

NCRI
Women
committee

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دانشگاه تهران
دولت نمی‌پوشد

2018 Annual Report



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2018 Annual Report

FOREWORD

Women are indeed the Force for Change. This was vividly seen in Iran throughout the past year and of course, most conspicuously during the uprising in December and January.

Although the situation in Iran is extremely oppressive for women and they have borne the brunt of repression for the past 39 years, they are not submissive contrary to the regime's expectation.

Gender discrimination, gender segregation, and various restrictions have made Iranian women not just rebellious but also very resilient.

Look at women's education in Iran. Low legal age of marriage and forcible marriage of girl children, discrimination against them in education, traditional prejudice against girls' education in the villages, poverty and many other factors make girls their primary victims, leading to tens of thousands of girls dropping out of school at young age.

At college level, young women are banned from studying in 77 fields, and many universities have set quotas for girls' admission. Some universities are gender segregated and teach some fields only for men. Despite all these obstacles, women have made up over 50 per cent of university admissions every year, for some 15 years.

Look at women's sports. Women have no government or private support. Those women who wish to participate in international tournaments, have to pay for their own travel, practice, equipment, etc. But Iranian women are so motivated that they continue to be active in sports and win medals.

The mullahs' supreme leader banned them from cycling in public, but they buy their own bikes and participate in Asian games.

They have no decent field to play and no spectators, photographers or reporters are allowed in their games, but Iranian women and girls are among the best football players in Asia. They are banned from entering stadiums. A few months ago, one of the top ayatollahs declared that the issue is unnegotiable and women will never be allowed into stadiums to watch men's games, period. Nevertheless, young Iranian women defied the mullah, wore make up and posed as men and entered the stadiums to watch their favorite teams.

As for the compulsory veil, they have frustrated the regime to the extent that officials confess having failed to impose the Hijab on Iranian women. For at least a decade, Iranian women have been defying vice and guidance patrols and flouting the regime's dress-code, gradually dropping the veil behind the wheels and in public, accepting the price for making their statement.

The situation with women is so sensitive that the mullahs' President, Hassan Rouhani, did not dare to include a single woman in his cabinet. Although all observers believe that the inclusion of even more women could not resolve the problems women face in Iranian society, the clerical regime is so vulnerable it could not afford even a single cosmetic gesture in this regard.

And finally, despite zero participation in political leadership and decision-making, women were present everywhere during the uprising and in hundreds of protests last year, to help decide their own destiny.

And the women political prisoners dared to send messages to protesters from behind the bars, encouraging and urging them to take the risks and pay the price of freedom.

As one journalist noted "real women freedom fighters" are in the streets of Iran.¹

Of course, this is not a spontaneous phenomenon. Iranian women have always had role models to look up to. The Muslim women of the People's Mojahedin of Iran (PMOI) who defied the mullahs in the face, defended women's freedom of choice from the onset, and made a mockery of the mullahs' fake adherence to Islam. Those who paid the price of standing on their principles with utmost dedication, in the face of a brutal, fundamentalist regime. And through years of suffering and sacrifice, rose to the leadership of the opposition and qualified to lead the movement through the most difficult and tortuous junctures of its history.

Opposition leader Maryam Rajavi announced her plan on women's freedom in 1995, vowing to recognize women's equal rights in all political, judicial, legal, social, religious, cultural, economic and educational realms. She stressed on women's freedom of choice of clothing, and their equal rights in marriage and divorce.²

She has also launched an extensive international campaign, urging all democratic governments to compel the clerical regime to release all prisoners arrested during the uprising, particularly women who are imprisoned under torture and face the death sentence. At the same time, she called on them to help guarantee freedom of speech and assembly in Iran and abolish women's repression and the compulsory veil.

The Women's Committee of the National Council of Resistance of Iran urges all women's rights advocates and freedom lovers to support the courageous struggle of Iranian women and support its campaigns including those for the release of women political prisoners in Iran.



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Women's Committee of the National Council of Resistance of Iran

 www.women.ncr-iran.org
 @womenncri
 NCRI Women's Committee

¹ <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/11655/women-freedom-iran>

² Maryam Rajavi on women's rights in tomorrow's Iran – women.ncr-iran.org/ten-point-plan-for-women

WOMEN, THE DRIVING FORCE OF THE PROTESTS



The "women's year" – March 2017 – February 2018 -- kicked off with women teachers actively participating in demonstrations in more than 20 cities across Iran on Thursday, March 9, 2017. In April, women started their protests against fraudulent financial institutions that have plundered their investors and depositors' money or lands.

A wide range of women including political prisoners and activist mothers spoke out against the mullahs' sham presidential elections in May and did not vote for murderers of thousands of Iranian youths.

From May 26 to 30, women wore shrouds in Mashhad, blocked the road in Ahwaz, also staged protests and sit-ins in Aligoudarz, Borujerd, Delfan, Doroud, Noorabad, Azna, and in Khorramabad in the western province of Lorestan to protest being cheated and swindled by state-backed financial institutes. There were also protests in Tehran and Yasouj by doctors and medical student, nurses and hospital staff, teachers and educators, demanding payment of their past due wages among others.

Summer 2017 saw at least 58 acts of protest either staged by women or actively participated by them despite massive crackdown campaigns to curb women's tendency to somehow get rid of the mandatory veil in the heat of summer.

This was an average of almost 19 protests per month, which denoted a significant rise compared to the average 8.5 women's protests in 2016.

