</sup>

In February 2016, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child addressing the Iranian regime said, “The committee is seriously concerned about the reports of increasing numbers of girls at the age of 10 years or younger who are subjected to child and forced marriages to much older men.”<sup>1419</sup>

Obviously, the Iranian regime has not tackled early marriages, and consequently the health outcomes due to early childbearing, in the period spanning from 2016 to 2021, as explained in the opening part of answers to question 28.

Additionally, a bill called the “Law to Support Abandoned Children and Teenagers” was passed by the Iranian Parliament on September 22, 2013, which in the addendum to Article 26, sanctions marriage of the guardian with the girl under his guardianship with approval of a court: “Marriage, either during guardianship or after between the child and guardian is forbidden unless the court, after advisory opinion from the organization, determines that it is in the interest of the child.”<sup>1420</sup>

According to a sociologist, “Early marriages make slaves out of girl children. Not only they are subjugated by their husbands, but since they are children and cannot manage their own lives, their husbands’ families dominate them.”<sup>1421</sup>

- An Iranian Justice Ministry lawyer said laws related to underage marriages are insufficient, and child marriages in Iran have been on the rise in recent years.<sup>1422</sup>
- Another Judiciary official revealed that on the average between 500,000 and 600,000 early marriages are registered in Iran every year. But there are a large number of marriages that are not registered.<sup>1423</sup>
- The Iranian census organization also released new statistics indicating that 234,000 marriages of girls under 15 years were officially registered from March 2017 to March 2018. Of these marriages, 194 were girl children under 10 years old.<sup>1424</sup>
- The legal age of marriage for girls in Iran is 13. The parliamentary judicial and legal committee rejected the plan to increase the minimum age of marriage for girls in December 2018.<sup>1425</sup>
- Some families force girls as young as 9 or 10 years old to get married with old men just to earn some money to support the rest of the family’s needs.<sup>1426</sup>
- The general director of the Welfare Organization in Ardabil, announced that early marriages have become common practice in that province.<sup>1427</sup> He pointed out, “Out of a

<sup>1418</sup> [UN General Assembly censures Tehran regime for rights abuses in Iran](#), the NCRI Women’s Committee website, December 19, 2019

<sup>1419</sup> [UN Committee Strongly Censures Abuse of Girl Children in Iran](#), the NCRI Women’s Committee website, February 7, 2016

<sup>1420</sup> [Under new law in Iran, Men Allowed to Marry their Adopted Children](#), a special report by the NCRI Women’s Committee, October 2014

<sup>1421</sup> The official IRNA news agency, September 4, 2019

<sup>1422</sup> The state-run IRNA News Agency, August 3, 2019

<sup>1423</sup> Ali Kazemi, advisor to the legal deputy of the Judiciary Branch, the state-run daily Entekhab – March 4, 2019: “Between 500,000 to 600,000 children get married every year (in Iran) according to the officially-registered data. The main problem is that there are marriages taking place beyond those officially registered.”

<sup>1424</sup> The state-run Iran daily newspaper, October 30, 2019

<sup>1425</sup> The state-run Fars news agency, December 23, 2018

<sup>1426</sup> Massoumeh Agha-Alishahi, member of the mullahs’ parliament, the state-run ROKNA news agency, May 28, 2018

total of 12,000 marriages over the past year in this province, 37 percent (or 4,400) have been girls between 10 to 14 years of age.”

- The number of girl children under 10 who got married was 220 in 2011; 187 in 2012; 201 in 2013; 176 in 2014; and 179 in 2015. These figures are probably higher because of unregistered marriages.<sup>1428</sup>
- The average marriage age for girl children in Zaweh village is 11.<sup>1429</sup>
- The marriage age for girls in Zainub village is under 10.<sup>1430</sup>
- 109 girls under the age of 15 got married in Markazi Province in the six-month period from April to August 2020. During the same period, 109 young women under the age of 18 became pregnant.<sup>1431</sup>
- From 2017 to 2019, some 1,157 girls under 15 years got married in the Markazi Province. From 2016 to 2019, there were 1,055 under-18 pregnancies. In 2020, they have registered 109 under-18 pregnancies.<sup>1432</sup>
- 7,323 girls between 10 and 14 years of age got married in Iran from April to June 2020. During the same period, the marriage of one girl under 10 years has also been registered.<sup>1433</sup>
- The National Statics Center of Iran (NSC) released figures on January 31, 2021, according to which 9,058 marriages of girls between 10 and 14 years of age were registered in summer 2020.<sup>1434</sup>
- The NSC registered 16,381 marriages of girls under 15 years in six months in 2020, showing a 23% increase from spring to summer and 2% increase compared to the same period last year. This means that 100 marriages of girls under 15 are registered in every 24 hours.<sup>1435</sup>
- The NSC has also registered 364 child births to mothers under 15 years of age in summer 2020. Razavi Khorasan, East Azerbaijan, Sistan and Baluchestan, and Khuzestan are the top four provinces in Iran for children marriages under 13 years of age.<sup>1436</sup>
- Statistics show that children under the age of 15, especially girls under this age, have used marriage loans, and the number of under-15 marriages in 2019 quadrupled compared to 2018.<sup>1437</sup>

<sup>1427</sup> Behzad Sattari, the general director of the Welfare Organization in Ardabil, meeting with the Governor of Khalkhal, the state-run didarnews.ir, September 4, 2019

<sup>1428</sup> Batool Salimi Manesh, a social researcher, the official IRNA news agency, August 5, 2018

<sup>1429</sup> Ali Baghdar Delgosha, advisor in youths' affairs to the Governor of Razavi Khorasan Province, told a meeting at the School of Literature of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad on May 14, 2018. Zaweh is located in Razavi Khorasan Province in northeastern Iran.

<sup>1430</sup> Amir Taghizadeh, cultural and youth affairs deputy in the General Department of Youths and Sports in East Azerbaijan Province, the state-run ISNA news agency, May 24, 2018

<sup>1431</sup> Zahra Kasaii-pour, the general director of women and family affairs in the Markazi Province, the state-run ROKNA news agency, November 24, 2020

<sup>1432</sup> Zahra Kasaii-pour, the general director of women and family affairs in the Markazi Province, the state-run ROKNA news agency, November 24, 2020

<sup>1433</sup> The quarterly report of the National Statics Center of Iran (NSC), November 30, 2020

<sup>1434</sup> The state-run Tabnak website, February 5, 2021

<sup>1435</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, February 5, 2021

<sup>1436</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, February 5, 2021

<sup>1437</sup> Mohammad Mehdi Tondgooyan, Deputy Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs, the state-run ISNA News Agency, December 10, 2019

## Tackled disadvantages in health outcomes due to malnutrition, early childbearing (e.g. anemia) and exposure to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases

Malnutrition and early childbearing are among the worst problems Iranian girl children have to deal with. However, there are not sufficient reports and statistics available on these problems.

- A September 2020 Health Ministry post indicated that there were 50,000 children in Iran, under the age of 5, who are malnourished. The post did not specify how many of these children were girls.<sup>1438</sup>
- Another report said 67,000 poor pregnant women (who are malnourished and give birth to malnourished infants) had been identified by the Health Ministry; many more have not been identified.<sup>1439</sup>
- A week earlier, another source put the number of malnourished children at 137,000.<sup>1440</sup>
- Three years earlier in 2017, the statistics on malnourished children under the age of 6 was 200,000.<sup>1441</sup>
- In 2020, Iran's poverty line was declared to be 10 million Tomans (approx. \$425). Of Iran's population of 83 million, some 60 million are below the poverty line.<sup>1442</sup>
- According to conservative estimates, between 15 and 35 percent of Iran have eliminated or reduced their consumption of food items. Food items have been removed from the table due to declining family incomes and rising food prices.<sup>1443</sup>

Obviously, given the rise in poverty in Iran over the past 4 years, it does not seem logical that the number of malnourished children dropped from 200,000 in 2017 to 50,000 in 2020.

According to government sources, children in eight Iranian provinces are more malnourished than in other provinces. Lorestan, Sistan and Baluchestan, Hormozgan, Ilam, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Kerman, Hormozgan, and Khuzestan are among these provinces.

These figures must be considered as being grossly underestimated.

- 12,000 children in Sistan and Baluchestan<sup>1444</sup>
- 2,300 children in Bushehr<sup>1445</sup>
- 2,200 children in Yazd<sup>1446</sup>
- 1,600 children in Semnan<sup>1447</sup>
- 1,200 children in Zanjan<sup>1448</sup>
- 2,038 children in Chaharmahal-o Bakhtiari<sup>1449</sup>
- 1,599 children in Ardabil<sup>1450</sup>

<sup>1438</sup> The state-run behdasht.gov.ir, September 29, 2020

<sup>1439</sup> farsi.alarabiya.net, September 30, 2020

<sup>1440</sup> The state-run rouydad24.com, September 22, 2020

<sup>1441</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, May 31, 2017

<sup>1442</sup> The state-run Tabnak website, September 20, 2020

<sup>1443</sup> The state-run behdasht.gov.ir, September 29, 2020

<sup>1444</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, November 17, 2018

<sup>1445</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, April 24, 2019

<sup>1446</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, July 14, 2019

<sup>1447</sup> The state-run Fars news agency, April 29, 2019

<sup>1448</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, July 25, 2019

<sup>1449</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, June 27, 2020

<sup>1450</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, September 19, 2020



Depression, suicide, divorce, school dropouts, and poverty are among the physical and psychological consequences of early marriage and childbearing in Iran.

- In 2017, it was reported that nearly 1,700 pregnant mothers less than 15 years of age were experiencing their first pregnancy.<sup>1451</sup>
- Experts in Iran say 50% of early pregnancies in Iran lead to the deaths of the mother or her baby. There is also 70% higher chance of cancer in such mothers.<sup>1452</sup>
- In 2018, the Director of Iran's Census Organization in Hamadan Province stated that 44 girls under the age of 15 were pregnant in Hamadan.<sup>1453</sup>

With the rising number of early marriages every year, one could assume that a large percentage of these underage brides get pregnant.

In the absence of any form of legal support for young women, forced marriage is another main contributor to suicide. Following are a few examples which found their way to the press and media:

- A 16-year-old young woman by the name of Ziba set herself on fire to evade her family's insistence that she marries an old man.<sup>1454</sup>
- There were reports in June 2019 that Souma Khedri, 19, from Baneh, and Sara Esmaili, 17, from Piranshahr, committed suicide to evade forcible marriage due to lack of legal protection for women under the law.<sup>1455</sup>
- Within six months from March to August 2019, 11 women set themselves ablaze in the small town of Dishmuk, in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, southwestern Iran.<sup>1456</sup>
- Early marriages, domestic violence against women and girls, and poverty are among the main reasons of self-immolations of women in Dishmuk, a remote city in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, SW Iran. A woman by the name of Sorayya, married at age 11, another only 17 years old set themselves alight in August. Two others, 14 and 17 years old, set themselves ablaze in April 2019.<sup>1457</sup>
- On June 19, 2020, in Kermanshah, Shirin Kamari, 17, resorted to suicide under her family's pressure to get married with someone they had chosen.<sup>1458</sup>
- On June 20, 2020, Shelar Barzanji, 28, set herself on fire to end her life. Shelar lived in a village near Urmia, capital of West Azerbaijan Province. She had been forced to marry a man she did not love.<sup>1459</sup>
- A 13-year-old girl in Kerman also attempted suicide, however unsuccessfully, to escape forced marriage and continue her education.<sup>1460</sup>
- On June 30, 2020, Banafsheh, 18, the mother of two and married at 11 years old, ended her life by drug overdose after delivering her second child. On August 3, 2020, Donya Nozari, 18, committed suicide to escape forcible marriage.<sup>1461</sup>

<sup>1451</sup> The official IRNA news agency, July 30, 2017

<sup>1452</sup> The state-run shafaqna.com, December 14, 2017

<sup>1453</sup> The state-run IRNA News Agency, August 3, 2019

<sup>1454</sup> The state-run Khorasan daily, August 26, 2019

<sup>1455</sup> [Women burn themselves to evade oppressive marriage laws in Iran](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, August 28, 2019

<sup>1456</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, August 11, 2019; the state-run KABNA news website, May 16, 2019

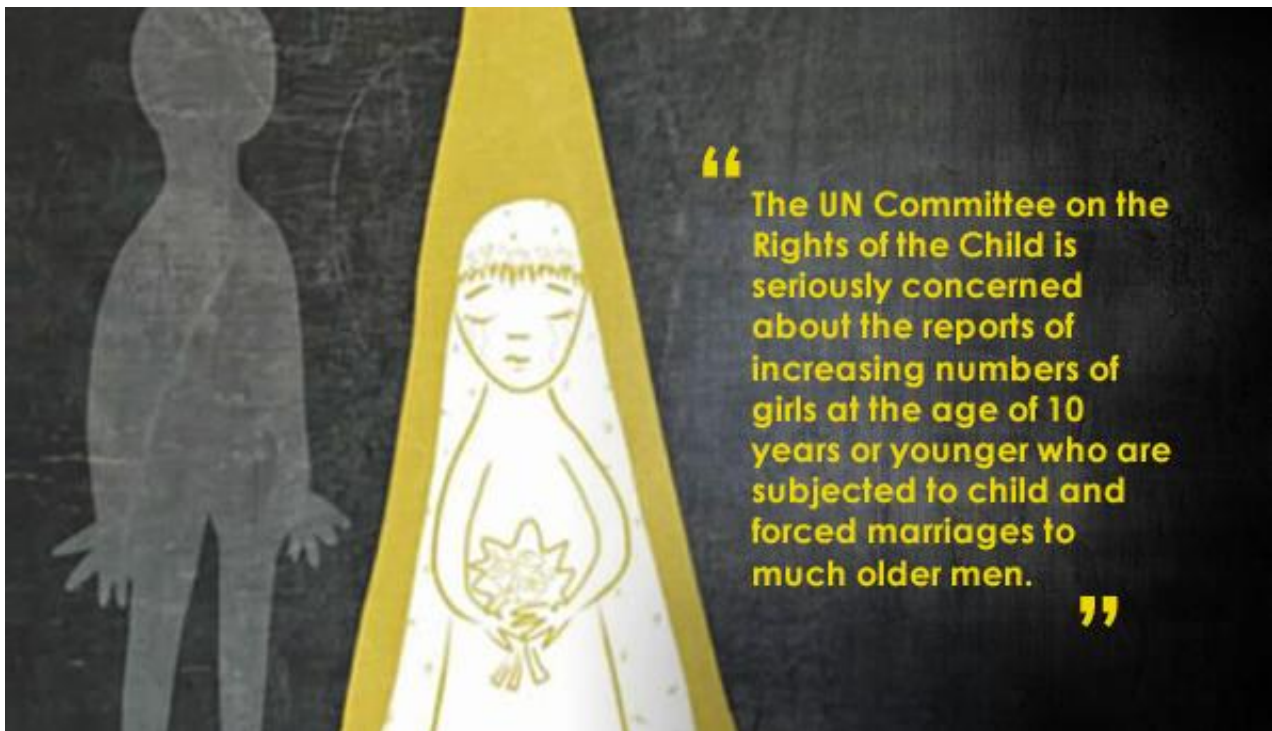
<sup>1457</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, August 11, 2019; the state-run KABNA news website, May 16, 2019

<sup>1458</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, June 20, 2020

<sup>1459</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, June 20, 2020

<sup>1460</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, June 20, 2020





Sometimes, girl children are forced to marry much older men with an age difference of up to 30 years.<sup>1462</sup>

- The largest number of such marriages take place in the southern part of Sistan and Baluchestan. Girls often are between 12 and 13 years old. They are mostly wed to old men who have multiple spouses. The main reason for this type of marriages is poverty. Families receive houses, cars, and cash in return for their daughter's marriage. These young girls unfortunately undergo depression and other internal problems until the end of their lives, because their husbands turn 70 or 80 when they are not even 20.<sup>1463</sup>
- Samira, 8, was given to marriage to a boy, 14 years old, to compensate for her father's debt to the boy's father. Samira's father worked at a brick kiln in Pakdasht, Tehran Province. He had borrowed 20 million Tomans (\$1740) from his friend, but was not able to return his debt. So, he decided to wed his daughter to his friend's son.<sup>1464</sup>
- According to the official statistics, there are some 24,000 widows under 18 years of age in Iran, and most of the early marriages end up in divorce.<sup>1465</sup> Out of this number, an estimated 15,000 young widows are under 15 years of age in Iran.<sup>1466</sup>
- Every year, in the cities and villages of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province and Dehdasht county, in places such as Tamoradi, Zeilaei, Banari, and Baramshir, 10- to 13-year-old girls marry adult men without even having their marriage registered. Innocent 14-year-old girls are also married to 60- to 70-year-old men for a small payment.

