

Women are the force for change

Women against
fundamentalism and for equality

NCRI Women's Committee

50 years and on

Solidarity with Iranian women's struggle for freedom

March 2016

Brief history
of Iranian women's movement

Regulations and facts of
repression against women in Iran

Activities of women
for freedom



NCRI & Maryam Rajavi

February 2, 2013

Maryam Rajavi's Platform for Future Iran

1. In our view, the ballot box is the only criterion for legitimacy. Accordingly, we seek a republic based on universal suffrage.
2. We want a pluralist system, freedom of parties and assembly. We respect all individual freedoms. We underscore complete freedom of expression and of the media and unconditional access by all to the internet.
3. We support and are committed to the abolition of death penalty.
4. We are committed to the separation of Church and State. Any form of discrimination against the followers of any religion and denomination will be prohibited.
5. We believe in complete gender equality in political, social and economic arenas. We are also committed to equal participation of women in political leadership. Any form of discrimination against women will be abolished. They will enjoy the right to freely choose their clothing. They are free in marriage, divorce, education and employment.
6. We believe in the rule of law and justice. We want to set up a modern legal system based on the principles of presumption of innocence, the right to defense, effective judicial protection and the right to be tried in a public court. We also seek the total independence of judges. The mullahs' Sharia law will be abolished.
7. We are committed to the Universal Declaration of Humans Rights, and international covenants and conventions, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture, and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

We are committed to the equality of all nationalities. We underscore the plan for the autonomy of Iranian Kurdistan, adopted by the National Council of Resistance of Iran. The language and culture of our compatriots from whatever nationality, are among our nation's human resources and must spread and be promulgated in tomorrow's Iran.
8. We recognize private property, private investment and the market economy. All Iranian people must enjoy equal opportunity in employment and in business ventures. We will protect and revitalize the environment.
9. Our foreign policy will be based on peaceful coexistence, international and regional peace and cooperation, as well as respect for the United Nations charter.
10. We want a non-nuclear Iran, free of weapons of mass destruction.

National Council of Resistance of Iran, a broad democratic coalition was founded in 1981 in Tehran by Massoud Rajavi, the leader of the Iranian Resistance.

Maryam Rajavi was born in 1953 to a middle class family in Tehran.

She has a degree in metallurgy from Sharif University of Technology in Tehran.

Maryam Rajavi began her activities during the anti-shah movement in early 1970s, as one of the leaders of the student movement while studying at the University.

The Shah's regime executed one of her sisters, Narges, and the Khomeini regime murdered another, Massoumeh, who died under torture in 1982 while eight months pregnant.

After the 1979 Revolution, she became a leading figure in the Social Section of the PMOI. At the time, the PMOI quickly emerged as the principal opposition movement to the clerical regime.

In 1980, Maryam Rajavi was among candidates for the parliamentary elections in Tehran and received more than a quarter million votes, despite widespread vote fraud by the government. In 1982, she left Iran for France.

In August 1993, the NCRI, the Iranian Resistance's parliament, elected Maryam Rajavi as Iran's future president for the transitional period following the mullahs' overthrow.

PARLIAMENT IN EXILE

The NCRI is an inclusive and pluralistic parliament-in-exile with more than 500 members, including representatives of ethnic and religious minorities such as the Kurds, Baluchis, Armenians, Jews and Zoroastrians, representing a broad spectrum of political tendencies in Iran. The NCRI aims to establish a secular democratic republic in Iran, based on the separation of religion and state. Women comprise over 50 % of the Council's members. There are five organizations in the NCRI, including the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI/MEK), the largest and most popular resistance group in Iran

NCRI'S PLATFORM ON WOMEN

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



150 years of struggle for freedom

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

Fatemeh Mesbah



Executed at age of 13

She was executed at the age of 13. She is one example of students killed by the regime. 7 other members of her family including her father, mother, brothers, sister and relatives were executed.

Forouzan Abdi



True national champion

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

Soraya Abulfat'hi



Pregnant upon execution

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



Heroine of resistance

Ashraf Rajavi

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

Massoumeh Shadmani



Executed at 50

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

Monireh Rajavi



Symbol of massacred prisoners

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

Zahra Rajabi



Murdered while helping refugees

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

Maryam Rajavi's view on women

- **In the future Iran**, all personal freedoms concerning women have to be recognized, including the freedom to choose one's clothing, freedom of opinion, religion, employment and travel.
- **We believe** in complete gender equality in social, political, cultural and economic arenas. Women must have equal participation in the society's political leadership.
- **Civil laws** will be drafted based on international conventions about the rights and freedoms of women, specifically the CEDAW and the declaration on the elimination of violence against women.

Women united

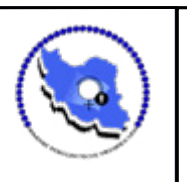


Women standing for their rights



Misogynous civil laws under the mullahs' rule

- **Article 1105:** Within the household, the husband is entrusted with the task of heading the family.
- **Article 1117:** The husband has the right to prevent his wife from engaging in a profession which goes against the interest of the family or the man's or woman's pride.
- **Article 1133:** The man can divorce his wife any time he so chooses.
- **Article 1114:** A wife must live in a home, which her husband chooses, unless she is given the right to choose the location of her residence.