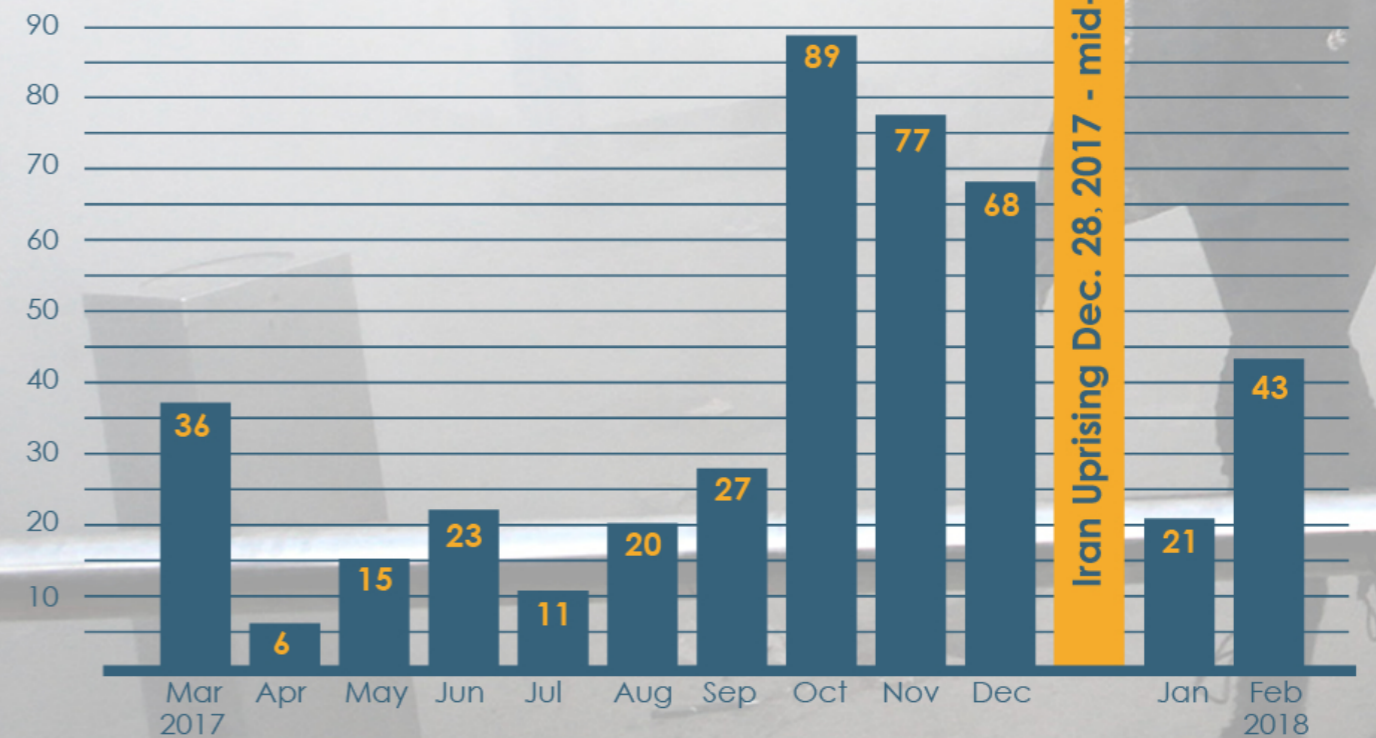
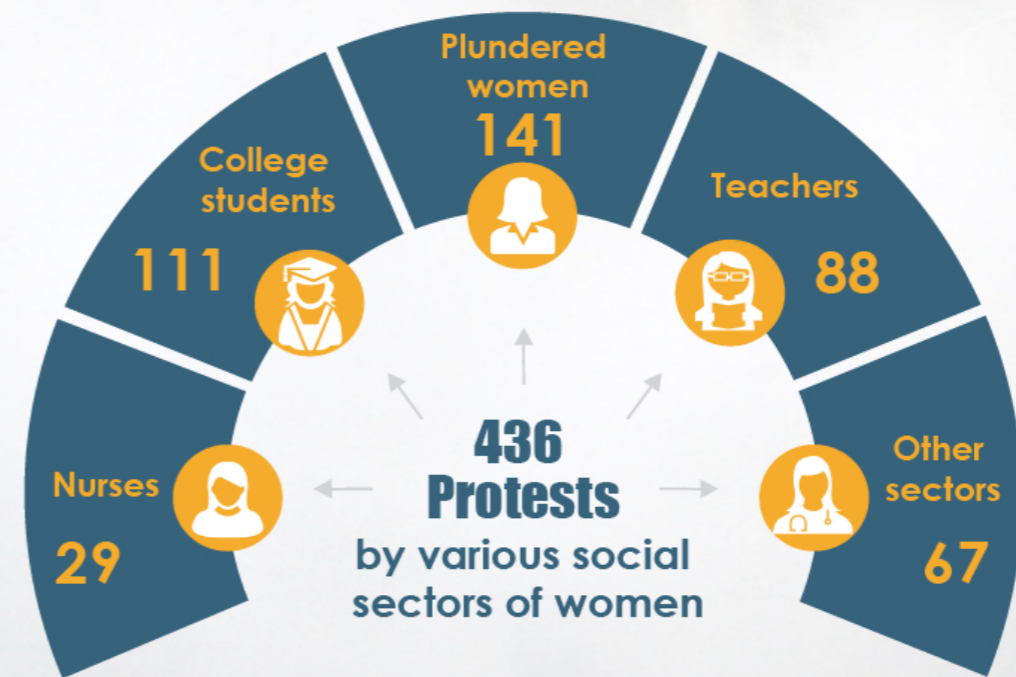
In Autumn, the social atmosphere was extremely volatile. Women actively participated at the forefront of at least 89 protests in this month. This showed more than a three-fold increase compared to the 27 protests in September and a ten-fold increase compared to the previous year.

On October 23, thousands of plundered people from cities across the country converged in Tehran and marched towards the mullahs' parliament where they demanded their money back. Women led this protest march and were conspicuously active.

At least 77 protests were registered by the NCRI Women's Committee in the month of November where women were actively and prominently present.

By December 28, women took part in at least 68 protests. Students, teachers, nurses and interns, retirees, plundered people, and other discontented social sectors staged the protests with more radical chants, targeting heads of the three branches of the government.

In one of the protests in Rasht, capital of Gilan Province in northern Iran, participants were mostly women who pelted eggs and rotten



tomatoes and sprayed paint at the building of the credit institution which had plundered them. Twenty-one protests took place in the second half of January following the nationwide uprising.

Plundered women, students, teachers and village women staged protests despite government crackdown that had led to 8,000 arrests including of hundreds of women. In February, at least 43 protests took place with women playing an active role in them. Teachers, students, plundered women and others took to the streets and staged protests to demand their rights.

December 28, over 10,000 discontented residents of Mashhad took to the streets of Iran's second largest city and protested skyrocketing prices. The protest rapidly spread to dozens of cities across the country in a few days and evolved into a nationwide uprising in 142 cities. Women were numerous, loud and active in these protests, confronting armed security forces empty handed, encouraging others to not fear and join the protests, and leading the chants of "death to the dictator." Eyewitnesses attested that women's courage was the driving force everywhere as did as senior

official of the Revolutionary Guards (IRGC). Rassoul Sanaii Rad, political deputy to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, told a Friday prayer gathering in Tehran, "80 per cent of those arrested were under 30 years and among them were a number of middle-aged women. In the 1980s, the leaders of the street protests by the Mojahedin Organization were mostly women. And today, too, the ringleaders inciting (the protests) were women. For example, four such women launched the riots in Ilam." (The state-run Jahan News website, January 27, 2018)

Of course, Iranian women paid a high price for their protests as the Iranian regime responded by massive clampdown and arrests.

Hundreds of women were arrested during the nationwide uprising.

Dozens of girl students were among those arrested. The arrests of Touran Mehraban, Leila Hosseinzadeh, Faezeh Abdipour, Yasamin Mahboubi, Soha Mortezaei, Negin Arameshi, Neda Ahmadi, and Sepideh Farhan were confirmed so far and reported by the NCRI Women's Committee.

At least 21 women were among those arrested in the early days of the uprising in Robat Karim, Parand, Arak and Saveh. Seven Kurdish women were arrested in Saqqez and another seven in Orumiyeh, Kermanshah and Ilam. Two women were arrested and detained in Mashhad. At least 400 women were among those arrested in the protests in the city of Izeh, in southwestern Khuzistan Province.

And the post-uprising arrests continue.