<sup>1461</sup> [Suicides among women in Iran tops rates in Middle East](#), articles, NCRI Women's Committee website, September 10, 2020

<sup>1462</sup> The state-run Fararu news agency, August 14, 2017

<sup>1463</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, January 27, 2017

<sup>1464</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, January 31, 2018

<sup>1465</sup> Massoumeh Agha-Alishahi, member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run ROKNA news agency, May 28, 2018

<sup>1466</sup> Shahrbanou Imami, member of Tehran's City Council and former member of the mullahs' parliament, IWD gathering at Tehran's Melli University, the state-run ILNA news agency, March 8, 2018

According to the Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Civil Registry Office, 9 girls under the age of 10 and 458 girls under the age of 15 were married in this province in 2017.<sup>1467</sup>

### Implemented policies and programmes to eliminate violence against girls

Child abuse and violence against children is the first social ill in Iran, but no accurate data are available.<sup>1468</sup>

- A government official admitted in 2017 that 12,000 cases of child abuse had been registered by the National Welfare Organization.<sup>1469</sup>
- One social expert reported of over 16,000 instances of violence against children being registered in just six months in 2018, without specifying the number of provinces.<sup>1470</sup>
- A Welfare Organization deputy announced that 13,000 cases of child abuse had been reported only to one emergency center in West Azerbaijan Province in the year 2017.<sup>1471</sup> He did not say how many emergency centers exist in the province.
- More girls are victims of child abuse than boys. 52% of abused children are girls and 57% of perpetrators of violence are fathers.<sup>1472</sup>
- Child abuse increased fivefold in Iran after the Coronavirus outbreak.<sup>1473</sup>

As explained in answer to question 13, the Iranian regime has not yet adopted the bill to protect women against violence and the bill adopted to protect children's rights fails to define child abuse and to incriminate parents who abuse their children. Neither does it contain any mechanism to ensure sufficient funding to address the needs of child laborers, child widows, and children of low income families. Some case examples of violence against girl children follow:

- A 5-year-old girl in Mashhad suffered brain death. After a quarrel with the child's mother, the stepfather banged the girl on the floor several times which led to serious physical injuries and brain death.<sup>1474</sup>
- In Damavand, Tehran Province, it was reported that a two-year-old girl was burned by her father and stepmother.<sup>1475</sup>
- A three-year-old girl in a village in Marand, East Azerbaijan Province, went into coma after being brutalized by her addicted father.<sup>1476</sup>
- A six-year-old girl by the name of Haddiseh died after eight days of brain death, on January 2, 2019, at Kamyab Hospital in Mashhad. There were scars of infected burns by cigarettes and hot wire on her body and genitalia.<sup>1477</sup>

<sup>1467</sup> The state-run Didarnews.com, September 3, 2019

<sup>1468</sup> Kamel Delpasand, sociologist and a researcher in social sciences, interview with the official IRNA news agency, July 18, 2018

<sup>1469</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, March 4, 2017

<sup>1470</sup> Reza Jafari, head of the Social Emergencies, interview with the state-run ILNA news agency, February 25, 2018

<sup>1471</sup> Mehrdad Motallebi, Social Affairs deputy of the Welfare Organization of West Azerbaijan, the state-run Uromnews.com, August 7, 2018

<sup>1472</sup> The state-run salamatnews.ir, October 4, 2018

<sup>1473</sup> Abbas Masjedi Arani, head of the National Forensics Organization, the state-run hamshahrionline.ir, April 11, 2020

<sup>1474</sup> The state-run IRNA news agency, May 3, 2017

<sup>1475</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, September 1, 2019

<sup>1476</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, May 27, 2019

- Neighbors discovered three children in the backyard of a house in the town of Taleghan, in Mahshahr, southwestern Iran, in April 2018.<sup>1478</sup> Fatemeh, 12, Omolbanin, 8, and their five-year-old brother, Ali Akbar, had been kept out in the hot weather and tortured physically and psychologically by an ax, a hammer, hot iron rods, etc. Various parts of the children's bodies had been burnt. Their mouths had been closed by adhesive tape to prevent them from screaming.



Fatemeh, 12, Omolbanin, 8, and their five-year-old brother, Ali Akbar, tortured in the backyard



<sup>1477</sup> The state-run Khorasan daily, January 2, 2019

<sup>1478</sup> The state-run asriran.com, April 24, 2018

### Implemented policies to prevent and eliminate sexual violence and harmful practices

No, the Iranian regime has not taken any specific steps to prevent and eliminate sexual violence and harmful practices. Rape has been mushrooming in different parts of Iran, including the rape and murders of 6 and 7-year-old girl children, and most tragically the rape and death of a 17-month-old by her father.

- A seven-year-old girl, Atena Aslani, (picture on the right) became victim of sexual violence and murder in Parsabad on June 19, 2017. Atena's father was a street peddler who sold clothes. The state media identified the suspect as Ismail, a local businessman selling paint.
- A 5-year-old girl in Mashhad suffered brain death due to harsh beating by her stepfather. Multiple scars of injury were evident on the girl's abdomen, head, and face upon admission to hospital. After clinical examinations, it became clear that in addition to broken legs and hip, she had also suffered brain damage.<sup>1479</sup>
- The rapes of 41 women and girls in Iranshahr, in southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan, was one of the most horrific cases stirring controversy across the country in June 2018. The victims were between 18 and 30 years of age assaulted by a gang of four men, linked to the city's wealthy and influential families, the Bassij and IRGC.<sup>1480</sup>
- Zahra Navidpour, 28, was raped and murdered in Malekan, a small city in East Azerbaijan Province. She had been raped by the parliamentary deputy of Malekan, Salman Khodadadi, and had filed a suit against him.<sup>1481</sup>  
She was found dead at her mother's home on January 6, 2019. The coroner's office was supposed to perform autopsy to determine the reason for her death, but security forces stole and secretly buried her body in a village before the autopsy.
- A young woman, 20, divulged that she had been abused and raped by her father since she was eight, but had feared to talk about it.<sup>1482</sup>
- In November 2017, following a research done on 400 child laborers, it was revealed by an official of Social Services in Tehran's Municipality that some 90% of child laborers are sexually abused. "We are going to prove that 90 per cent of child laborers get raped."<sup>1483</sup>
- Romina Ashrafi, 13, from Talesh, was killed when her father beheaded her with a sickle on May 21, 2020, while she was asleep. She had run away with a boy who was planning to marry her but was arrested. The judge sent her home, despite her pleas that her father had been abusing her.<sup>1484</sup> A couple of days before the murder, her father had consulted a lawyer, making sure that according to the Iranian regime's laws he would not be executed for killing his daughter.



<sup>1479</sup> The state-run IRNA news agency, May 3, 2017

<sup>1480</sup> [Gang rapes of 41 young women and girls in Iranshahr](#), the NCRI Women's Committee website, June 20, 2018

<sup>1481</sup> [Body of rape victim Zahra Navidpour secretly buried without autopsy](#), the NCRI Women's Committee website, January 12, 2019

<sup>1482</sup> The state-run Fararu website, June 2, 2019

<sup>1483</sup> The executive director of the Organization of Social Services in Tehran's Municipality, the state-run Salamatnews.com, November 8, 2017

<sup>1484</sup> The state-run Didarnews website, May 21, 2020



- Kowsar Gol Soghanloo, 15, from Piranshahr, died after her husband set her on fire on February 19, 2020. She had been married at the age of 14.<sup>1485</sup>
- Somayyeh Fathi, 18, from Kurdistan, was killed by her father and brother on June 18, 2020, with aluminum phosphide pills, known as rice pills. Somayyeh was married and pregnant. Neither of her killers was arrested or interrogated.<sup>1486</sup>
- Hadith, 11, from Khoy, was strangled to death by her father using a belt on March 18, 2020. The father had already researched the punishment for murdering his child and knew that the law would not impose a severe punishment on him for murder. He had also repeatedly threatened to kill Hadith's mother.<sup>1487</sup>
- Fatemeh Ghozati, 16, died after her step-uncle threw her out of an 11<sup>th</sup>-floor window of their building on July 23, 2020. The mother witnessed the crime, and despite her and Fatemeh's stepfather's complaints, the killer was released on bail and continued his threats to the family. The regime's Judiciary described the murder as a suicide.<sup>1488</sup>
- Fatemeh Hawasi, 16, from Qal'eh-Shahin, Sarpol-e-Zahab district, was shot dead by her brother on August 31, 2020.<sup>1489</sup>
- A 17-month-old baby lost her life because her father raped her. The Coroner's Office announced that Sanaz had suffered from internal hemorrhage and severe lacerations due to cruel and very violent abuse.<sup>1490</sup>

### **Implemented policies and programmes to eradicate child labour and excessive levels of unpaid care and domestic work undertaken by girl children that prevents them from going to school and accessing health services**

Every year, at least a quarter of Iran's students are forced to drop out of school, many of them becoming child laborers.<sup>1491</sup> The Iranian regime does not have any policy of eradicating child labor and excessive levels of unpaid care and domestic work undertaken by girl children that prevents them from going to school and accessing health services.

Instead, the government's wrong policies, mismanagement of the economy, and the corrupt kleptocratic rule further contribute to poverty, early and forced marriages of girl children, and spread of child labor.

Indeed, government agencies such as Tehran's Municipality are involved in child labor; the State Security Force is engaged in the abuse of street children and child laborers; and the Labor Ministry turns a blind eye on small workshops who recruit children with low wages.

The garbage collection mafia in Iran is among the largest syndicates of organized crime. According to government officials, only 2.5 percent of the profits from garbage collection go to children; the remainder goes to the mafia. Most children who work as garbage collectors are breadwinners of their families. As long as the government fails to support families financially, these children will continue to labor in the never-ending cycle of street work.<sup>1492</sup>

<sup>1485</sup> Kurdish Hengaw website, February 23, 2020

<sup>1486</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, June 24, 2020

<sup>1487</sup> The state-run Etemadonline.com, March 18, 2020

<sup>1488</sup> The state-run Bahar news agency, June 14, 2020

<sup>1489</sup> Kurdish Hengaw website, September 7, 2020

<sup>1490</sup> The state-run Eghtesadnews.com, April 20, 2021

<sup>1491</sup> Nahid Tajeddin, member of the board of directors of the Social Commission of the Majlis, the state-run salamatnews.com, September 27, 2017

<sup>1492</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, July 7, 2020

The statistics provided officially are not reliable. The situation and numbers of child laborers are catastrophic particularly in Sistan and Baluchestan and Razavi Khorasan provinces in eastern Iran.<sup>1493</sup> Despite the “growing population” of child laborers “the problem of child labor is not among the regime's top priorities.”<sup>1494</sup> Lack of sufficient funds is another reason for the government's failure to cope with this issue.<sup>1495</sup>

Child laborers in Iran often have families and are at times their family's sole breadwinner. “Many of them are responsible for helping their families while others are responsible for the family's expenses, entirely.”<sup>1496</sup> A large number of them are being sent to large metropolitan areas by their families who are often from the low-income sectors and (socio-economically) disadvantaged regions.<sup>1497</sup> All of the child laborers identified in Khuzestan Province, southwestern Iran have families.<sup>1498</sup>

- In October 2015, the director-general of Tehran's Department of Education disclosed that 25,000 school-aged children in this city are working instead of attending school.<sup>1499</sup>
- Girls in Tehran's Herandi district are unable to pursue their education or even leave home because of the detrimental atmosphere in this region, namely the large number of homeless and addicted people sleeping in the parks and the streets.<sup>1500</sup>
- Generally, rural girls are converted to unpaid domestic workers at an early age. Nomad girls are forced to go to livestock breeding, sheep minding and hard labor with no opportunity to study.<sup>1501</sup>
- In September 2017, Nahid Tajeddin, a member of the Board of Director of the parliamentary Social Affairs Committee, estimated the number of child laborers in Iran were between 3 to 7 million and emphasized “that no accurate statistic can be provided in this regard since most child laborers do not have registered identity papers.”<sup>1502</sup>
- The population of these children has been on the rise in Tehran.<sup>1503</sup>
- Child laborers in Iran are vulnerable to various social ailments. At least half of the child laborers in Iran are young girls.<sup>1504</sup>
- A member of the mullahs' parliament, asserted, “Currently, there are some 15,000 scavengers in the capital, 5,000 of whom are children. 40% of them are 10- to 15-year-olds and their families' only breadwinners.”<sup>1505</sup>
- There are children from 4 to 12 years old among the scavengers. Living in sheds made of junks without bathrooms or showers, these children have to deal with vermin and contagious diseases. Iron deficiency, lice, skin and ear infections, severe malnutrition, hepatitis A and AIDS are other diseases child laborers have to cope with.

