

UN Women Liaison Office in Geneva
Palais des Nations
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Ref: Tenure of the Islamic Republic of Iran commission on the status of women.

In March of this year, the Islamic Republic began its four-year term as a new member of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). This commission is dedicated to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

The Islamic Republic and its constitution represent a theocratic dictatorship.

After the establishment of a new constitution and penal code in 1979, women's rights have been subjected to systematic discrimination and inequality.

The World Economic Forum's 2017 Global Gender Gap Report ranked Iran 140, out of 144 countries, for gender parity. Iranian females comprised 19% of the workforce in 2017. This represents a mere seven percent growth since 1990. In 2017, the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Index ranked Iran in the bottom tercile of 153 countries.

The recent and ongoing demonstrations sparked by the murder of Miss Mahsa Amini by the Islamic morality police of the Islamic Republic have led to calls for Women's Rights and equality. The Islamic Republic has responded with a deadly crackdown resulting in the deaths of many young Iranian girls and the arrest of many others.

Confirmed reports have provided the names, faces, and stories of only a few young Iranian girls who have been killed by the Islamic Republic in the nationwide demonstrations. These young and brave Iranian women are protesting and fighting for women's Rights in Iran against a theocratic dictatorship.

Young girls such as 23-year-old Hadis Najafi have been shot and killed in the streets of Iran. Innocent 16-year-olds such as Sarina Esmailzadeh are being beaten to death in the streets after being arrested by the para-military and police forces. Young teenagers like 17-year-old Nika Shakarami, have been arrested and their lifeless bodies are being returned to their parents. We dare not comprehend or imagine the pain and suffering and probable rape that they had to endure before death. Nika's family has also been arrested in an attempt to silence her grieving family.

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, a woman's life is regarded as only half as valuable as a man's. This value is also represented in tort cases and testimonies in a court of law.

Iranian women are subjected to inequalities and discrimination in personal matters, such as marriage and divorce, child custody, and inheritance laws, as Iranian law only recognizes a man as the head of the household. Male siblings also have an upper hand and are entitled to twice the inheritance as their sisters. Unbelievably, a woman must satisfy her husband's sexual needs, and refusal may lead to her loss of maintenance payments including accommodation and food. A husband has the right to decide, if he so chooses, to prevent his wife from seeking employment if he deems it to be against his values.

The inequality of Iranian women within the framework of the Islamic Republic has created a second-class tier for nearly half of the population. Iranian women cannot sing or dance in public and are banned from attending sports stadiums, and the simple pleasure of riding a bicycle in a park or a street has also been denied for Iranian women.

The wearing of an Islamic *hejab* is mandatory and enshrined in the constitution of the Islamic Republic. This should be a religious choice and a free choice. Women who do not respect this are arrested and face severe financial penalties, and some have been subjected to acid attacks. This law deprives all women of the authority and self-determination to choose what they would like to wear.

Now the world has witnessed how unarmed Iranian women are being beaten, arrested, and killed for simply demonstrating their freedom and rights as a woman in Iran.

Despite the blatant and fully documented breaches in human rights and women's rights by the Islamic Republic of Iran, the United Nations has elected the Islamic Republic to a 4-year term on its commission on the status of women. This tenure is unacceptable.

The association of Iranian Human Rights and Allies condemns this appointment as morally reprehensible and an insult to all the achievements and strides taken for women's rights.

We request the United Nations Women's liaison offices in Europe and the United States reflect on historic and ongoing events in Iran and recognize the non-compliance of the Islamic Republic in respect of not only women's Rights, but all aspects of Human Rights.

For the support and solidarity that Iranian women deserve, we request that the Islamic Republic is removed from the CSW with immediate effect.

Yours Sincerely,

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