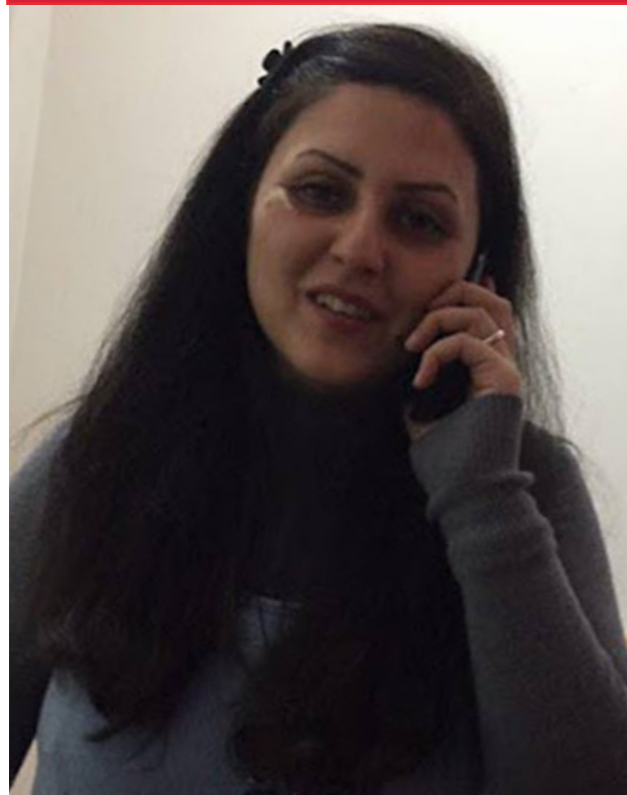
On January 15, 2018, the regime's security forces took hostage the mother of a student activist in Tabriz to compel him to report in. Several girl students of Tehran University have been arrested.

On January 20, 2018, the State Security Force in Robat Karim ran over a woman participating in the protest of people cheated by financial institutes.

A large number of women were arrested on February 19 and 20, in the extensive protest by Gonabadi dervishes. At least 70 of the arrested women were taken to the notorious Qarchak Prison.



WOMEN PAYING THE PRICE OF FREEDOM



“Maryam (Akbari) is not alone. She represents thousands of people who have lost members of their families. We should help resonate their voice echoing in the sky of this land for years. We should announce that we, too, seek justice for the bloody crimes of the 1980s.”

-- Golrokh Iraee

Women who dare to defy the dictated rule of the mullahs, defending human rights, campaigning against the death penalty and opposing the regime's repressive restrictions are arrested and detained for «acting against national security», «waging war on God», and «insulting the sanctities» and have to face harsh consequences.

At least 600 women activists, dissidents and opponents have been arrested and detained in Iran from January 2017 to February 2018, an estimated 500 during the uprising in January and afterwards.

This section will also take a glance at the present situation of women who have been detained earlier than January 2017.

Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee was arrested by the Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) on January 22, 2017, as she was leaving home and heading for the hospital where her imprisoned husband was supposed to be examined that day. The IRGC Sarallah Corps transferred her to Evin Prison.

A human rights defender and writer, Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee has been sentenced to six years in prison for writing a story about the cruel practice of stoning.

Security forces had stormed Ms. Iraee's residence on October 24, 2016, and taken her away to serve her six-year prison term. But she was released on January 3, 2017, after 72 days of hunger strike in jail by her husband, Arash Sadeghi.

The Prosecutor had promised Mr. Sadeghi that they would free his wife if he ended his hunger strike. But they reneged on the promise, and forcibly took Ms. Iraee back to prison on January 22.

Amnesty International has on several occasions urged the Iranian authorities to “immediately and unconditionally release” the couple.

Golrokh Iraee has remained one of the most outspoken prisoners throughout her detention. She boycotted the regime's sham presidential elections. She also spoke out against a guided tour of Evin Prison by ambassadors of 45 countries in July 2017.

She also welcomed the UN working group's acceptance of political prisoner Maryam Akbari's call for justice for her siblings executed in the 1988 massacre.

In her open letter, Ms. Iraee wrote, “Maryam is not alone. She represents thousands of people who have lost members of their families. Our failure to react and follow up these crimes will lead to more horrible crimes. We should help resonate their voice, echoing in the sky of this land for years. We should announce that we, too, seek justice for the bloody crimes of the 1980s.”



At least 600 women have been arrested and detained on political grounds

from January 2017 to February 2018

Finally, as the Iranian people's uprising was spreading across the country, Golrokh Iraee sent out a letter on January 9, 2018, calling on Iranian youths to endure and pay the price of freedom. It was in reaction to this call, that the regime took reprisal on her and her fellow inmate Atena Daemi.

They were summoned five times between January 16 to 24, 2018 but refused to appear in court or give in to illegal interrogations. Finally, on January 24, when they refused to be separated for interrogation, IRGC agents brutalized and transferred them unlawfully to the notorious Qarchak Prison in Varamin. Golrokh and Atena demanded to be returned to Evin. In protest to the regime's breach of the principle of separation of prisoners of different categories and their illegal exile to Qarchak, they went on hunger strike on February 3. Golrokh Iraee has been on hunger strike for 40 days as this pamphlet is going under print.

Rahleleh Rahemipour was arrested on September 10, 2017, at her residence in Tehran. She has been demanding the regime to account for her missing brother, Hossein Rahemipour, a dentist, and her niece, Golrou Rahemipour, born in prison in 1984, and separated from her mother when she was only 14 days old. Ms. Rahemipour has been sentenced to two years in jail for demanding justice.

○ **Mansoureh Behkish** was sentenced to 7.5 years in prison on February 1, 2018, for demanding justice for six of her siblings and in-law executed in the 1980s. She is one of the most well-known activists demanding justice for victims of the 1988 massacre in Iran.

○ **Maryam Kalangari**, 65, was taken to the Central Prison of Arak, in Markazi Province, on January 13, 2018. Agents broke into her residence and took her to jail by walker. She suffers from various illnesses, including heart and lung complications, arthritis and osteoporosis, and is not able to endure prison conditions. She had been previously sentenced to five months in jail on the charge of “disseminating propaganda against the state.” She and her family are survivors of victims of the massacre of political prisoners in 1988.

Women political prisoners and prisoners of conscience are resilient and defiant, defending their beliefs even in captivity under the harshest prison conditions. By doing so, they accept to endure further torture and solitary confinement, forsaking their medical treatment and visitation rights.

Atena Daemi, 29, has been one of the most resistant political prisoners over the past year. The children's rights activist is sentenced to seven years in prison.

Ms. Daemi was violently arrested at home at 8 a.m. on November 26, 2016, in an unwarranted raid by agents of the IRGC Sarallah Corps. She was brutalized, intimidated and taken to Evin Prison.

Her sisters were also beaten up at the time of the raid. On March 13, 2017, they were falsely accused of beating IRGC agents and the three Daemi sisters (Atena, Ensieh and Hanieh) were each sentenced to 91 days of imprisonment for "preventing implementation of the verdict" and "insulting public officers on duty."

In protest to the unfair prison sentences issued for her sisters, Atena Daemi started a hunger strike on April 8, 2017.

In an open letter, she vowed, "I will not allow security agencies to trample their own laws and manipulate our families as a tool to psychologically torture us and create an atmosphere of terror in society. I am prepared to die but will never become a slave of oppression."

During her hunger strike which lasted 54 days, Atena fought back several times despite poor health and numerous complications caused by hunger strike, including kidney infection.

The director of Evin's dispensary issued false reports, claiming that she did not have any medical problems. They did not allow her to be examined and hospitalized outside prison.

On May 31, the Revision Court revoked the prison sentences for Ensieh and Hanieh Daemi and Atena Daemi ended her hunger strike. Again, Evin Prison officials not only failed to provide adequate treatment and medical care for Ms. Daemi, but accused her of making false pretenses of illness.

The Daemi family had persistently pursued to obtain permission for Atena's treatment but every time, her transfer was stopped in the last minutes. As a result of such stonewalling, a simple renal and gallbladder problem diagnosed in April developed into a dangerous condition. Her gallbladder was full of stones and her kidneys were dangerously infected.