<sup>1493</sup> The state-run Etemadonline.com, April 15, 2020

<sup>1494</sup> The official IRNA news agency, June 1, 2020

<sup>1495</sup> The state-run Khaneh Mellat (ICANA), July 14, 2019

<sup>1496</sup> The state-run asriran.com, May 10, 2020

<sup>1497</sup> Zahra Sa'ii, a member of parliament, the state-run Khaneh Mellat (ICANA), July 14, 2019

<sup>1498</sup> The state-run Khaneh Melat website (ICANA), July 14, 2019

<sup>1499</sup> The state-run ANA news agency, December 6, 2015

<sup>1500</sup> The state-run ANA news agency, December 6, 2015

<sup>1501</sup> The state-run mehrkhane.com, July 30, 2017

<sup>1502</sup> The state-run salamatnews.com, September 27, 2017

<sup>1503</sup> The state-run Khaneh Mellat (ICANA), July 14, 2019

<sup>1504</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, September 27, 2019

<sup>1505</sup> Hossein Maghsoudi, member of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run ICANA news agency, October 18, 2019



- Garbage collection exposes children to a multitude of social ills, including addiction and abuse. In 2019, at least 1,200 children under the influence of drugs were handed over to the Welfare Organization.<sup>1506</sup>
- Drug trafficking mafia hunt child laborers who have no parents or guardians and no homes. Not only the regime does not take appropriate measures to protect children from the illicit use of narcotic drugs and to prevent the use of children in the illicit production and trafficking of such substances, but Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is the state entity that runs this business and makes enormous wealth.<sup>1507</sup>
- As a result of their unsanitary environments about four to five percent of child laborers on the streets have AIDS. 66% of child laborers have parasitic intestinal infections, 10% have urinary tract infections, 96% have dental caries and gum disease, and 24% have skin infections. In addition, these children have higher rates of depression and suicidal thoughts.<sup>1508</sup>
- State-run media wrote about girl children sifting through garbage saying they are more vulnerable to diseases than boys. Their long hairs are full of lice and they have not enough water to wash their hair. The little water they use is contaminated.<sup>1509</sup>
- Sexual abuse is the greatest ailment among young child scavengers.<sup>1510</sup>
- The state-run Salamatnews.com and Rokna.ir websites published a report run by the official Iran newspaper which included some painful examples of sexual assault on deprived girl children and child laborers. The report narrated the stories of girl child laborers who are assaulted and raped since very young age due to poverty and addiction of their parents.<sup>1511</sup>
- A social activist also said, "Children sifting through garbage work an average of more than 10 hours a day. There were kids who worked 20 hours a day. This is kind of a modern slavery."<sup>1512</sup>
- "Most of these children (child laborers) earn money in difficult ways; in hot or cold weather, they carry a sack and collect garbage, known as dirty gold, but they are given only a small share of profit from their findings. This is a new kind of slavery in the age of technology."<sup>1513</sup>
- Regardless of gender, children who collect garbage work an average of more than 10 hours a day. There are children who work 20 hours a day. This is a new kind of modern slavery.<sup>1514</sup>
- A Tehran NGO identified some 4,700 children who scavenge through garbage in the capital alone. They work in 500 junk yards and garbage depots, producing a daily profit of 2 trillion Tomans for the garbage mafia, 200 billion Tomans of which goes to Tehran's Municipality.<sup>1515</sup>

<sup>1506</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, July 7, 2020

<sup>1507</sup> [Iran's elite Guard "runs global crime network pushing heroin to West,"](#) The Times, November 17, 2011; [Under the shadow, illicit economies in Iran](#), The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, October 2020

<sup>1508</sup> Minoo Mehrz, director of Iran's AIDS Research Center, the state-run Khaneh Melat website (ICANA), July 14, 2019

<sup>1509</sup> The state-run ICANA news agency, October 20, 2019

<sup>1510</sup> Elham Fakhari, member of Tehran's City Council, the state-run ILNA news agency, June 12, 2019

<sup>1511</sup> [State media confess to rape of girl child laborers](#), the website of the NCRI Women's Committee, November 9, 2017; the state-run Salamatnews.com, November 8, 2017

<sup>1512</sup> The state-run Tahlil-e Iran website, January 8, 2018

<sup>1513</sup> Zahra Sa'ii, a member of parliament, the state-run Khaneh Mellat (ICANA), July 14, 2019

<sup>1514</sup> The state-run Tahlil-e Iran website, January 8, 2018

<sup>1515</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, September 12, 2020; the state-run Tasnim news agency, June 25, 2019

- On the Saturday night, May 2, 2020, several men attacked the female child laborer in Enqelab Square of Isfahan in a bid to rob her day's income. Facing the little girl's resistance, they doused her with gasoline and set her alight. Fortunately, some passers-by arrived and extinguished the fire before it caused severe injury.<sup>1516</sup>
- A little girl child laborer, only 7 years old, was attacked and seriously injured by a group of stray dogs in the streets of Shahr-e Ray, a Tehran suburb, on Tuesday night, January 28, 2020, while selling flowers. She was seriously injured in the head, neck, shoulder, waist and legs and was subsequently taken to hospital by the people.<sup>1517</sup>
- A garbage girl who is only 14 years old had to get pregnant to pay for her living. She would sell her baby for 20 million – 30 million Tomans (\$1280).<sup>1518</sup>
- On September 9, 2020, three of four missing child laborers were found dead in the water canal in Shahinshahr, Isfahan Province. Municipal officials had detained them about a week before their bodies were found.
- Other reports have indicated that municipal agents take sexual advantage of the girls who work on the city streets and at intersections.<sup>1519</sup>

## Other

### Runaway girls

Due to the patriarchal culture promoted and advocated by the clerical regime, and lack of any form of support for abused children, recent years have seen a rise in the number of runaway girls in Iran as a major social issue. However, no accurate statistics are available on this issue.

Unfortunately, there have been reports that the limited number of shelters made for runaway girls are used by authorities for human trafficking and prostitution.

Hossein Assadbeigi, head of the Social Emergency of the Welfare Organization, said the organization had been informed of a total of 5,000 runaway girls over the past year.<sup>1520</sup>

### The impact of water shortages on girl children

Another issue worth examining, is the impact of water shortages on girl children.

In summer 2018, 48% of the country's population was under water stress.<sup>1521</sup>

No budget was allocated for water from the National Development Fund in 2019.<sup>1522</sup>

Two-thirds of the population of Sistan and Baluchestan province do not have access to sanitary drinking water.<sup>1523</sup>

<sup>1516</sup> The state-run asriran.com, May 10, 2020

<sup>1517</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, January 29, 2020

<sup>1518</sup> Shahnaz Ramaram, a member of the presidium of Mashhad City Council, the state-run IMNA news agency, September 15, 2020

<sup>1519</sup> [Labor child girls are physically and sexually abused by city agents](#), news, the NCRI Women's Committee website, February 6, 2019

<sup>1520</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, January 10, 2018

<sup>1521</sup> The website of Tehran's Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture, [www.tccim.ir/news/](http://www.tccim.ir/news/), January 6, 2019

<sup>1522</sup> The website of Tehran's Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture, [www.tccim.ir/news/](http://www.tccim.ir/news/), January 12, 2019

<sup>1523</sup> [www.bbc.com/persian](http://www.bbc.com/persian), January 6, 2019

For example, women and girls in Chabahar have to walk almost 30 minutes, five or six times a day to provide drinking water to their families. They have to bring water with jerry cans.<sup>1524</sup>

The daily walks involve carrying very heavy water jugs in harsh weather conditions: as high as 50 degrees Celsius in the summer and freezing cold in the winter.

These conditions cause illnesses in the women and girls who fetch the water, such as lumbar disc herniation, spinal cord fractures, lower back pain, and miscarriages. Many of the girls are deprived from school and studying because they have to fetch water every few hours.

In the absence of pipelines and even tankers, people in this deprived region dig ditches to collect rainwater. These ditches are called *Hootag* and are considered as water reservoirs for village inhabitants. The water is used for both humans and animals and is extremely contaminated.

There have been numerous reports of little girls and women drowning in these ditches or being injured by the crocodiles living in these ditches.

- As many as 20 children have died from drowning in *Hootags*.<sup>1525</sup> Hawa, a Baluch girl, was retrieving water from a *Hootag* when she was attacked by a Gando crocodile and lost one of her hands.
- Monireh Khedmati, Maryam Khedmati and Yasra Delshab drowned while drinking water from *Hootag* on May 29, 2019. They were were studying in the second and third grade in the Kambazar village near Chabahr.<sup>1526</sup>
- Two teenage Baluchi girls, Sara and Basmeh Kalamati, 14 and 16, were drowned in a water ditch or *Hootag* while doing their dishes and laundry.<sup>1527</sup> The girls had gone to the *Hootag* outside of school hours to help their families, when they fell into the *Hootag* and lost their lives. Many students lose their lives while getting water from the *Hootag*.<sup>1528</sup>
- Three girls and a woman drowned in a waterhole in the village of Zirdan, central Nik Shahr, located in south of Sistan and Baluchestan Province on August 28, 2018. The four victims included three girls, 8, 11 and 14 years old, and a 25-year-old woman who had gone to bring water.<sup>1529</sup>



Hawa, the little girl whose hand was eaten by a Gando crocodile

<sup>1524</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, December 22, 2015

<sup>1525</sup> The official IRNA news agency, July 23, 2019

<sup>1526</sup> The official IRNA news agency, May 29, 2019

<sup>1527</sup> Jamshid Sarani, governor of Dashtyari County of Chabahar, the state-run Khabar Fori, October 10, 2019

<sup>1528</sup> Anvar Badpa, director of the Education Department of Dashtyari, the state-run Khabar Fori, October 10, 2019

<sup>1529</sup> Naseh, head of the pre-hospital emergency ward and accident management at the School of Medical Sciences of Iranshahr, the official IRNA news agency, August 28, 2018



Monireh Khedmati, Maryam Khedmati and Yasra Delshab drowned while drinking water from *Hootag* on May 29, 2019

### Persecution of young women by the state

Young women are also victims of persecution and even executions by the clerical regime.

At least 23 juveniles were among those killed in the streets during the November 2019 uprising across Iran.<sup>1530</sup> Many more young protesters were snatched from hospitals and imprisoned. They were not provided medical treatment for their injuries as a way of further physical torture.

At the same time, the Iranian regime is the world top executioner of minors. It does not spare juveniles who commit crime while under 18 years of age. The only thing is that the regime waits for them to turn 18 to execute them.

Following are a few examples of young women victimized by the Iranian regime's policies:

- A 15-year-old student, Ma'edeh Shabani-Nejad, was arrested on January 25, 2018, by the IRGC's Department of Intelligence and detained under interrogation in Sepidar Prison of Ahvaz, for over three months in an undetermined state. She suffered GI bleeding while in prison.<sup>1531</sup>
- Nikta Esfandani, 14, was one of the youngest victims killed during the Iran uprising in November 2019. She was shot in the head by security forces on Tehran's Sattar Khan Ave. on November 16, 2019.<sup>1532</sup>
- Zeinab Sekaanvand, 24, was hanged on October 2, 2018, in the Central Prison of Urmia despite appeals from UN Special Rapporteurs and the UN Secretary-General since her conviction in October 2014. She was accused of killing her husband in 2012 at the age of 17. Forced into marriage when 15, she lived two painful years, being battered everyday

<sup>1530</sup> [At least 23 children killed by security forces in November protests](#), Amnesty International, March 2020

<sup>1531</sup> [Ma'edeh Shabani-Nejad remains in detention without legal warrant](#), the NCRI Women's Committee website, May 31, 2018

<sup>1532</sup> [Nikta Esfandani](#), the fallen for freedom, the NCRI Women's Committee website, November 2, 2020

by her husband. Ms. Sekaanvand was convicted of killing her abusive husband at the age of 17. She told the judge that her brother-in-law, who had raped her several times, had actually committed the murder. Her claims that she was coerced into confessing the murder, and that she had been a victim of domestic violence, were reportedly not adequately examined during her trial.<sup>1533</sup>

### Conditions of children in Iran amounts to organized crime

There are many more serious issues involving children in Iran, like the sale of infants<sup>1534</sup> and trafficking of children<sup>1535</sup> in violation of CRC Article 11, and children who in violation of Article 7 are not entitled to birth certificates and identity papers because they are born from an alien father or out of marriage. Children of ethnic minorities are deprived of learning their mother tongue in violation of Article 30 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. And the list goes on. Being a child and a woman, makes Iranian girl children the most innocent victims of the clerical regime. They are the poorest, the hungriest and the most oppressed sector of Iranian society. They have no rights and their conditions over the past four decades, amount to organized crime by the mullahs' religious dictatorship.

<sup>1533</sup> UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, [statement](#), October 5, 2018

<sup>1534</sup> [Annual Report 2018](#), document, the NCRI Women's Committee website, March 2018

<sup>1535</sup> [Trafficking of Iranian Women Often Takes Place Through Three Provinces](#), articles, the NCRI Women's Committee website, April 21, 2021







# ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION, PROTECTION AND REHABILITATION

## 29. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies?

The Iranian regime is not protecting the environment but destroying it. As a result, it could not integrate gender perspectives and concerns into its non-existent environmental policies. The destruction of environment in Iran has led to poverty and destitution of a large portion of the populace.

While part of the problem can be attributed to the global climate change, the regime must be blamed for adopting wrong policies which have aggravated the conditions.

The clerical regime does not have any policy to conserve and protect the environment. In fact, it has done the opposite throughout its rule, destroying the country's natural resources, its infrastructures, and adding to air pollution.

The unfettered construction of dams and wrong plans to transfer water from basin to basin to provide for the regime's nuclear weapons program, and the unmanaged establishment of industries, and the emphasis on unprincipled and high-consumption agriculture to reap profits for the ruling clique, have accelerated the process of desertification and drought in Iran.

The regime's inefficient management of the share of natural water from available resources have boosted desertification in Iran. Desertification is no longer just the drought of lands and aqueducts, but the decline in soil fertility and increased migration are also among its consequences.

- Some 20 percent of the country's lands are located on the desert strip, which is called by the state-run outlets as a silent earthquake. Currently, 18 out of 31 provinces and 97 cities of Iran are involved in desertification, and these numbers are increasing annually.<sup>1536</sup>
- Air pollution is increasing and biodiversity in Iran has suffered unprecedented destruction, as statistics released by the Global Carbon Project show that Iran is the seventh largest air polluter in the world with an annual emission of 648 million tons of carbon dioxide.
- Drying up of Lake Urmia in the northwestern province of West Azerbaijan,<sup>1537</sup> drying of Zayandeh Rood in Isfahan in central Iran and other rivers, dust storms and haze in

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<sup>1536</sup> The state-run website Gostaresh News, May 2, 2021

<sup>1537</sup> [Lake Urmia drying danger of disease for 14 million people](http://www.ncr-iran.org), www.ncr-iran.org, July 26, 2017

southwestern Khuzestan Province, scarcity of water all across the country, as well as alarming air pollution levels in Tehran and other metropolises, are some of the major environmental disasters in recent years.

