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**Promotion and protection of all human rights,
civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

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The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[10 May 2013]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Discrimination and violence against women in the Islamic Republic of Iran both in private and public

Women of Iran are rated second class citizens and the state's macro politics are geared to drive them into the margins of society. They had been kept away from high office and decision-making posts. Since the Iranian revolution in 1979, and in the span of 8 rounds of elections and out of 2860 deputies, only 54 women had won seats in the parliament.¹ No woman has ever been approved to run for presidential elections. The Islamic Republic of Iran prefers women as housewives to stay at home and bear and raise children. In the past 8 years, unemployment among women has doubled.²

Social insecurity, intimidation and threat against women

Women in Iran live in constant fear and threat posed by various government agencies such as the security police force, moral guidance mobile force and the intelligence forces. This is not confined to activists but women in general. It is not confined to the public areas but even in private spaces women do not feel free from the threat and intimidation. Recently, general Radan, commander of police boasted that: "In a ceremony in the Milad tower, a number of women were detained due to improper Hejab (veil)."³

"In 2012, at least 80 women activists and more than 42 journalists were either detained and imprisoned or received new sentences. A large number of activists are currently serving terms or have been released under heavy bail and some were denied to continue their studies at the university while others had left the country because of the intimidations."⁴

Women's peaceful demonstrations to set their grievances routinely met with extreme violence where they are beaten up and assaulted. Pressure on women to wear the imposed Hejab and humiliation of those who refuse to comply, places women alongside villains and drug dealers and they are treated as such.⁵

On April 22, 2013, in line with the implementation of "moral security", the moral police which was stationed at the main squares in Tehran, offered flowers to those whose Hejab was "acceptable" and warned others to behave.⁶

Apart from harassment, detention and imprisonment and those killed during the 2009 disputed presidential elections, a number of women had been murdered under police

¹ Moghaddam, Rezvan, Identities & challenges, Twenty second Conference of the Women's Studies Foundation Amersfoort, 2011 p215

² <http://www.dw.de/a-16782166>

³ <http://www.khabaronline.ir/detail/220206>

⁴ <http://www.dw.de/a-15814015>

⁵ http://tnews.ir/%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%B1%DA%AF%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%B1%DB%8C_%D8%A2%D9%86%D8%A7/%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%AE%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%AF_%D8%A8%D8%A7_%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86%DA%A9%D9%86_%D9%86%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%A7_%D8%AF%D8%B1_%DB%B1%DB%B7_%D8%B4%D9%87%D8%B1_%D9%87%D8%B2%DB%8C%D9%86%D9%87_%D9%88%D9%82%D9%88%D8%B9_%D8%AC%D8%B1%D9%85_%D8%B1%D8%A7_46F1_14171994.html

⁶ <http://fararu.com/fa/news/148243/%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%88%DB%8C%D8%B1-%D8%A2%D8%BA%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D8%B7%D8%B1%D8%AD-%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%86%DB%8C%D8%AA%E2%80%8C%D8%A7%D8%AE%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%82%DB%8C-%D8%A8%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%AF%D8%A7%DB%8C%E2%80%8C-%DA%AF%D9%84>

custody. In 2007, Dr Zahra Bani Yaqoub, who was an exceptionally gifted woman was detained while walking in a park with her fiancé and taken into custody in the city of Hamadan. She was murdered hours later and her family are still seeking justice.

In 2004, Zahran Kazemi, Canadian/Iranian journalist was detained while taking photos of a gathering in front of the Evin prison. She was murdered while in custody. Dr Shahram Azam, a doctor who examined Zahra Kazemi's body, wrote extensively of fingers, nose, ribs and skull fractures, lung injury, thigh, abdomen, genital and extra genital injuries and bruises evident in her body which are clear signs severe beatings, torture, flogging and rape. He had to flee to Canada in fear for his own life.⁷

Abuse of women of ethnic groups

Women in general and regardless of their culture, ethnic origins, religion and social status are prone to violence and discrimination. In the developing societies they face the double burden of violence both by the society and also by states. The physical and psychological health of women is not only jeopardized by states but also due to wrong cultures, traditions and special interpretations of religion which are against women. As an example, so far since 21st March 2013, 7 women from Kurdish areas of Iran have been detained by the security and intelligence forces⁸ and at least 9 women have attempted suicide from which 8 have died.⁹