Finally, on September 25, 2017, the warden of Evin agreed with Atena's gallbladder surgery but ordered that she should wear her handcuffs



"We must consciously stand up to suppression. We must learn our lessons from Iran and the world's history, because history constantly repeats itself. No victory has been achieved easily. And no oppression has been everlasting."

-- Atena Daemi

and shackles all the time while in hospital. She did not agree and was returned to Evin Prison. On October 7, 2017, Ms. Daemi finally underwent cholecystectomy and hospitalized at a Tehran hospital without handcuffs and shackles.

Throughout this period, Ms. Daemi did not fail to speak out on important social issues.

On the fortieth day of her hunger strike, she announced that she will not participate in the sham presidential elections. Then in July 2017, she took a stand on the guided tour of Evin by foreign ambassadors. She also took a stand against the Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) when it was designated as terrorist by the US.

And finally, in January 2018, in the midst of the Iranian people's nationwide uprising, she wrote an open letter from prison and said, "Such crackdowns and murders, such detentions and incarcerations, such threats, intimidation and terror, are the price for freedom. .."

"We must consciously stand up to suppression. We must learn our lessons from Iran and the world's history, because history is constantly being repeated. No victory has been achieved easily. And no oppression has been everlasting."

It was in reaction to such bold pronouncements that Atena Daemi and Golrokh Iraee were summoned five times and finally violently beaten up on January 24, 2018, and transferred



500 women have been arrested during and after the January uprising



in the dark of the night to the notorious Qarchak Prison outside Tehran.

Even in Qarchak, Atena and Golrokh refused to wear the chador to visit their families.

They initially announced a ten-day deadline for prison officials to return them to Evin and observe the principle of separation of different prisoners' categories.

On February 3, 2018, she went on hunger strike for 12 days.

Other women arrested for their activism in defense of human rights or affiliation with religious minority groups are Ashraf Rahimkhani, Zeinab Keshvari, Fereshteh Arghavani, Mehrnaz Haghighi, Nastaran Na'imi, Fatemeh Soltani, Zahra Shafii Dahaghani, Melika Kavandi, Zahra Sadat Ebrahimi, Raha Davoudian, Fatemeh Teimouri, Masoumeh Teimouri, Noushin Khyyamdar, Nahid Rabbani, Ameneh Hekmat Maram, Akram Darvishi, Saeedeh Goodarzi, Mahtab Alipour, Nora Najafi, Massoumeh Sadeghi, Massoumeh Zia, Farzaneh Jalali, Safieh Gharebaghi, Shahnaz Akmal, Shima Babai, Leila Faraji, Mahsa Roj'ati, Mona Mo'afi, Zahra Khandan, Soha Mortezaei, Touran Mehraban, Leila Hosseinzadeh, Faezeh Abdipour, Yasamin Mahboubi, Negin Arameshi, Neda Ahmadi, Sepideh Farhan, Terfayeh Jelizi, Hassneh Jelizi, Hamideh Sarkhi Jelizi, Hamideh Jaab, Ma'edeh Shaabani Nejad, Kobra Khalandi, Soheila Zobeiri, Safa Hassanpour, Leila Khalilzadeh,

Hiva Zarepour, Hiva Dastbaz, Sarina Fat'hi, Laleh Mahmoudi, Ronak Aghaii, Sara Rostami, Fatemeh Almasi, Farideh Bahrami, Soheila Zandi, Nasrin Pershangdar, Sara Kamangar, Chenar Hosseini, Neshimal Sohrabi, Sara Rezaii, Nishman As'adi, Safi Sadeghi, Chini Akharkhoob, Haleh Gholami, Mahnaz Jan Nessar, Maral Rasti, Nassim Ghanavati, Leila Abdinejad, Sima Kian, Shamiram Essavi, Mojgan Siyami, Assal Ismaelzadeh, Zeinab Karimian, Parisa Rafii, Leili Nayeibzadeh, Maryam Delbari, Nafiseh Moradi, Avisha Jalaleddin, Shokoufeh Yadollahi, Nazila Nouri, Shima Entesari, Sima Entesari, Maryam Farisani, Massoumeh Barakouhi, Elham Ahmadi, and Zahra Rahimi.

Another 500 women have been arrested during and after the uprising, whose names were not possible to obtain.

Maryam Akbari Monfared, 42, with three daughters, has been detained since December 2009. Maryam Akbari has been deprived of access to legal counsel and was sentenced to 15 years in prison in a summary trial. She has served eight years of her sentence without any leave. Maryam Akbari suffers from various illnesses but prison authorities have denied her treatment. In a letter on February 17, 2017, to the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, Ms. Akbari asked the UN experts to hold the regime accountable for the execution of her brother, Abdulreza, and her sister, Roqieh Akbari Monfared, in summer 1988. In October 2016, when she went public with her demand for justice, the clerical regime's prosecutor threatened to extend her sentence for another three years, if she persists on demanding justice for victims of 1988 massacre. In November 2017, the UN Working Group accepted Ms. Akbari's complaint and recognized her siblings executed in 1988 as enforced disappeared people, urging Iranian officials to explain about their fates and places of burial.

○ **Afsaneh Bayazdi**, Kurdish student activist, was sentenced on September 8, 2016, to four years in prison and internal exile to Kerman for disseminating propaganda against the state. She was beaten up and sent into solitary confinement in the wake of writing a letter to the mullahs' leader Ali Khamenei, protesting insults, brutal torture and rape in prisons.

○ **Fatemeh Mosanna**, 47, was arrested by security forces in February 2013, for attempting to hold a funeral ceremony for her father-in-law, who was a member of the opposition PMOI.

○ Political prisoner **Maryam Olangi** has been detained in Evin Prison since July 24, 2016. Her husband, former political prisoner Mohsen Dokmechi, a renowned Bazaar merchant, lost his life on March 27, 2011, due to cancer and lack of treatment.

○ **Aliyeh Motallebzadeh**, a photographer and a women's rights activist, got arrested on November 26, 2016, upon return from Georgia. She was held in solitary confinement in Evin Prison and interrogated for 25 days.



○ **Zeinab Jalalian**, 35, has been imprisoned and tortured since March 2007 for having contacts with Kurdish parties. On December 3, 2008, she was sentenced to death, but her sentence was commuted to life in prison in November 2011. She has been tortured to make false TV confessions. She has been deprived since September 2017 of weekly family visits. The illnesses of Ms. Jalalian including canker sores in her mouth and pterygium, have deteriorated due to lack of medical care. Amnesty International issued an urgent action on August 25, 2017 for Ms. Jalalian, reiterating, "The denial of access to medical care in these circumstances amounts to torture."

○ **Zahra Zehtabchi**, a social researcher and mother of two girls, has been in prison since 2013 without enjoying any leave. She is sentenced to 10 years in prison for supporting the opposition PMOI. She has lost her father and other relatives in the executions of the 1980s.

○ **Tahereh Riyahi**, a journalist and a social editor, was arrested on December 27, 2016, for disseminating propaganda against the state. She has been detained incommunicado in solitary confinement since March 25, 2017. Tahereh Riyahi suffers from Asthma and her left eye cornea has been hurt during interrogations.

○ **Soheila Kargar**, a civil rights activist, was sentenced to five years in jail on March 31, 2017, for "disrupting public security" through membership in social network groups.