- Iran is now among the countries with the highest rate of soil erosion, exploitation of water resources, desertification, and so forth. Today, there's not a single living wetland or lake in the country.<sup>1538</sup>
- Iran's groundwater resources are running out. Iran consumes more than 85 percent of its freshwater resources annually, while global statistics show that more than 60 percent of water consumption is a sign of crisis and water stress.<sup>1539</sup>
- The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which dominates the country's Armed Forces and economy, has had an extremely destructive role in this regard. The IRGC has changed the path of rivers and built numerous dams in wrong locations to serve the regime's nuclear and military projects. The drying of Lake Urmia, Zayandeh Rood river and other major rivers in Khuzestan and Kohgiluyeh and Boyer Ahmad provinces are attributed to the IRGC projects.
- The IRGC's Khatam al Anbiya Construction Headquarters is one of the regime's agencies that is fully involved in destroying Iran's environment and natural resources. The company announced in September 2020 that it has 10 trillion Tomans' worth of construction plans in progress in West Azerbaijan Province, alone. Building dams is a part of its portfolio of projects.<sup>1540</sup>
- The IRGC's Khatam al Anbiya Construction Headquarters has built at least 62 dams across the country; this represents 50 percent of Iran's reservoirs and dams. The company currently has 285 constructive projects in progress.<sup>1541</sup>
- The regime has issued permission to raze large parts of Iran's jungles and forests to smuggle wood out of the country, to construct hotels and buildings in the natural course of rivers to earn more money. They export the country's water for economic and political profits.<sup>1542</sup> They have sold out the Caspian Sea and allowed Chinese companies to use industrial fishing methods causing irreversible damages to the Persian Gulf environment. By doing so, they have virtually eliminated the source of income for local people and vastly contributed to the destructions caused by natural disasters such as the case in the flash floods which washed away large parts of the country in spring 2019 and afterwards.
- As a result of such destructive policies, whoever attempts to take any step to voluntarily conserve the environment and natural resources, comes automatically into collision with the state interests and is accused of jeopardizing the country's national security.
- Employees of the Environmental Protection Organization held a protest on October 26, 2015, where they protested mismanagement of the country's environment, by overlooking experts' views. The organization's response, however, was to order protesters to leave if they were discontented.<sup>1543</sup>

<sup>1538</sup> Isa Kalantari, the head of the Environment Protection Agency, the state-run ISNA news agency, October 15, 2017

<sup>1539</sup> The state-run website Gostaresh News, May 2, 2021

<sup>1540</sup> The state-run Young Journalists Club news agency, September 3, 2020

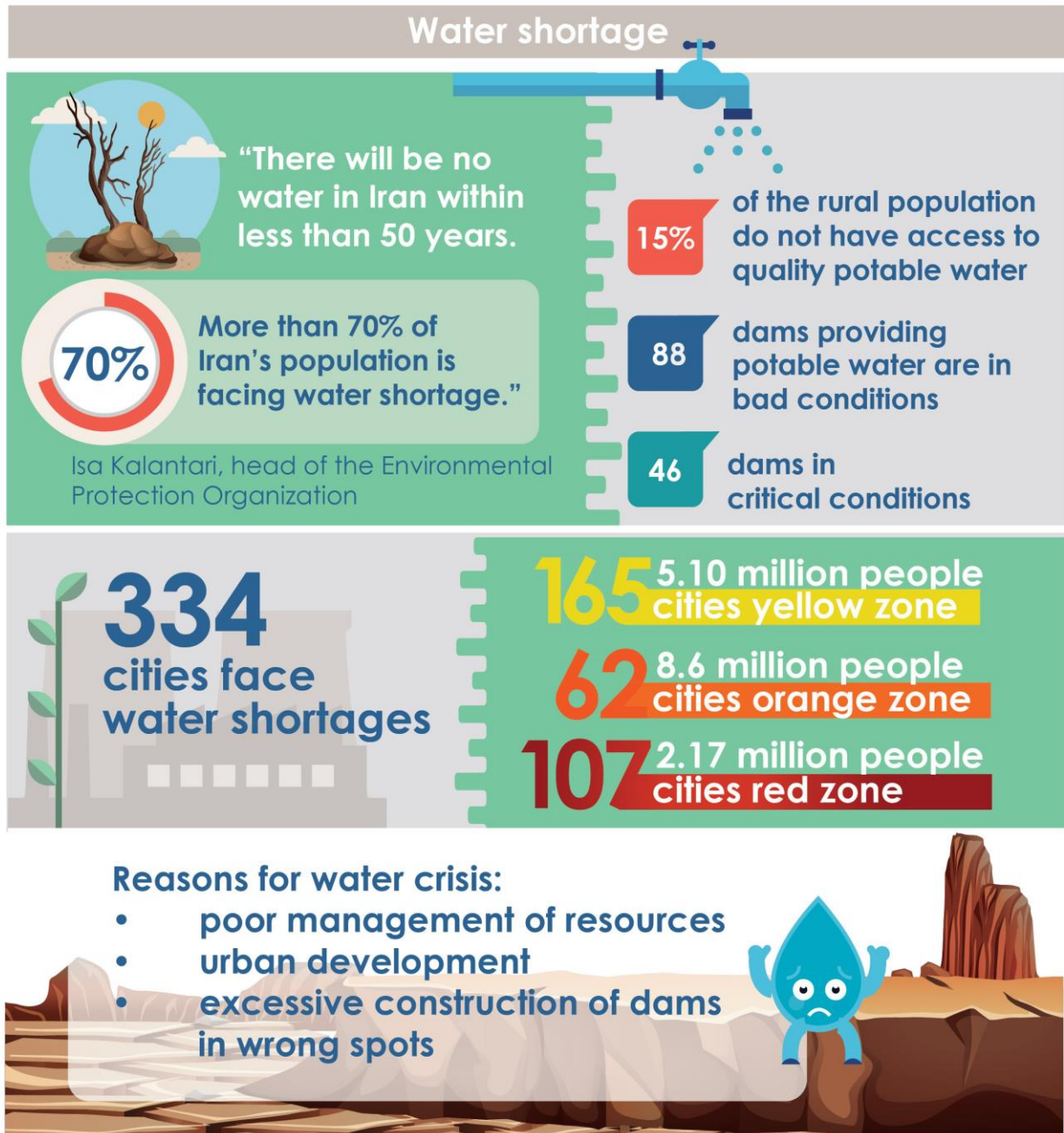
<sup>1541</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, September 25, 2020; The State-run Mehr news agency, September 21, 2020

<sup>1542</sup> A report aired on an Iraqi TV channel, Iran's Foreign Affairs Minister, Javad Zarif had negotiations with Iraq last year on exporting Khuzestan's water to Basra. The event was not carried by Iranian news agencies and Iranians were unaware of it until the al-Baladi TV station covered it. A number of amateur videos were also published online showing large pipes carrying fresh water to Iraq.

<sup>1543</sup> The state-run Fars news agency, TNews.ir, October 26, 2015

## Official acknowledgements to the destruction of Iran's natural environment

Following are statements and remarks by the clerical regime's officials on the destruction of nature and environment in Iran.



- Isa Kalantari, the head of the Environment Protection Organization: Unfortunately, we have destroyed the nature. We had 500 billion cubic meters of fossil water resources, of which 300 billion cubic meters were salty and 200 billion cubic meters were sweet, and we consumed that 200 billion cubic meters. We have closed the flow of water and we no longer have running water. Iran's rivers are dead, except for Sefidrud and Karun rivers,

which are short of breath. The rest of the rivers do not reach their destination and are not alive.<sup>1544</sup>

- Mohammad Reza Mahboubfar, an environmental expert: The water shortage crisis is serious in the central, eastern and southern parts of the country. 360 square meters of Iran's nature disappear in every second. Groundwater resources in Iran are not in a better situation than surface water resources. Excessive abstraction of groundwater reserves in recent years has led to subsidence and soil salinity, and this issue has posed a serious threat to the future of food and human security in the Iranian plateau. The amount of groundwater depletion in Iran is more than 74 billion cubic meters and the overdrafts have been three times more than the compensation and replacement of groundwater in the country.<sup>1545</sup>
- Researchers warn that continued unsustainable management of Iran's groundwater and the rapid disappearance of these reservoirs can lead to irreversible impact on the environment and soil.<sup>1546</sup>
- Isa Kalantari, the head of the Environment Protection Organization: In 1981, we had a total negative balance of 200 million cubic meters of water per year, but this figure has reached 20 billion cubic meters; That means it has increased 100 times. Overexploitation of fossil water and bringing it to the surface, using this water for production, unscientific use of surface water, disregard for the environment's share of water, unsustainable dams, and disregard for the right of the nature... Under the United Nations' Rio Agreement in 1992 and 1997, countries have the right to use only 40% of their renewable water resources. We have been using more than 100% of our renewable water capacity for years.<sup>1547</sup>
- Isa Kalantari, the head of the Environment Protection Organization: Iran's nature has fallen victim to the country's macro-policies. Macro-policies have also been communicated to the executive, and these bodies are sometimes at the forefront of advancing these policies. There is an overexploitation of 20 billion cubic meters of natural resources and groundwater annually, and water reservoirs are looted. With this trend, there will be no trace of agriculture around the Zagros (mountains) in 20 years, because we are looting the water resources.<sup>1548</sup>
- Road accidents in Iran cause the death of 16,000 people a year, but air pollution causes almost twice as many road deaths. Every year, 30,000 people die due to air pollution.<sup>1549</sup>
- According to national statistics and deaths related to air pollution published by the Ministry of Health, air pollution kills 4,500 citizens of Tehran and more than 30,000 people in the country annually.<sup>1550</sup>
- Some 40,000 Iranians prematurely die every year due to exposure to air pollution. The average annual concentration of the most important air pollutant (PM2.5) in the country

<sup>1544</sup> The state-run Javan newspaper, May 20, 2021

<sup>1545</sup> The state-run Javan newspaper, May 20, 2021

<sup>1546</sup> Radio France (RFI), May 9, 2021

<sup>1547</sup> The official IRNA news agency, May 18, 2021

<sup>1548</sup> Deutsche Welle website, May 18, 2021

<sup>1549</sup> Isa Kalantari, head of the Environmental Protection Organization, the state-run ISNA news agency, February 16, 2020

<sup>1550</sup> Shina Ansari, Tehran Municipality's executive director for environment and sustainable development, the state-run Mehr news agency, January 18, 2021

is almost three times the standard and existing guidelines and six times the new WHO guidelines in the summer.<sup>1551</sup>

### Drying up of Lake Urmia

- The rapid drying up of Lake Urmia has been the worst disaster taken place under the rule of the clerical regime in Iran. The drying of the lake endangers the lives of residents of East and West Azerbaijan Province, and has affected the lives of neighboring provinces, over time.
- The salty shores surrounding the lake are gradually expanding, and the salinity of aquifers has been increasing. With the drying of Lake Urmia, a vast salty desert will replace it and change the face of life of local people.
- Experts say the clerical regime's disorderly construction of big dams as well as the construction of a road with military purposes which passed through the middle of this lake upset its ecological balance and accelerated the speed of its dehydration.<sup>1552</sup>
- The expanse of Lake Urmia has decreased by 17 kilometers compared to last year (2019). The budget considered for protecting and saving the lake is around 499 million Tomans, but saving the lake needs more budget, otherwise the risk of drying up is high.<sup>1553</sup>

### Drinking water

- People living in Khuzestan, located on the banks of Iran's largest river, and cities bordering bodies of sea, are struggling with shortage of drinking water. According to official statistics, around 334 cities from the 1,157 cities in Iran are struggling with water shortages.<sup>1554</sup>
- According to the Ministry of Energy, 165 cities with a population of 5.10 million people are in the yellow zone, 62 cities with a population of 8.6 million are in the orange zone while 107 cities with 2.17 million people are in the red zone in terms of water shortages. In total, 334 cities are struggling with a water shortage.<sup>1555</sup>
- A water official said 88 dams built for providing potable water are in bad conditions, and 56 dams in critical conditions.<sup>1556</sup>
- 15% of the rural population do not have access to quality potable water. 107 cities suffering from water shortages are mostly overpopulated and currently 17 million people are subject to water shortage.<sup>1557</sup>
- The head of Meteorological Organization's National Center for Drought and Crisis Management acknowledges that nearly 95 percent of the country is suffering from drought.<sup>1558</sup>

<sup>1551</sup> Dr. Mohammad Sadegh Hassanvand, Head of Air Pollution Research Center, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, @AkhbareFori, April 30, 2021

<sup>1552</sup> The state-run Mashreqnews.ir, June 26, 2018

<sup>1553</sup> The state-run Etemadonline.com, December 8, 2020

<sup>1554</sup> Reza Ardakanian, Minister of Power, the official IRNA news agency, April 24, 2018

<sup>1555</sup> Reza Ardakanian, Minister of Power, the official IRNA news agency, April 24, 2018

<sup>1556</sup> Hamidreza Janbaz, Head of the Water and Sewage Company, the state-run ISNA news agency, August 8, August 8, 2018

<sup>1557</sup> Hamidreza Janbaz, Head of the Water and Sewage Company, the state-run ISNA news agency, August 8, August 8, 2018

<sup>1558</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, August 9, 2017

- Isa Kalantari, head of the Environmental Protection Organization, warned there will be no water in Iran within less than 50 years.<sup>1559</sup> He also asserted that more than 70% of Iran's population is facing water shortage.<sup>1560</sup>
- According to other experts, Iran's central plateau will be facing water crisis within half a century.<sup>1561</sup> They blame the aggravating water crisis on poor management of resources, urban development, and excessive construction of dams in wrong spots.
- No budget has been allocated for water from the National Development Fund in 2019.<sup>1562</sup> Officials predict that due to shortage of water for agriculture, Iran's eastern and southern areas will be completely deserted in less than 25 years, and 50 million people will have to emigrate.<sup>1563</sup>
- Groundwater resources in **Isfahan**, used for drinking water in the province, are depleting. Currently, only 160 million cubic meters of drinking water remain behind the dam, while the annual consumption of drinking water in Isfahan is about 420 million cubic meters.<sup>1564</sup>
- From the 570 springs in **Kohgiluyeh and Boyer Ahmad** province, 360 springs and water sources for drinking water have completely dried out in the tribal regions.<sup>1565</sup> The drought in the province has also led to early migrations by nomadic tribes.
- The southern province of **Kerman** which produces one of the country's main exports, pistachios, suffers from a "Drought Tsunami" and 800 villages are supplied by water tanks.<sup>1566</sup>
- Also, in **Mazandaran** Province in northern Iran, 2,471 acres of agricultural soil have turned into arid lands and 617 acres of paddy fields have dried up.<sup>1567</sup>
- In the plains and plateaus of Iran and areas such as **Semnan** and Fars, about 70% of the plains have been declared as "forbidden water plains" due to the reduction of groundwater.<sup>1568</sup>
- The condition of aquifers of the southern province of **Fars**, once one of the top producers of wheat in Iran, has become irreversible.<sup>1569</sup>
- Some 700 villages in **Khuzestan** province have problems with water supply and distribution. We have stated this many times, but the government does not pay attention.<sup>1570</sup>
- The residents of 800 villages in Khuzestan do not have access to sustainable potable water, despite their proximity to 5 major dams and 7 rivers.<sup>1571</sup>