Abuse of women's right in education

In 2012, apart from the implementation of the strategy of sex segregation and the single sex educational universities; women were barred to study in more than 77 fields at 36 universities throughout the country. In addition to the fields of engineering where women were barred most, they were also barred to enter fields such as carpet weaving (an industry where its workers are mostly female), English literature, history and many other subjects.¹⁰

To impose further pressure on women, the imposition of "improper Islamic Hejab" and "disregard the university regulations" has deprived many female students at the Iran University of Science & Technology to be dismissed without proper procedures for a period of time. Discrimination does not stop there. Since 1979 and according to article 13 of the bill regarding studying abroad financial aids, only married women has been eligible to use government foreign currency facilities (i.e. at least half the market price).¹¹

Discrimination in sports

Women must wear the full Islamic Hejab when attending sport contests; an outfit, which makes free movement extremely difficult. Women are also barred to enter some fields of sports. Women are barred to enter stadiums to watch matches. They are barred to contest in many international fields as well. Recently, Neda Shamsavari, the first Iranian woman who got eligibility to attend the Olympics in table tennis and who was scheduled to attend the Asian cup contests, was refused to board the plane in the last minute while men left for the matches.¹²

⁷ http://zobin-cost.blogspot.de/2010/06/blog-post_2917.html

⁸ <http://www.kurdpa.net/?id=9291&besh=dreje>

⁹ <http://www.kurdpa.net/farsi/index.php?cat=idame&id=9876>

¹⁰ <http://new.hamshahrionline.ir/details/180132>

¹¹ <http://news.gooya.com/politics/archives/2012/03/137044.php>

¹² <http://farsidari-wluml.org/?p=1590>

Violence, discrimination and humiliation of women in law

Humiliation of women is enshrined in law. But sometimes those who impose the law go a step forward to further humiliate women. In April this year and in the town of Marivan in the Kurdish region in order to punish a number of well-known thugs they were paraded throughout the town in female outfits! This was implemented by police forces.

In some regions where ethnic groups such as the Kurds, Lors, Baluches and the Arabs live, the rate of suicide and self-burn is high. Female circumcision is also practiced in some regions. The Islamic Penal code (articles 630 and 220) regarding honour killing has led to the increase in violence against women in the regions where violent cultural practices already existed. In 2010, of 11 cases of pregnant women's death in one of the provinces, 5 were due to self-burn.¹³

Violence and discrimination against women exist in many areas of civil code and Islamic Penal Code which include: the age of criminal responsibility for girls, honour killings law, imposed Hejab, minimum age for marriage for girls, polygamy, marital duties and responsibilities, travel, divorce, inheritance, custody of children, employment, appointment as judge in the court of law, bear witness in the court of law.

Underage marriage

According to the civil law, girls can marry at 13 years of age. According to the Islamic Sharia law, the age of consent is 9 lunar years, which means 8 years and 9 months. In rural areas, where the implementation of the Islamic Sharia law is more common, girl children are forced into marriage at such young ages. In 2010, according to a member of the Society for Protecting the Rights of the Child (IRSPRC), 716 cases of child marriages under the age of 10 had been registered. Child marriages have increased two folds in the past three years. For the same reason the rate of divorce has increased. Only from 2007 to 2010, 800 girls between 10-14 and 15 thousand between 15-19 years old girls were divorced.¹⁴

According to the last official statistics in 2010, there had been 342,000 marriages of below 18 years old, of which 42,000 were children of 10-14 years at the time of marriage.

Recommendations

Women's rights activist believe that in the long term unless the Islamic Republic of Iran ratifies the CEDAW and complies fully with its contents and with that of the agreed conclusion of the 57th session of CSW¹⁵, violence against women and girls and gender discrimination will continue to grow in all areas and spheres of public and private lives of Iranian women.

In the short term however, we urge the Human Rights Council to consider the issues raised in this report as grave abuse of women's human rights and demand:

- Equal rights for women in all areas of private and public life,
- Eradication of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls as stated in this report.

¹³ <http://www.tabnak.ir/fa/news/141730>

¹⁴ <http://www.radiofarda.com/content/f10-underage-marriage-increases-in-iran/24684390.html>

¹⁵ http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2013/L.5