○ **Marjan Davari**, 50, a translator, was sentenced to death on March 12, 2017. She is charged with "corruption on the Earth" for translating books on mysticism and metaphysics. She was arrested at home in Karaj on September 24, 2015, and held in solitary confinement for more than three months without access to legal counsel. Her death sentence was revoked on January 6, 2018, but she continues to remain incarcerated in Qarchak.

WOMEN OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES AND ETHNIC GROUPS

Hiva Zarepour, Hiva Dastbaz, Sarina Fat'hi, Sarveh Moussazadeh, Ronak Ahmadi, and Laleh Mahmoudi, September 25, 2017, different cities; Ronak Aghaii, Mahabad; Chini Akharkhoob, September 26, 2017, Saqqez; Nishman As'adi, a reporter, January 25, 2018, Mahabad; Dayeh Shahrifeh, mother, February 2, 2018, Sanandaj.

○ A pregnant woman suffered a miscarriage after intelligence agents raided her residence in Sanandaj, capital of the Iranian Kurdistan, in search for her husband. According to a report published on November 6, 2017, Sara Farhadi was alone at home when agents of the Department of Intelligence violently broke into the house, carried out a thorough search and took away some equipment. The woman was transferred to hospital in a state of shock, nevertheless, she ended up having a miscarriage after two days.

■ Baha'is

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. In the time period under study, at least 47 Baha'i women have been arrested:

Haleh Gholami, January 27, 2017; Sholeh Ram, February 1, 2017, Zahedan; Sima Kiani, March 8, 2017, Shahr-e Ray, a Tehran suburb; Lisa Tebyanian, March 15, 2017, Karaj; Mahnaz Jan Nessar, Maral Rasti, Mehraleh Afshar and Nassim Ghanavatian, April 18, 2017, Bandar Abbas and Qeshm; Maryam Dehghan Yazdli, Mojdeh Zohouri (Fahandeh), Farah Tebyanian (Sanaii), June 13, 2017; Noushin Salekian and Farideh Abdi, June 14, 2017, Shahinshahr, Isfahan; Shiva Rouhani, Roufia Pakzadan, Parivash Shojaii, Mojdeh Zohouri, Farahnaz Tebyanian, Maryam Yazdali, Shiva Ghoddusi, Pooneh Sanaii, Parisa Shahidi, Nazi Tahghighi, Mitra Nouri, Hana Aghighiyan, and Soudabeh Mehdinejad, June 17, 2017, Gorgan; Dori Amri, May Kholosi and Saghi Fadaii, June 17, 2017, Mashhad; Shiva Akhlaghi, July 4, 2017, Shiraz; Neda Mokhtari, August 17, 2017, Mashhad; Helia Moshtagh, Nava Monjazeb Ghamsari and Negar Bagheri Taregh, October 4, 2017; Nazila Khanipour (Heravi), October 16, 2017, Rasht; Sheida Abedi, 26, October 21, 2017, Birjand; Negin Tadrissi and Sofia Mobini, October 26, 2017, Tehran; Hiwa Yazdan Mehdi Abadi, late November 2017, Yazd; Rouhieh Safajoo and Tara Houshmand, 21, September 26, 2017; Navideh Bakhshi, November 5, 2017, Rasht; Sima Kian, January

The Iranian regime is among the top violators of the rights of religious and ethnic minorities.

Kurds, Baluchis, Azeris, Lors and Arabs are viciously suppressed. Among religious groups, Baha'is and Christian converts from Islam are seriously discriminated against. Most recently, followers of Ahl-e Haq or Yaresan have been arrested in large numbers, brutalized and imprisoned.

This section lists the facts and figures from March 2017 to February 2018 concerning women of ethnic and religious minorities:

■ Kurds

Kurdish women activists are systematically imprisoned and tortured. At least 47 Kurdish women have been arrested in the period from March 2017 to February 2018:

Safi Sadeghi, March 2017, Orumiyeh; Chenar Hosseini, March 21, 2017, Sanandaj; Twenty-three environmental activists, March 18, 2017, Marivan; Farideh Bahrami, 23, June 11, 2017, Ravansar; Soheila Zandi and Nasrin Pershangdar, June 12, 2017, Sanandaj; Fatemeh Almasi, July 2017, Saqqez; Sara Kamangar, Sanandaj; Sara Rezaii, August 10, 2017, Qorveh; Sara Rostami, 28, August 21, 2017, Baneh; Kobra Khalandi, September 10, 2017, Mahabad; Soheila Zobeiri, 46, Safa Hassanpour, 18, December 13, 2017, Sardasht; Varya Delangiz, Leila Khalilzadeh,



Women of minority groups are systematically harassed, persecuted, and deprived of their right to education and occupation

27,2018, Shahr-e Ray; Minoo Riazati, Ehteram Shakhi, Farideh Jaber, and Pouneh Nasheri, February 13,2018, Boushehr.

Higher education

Paragraph 3 of the bill ratified by the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution in March 1991 and endorsed by the mullahs' supreme leader Ali Khamenei, reiterates, "Once it is confirmed that a student adheres to Baha'ism, whether at the time admission or during their studies, she/he must be deprived of education."

The Iranian regime has also banned the Baha'is from having their own independent or online university. After dismantling the university, the instructors have been condemned to long prison sentences.

Twenty-three Baha'i women were expelled from their universities over the past year:

Afrouz Zabihi, March 15,2017, third-year student of Civil Engineering, Tehran's Beheshti University; Niloufar Moussavi, March 19,2017, freshman student of English Translation, Payam-e Nour University in Qazvin; Paniz Johari, Pegah Johari, Taranom Haghighi, Parnia Misaghi, Zohreh Fazli, Sama Safari, Pegah Siroosian, and Ava Sadeghian from Karaj, Bahareh Rahmani and Ghazal Sedaghat from Isfahan, Roxana Karamzadeh from Shahinshahr, Mahna Moslemi, Kiana Zahedi and Hila Darabi from Sari, September 19,2017; Sahar Sanaii in Kermanshah and Darya Ghalili in Shahr-e Kurd, October 23,2017; Neda Eshraghi Boroujeni, January 20,2018, student of Computer Sciences, University of Kashan; Sara Shakib, student of Statistics, and Mona Eshraghi Boroujeni, Kashan

University; Paria Foroughi, December 2017, University of Kashan; Sadaf Vojdani, January 12,2018, student of architecture, Razi University of Kermanshah.