<sup>1559</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, August 8, 2018

<sup>1560</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, August 8, 2018

<sup>1561</sup> Parviz Kardovani, prominent professor of geology and director of the Desert Studies Center,

<sup>1562</sup> The [website](#) of Tehran's Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture, January 12, 2019

<sup>1563</sup> Isa Kalantari, head of the Environmental Protection Organization, the state-run ILNA news agency, October 11, 2016

<sup>1564</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, March 12, 2018

<sup>1565</sup> Majid Alipour, Director General of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer Ahmad Tribal Affairs, the official IRNA news agency, April 23, 2018

<sup>1566</sup> The state-run Qods Online, October 14, 2017

<sup>1567</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, August 6, 2018

<sup>1568</sup> Ahmad Reza Lahijanzadeh, deputy for Marine Environment and Wetlands in the Environmental Protection Agency, the state-run Mehr news agency, November 2, 2019

<sup>1569</sup> Ahmad Reza Lahijanzadeh, deputy for Marine Environment and Wetlands in the Environmental Protection Agency, the state-run Mehr news agency, November 2, 2019

<sup>1570</sup> Sadegh Haghighipour, Managing Director of Khuzestan Water and Sewerage, The official IRNA news agency, June 13, 2020

<sup>1571</sup> Mojtaba Yousefi, member of the mullahs' parliament from Ahvaz, The state-run Fars news agency, August 10, 2020



- In the absence of proper plumbing, women in Khuzestan are forced to carry the water they need. This results in many physical problems. Women must wait in long lines – sometimes for hours – just to get a bucket of drinking water for their families.
- Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, Khuzestan is a “red” province in the country. Women and other residents face even more problems given that a primary safety measure against contracting the virus is frequent hand- washing with soap and water. In addition, the bad water poses a risk to health and weakens the immune system, making the people of this province more susceptible to the Coronavirus.
- Gheizaniyeh residents have been facing water shortages since 2004. Locals are deprived of drinking water for days, sometimes even months.<sup>1572</sup> Gheizaniyeh with a population of more than 26,000, mainly farmers and ranchers, is located 40 kilometers east of Ahvaz. Despite 600 oil wells and daily production of more than 500,000 barrels of oil, Ghazanieh is one of the most deprived parts of the province. This area hosts oil and gas companies and boasts the country's largest oil fields.<sup>1573</sup> Most residents work in the animal husbandry and agriculture sectors but have lost their jobs. In the summer heat, Gheizaniyeh residents must meet their daily needs with nothing more than the water rations provided in barrels.<sup>1574</sup>
- Only 19 percent of **Sistan and Baluchestan** residents have access to safe drinking water. Water and sewage projects have been half-finished for 30 years. Not a single meter of piping has been laid in any of the villages in this province. Citizens in some of these areas do not even have the salt water that once flowed in the water pipes. Many neighborhoods in Zahedan, capital of Sistan and Baluchestan Province, do not have water, yet temperatures reach higher than 40 degrees. The deputy governor of Sistan and Baluchestan province said, “In the current situation, the technical problems associated with the water supply line, as well as the increase in construction, population growth, and the spread of the Coronavirus, have led to an increase of 25% in consumption.”<sup>1575</sup>
- The port city of Chabahar is one of the most important cities of Sistan and Baluchestan Province, lying on the coast of an ocean. But tankers provide 100% of the water supply in the villages in Chabahar.<sup>1576</sup> The water in the villages around Chabahar is supplied by five water tanks every week by the water and sewage company. The discolored, foul-tasting water is not only of poor quality; it also contains frogs.<sup>1577</sup>
- Despite the 370-kilometer stretch of water in the northern part of the Gulf of Oman and access to the ocean, and despite the two large dams, Dashtiari and Zirdaran, this province has the least access to drinking water in the country. As a result of 20 years of drought and heavy dust in these areas, the citizens of this province suffer from diseases such as tuberculosis and dyspnea, or shortness of breath.<sup>1578</sup>

<sup>1572</sup> The state-run Mashreqnews.ir, May 25, 2020

<sup>1573</sup> The state-run Donyay-e Eghtesad website, May 28, 2020

<sup>1574</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, May 26, 2020

<sup>1575</sup> The state-run salamatnews.com, July 4, 2020

<sup>1576</sup> The official IRNA news agency, July 23, 2019

<sup>1577</sup> The state-run asriran.com, June 15, 2020

<sup>1578</sup> The state-run ROKNA news agency, July 4, 2018

- Underlining the acute water crisis in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, a Majlis deputy revealed that 4 years ago, a widow had been compelled to sell her body to provide potable water for her children. The miserable woman then committed suicide.<sup>1579</sup>
- In recent years, as many as 20 children have drowned in *Hootags* which are dug by people to collect rainwater to be consumed by both humans and animals.<sup>1580</sup> For example, in May 2019, three elementary school girls went to a *Hootag* to quench their thirst. They fell into the water and drowned.<sup>1581</sup>



Hyrcanian forests surrounded by floodwaters

## Forests

Some 60 percent of Iran's lands are exposed to desert, Iran's Organization for Forests, Rangeland and Watershed by the Ministry of Agriculture announced. The progress of desertification in Iran's soil occurs in a situation where the desert per capita in Iran is more than twice the global average.<sup>1582</sup>

Most of Iran's forests are in the north of Iran which borders the Caspian Sea where the inhabitants of the provinces of Gilan, Mazandaran, and Golestan enjoy a subtropical climate. The northern

<sup>1579</sup> Mo'ineddin Saeedi, member of the mullahs' parliament from Chabahar, The state-run etemadonline.com – October 21, 2020

<sup>1580</sup> The official IRNA news agency, July 23, 2019

<sup>1581</sup> The official IRNA news agency, May 29, 2019

<sup>1582</sup> The state-run website Gostaresh News, May 2, 2021

provinces of Iran used to be known for their lush greenery and forests. Over the past 40 years, however, deforestation has destroyed half of Iran's northern forests.

- According to the data collected by the Natural Resources and Forestry Organization, the area of the northern forests has gone from 3,600,000 to 1,800,000 hectares during the past 40 years.<sup>1583</sup> Some 100,000 hectares of forests are destroyed in Iran every year.<sup>1584</sup>
- The Caspian Hyrcanian mixed forests in Alborz have been vastly devastated.<sup>1585</sup> Hyrcanian forests are 55,000 square kilometers and extend from the Republic of Azerbaijan to Iran and the greater part of this millions-year-old jungle is located in Iran. It is one of the oldest jungles on earth. Some parts of these forests have turned into a garbage land.
- Rain has decreased by 20 percent in the past 50 years while floods have increased by 50 percent, according to environment officials.<sup>1586</sup>
- Rain is considered a disaster in northern Iran these days because trees have been cut down under the excuse of development, building industrial plants, roads and villas. Deforestation means that flood water is directed better. When half of the forests are gone, the rain is no longer a blessing and turns into floods.<sup>1587</sup>
- Deforestation is taking place extensively and at a high speed, so much that it could be physically detected. Experts say it is soon going to lead to a huge catastrophe in Iran's semi-arid climate.<sup>1588</sup> Not much time is left before all the forests in the north are destroyed, warned a study.<sup>1589</sup> It has already led to the erosion of soil, pollution, reduction of biodiversity and extinction of various animal and plant species.<sup>1590</sup> Another study says that in 10 years' time, there would be no trace left from the forests in western Iran and in Golestan Province in the north.
- In the period spanning from March to June 2020, there were at least 160 incidents of fire in Iran's forests.<sup>1591</sup>
- Between 2015 and 2020, approximately 12,000 hectares of forests across the country were wiped out every year. In the last 5 years alone, 60,000 hectares of the country's forests have been destroyed due to fire, pests, disease, dams, road construction, other construction activities, and timber smuggling.<sup>1592</sup>
- Official reports from the Forest Organization say that Iran experienced more than 240 fires in the country's natural areas from March to June 2020.<sup>1593</sup>
- The forests and areas of the Deil Mountain Protected Area have been on fire since Friday, May 22, 2020. Bushfire intensified due to provincial officials' negligence. On May 29,

<sup>1583</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, March 12, 2014

<sup>1584</sup> The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, March 12, 2014

<sup>1585</sup> Ahmad Reza Lahijanzadeh, deputy for Marine Environment and Wetlands in the Environmental Protection Agency, the state-run Mehr news agency, November 2, 2019

<sup>1586</sup> Violating the sanctity of forests, main cause of floods, the official IRNA news agency, April 9, 2019

<sup>1587</sup> Massoud Molana, a member of the Iran Environment and Natural Resources Network Coordination Council, the state-run ISNA news agency, October 24, 2018

<sup>1588</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, March 2, 2016

<sup>1589</sup> The state-run donya-e-eqtasad.com, October 9, 2017

<sup>1590</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, March 2, 2016

<sup>1591</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, June 5, 2020

<sup>1592</sup> Reza Bayani, Director of the Engineering and Studies Office at the Forest Organization, the state-run IMNA news agency, August 26, 2020

<sup>1593</sup> Reza Bayani, Director of the Engineering and Studies Office at the Forest Organization, the state-run IMNA news agency, August 26, 2020

2020, Iranian army helicopters arrived – a full week after the start of the fires – to contain the flames. However, the helicopters were not equipped with spray pumps, rendering them useless except to move troops. Volunteers fought the fire for 10 days without any of the equipment necessary to put out forest fires. The fire was finally contained on June 1, 2020, after 10 hectares of forest and plant species in Gachsaran had burned.

- Fire in the protected forests of Khaeez started on May 28 in the forestland from Behbahan in Khuzestan Province. They were left to rage on as they spread to Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province. Roya Janfza, a 19-year-old girl, sustained injuries in both legs after trying to extinguish a fire on the Khaeez mountains. Another volunteer, Alborz Zarei, died of severe burns a few weeks later.
- Another forest fire occurred in the highlands of the no-hunting zones on Dashtestan's Siah Kuh Mountain on May 27, 2020. The fire, ignited by thunder, left extensive damage to the palm forest during the 3 days it raged. At least 300 palm trees in the area burned before the fire was extinguished on May 30, 2020.
- On September 25, 2020, the Shirbisheh forest experienced another fire accident that raged for 5 hours, damaging 10 hectares of grassland before being controlled.

## Wetlands

Most of the wetlands in Iran are drying up.

- Low water levels of Karun River caused by irresponsible official measures, have led to the drying of Hoor-ol Azim wetland, and contributed to the remarkable warming of weather in Khuzestan Province.
- The oil-rich Khuzestan Province in southwestern Iran is an embodiment of unstable development in the country. Despite abundant water, fertile soil, and oil and gas resources that could nourish all of Iran's populace, lagoons and rivers in this province have dried up. Consequently, dust storms have crippled Khuzestan, for years.<sup>1594</sup>
- Low water levels and increasing salt concentration of Karun river, have resulted in rising fish fatalities at the Khorramshahr Fish Farming Complex.<sup>1595</sup>
- Salt mountains overlooking Iran's biggest earth-fill dam called the Gotvand Dam have caused high salinity of billions of cubic meters of water collected behind this dam, transferring the salt into Karun River and destroying all the farmlands across the river's path. Gotvand Dam was built by the IRGC.<sup>1596</sup>
- Anzali Wetland, one of the most famous in Iran, has been drying up since more than 30 years ago. But the regime has taken no practical measures to save the wetland. Then in 2015, the wetland caught fire. Authorities of the Environmental Protection Organization of Gilan Province later said the fire was an arson.<sup>1597</sup>
- In the deprived province of Sistan and Baluchestan, Hamun Lake has dried up, creating a serious environmental crisis in this province.<sup>1598</sup>

<sup>1594</sup> Ahmad Reza Lahijanzadeh, deputy for Marine Environment and Wetlands in the Environmental Protection Agency, the state-run Mehr news agency, November 2, 2019

<sup>1595</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, August 6, 2018: This complex started its activities as a conglomerate of 55 cooperatives in 1998 and expanded to include 88 cooperatives in 2016. The farm grows a variety of fish, and it has more than 1,000 employees.