Finally, in the struggle against a misogynist regime, nothing is more powerful than women leadership of the opposition and the efforts for regime change. Women leadership and gender equality present the most formidable existential challenge to the clerical rule. This becomes even more effective when these women are Muslim but under the leadership of Maryam Rajavi, they fight for absolute gender equality, reject Sharia law of the mullahs or any other restrictions on women's individual freedoms under the pretext of Islam.

The existence of an organized opposition with strong roots in Iranian society and a public platform for gender equality, separation of church and state, recognition of all international conventions on human rights and civil rights provide the right vehicles for change in Iran. This is why the Iranian regime fears most from the organized opposition. For this reason its prime objective is to eliminate residents of Camp Liberty. In particular the presence of 1000 women among the ranks of opposition makes the regime more vulnerable in facing the opposition. Four missile attacks on defenceless residents of Camp Liberty in a matter of few months in 2014, which left 14 killed and dozens injured is a clear indication of the

regime's fear. Three other major attacks were carried out in their former camp, where they lived for over 25 years, leading to the overall murder of 116 with 1375 wounded as well as 7 hostages, six which are women. In January 2009, despite strong opposition by the residents and several legal opinions by distinguished jurists, the camp's security was transferred to Iraq. The US stated that the Government of Iraq has given written guarantee respecting the rights of the residents. Since 2009, the camp has been under a barbaric siege where delivery of food, fuel and medicine has been hampered and visits by family members, human rights organizations, residents' lawyers, and independent journalists have been disallowed. As a result, the insecurity of this camp is a vital and immediate threat, demanding an urgent solution. Iraq has officially declared it cannot prevent further attacks, and guaranteeing protection through Iraq is not an option."



The threats of Islamic fundamentalism against women and in the larger context against global peace and security is of great importance. Therefore, the solution to this ominous phenomenon has been the role of Iranian women in the fight for democracy against the fundamentalist regime ruling Iran. 1000 Iranian women opposed to Islamic fundamentalism are now living in Camp Liberty in Iraq. They are members of the single Iranian organized opposition, People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran (MeK/PMOI), led by women. One third of them had spent several years in prisons and suffered the most severe tortures and mistreatments but have continued their struggle against the regime and now live as refugees in Iraq. Their plight has turned into major international issue over the past years, since they have been attacked on a number of occasions by Iraqi forces

at the behest of Tehran. They are mostly well educated and many have lived in Europe for decades. Nevertheless, they are eager to see freedom and democracy flourish in Iran. They would like to see democratic change in Iran and support all efforts by democratic opposition in this respect. Therefore, they reject all factions within the Iranian regime, including those pretending as moderates, as they all aim to maintain the constitution of the Islamic Republic and the absolute rule of the clergy. In the aftermath of invasion of Iraq, these women engaged in the most difficult negotiations with the US Army generals that led to mutually agreeable settlements. The most striking point about these women are that while they are Muslim, they support a secular system (separation of Religious and State), they support freedom of choice for women in all aspects of their life including choosing their attire. Therefore, the Iranian women look to women in resistance as their source of inspiration rather than those who simply try to work within the system under the illusion of bringing change from within the regime.





Arbitrary arrests

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



Executions

More than 993 prisoners have been executed in Iran in 2015, up to 20 of them women. During Rouhani's tenure since August 2013 at least 2300 executions have been reported including at least 63 women. However many executions carried out inside prisons go unreported. These represent only a tiny proportion of crimes committed by the mullahs against their own population in 2015. The head of the regime's judiciary system banded reports by international bodies on the worsening state of human rights in Iran as 'fabricated and prejudiced' and said: "Opposing the death sentence is opposing Islam's orders."

Suppression of women under the mullahs' rule

Intimidation

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



Prisons

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



Dress-code

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



Restrictions

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



In the frontline

As the world witnessed the Iranian people's desire to change the regime and as they came to the streets in 2009, women were at the forefront of the movement. They use every occasion to protest against the fascist and misogynist regime and gather to break the silence which has prevented them from living in democracy and freedom for over 37 years. The courageous women stand side-by-side the freedom loving Iranian men and denounce the regime all together.



Bonding with the Resistance

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



1000 women of the Resistance

Today the struggle of Iranian women is alive in the Iranian Resistance movement. 1000 brave women of the resistance are a source of hope and motivation for millions in Iran. They have created a movement without borders based on a new level of human solidarity and have risen to defend the resistance.



Protests

Despite an atmosphere of repression, women and young girls have played an important and significant role in organizing uprisings and protests in universities or local areas. Among these groups are the Mourning Mothers of martyrs who use every opportunity to be the voice of their fallen children. Women are always in the front line of all protests and fearlessly stand against the regime.

Iranian women resisting

Universities

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

60% of university students are women, however, 70 fields are banned for women.



Reyhaneh Jabbari

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



Commemorating Women's day

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

Excerpts of speeches by Mrs. Maryam Rajavi at conferences commemorating international women's day:

2015

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

2014

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

2013

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

2012

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

2011

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

2010

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

2008

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



An unprecedented convention with the participation of over 300 Iranian associations from North America, Europe and Australia was held in Paris on February 28, 2014. Over 40 women's associations were present at the Iranian Convention. (Logos of some are found at the bottom of pages 2-5)