Christians

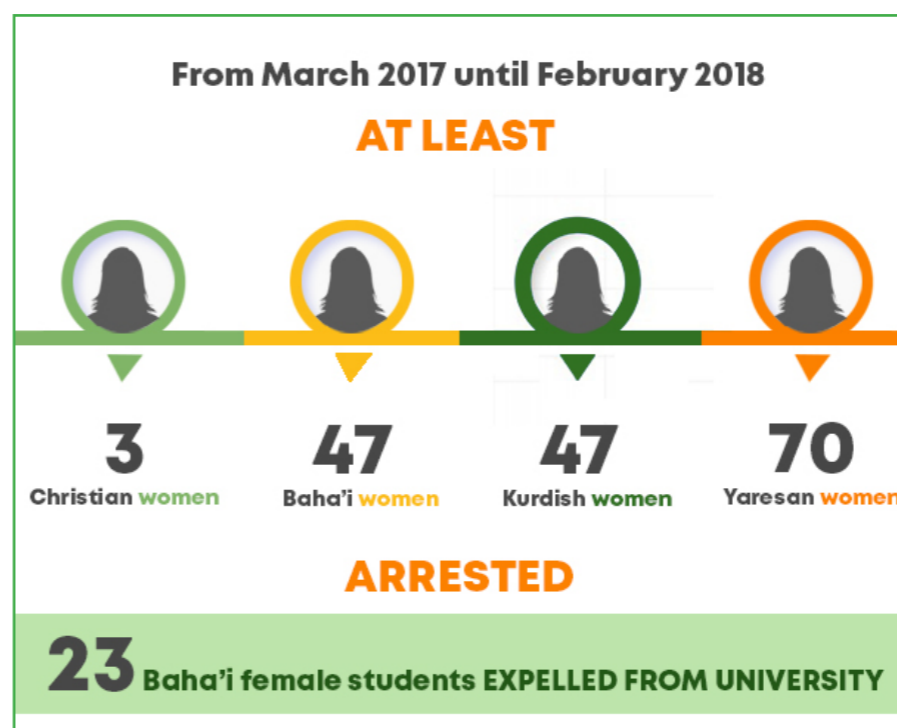
The Iranian regime continues to harass, interrogate and arrest Christians. It regulates Christian religious practices closely to enforce the prohibition on proselytizing. The regime denies building permits for places of worship and employment and restricts their religious materials.

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, mainly the Christian converts from Islam.

○ Anousheh (Veronica) Rezabakhsh and her son were arrested on February 20,2017, and taken to a detention center in Orumiyeh.

○ Sarah Nemat and her husband were summoned to the Intelligence Department on September 11,2017, where they were arrested. The couple are accused of performing Christian rituals at a funeral in Behesht-e Zahra.

○ Shamiram Essavi, an Assyrian (Christian), was sentenced on January 6,2018, to five years in prison on charges of espionage and acting against national security for launching home churches, participating in Christian seminars abroad, and educating Christian leaders.



Ms. Essavi's husband, pastor Victor Bet Temrz has been sentenced to 10 years in jail. Pastor Victor, his wife and son along with 12 other Christian converts were arrested during Christmas celebrations on December 26,2014.

Yaresan

○ Zahra Qalandari Nejad, a Gonabadi dervish, was verbally informed that she was dismissed from university and not allowed to continue her education.

○ Sepideh Moradi is another Gonabadi dervish who was studying for Master's degree in Computer Sciences at the Teachers' Training University in Tehran. Security organs ordered her to leave on February 2,2018.

○ Maryam Delbari was sentenced to 18 months in prison and two years of compulsory service in the seminary of Boushehr for having connection with Qaderi dervishes in Kurdistan.

○ Seventy of the women dervishes arrested during a protest in Tehran on February 19,2018, were transferred to Qarchak Prison for women in Varamin. More women were reportedly arrested in this protest but no information is available on their fate.

Leili Nayebeh Zadeh, Nafiseh Moradi, Avisha Jalalian, Shokoufeh Yadollahi, Nazilla Nouri, Shima Entessari, Sima Entessari, Maryam Farisani, Massoumeh Barakouhi, and Elham Ahmadi have been identified among those arrested and taken to Qarchak Prison.

WOMEN OPPRESSED UNDER THE VEIL

From March 2017 until February 2018, the Iranian regime launched numerous "veil and chastity" campaigns and most specifically during the Persian New Year holidays in March, during the fasting month of Ramadhan, and during summer, to enforce the detested "compulsory veil."

They also increased the number of "guidance" patrols monitoring women's observance of the veil on the streets.

The SSF Commander, Hossein Ashtari, revealed in September 2016 that, "Some 2000 women who wear improper clothing are arrested every day in Tehran and some other provinces." (The state-run Tasnim news agency, September 29, 2016)

This figure amounts to 730,000 arrests in a year, a minimized figure both due to lack of transparency on the part of the regime, and the increase in suppression of women in 2017 compared to 2016.

Throughout the year, Iranians disseminated video clips of women getting arrested in parks and streets for mal-veiling and dropping the veil. These video clips are moving in terms of bringing to life the horror Iranian women face every day on the streets. The images of lone women being violently dragged into SSF vehicles and vans, while screaming and struggling to break out of their hands, are devastating. And these scenes are repeated at least 2,000 times every day all across Iran.

The regime also rounded up at least 40 women last year who worked as models, since the modelling business was banned in October 2016. One of the Iranian regime's routine practices is raiding private parties in people's residences or in gardens in suburban areas. While such raids take place every night, only a few are reported in the press every month. According to the figures compiled by the NCRI Women's Committee over the past year, at least 570 women were arrested in such nightly raids on various parties.



730,000 women arrested for flouting the veiling requirement

570 women arrested in raids on private parties

40 models arrested

From March 2017 until February 2018
AT LEAST

WOMAN is not allowed to ride a bicycle to enter stadiums to choose her clothes to get visa to travel alone



Today, after almost four decades of excessive restrictions imposed on women, and despite deployment of at least 26 cultural, religious, military, disciplinary, legislative, judicial and executive agencies, the regime's failure to compel Iran's resilient women and girls to "properly" observe the veil has turned into a political scandal for the regime which it views as a national security threat.

There have been other outrageous measures taken to enforce the compulsory veil and government dress code.

Shiva Amini, a member of Iran's national futsal team, was deprived of playing futsal after she played in a friendly game abroad without covering her hair with the veil. A TV anchorwoman and 20 Iranian actresses were banned from performing and acting for disseminating photos in the social networks which showed them without the mandatory veil or Hijab.

In the company of several State Security forces, the principal and master of a girls' school in

Islam Abad Village of Orumiyeh, in northwestern Iran, went to the court yard and cut the hair of those girls whose hair stuck out of their scarves. In this way, they tried to force the girls to wear the headband under their scarves.

A ten-year-old Iranian gymnastics champion, Kiana Abdipour, was summoned to the Disciplinary Committee of Iran's Gymnastics Federation to be deprived of participating in tournaments for publishing photos online showing her practicing in tournaments in Armenia without observing the veil.

The mullahs' law prescribes imprisonment of 10 days to two months for any woman who appears in public without the veil plus a cash fine of 50 to 500 thousand toman. Women could also be punished to 74 lashes for "hurting public chastity" by appearing in public without the veil.

Recently the State Security Force announced that encouraging the public to shun the veil is punishable by one to ten years of imprisonment. The SSF announced, "Appearing in public without the religious veil (Hijab) is punishable by up to two months' imprisonment according to the waver of Article 638 of the Penal Code. This could be transformed to alternative forms of punishment and avoid imprisonment."

"However, encouraging people to shun the veil applies to paragraph 2 of Article 638 and is punishable by one to -10year prison sentence which cannot be transformed to alternative forms of punishment."

The threats failed to make women back down in their struggle to push back the official policy of compulsory Hijab.

[The Women's Committee of the National Council of Resistance of Iran condemns the arrest, detention and imprisonment of women for exercising their right to choose their own clothing and has called campaigns to free the women arrested for removing their veils.](#)

The following statements by regime's officials on the need for compulsory veiling reveal its impact on the regime.

○ In a meeting on April 25 on the enforcement of the mandatory veil for women, Tehran's Prosecutor Jaafari Dolatabadi said, "Chastity and veil are our official policy." (The state-run Aftab News website, April 25,2017)

○ On May 30,2017, commander of the Traffic Police, Taghi Mehri said, "It is true that one's car is one's personal limits, but it is not like one's home. Those who drop their veils or eat and drink during the month of Ramadan, are going to be arrested by the Traffic Police and instantly turned in to the Judiciary."