<sup>1596</sup> tribunezamaneh.com, June 7, 2018

<sup>1597</sup> The state-run Tabnak website, October 16, 2015

<sup>1598</sup> tribunezamaneh.com, June 7, 2018



- The famous Gavkhouni wetland and Bakhtegan Lake in Fars Province, southern Iran, are also drying up.<sup>1599</sup>



A dry wetland with piles of dead fish in the dirt

## Marine environment

The Caspian Sea's coastline has been gradually and steadily disappearing in both Mazandaran and Gilan provinces in northern Iran.<sup>1600</sup>

- The destruction of marine environment of the Caspian Sea, and the gradual and steady coastal erosion is evident in both Mazandaran and Gilan provinces to the extent that one cannot even find 100 meters of shore area.
- On the reduction of the water level of the Caspian Sea, the organizer of the International Project on the Effects of Caspian Sea Fluctuations on the Environment of the Coastal Areas, Homayoun Khoshnavan, said: "We have very valuable environmental sectors, very important coastal wetlands such as Gorgan Bay, Miankaleh wetland, Bojagh National Park, Kiashahr Wetland and Zibakenar Wetland, each of which will dry up completely if this (water level reduction) happens. Their environmental services will be completely destroyed, causing serious damage to the country... The nutrients that enter this sea through the northern part of the Caspian Sea can be the food needed by fish, migratory birds and even seals that live endemically in this sea, and if in any case these nutrients are not enough, it can directly affect the lives of these animals and cause the extinction of these species on a large scale."<sup>1601</sup>

<sup>1599</sup> [tribunezamaneh.com](http://tribunezamaneh.com), June 7, 2018

<sup>1600</sup> Ahmad Reza Lahijanzadeh, deputy for Marine Environment and Wetlands in the Environmental Protection Agency, the state-run Mehr news agency, November 2, 2019

<sup>1601</sup> The official IRNA news agency, January 10, 2021

- The IRGC-linked Fisheries Organization has “rented out” Iran’s southern waters to Chinese fisheries allowing them to fish in Iran’s southern waters, causing major problems for Iranian fisherman.<sup>1602</sup>
- The Chinese bottom trawling methods and the industrial fishing practices of thousands of Chinese boats leave nothing for native fishermen. Even fish eggs, and shellfish get stuck in the Chinese trawling nets. The overfishing in the Gulf waters has led to serious and irreversible damage to the environment.
- A fisherman says: Imagine the seabed if you look at the submarine maps, you can see the line of trawl nets remaining. The world knows that this is the work of Chinese trawlers with whom the children of top officials have signed contracts. They do not give accurate statistics of their catch, they do not even say what and how much they caught. When they set up nets, they take everything and pack it, and they freeze and pack the live catch and sell it abroad... Grass, Gadir and stony fish are very valuable, but considering the trawl fishing model, many of these species are disappearing.” These trawlers are always there and their fishing is not limited to a juncture or a season. I remember last year, the authorities stopped 11 Chinese ships and then released them. They said the Chinese had an Iranian fishing license. Their excuse for trawling is that we cannot fish in the depths. But under the pretext of a depth of 200 meters, they come to the edge of the beach and trawl.<sup>1603</sup>
- Environmental experts say the Persian Gulf has turned into the world’s most contaminated body of water on earth.<sup>1604</sup>

### Impact of petrochemical industry on the environment

- The development of the petrochemical industry in Mahshahr, in southwestern Iran, has reduced the city’s fishing capacity down to about 900 tons. Officials admit they have sacrificed long term interests for short term interests.<sup>1605</sup>
- The southern industrial city of Asaluyeh is “the most polluted city” in Iran and has reached the point of no return. The area is witnessing widespread slaughter of aquatic species and reduced environmental diversity.<sup>1606</sup>
- Asaluyeh, located in Bushehr Province is believed to house one of the largest oil, gas and petrochemical projects in Iran. The power and petrochemical plants were built without observing the minimum environmental standards and their detrimental effects on the people of the surrounding areas. The concentration of heavy industrial activities on the shores of Bushehr Province and the absence of wastewater treatment facilities is a major threat to the Persian Gulf environment.
- A report by the Parliamentary Research Center, entitled the Comparative Environmental Economics Review from a Legislative and Regulatory Perspective, indicates that pollution and environmental degradation have undermined health of Iranian citizens.

<sup>1602</sup> The state-run Tabnak website, August 20, 2018

<sup>1603</sup> The state-run Fars news agency, September 5, 2018

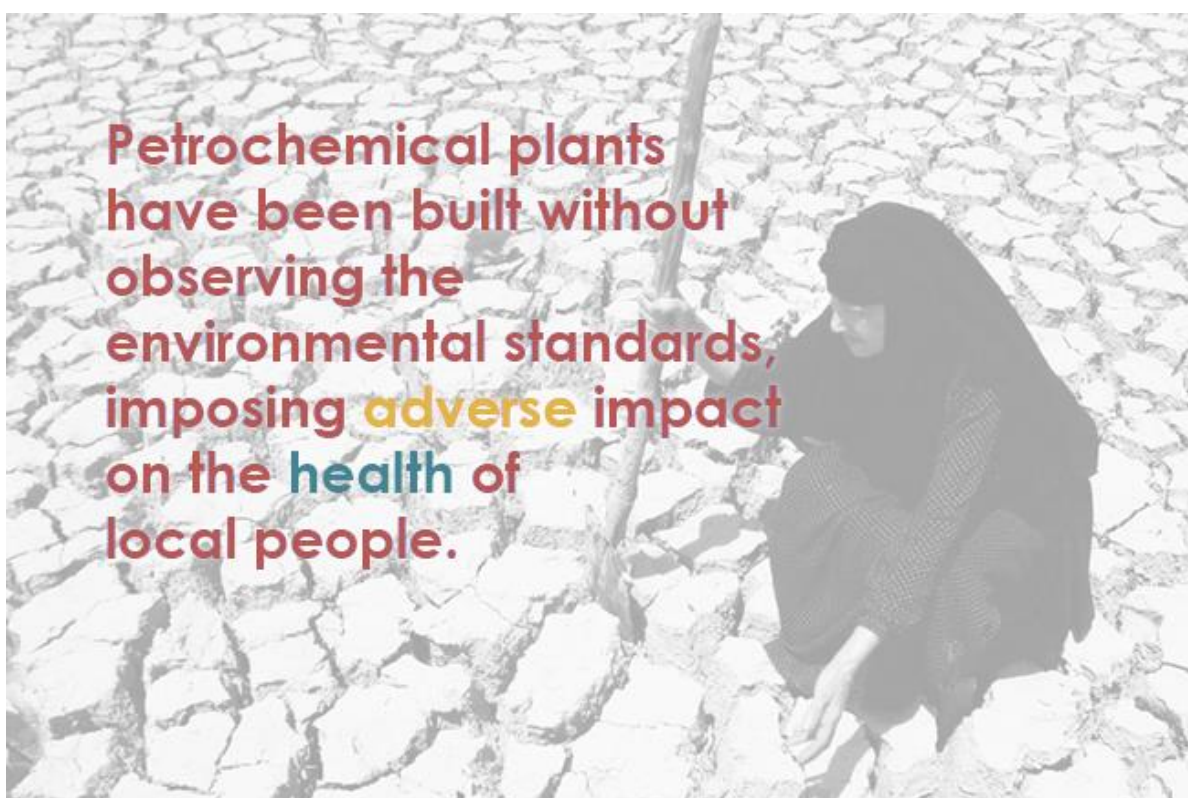
<sup>1604</sup> Hambastegimelli.com, October 17, 2015

<sup>1605</sup> Ahmad Reza Lahijanzadeh, deputy for Marine Environment and Wetlands in the Environmental Protection Agency, the state-run Mehr news agency, November 2, 2019

<sup>1606</sup> Ahmad Reza Lahijanzadeh, deputy for Marine Environment and Wetlands in the Environmental Protection Agency, the state-run Mehr news agency, November 2, 2019



- Ghaed Bassir Petrochemical Plant<sup>1607</sup> owned by Ali Khamenei, the mullahs' Supreme Leader,<sup>1608</sup> located in Golpayegan, Isfahan Province, has had a devastating impact on the life of the surrounding villages since its construction in 1997.
- The plant has dug more than 200 deep water wells sucking out all the water in the area. As a consequence, the villages once known for their natural springs and sparkling water, are now barren. The people have lost their agriculture and the lands are no longer productive.<sup>1609</sup>
- According to the villagers interviewed by the official IRNA news agency, their water is contaminated and the smoke from the Ghaed Bassir Petrochemical Plant has robbed them of clean air. The factory's sewage system is right next to the village's drinking water reservoirs. Toxins have found their way into the water which has resulted in numerous cases of cancer among the villagers. The report shows that the government of Iran is responsible for yet another environmental crisis which has led to many cancer-related deaths and hardships for the people of Golpayegan, Isfahan.<sup>1610</sup>



<sup>1607</sup> The Ghaed Bassir Company is owned by the Tadbir Energy Development Group, overseen by Tadbir Economic Development Group, which is controlled by the Execution of Imam Khomeini's Order (EIKO) or "*Setad*" which in turn is overseen by Iran's Supreme Leader himself.

<sup>1608</sup> According to a report by [Reuters](#), November 11, 2013, "Khamenei controls massive financial empire built on property seizures. (The *Setad* has become) one of the most powerful organizations in Iran, and has morphed into a business juggernaut that now holds stakes in nearly every sector of Iranian industry, including finance, oil, telecommunications, the production of birth-control pills and even ostrich farming."

"The organization's total worth is difficult to pinpoint because of the secrecy of its accounts. But *Setad*'s holdings of real estate, corporate stakes and other assets total about \$95 billion, Reuters has calculated."

<sup>1609</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, July 30, 2019

<sup>1610</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, July 30, 2019

### Air pollution

- Toxic industrial emissions cause heavy air pollution in all major Iranian capitals and especially Tehran. Coupled with dust and sandstorms, air pollution leads to the deaths of thousands of people every year.<sup>1611</sup>
- According to national statistics and deaths related to air pollution published by the Ministry of Health, air pollution kills 4,500 citizens of Tehran and more than 30,000 people in the country annually.<sup>1612</sup>
- Road accidents in Iran cause the death of 16,000 people a year, but air pollution causes almost twice as many road deaths. Every year, 30,000 people die due to air pollution.<sup>1613</sup>
- Some 40,000 Iranians prematurely die every year due to exposure to air pollution. The average annual concentration of the most important air pollutant (PM2.5) in the country is almost three times the standard and existing guidelines and six times the new WHO guidelines in the summer.<sup>1614</sup>
- According to the statistics released by the Global Carbon Project, Iran is the seventh largest air polluter in the world with an annual emission of 648 million tons of carbon dioxide.

### 30. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programmes for disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation?

Not only there are no governmental mechanisms in Iran to deal with natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods, but due to widespread corruption in the ruling hierarchy, even popular and international aid cannot get to the victims. In the following examples, one can clearly see that victims of earthquakes, floods, and other disasters are literally abandoned without any government support. In such situation, women bear the brunt and pay the heaviest price.

### Earthquakes

- **Earthquake in Bam:** In the 2003 earthquake which shook the city of Bam in Kerman Province in southern Iran, two thirds of the city's residents died and in some regions all of the houses were destroyed.
- The statistics on the casualties cause by the earthquake in Bam was released after 17 years. Some 34,000 persons died in this earthquake and more than 200,000 people were injured. People say a considerable number of people also lost their life while removing debris by loaders, shovels and pickaxes.<sup>1615</sup>

<sup>1611</sup> tribunezamaneh.com, June 7, 2018

<sup>1612</sup> Shina Ansari, Tehran Municipality's executive director for environment and sustainable development, the state-run Mehr news agency, January 18, 2021

<sup>1613</sup> Isa Kalantari, head of the Environmental Protection Organization, the state-run ISNA news agency, February 16, 2020

<sup>1614</sup> Dr. Mohammad Sadegh Hassanvand, Head of Air Pollution Research Center, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, @AkhbareFori, April 30, 2021

<sup>1615</sup> Esmael Najjar, head of the Crisis Management Organization, the state-run Donya-ye Eghtesad newspaper, December 26, 2020

- The official plan was to finish reconstruction of this city by summer 2005. To this date, however, the residents of Bam continue to lack the most basic needs for a simple life and hundreds of people live in the outskirts of the city in trailers.<sup>1616</sup>
- A 2017 report: A woman by the name of Azam lives in a shanty town with her three children. Two of her daughters go to school and she also has a little boy. Her husband is a daily worker who is an opium addict and practically does not work at all. For the past 11 years, Azam has been working in a date farm to pay for her daughters' school expenses. She and her family live in two small trailers with no bathrooms. There is no electricity and every now and then, her water supply is cut off.<sup>1617</sup>
- A 2019 report: Sixteen years after the Bam earthquake, many people, especially in the city of Kordoman, live in old and unstable houses. People suffer from many psychological problems after the earthquake. The ruins are still seen in the city. Many houses have not been reconstructed yet, and many of the streets and alleys are dirt. People still face many problems. Depression is prevalent in Bam. People lost all their assets in the earthquake. They are unable to repay the loans they received. And since they are in debt, they cannot use the facilities. They are practically deprived of using bank facilities. The loans were supposed to be forgiven and promises were made but nothing happened.<sup>1618</sup>



A woman weeping after the earthquake in Kermanshah Province robbed her loved ones and all her belongings

<sup>1616</sup> The state-run qudsonline.ir, December 26, 2016

<sup>1617</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, December 26, 2017

<sup>1618</sup> Habibollah Nikzadipناه, member of the regime's parliament, the state-run Mehr news agency, December 25, 2019



- **Earthquake in Kermanshah:** There is a similar situation in Kermanshah Province, western Iran, which was struck with a 7.3 Richter earthquake in November 2017. Some 450 people died, 7,100 people were wounded, and 70,000 people became homeless.
- By a conservative estimate, at least 100 women lost their husbands and turned into their family's bread winners.
- After the earthquake, the region ran out of water and electricity for a long time and hospitals could not deal with such a large volume of disaster. The government was not even capable of supplying food to the victims. The earthquake in Kermanshah caused great pain and suffering to many women who lost their properties and entire wealth and belongings.
- The health situation is dreadful, particularly for pregnant women many whom suffered miscarriages. Pregnant women were promised to receive trailers, but this did not happen. Many women gave birth in the tents and due to poor sanitary conditions, caught infections. Dozens of children died in the freezing cold of winter.<sup>1619</sup>
- Toilets and bathrooms are scarce and in poor conditions. Lack of cleaning material, including soaps and shampoos, wet towels, diapers and sanitary napkins for women, underwear for children and women, and lack of bath towels are among other problems of the population of villages hit by the earthquake.
- Families with nine and even more live in one trailer.
- Lack of powdered milk, food and medicine have caused malnutrition and various kinds of diseases. Due to lack of regular bath for children, women and the elderly, many people have developed skin diseases such as acne, painful skin rash, skin fungus, lice and baldness.<sup>1620</sup>
- Frequent earthquakes measuring 4 to 5.2 on the Richter scale shook cities and villages in different parts of **Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad** Province from May 2 to 13, 2018, leaving hundreds of people injured, inflicting extensive damages. Women in the quake-hit towns and villages protested against government official's failure to attend to their problems.<sup>1621</sup>
- An earthquake measuring 5.9 on the Richter scale shook **East Azerbaijan** on November 8, 2019. 30 residential units were destroyed. In the village of Vernkesh, two women and two young girls lost their lives. After two months, people were left homeless in the cold. They do not have a bathroom. They live in tents or barracks with leaking roof. There are 340 families living in this village.<sup>1622</sup>
- 60% of earthquake victims in Vernkesh are women.<sup>1623</sup> Zahra Abedi, a 10-year-old girl, (picture on the right) was still alive after being pulled out from under the rubble, but lost her life due to the lack of a doctor and timely action.<sup>1624</sup>



<sup>1619</sup> The state-run salamatnews.com, March 15, 2018

<sup>1620</sup> [A year after the earthquake, deplorable plight of women and children](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, November 15, 2018

<sup>1621</sup> The state-run News Network website, May 2, 2018

<sup>1622</sup> The official IRNA news agency, December 11, 2019

<sup>1623</sup> The state-run Young Journalists Club website, November 9, 2019

<sup>1624</sup> The state-run Young Journalists Club website, November 10, 2019

- An earthquake measuring 7.5 on the Richter scale shook the Qotur county and 40 surrounding villages on February 23, 2020. Some 100 people were injured. 3,500 families had their homes destroyed or left homeless. In one month, more than 30 aftershocks occurred in the range of Qotur, Khoi and Salmas. These regions are among the most deprived regions of **West Azerbaijan**. Residents' livestock is in danger of extinction. Rural women collected nylons and made shelters for themselves in sub-zero temperatures. Local sources reported, "The Revolutionary Guards are catching fish from the muddy water. They suggested to the people affected by the earthquake in the villages that whoever wants a tent should pay 35,000 Tomans a night." According to local sources, "The Red Crescent has handed over 400 tents to the municipality and 300 tents to another institution, but these institutions have so far not provided any tents to the quake victims."
- On February 17, 2021, a magnitude 6.5 earthquake shook the small town of Sisakht in **Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad** Province. 47 people were injured. More than 70% of people's homes were damaged. 200 women heads of households were affected by the earthquake. 3,700 houses were damaged. The city's agricultural sector, especially the fisheries sector and fish farms, suffered 950 billion Rials in damages.<sup>1625</sup> 40 schools with 171 classrooms have been severely damaged in Sisakht and its surrounding villages in Dena county or need to be repaired.<sup>1626</sup> One of the residents of Sisakht posted a video clip on the internet in which he says: "Dear friends, if you hear our voice, here is the Red Crescent building of Dena county, the city of Sisakht. Due to the lack of the smallest amenities such as tents, blankets, food and clothing, this woman was forced to go to the roof to throw herself down from the building. The situation is the same outside and inside the Red Crescent building. People have gathered and are protesting."