○ The commander of the State Security Force in Boroujerd, Alireza Daliri, said, "One of the most important tasks inherent to the Moral Security Police is confronting and warning women who are improperly veiled or not veiled at all," he said. (The state-run Tnews website, June 8,2017) Boroujerd is one of the major cities of Lorestan Province, western Iran.

○ Gorgan's Public and Revolutionary Prosecutor, Mostafa Haghi, said, "Some female drivers and passengers think that inside their

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.

-- The State Security Force, February 23, 2018



In coastal cities such as Farahabad in the north (top) and Boushehr in the south, the "Moral Security Police" were permitted to enter beach areas to control and enforce women's observance of the veil. In Boushehr (bottom), the State Security Force fenced up the beach and set up billboards, prohibiting women's presence.



cars is like their home and is considered private and they take off their scarves, but according to the law this is a transgression and they will be dealt with without any mercy. The cars where women drop their scarves will be identified and impounded in coordination with the State Security Force." (The official IRNA news agency, June 19,2017)

○ Movahhedi Kermani, Tehran's Friday Prayer leader, dedicated one of his Friday sermons to prove that it is religiously unlawful to drop one's veil while travelling by car and women who do so must be punished. "Inside one's car is not a private space; it is a public space and if an improperly veiled or -God forbid an unveiled woman— was inside, it would hurt the public atmosphere. Therefore, the State Security Force must deal with these people, decisively." Kermani went on to conclude that womens covering up in veil is tied to the regime's political and security interests. "The issue of Hijab is a very crucial issue tied to our religion, politics and independence. When the world sees that the veil (Hijab) is observed in Iran, they conclude that they cannot harm this people and country... But, if God Forbid, they see that people go around without the Hijab, or if there is a situation in a car similar to dropping the veil, the conclusion would be different." (The state-run ISNA news agency, July 14,2017)

○ Despite all this, one of the clerical regime's high ranking religious scholars admitted that the mullahs have failed to impose the compulsory veil on Iranian women. In a meeting with the SSF Commander, Hossein Ashtari, on October 8,2017, Mullah Jafar Sobhani said, "Despite all the various emphases in recent years, we have not been able to achieve our goals regarding mal-veiling." (The state-run Fars news agency, October 8,2017)

Iranian women have been bravely defying the compulsory veil for decades beginning in the 1990s. From top to bottom, high school girls drop their scarves under a billboard that says, "Hijab is not a restriction; it's security." Inside a State Security Force van, women have been arrested for flouting the official dress code. Dropping the veil behind the wheels and in the car became a common practice by summer 2017, provoking tough reactions by top officials and scholars. Picture published by state-run ROKNA news agency on July 14, 2017, showing a woman walking around the town in Boushehr with just a T-shirt and tight knee-high leggings.

GENDER GAP AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

The World Economic Forum (WEF) issued its 2017 report on November 2, 2017. The Global Gender Gap Report benchmarks 144 countries on their progress towards gender parity. According to the WEF, Iran slipped one place, ranking 140th among 144 countries, only before Chad, Syria, Pakistan and Yemen. Iran's global index score is 0.583. It scores 0.357 in economic participation and opportunity, and a nearly zero index of 0.046 in political empowerment, showing how far women are discriminated against in Iran.

On March 2017, 19, Ali Khamenei, the mullahs' supreme leader, declared, "Those who want to defend women's rights play the trumpet from the wrong end... Those who had brought up and pursued the issue of gender equality, now regret it because they face so much misery and corruption because of this." He further labeled the equality movement as "a Zionist conspiracy." (The official website of Ali Khamenei, March 19, 2017)

Abolfazl Torabi, member of the mullahs' parliament from Najafabad, reacted to the employment of women, "As long as there are educated men who are unemployed, what is the need for women to have jobs. When we have young educated men who are unemployed, priority in employment is theirs so that they can have families. But women are working in their stead." (The state-run Khabar Online website, January 30, 2018)

In a bid to attract votes of women during the election campaigns, presidential hopeful Es'hagh Jahangiri admitted in a televised debate on May 2, 2017, that "women's rights and respects are not honored," and that 49 per cent of the population have been "marginalized."

Massoumeh Ebtekar, Rouhani's deputy in Women and Family Affairs, affirmed that "women almost disappear in senior management positions." (The state-run ISNA news agency, October 31, 2017)

Political participation

137 women had registered for the 12th presidential elections sham in Iran all of whom were disqualified.

The spokesman for the Council of Guardians, Abbas Ali Kad-Khodaii, declared on April 4, 2017, that the Council of Guardians would act according to its previous procedures. He said, "In light of the criteria set by the Principle 115, the Council of Guardians will continue to preserve its previous procedure."

The Minister of Interior Abdulreza Rahmani Fazli said, "The interpretation of the law so far indicates that the term (political statesmen) does not include women." (The state-run Daneshju website, April 11, 2017)

No woman was appointed as Cabinet minister. Nor were there any women among the new governors appointed by Hassan Rouhani, the mullahs' president.

Members of the Iranian parliament, Majlis, elected on May 31, a new board of directors. The vote did not bring about much change in the make-up of the board except exclusion of the only woman and the single Sunni deputy on this board, Farideh Oladghobad and Mohammad Ghasim Othmani, respectively. (The state-run ISNA news agency, May 31, 2017)

Mohammad Haghani, head of Tehran City Council's environmental committee, said, "Women's share of high-level responsibilities in the Municipality of Tehran, is zero percent... The presence of one woman among senior managers of Tehran Municipality is just a theatrical measure." (The state-run Entekhab news website, May 5, 2017)

A parliamentary report on the City Councils' elections, accounting only for the main cities, claimed 12 per cent participation of women in the city councils, only 1 per cent drop in women's participation.

Another state-run news outlet announced a 36.4 per cent drop in women's participation in city councils, setting the number of women at 42. (The state-run Iran newspaper, May 29, 2017)

The study by the NCRI Women's Committee of the election outcome in 500 cities across the country, however, found that only 64 women were elected as members of City Councils compared to 3724 male members. That amounts to a meager 1.7 per cent participation for women in the City Councils.

Legislative discrimination

Leila Arshad, a women's rights activist and the executive director of a social aid house called Khaneh Khorshid (the House of Sun) reiterated that the issues relating to women and children are presently being ignored. She pointed out, "Presently, we have bills which have been pending for ten years in the parliament without being examined... The bills on support for children and elimination of violence against women have been pending on the agenda of the parliament for years." (The state-run ISNA news agency, December 25, 2017)

The legal deputy to the Judiciary, Zabihollah Khoda'ian, expressed his opposition to the adoption of the VAW bill by saying, "The bill on combatting violence against women (in Iran) has been drafted from a merely sexual perspective." Making the comment on August 24, 2017, he justified his view by stating that 70 out of 100 articles of the bill are "criminalizing", "setting prison sentences for even the slightest tensions between couples."

A bill proposing raising age of marriage for Iran's girl children from 13 to 16 met opposition of men in the mullahs' parliament, Majlis. Tayyebeh Siavoshi, a Majlis deputy, tweeted on February 3, 2018, that deliberations on the bill had stopped due to the opposition of men.