One of the towns in western Iran devastated by flashfloods in spring 2019

<sup>1625</sup> The state-run Mehr news agency, March 6, 2021

<sup>1626</sup> The official IRNA news agency, March 4, 2021

## Floods

The heavy rainfalls in spring 2019 ravaged thousands of Iranian villages and towns and devastated people's lives. The scale of destruction caused by the devastating floods attested to the destruction of Iran's natural resources. And yet again, 14 Iranian provinces were washed away by massive floods in spring 2020 and 2021 while the regime did not take any effective measure to help people. Obviously, women and children are the prime victims and suffer most during such natural disaster crises.

- Citing the European Commission, the United Nations estimated that at least 12 million citizens across Iran were affected by the devastating floods in spring 2019.
- The European Civil Protection Mechanism (EUCPM) said the incident was the worst natural disaster happening in Iran in 15 years, affecting 2,000 cities and towns in 31 provinces. ReliefWeb,<sup>1627</sup> the specialized digital service of United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said two million people were in need of humanitarian aid and over half a million people had been displaced from their places of residence.<sup>1628</sup>
- On April 9, 2020, massive floods swept through 14 provinces across Iran. In a matter of five days, the flood over-ran 18 provinces. 29 persons lost their lives and 41 people were injured.<sup>1629</sup>
- On July 15, 2020, 21 cities in Iran were flooded due to heavy rain in the provinces of Tehran, East Azerbaijan, Ardabil, Gilan, Mazandaran and North Khorasan. As a result of this flood, two people were killed in Ardabil, two in Amol and one in Rezvanshahr. A 65-year-old woman died in the city of Talesh.
- On September 20, 2020, another flood occurred in Talesh. Seven cities were flooded. 2 people were killed. Roads to 100 villages were blocked. 20 rural houses were completely destroyed and 240 houses were damaged. 100,000 hectares of farms and gardens in Talesh city, which are the local people's source of income, were damaged.
- October 4, 2020, flood in Meshkinshahr destroyed more than 100 residential and commercial units. In the first days of August, floods caused 350 billion Tomans worth of damages in this city.
- The floods in March 2021 inflicted damages on some cities in East Azerbaijan province and destroyed the iron bridges in Urmia, capital of West Azerbaijan Province.<sup>1630</sup>
- Floods in northern Kerman Province (southern Iran) in April 2021, left several people injured. Roads, gardens, and agricultural lands suffered extensive damages.<sup>1631</sup>
- The head of the Relief and Rescue Organization said floods had inundated 14 provinces in the period from April 29, 2021, at 6:30 a.m. until May 5, 2021. He said: "During this period, 14 provinces of East and West Azerbaijan, Isfahan, Tehran, South Khorasan, Razavi Khorasan and North Khorasan, Semnan, Sistan and Baluchestan, Khuzestan, Kerman, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Mazandaran and Yazd were in need of rescue services. 47 villages and 6 cities in eight provinces of Sistan and Baluchestan, Kerman,

<sup>1627</sup> [Relief Web](#), OCHA services

<sup>1628</sup> [Iran floods: Two million people in need of humanitarian aid](#), Relief Web, April 15, 2019

<sup>1629</sup> The state-run ISNA news agency, April 10, 2020

<sup>1630</sup> The state-run Tasnim news agency, March 24, 2021

<sup>1631</sup> The state television, April 16, 2021



Yazd, Tehran, Semnan, South Khorasan and Razavi Khorasan and Isfahan had the greatest impact of these rains. We had 11 people missing.<sup>1632</sup>

- In the past 40 years, the clerical regime's fraudulent agencies, particularly the Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), have reaped huge profits through destruction of the environment and nature including by construction of hundreds of dams and tunnels in wrong spots, diversion of the natural paths of rivers, confiscation and sale of lands on river banks, illegal blocking and construction in the natural paths of flood, deforestation to sell the woods and lands, etc.
- They have done so without observing the basic rules essential to any construction. Consequently, they have left the people of Iran defenseless in the face of natural disasters. If the natural environment of Iranian cities and villages had not been so vastly damaged, the heavy rainfalls could have been reined in and the deprived people of Iran would not have suffered such extensive losses of lives and properties.

### The situation of women and children

Women and children suffered most in the devastating floods that swept through the country. Women are often left alone in taking care of their families. They have to endure tremendous pressure in circumstances where they have little or no access to food, water, health care and medical treatment.

- Women often suffer psychological harms while they lack any form of support, despite loss of their family members, homes and other properties. Such disruption of their routine life imposes an adverse impact on their mental health.
- According to the information collected from published news and reports, at least 20 women and girl children died in the devastating floods in spring 2019.<sup>1633</sup> No exact figures were ever announced by the regime officials. But real evidence, including the number of submerged villages and the cities destroyed by floods, indicates that the actual figures must be much greater.
- In none of the disasters in recent years, including the earthquake in Kermanshah and the nationwide flood disaster that overwhelmed the entire country, the mullahs' regime has given any support to the people.

In remarks made on April 14, 2019, Pezeshkian, deputy speaker of the mullahs' parliament, revealed that the Iranian regime neither can nor it wants to compensate for the damages the people of Iran suffered as a result of the devastating floods. He said, **"It is impossible for the government to respond to these problems just by-passing legislations... When it comes to action, the government has no money to do it."**

<sup>1632</sup> The state-run BORNA news website, May 5, 2021

<sup>1633</sup> [Devastating floods in Iran: problems of women in the absence of aid](#), website of the NCRI Women's Committee, April 19, 2019

## Other

### The clerical regime's approach to conservationists

- The State Security forces prevented women and girls from participating in the “Pure Tuesday” bicycle marathon on July 27, 2016. The event was held to promote a day without vehicles in support of a healthy environment.
- A number of environmental activists were arrested during a gathering on April 1, 2016, at Tehran’s Laleh Park in defense of animal rights and environment.
- At least three women, environmental activists, were arrested by security forces in Marivan, Iranian Kurdistan. These women had staged a protest gathering against burying the city’s waste in a tourist area called, Samaghan Valley.<sup>1634</sup>
- Twenty (20) female environmental activists were arrested by security forces in Marivan on March 18, 2017.<sup>1635</sup>
- Sahar Kazemi, a civil rights and environmental activist and an athletics coach, was arrested in Sanandaj, capital of Iranian Kurdistan, on August 9, 2018.<sup>1636</sup>
- Some 75 members of a group of environmental activists were arrested in February 2018 on the charge of espionage.<sup>1637</sup>
- Tehran’s Revolutionary Court sentenced two female conservationists, Niloufar Bayani to 10 years in prison and Sepideh Kashani to six years’ imprisonment on the charge of “espionage.” Niloufar Bayani and Sepideh Kashani went on hunger strike in Evin Prison in July 2019 to protest their continued detention in limbo. They were illegally held in Ward 2A of Evin under distressful conditions.
- In February 2020, Niloufar Bayani announced in an open letter that she had been beaten and brutalized, threatened and tortured on numerous occasions by the Revolutionary Guards agents during her year-long detention, and was forced to make false confessions against herself.<sup>1638</sup>
- Faranak Jamshidi a member of the Green Society of Kurdistan, was arrested at home in Sanandaj, capital of Kurdistan Province, on June 28, 2020. Her detention order was extended five times. After 4.5 months, she was released temporarily on a 200-million-Toman bail on November 10, 2020.<sup>1639</sup>

<sup>1634</sup> [Three female environmental activists are arrested](#), the NCRI Women’s Committee website, April 7, 2017

<sup>1635</sup> [Three female environmental activists are arrested](#), the NCRI Women’s Committee website, April 7, 2017

<sup>1636</sup> [Sahar Kazemi and Zahra Modarres-Zadeh arrested in Sanandaj, Karaj](#), the NCRI Women’s Committee website, April 12, 2018

<sup>1637</sup> [Sahar Kazemi and Zahra Modarres-Zadeh arrested in Sanandaj, Karaj](#), the NCRI Women’s Committee website, April 12, 2018

<sup>1638</sup> [Environmental activists interrogated for 1200 hours under severe torture](#), the NCRI Women’s Committee website, February 20, 2020

<sup>1639</sup> [Inhumane sentences serve as a ploy to silence women political prisoners](#), news, the NCRI Women’s Committee website, July 26, 2020



## NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES

31. What is your country's current national machinery for gender equality and the empowerment of women? Please name it and describe its location within Government.

What is the line of accountability for the national machinery for gender equality? Does it report annually to the Cabinet and Parliament? Are those reports accessible to the public?

To begin with, the Iranian regime openly opposes gender equality and uses the term gender EQUITY rather than equality, even in international women's forums and in their reports.

Consequently, the ruling regime in Iran does NOT seek to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. It does NOT have an institutional process for SDG implementation. In fact, they have so far opposed every attempt for SDG implementation, specifically the implementation of the Education Document 2030.<sup>1640</sup>

Furthermore, the Iranian regime is not a signatory of CEDAW and does not seek to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as they contradict the principles and foundations of the clerical regime which is based on gender discrimination. Article 1 of CEDAW, alone, contradicts the articles of the Constitution, the Civil Code, the Islamic Penal Code and etc. in 90 instances.<sup>1641</sup>

However, under the pressure of domestic and international public opinion, the regime took a cosmetic measure of establishing an entity called, directorate for women and family affairs (NOT FOR GENDER EQUALITY) in the president's office. This is the exact and accurate translation from Farsi title of "*Mo'avenat-e Zanan va Omour-e Khanevadeh dar daftar-e Ra'is Jomhour*."

In their propaganda and gestures for western public opinion, the clerical regime insists that this is a Vice Presidency.<sup>1642</sup>

In reality, however, this directorate does not enjoy any executive powers and its duties are limited to "planning, policy-making and monitoring." The directorate on women and family affairs has to work with other ministries' advisors or counsels on women's affairs to advance or implement their

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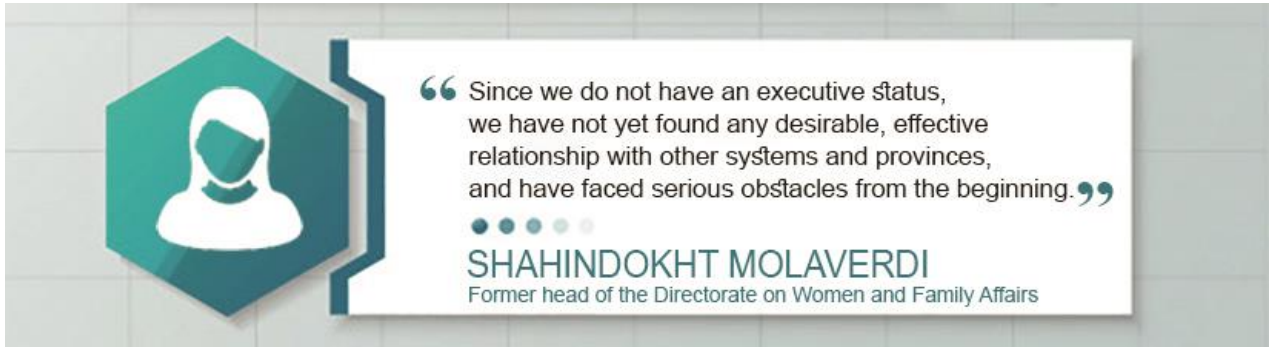
<sup>1640</sup> [Education 2030 Framework for Action \(SDG 4\) and Iranian officials' hysteric reactions to it](#), a special report by the NCRI Women's Committee, June 2017

<sup>1641</sup> [Why the Iranian regime does not join the CEDAW?](#) A study by the NCRI Women's Committee, March 2016

<sup>1642</sup> The regime translates the same title as "Vice Presidency for Women and Family Affairs" and claims that it is "a member of the government cabinet and with the level of ministry."

proposed plans and policies only after they are adopted, and “if these counsels do not participate in the decision-making processes in their departments, they would not be able to implement the devised policies.”<sup>1643</sup>

Shahindokht Molaverdi who headed this directorate from 2013 to 2017 once acknowledged: “Since we do not have an executive status, we have not yet found any desirable, effective relationship with other systems and provinces, and have faced serious obstacles from the beginning.”<sup>1644</sup>



In its biannual “Report on the Conduct of Directorate of Women and Family Affairs (2014-2015)”<sup>1645</sup> released on August 30, 2015, the directorate had listed 90 items in an “executive summary” table of measures and plans it has undertaken in two years under Rouhani to advance Iranian women’s conditions.

Of the 90 listed items, hardly 28 of them were practical, concrete measures which were only carried out through other agencies and ministries. The measures included providing multi-vitamins to 11,000 pregnant and lactating women, educating pregnant women about the benefits of natural childbirth, giving consultations to 2,410 women and girls on the verge of marriage or divorce, setting up a women’s website and at best, teaching skills to women recovering from addiction.

The other 62 items included making proposals (12 items); following up on various issues from treatment of acid attack victims, membership in a certain council, to adoption of the bill on insurance of homemakers, etc. (12 items); holding or taking part in meetings and paying visits to various institutions (9 items); writing the drafts of various bills (5 items);<sup>1646</sup> preparing various forms of reports (4 items); signing agreements with other ministries and countries (4 items); cooperation with other agencies and supporting specific projects (2 items); conducting interviews with the 229 national and international media (1 items); and items that are not specifically related to women (13

<sup>1643</sup> Interview with ISNA news agency, May 10, 2015: Sussan Bastani, director for strategic studies at the presidential Directorate for Women and Family Affairs: “The duty of the women’s directorate is planning, policy-making and monitoring and it does not engage in implementation. Therefore, the directorate finds direct relations with the advisors on women’s affairs in other departments. If these advisors do not partake in their respective department’s decision-making, it is going to create problems in implementing the programs planned in the women’s arena.”

<sup>1644</sup> TNews.IR, August 24, 2015: “She continued by pointing to the cooperation of the Directorate on Women and Family Affairs with other systems and provinces and said, “Since we do not have executive status, we have not yet found any desirable, effective relationship with other systems and provinces and have faced serious obstacles from the beginning.”

<sup>1645</sup> *Gozarash-e Amalkard-e Mo’avenat-e Omour-e Zanan va Khanevadeh dar Dowlat-e Tadbir-o Omid, 1392-1394*, pp. 7-14

<sup>1646</sup> Some of the items in the table, including some of the drafts, have been marked with zero per cent achievement meaning that they have not been done at all or have been rejected altogether, but are still listed as actions undertaken by the directorate.

items).<sup>1647</sup> The report did not elaborate on the outcome and end result of these activities in favor of promoting women's status in Iranian society.

The same is true for the National Report on Women's Status in the Islamic Republic of Iran (Beijing + 25) published by the office of international affairs, of the Vice Presidency for Women and Family Affairs in 2019.

The 200-page report has been filled with general statements without listing any practical, on-the-ground measures taken in favor of women. At the same time, they have refrained from answering many crucial questions posed by the UN Women and UN Committee on the Status of Women (CSW). For example, in the section dealing with social protection and eradication of poverty (Question 9, page 54 of the National Report on Women's Status in the Islamic Republic of Iran (Beijing+25)), the Iranian regime's Women and Family Affairs directorate has listed a number of so-called measures which are devoid of substance.

They have not taken any measures to help the poor or eradicate poverty through social protection, unemployment benefits, public works programs, or social assistance. Their hollow claims are instead based on the idea of entrepreneurship, mini-finance funds, training workshops and exhibitions, all of which have been attempts to use the **people's** own resources for the government's theatrical measures. The government has not even taken any steps to support the female entrepreneurs with the initial capital,<sup>1648</sup> but has extracted and collected the minimum resources people have to form the mini-finance funds to give loans to those seeking to start a small business in a village. And even the outcome of this is not clear in their report and whether it produced result.

Most of their activities are holding workshops where the government agents spend 60 hours but they multiply it by the number of people who attended the workshop to claim having done 820,020 hours of work. In this way, they have exaggerated the little they have done in cosmetic measures. One of the most absurd items included in the list of measures undertaken to provide social protection to women is at the bottom of page 54: "Adjust expectations and attitudes of graduate girls in terms of work and economic activities in accordance with labor market environment." This means that they convince girls with higher education to stay home and do not participate in the male-dominated job market in Iran.<sup>1649</sup>

Parvaneh Mafi, a former government official and active in women's affairs, evaluated the conduct of the presidential directorate on women and family affairs as the following:

**"This directorate has addressed mostly ultra-structural and superficial works, gatherings and meetings, etc.** These are not bad, but they must comprise only a small part of their conduct. (The directorate) must undertake infrastructural works that could cause fundamental change in women's affairs or at least initiate basic and infrastructural work with regards to women."<sup>1650</sup>

<sup>1647</sup> *Gozarash-e Amalkard-e Mo'avenat-e Omour-e Zanan va Khanevadeh dar Dowlat-e Tadbir-o Omid*, 1392-1394, pp. 7-14

<sup>1648</sup> Fatemeh Zolqadr, member of the Labor Committee of the parliament, said, "Many women who wish to start a business, do not have the initial capital despite their capability to run one. When we speak of supporting employment and occupation for women, the first thing is to provide the initial capital, and accordingly, women who wish to start a business must be able to be granted loans... Getting loans is more difficult for women compared to men. Thinking that women would have more problems in paying back their loans compared to men, banks refuse to grant them loans." The state-run ILNA news agency, October 9, 2019

<sup>1649</sup> The official IRNA news agency, January 17, 2019

<sup>1650</sup> The state-run Iran-e Zanan Network website, September 3, 2015.



### The women's directorate does not account to any authority, does not report to the parliament

As for the accountability of this directorate, Zohreh Tabibzadeh, member of parliament, said, "The Directorate on Women and Family Affairs presently does not account to any authority... No report has been provided by the Directorate on Women and Family Affairs to the parliament so that we know what they have done...We cannot examine an unprofessional report containing only generalities on the conduct of the directorate. Only exact figures and accurate explanations on the conduct of an entity can explain the quality of its work, not the number of memoranda and contracts signed with other centers. They must report on the number of coops they have set up, the number of books they have published, the amount of support they have provided to elite women, etc. Statement of generalities and highlighting just a few agreements as the report of conduct is totally unacceptable. Instead, they must provide exact details of their conduct."<sup>1651</sup>

The Directorate for Women and Family Affairs has also been criticized for being "ineffective." The former director of this agency was accused of making hollow promises. "She is good at rhetoric and making promises in line with women's demands, but in practice, she has not taken any steps that could be evaluated... Her work has been mostly for propaganda, protocol and showcase... She has not undertaken any infrastructural steps to advance the cause of women even one step further."<sup>1652</sup>

The current director, Massoumeh Ebtekar has done even less as she is often preoccupied with justifying the regime's misogynistic conducts, notably in the international media since she is fluent in English. A former hostage taker involved in the takeover of the American Embassy in Iran in 1979, Ebtekar was removed in 2017 as head of the Environmental Protection Agency and replaced Shahindokht Molaverdi, as head of the Directorate on Women and Family Affairs.

Regrettably, in a country with so many college-educated women<sup>1653</sup> and with a large work force of 15-49 year old women,<sup>1654</sup> "women's economic and political participation is non-existent"<sup>1655</sup> and

<sup>1651</sup> The state-run Iran-e Zanan Network website, September 3, 2015

<sup>1652</sup> The state-run Iran-e Zanan Network website, August 17, 2015, interview with a civil activist on women's affairs, Touran Vali-Morad on the record of the Directorate on Women and Family Affairs.

<sup>1653</sup> Sussan Bastani, deputy for strategic studies in Rohani's presidential directorate for Women and Family Affairs, the state-run ISNA news agency, February 13, 2016: "Two million girls have graduated from universities in the past 20 years. However, unemployment rate among women has increased. Women's economic participation has also dropped from 39.5 to 27 per cent."

<sup>1654</sup> The state-run Asr-e Banovan website, August 5, 2015: The former minister of science, Jafar Tofighi Darian, admitted that "more than 77 percent of Iranian women who are between 15 and 49 years of age, enjoy a great potential for activity in social, economic and political arenas" but they have not been recruited as much as they should have. "The rate of employment for women is very small compared to world averages, indicating that educated women have not been employed as much as they deserved."

<sup>1655</sup> Massoumeh Ebtekar, Rouhani's deputy in Women and Family Affairs, asserted that "women almost disappear in senior management positons." The state-run ISNA news agency, October 31, 2017



women have no presence in the administrative councils<sup>1656</sup> and their role in the parliament<sup>1657</sup> has not solved any of the existing problems.<sup>1658</sup>

**32. Is the head of the national machinery a member of the institutional process for SDG implementation (e.g. inter-ministerial coordinating office, commission or committees)? YES/NO If YES, what is their role in decision-making in the national machinery?**

There is no national process for SDG implementation in Iran. Massoumeh Ebtekar, head of the Directorate on Women and Family Affairs, is officially entitled as a deputy to Hassan Rouhani. The directorate does not have any executive powers and or any impact on decision-making processes in the country.<sup>1659</sup>

**33. Are there formal mechanisms in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, CEDAW and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?**

No, there is no formal mechanism in place for the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, CEDAW and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

**34. Is gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls included as a key priority in the national plan/strategy for SDG implementation?**

No, there is no national plan/strategy for SDG implementation to have any priority on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

<sup>1656</sup> The state-run ILNA news agency, August 25, 2015: On women's appointment to managerial positions, Shahindokht Molaverdi, presidential deputy on Women and Family Affairs, said, "Initially, there were some good moves in terms of appointment of female governors, which were halted after a while for reasons that I would not get into right now." She added, "Unfortunately, we do not see women's presence in the administrative councils of provinces."

<sup>1657</sup> The state-run Mizan website, September 8, 2015: "Women's presence in the parliament is about 3 percent and, in the most optimistic estimations, only one percent in other decision-making and power structures, a situation that is embarrassing for the government," said Shahindokht Molaverdi, presidential deputy on Women and Family Affairs.

<sup>1658</sup> The state-run Zanan-e Iran Network website, August 5, 2015: Tooran Vali-Morad, secretary of the Women's Islamic Coalition: "In the past 36 years and especially the past 26 years, our country has moved in the wrong direction in tackling women's issues... Unfortunately, all that has been done for women is summarized in gatherings and meetings. Women's mandatory presence both in the parliament and government have not solved any of the existing problems."

<sup>1659</sup> [Women demoted in new Rouhani Cabinet](#), the NCRI Women's Committee website, August 17, 2017





## DATA AND STATISTICS

35. Out of the following, which are your priorities for strengthening national gender statistics over the next five years?

- Promoted new laws, regulations, or statistical programme/strategy to develop gender statistics
- Establishment of an inter-agency coordination mechanism on gender statistics (e.g., technical working group, inter-agency committee)
- Use more gender-sensitive data in the formulation of policy and implementation of programmes and projects
- Conduct new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topics (e.g., time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability)
- Greater utilization and/or improvement of administrative-based or alternative data sources to address gender data gaps
- Production of knowledge products on gender statistics (e.g., user-friendly reports, policy briefs, research papers)
- Development of a centralized web-based database and/or dashboard on gender statistics
- Institutionalization of users-producers' dialogues mechanisms
- Statistical capacity building of users to increase statistical appreciation on and use of gender statistics (e.g., trainings, statistical appreciation seminars)
- Other
- Please explain your plan (2 pages max.)

Since misogyny and anti-feminine attitudes and approaches are institutionalized in the Constitution and other laws of the clerical regime in Iran, it is most important to eliminate the existing laws against women and replace them with gender sensitive laws.

This task, however, does not seem possible with a tyrannical regime in power that guns down peaceful protesters in the streets as the world witnessed in December 2017-January 2018, November 2019 and January 2020.

Presently, bills and proposals for minimum changes are being rejected or totally overhauled by the parliament for contradicting the Constitution and *Shari'a* laws.

The **bill to increase the age of marriage for girl children** was rejected in December 2018.<sup>1660</sup>

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<sup>1660</sup> [Marriage age increase rejected by Iran parliament](#), the NCRI Women's Committee website, December 25, 2018

The **bill to eliminate violence against women** got stuck in the parliament and Judiciary for eight years before being thoroughly re-written in 2019 by the Judiciary. It took 15 months for Hassan Rouhani's government to review the bill and pass it on to the parliament for adoption as a law.<sup>1661</sup> And it took more than four months for the parliament to acknowledge receipt of the bill in late May 2021.

Even if passed by the parliament, the "Protection of Dignity and Support for Women Against Violence" bill has many deficiencies that make it inefficient in achieving its goals.<sup>1662</sup>

The **Bill to Protect Children and Adolescents** was hastily passed on June 7, 2020, after 11 years of foot-dragging. The bill's content fails to address any of the current policies or laws that violate children's rights in Iran. The bill also falls short of providing any means to ensure the allocation of a budget sufficient to meet the needs of child laborers or child widows.<sup>1663</sup>

Instead, a bill called the Law to Support Disadvantaged, Defenseless and Abandoned Children was passed by the Iranian Parliament on September 22, 2013, which sanctions marriage between the child and her guardian (stepfather), with the approval of a court.<sup>1664</sup>

Actually, women and children do not enjoy any priority in the clerical regime's agenda.<sup>1665</sup>

### 37. Has data collection and compilation on SDG 5 indicators and on gender-specific indicators under other SDGs begun?

If NO, explain the main challenges for collecting and compiling data on these indicators

For those following up on the statistics in Iran, it is very difficult to come up with figures accurately reflecting the reality.

While there are no effective systems for collecting data, government officials often speak of percentages and not actual numbers. But when and if they do, they present varying figures on the same issue.

In the meantime, the percentages and figures provided are intended to downplay the severity of the situation or to conceal the reality.

Another problem is lack of transparency, since officials try to conceal the gravity of the situation to avoid adding fuel to the flames of widespread social discontent.

There are no gender-specific indicators for collection of data.

This issue has been thoroughly examined in the answer provided to **Question 1-e, Does the government have gaps in data? If so, what are these?**

<sup>1661</sup> [Provision of Security for Women bill finalized by Judiciary after 8 years](#), the NCRI Women's Committee website, September 19, 2019

<sup>1662</sup> [Bill to protect women against violence faces hopeless situation in Iran](#), articles, the NCRI Women's Committee website, February 1, 2021; Iranian state media, January 2021

<sup>1663</sup> [Bill to Protect Children and Adolescents Fails to Protect Girls](#), documents, the NCRI Women's Committee website, September 2020

<sup>1664</sup> [Under new law in Iran, Men Allowed to Marry their Adopted Children](#), a special report by the NCRI Women's Committee, October 2014

<sup>1665</sup> [Issues of women and children are overlooked](#), the NCRI Women's Committee website, December 27, 2017

**38. Which of the following disaggregation<sup>17</sup> is routinely provided by major surveys in your country?**

- ☐ Geographic location
- ☐ Income
- ☐ Sex
- ☐ Gender
- ☐ Age
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Marital status
- ☐ Race/ethnicity
- ☐ Migratory status
- ☐ Disability
- ☐ Other characteristics relevant in national contexts

None of the above is routinely provided by major surveys.

There are occasional reports on education and marital status (marriage and divorce and child marriages), however, it is never clear if the data provided by officials are from a recent survey or from an old one.

Officials usually speak in terms of percentages without providing exact figures.

If they do so, they are for only one or two provinces, and they never provide a complete picture in terms of real numbers.

This issue has been thoroughly examined in the answer provided to **Question 1-e, Does the government have gaps in data? If so, what are these?**









A Report to the UN Beijing+25 Forum

# **The Plight of Women in Iran**

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treatment of Iranian women

Women's Committee  
The National Council of Resistance of Iran

**JUNE 2021**