Parvaneh Salahshouri, who heads the so-called women's faction in the mullahs' Parliament, told a gathering in Shiraz on December 11, 2017, "Presently, there are some 2000 widows between 9 and 12 years of age. It has been more than a year that we have proposed in the Parliament to raise the legal age for marriage. However, more opposition has been coming from some women in positions of responsibility." (The state-run IRNA news agency, December 11, 2017)

Tayyebeh Siavoshi, a member of the mullahs' parliament, announced that the plan to correct the passport law and women's permission to depart the country without their husbands' permission was not placed on the agenda. (The state-run website of Khaneh Mellat, January 28, 2018) Siavoshi also announced that the bill on children's rights which could to a large extent prevent sexual abuse of children has been waiting in line for 11 years to be placed on the agenda. (The state-run Salamnews.com, January 28, 2018)



The Global Gender Gap 2017 report ranks Iran 140th among 144 countries.

137 women who had registered to run in the presidential election, were all disqualified.

Women's participation in City Councils amounts to 1.7 per cent.

"49 per cent of the population have been marginalized."

--Es'hagh Jahangiri

"Women almost disappear in senior management positions."

-- Massoumeh Ebtekar

■ Economic participation

Women are the first victims of Iran's bankrupt economy in light of the flagrant discrimination against women institutionalized in the law and numerous restrictions imposed on their employment and education.

○ During his election campaign, Hassan Rouhani, the regime's president, gave new statistics on the exclusion of women from the job cycle in Iran. "About 670,000 women lost their jobs from 2004 to 2014," he said and added, "The issue of women as an important sector of society has been neglected in the past." (The state-run Young Reporters Club, May 4, 2017)

○ Khamenei's representative rejected women's involvement in the economy and called for their marginalization. In remarks made in Mashhad, mullah Ahmad Alam-ol Hoda said, "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." (The state-run Alef website, July 12, 2017)

○ 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.

○ According to a survey by the National Statistics Center on the Iranian work force for the Iranian year 1395 (March 21, 2016 – March 20, 2017), from 20,654,750 people who hold jobs in Iran, only 16.2 per cent are women and 83.8 per cent are men.

Publishing the survey on December 3, 2017, the official IRNA news agency wrote the figure indicates that Iran's job market is male-dominated and job opportunities are planned for men.

This is while 48.1 per cent of women with employment have higher education compared to 26.1 per cent of employed men. The survey said the number of women applying for higher education in Iran is twice the men but they are not absorbed by the job market. According to the same survey, 1.5 million of the 7 million people employed by the unofficial job market, are women.

○ Despite the large number of educated women in Iran, unemployment index for educated women is twice as much as men's.

○ According to the latest figures compiled by the National Statistics Center of Iran, the rate of unemployment among young women between 20 and 30 years of age is double that of men in the same age range. (The state-run Asr-e Iran website, December 20, 2017)

○ "In some provinces, unemployed educated women are three times more numerous than men," said Massoumeh Ebtekar, Rouhani's deputy in women and family affairs. (The state-run Ghanoun website citing IRNA, October 30, 2017)

○ 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 per cent compared to women's 17.3 per cent share, indicating a fivefold access for men to wage-earning opportunities compared to women. (The state-run Mehr news agency, January 23, 2018)

○ Hassan Ta'ii, job market advisor to the Minister of Labor, said in September 2017, that working women receive 77 per cent of men's wage for equal work, and as such they lag 10 years behind their male colleagues.

○ Leila Falahati, from the presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs, set women's economic participation rate at an optimistic 17 per cent in Iran. This leaves Iran way behind other economic powers in the Middle East region. (The state-run ISNA news agency, January 13, 2018)
This is while the latest estimates according to official figures stood at 11.8 per cent.

Judiciary lifts ban on dismissal of nursing mothers

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. (The state-run Tasnim news agency, September 15, 2017)
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, 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."



Iran's job market is male-dominated and job opportunities are planned for men.

■ Gender segregation

Women's employment in Iran is contingent on gender segregation at the work place. If women's place of work is not separate from men, companies and workshops are not allowed to employ women. Also, many of the public places including classes, university entrances, parks, city buses, trains and etc. have already been segregated.

○ At an open session of the mullahs' parliament on January 14, 2018, Nasrollah Pejman, a cleric and deputy from Mashhad, objected to "the presence of male staff in giving services" to female patients in hospitals. (The state-run Fars news agency, January 14, 2018)

○ Officials of Zahedan's Azad University, in southeastern Iran, segregated the university's entrance for the young women and men studying there.

○ The Union of Photographers and Cameramen also announced that "wedding photographers necessarily have to be women." Manouchehr Bastani reiterated, "Even to show her sample work, the photographers must show them only to the bride and to ladies." (The state-run ISNA news agency, July 7, 2017)

The unemployment rate among young women doubles that of men.

Only 16.2 per cent of the 21 million-strong workforce are women.

Men's share of wage-earning jobs was 82.7 per cent compared to women's 17.3 per cent share.

Working women receive 77 per cent of men's wage for equal work.

Many college educated women resort to jobs with salaries as low as one-third of the minimum wage.

Women's economic participation stands at 11.8 per cent.

WOMEN TOP THE LIST OF UNEDUCATED

Discrimination in Education

5.5 million illiterate women
1.7 million absolutely illiterate
63 per cent of the illiterate population are women
1.9 million girls do not go to school

○ The National Center of Statistics in Iran announced that 5,569,044 of the illiterate population in the country are women. According to this center, there are 117,867 girl children between 6 and 9 years of age who are illiterate. The number of illiterate girls between 10 and 14 years of age is 37,915. The number of young women between 15 and 19 years who are illiterate was also announced to be 58,163. (The state-run Farhangian News website, August 3, 2017)

○ There are 1,682,000 women in Iran between 10 and 49 years of age who are absolutely illiterate, announced Ali Bagherzadeh, head of the Literacy Movement Organization. He added, "4.2 per cent of the women's population in 49-10 age group who live in cities and 13 per cent of those who live in villages are absolutely illiterate." Bagherzadeh further said, "63 per cent of the illiterate population are women. 44 per cent of them live in villages and 54 per cent live in cities. At the same time, there are 190,000 illiterates between 10 and 19 years of age." (The official Iranian IRNA news agency, December 25, 2017)

○ There are at least 1.9 million girls who do not go to school.

○ Iran ranks 120th in the world with a total 9.5 million illiterates.

There is a significant gap between girl and boy students... Women have always faced injustice.

--Mohammad Bat'haii, Minister of Education

A shocking 40 to 50 per cent of high-school-level girls remain out of school.

--Rezvan Hakimzadeh, Education official

○ "There is a significant difference and gap between girl and boy students" in Iranian schools.

Admitting that "women have always faced injustice" in Iran, Minister of Education Mohammad Bat'haii added, "In some mixed-gender schools or girls' schools with male teachers, school girls are deprived of physical education. In deprived regions, girls play in a corner during the physical education hour." He also revealed that "girls do not have access to secondary educational centers" and considered it another sign of "unequal treatment of girls." 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, Bat'haii said. (The state-run ISNA news agency, September 17, 2017)

○ Rezvan Hakimzadeh, the Education Ministry's deputy for elementary schools, said, "In many border provinces, high schools cover only 50 per cent of girls in high school level. This means that between 40 to 50 per cent of girl students remain out of school." "This is shocking," Hakimzadeh said, adding, "Possibly, the reason for some of them quitting school is early marriage." (The state-run ILNA news agency, September 9, 2017)

○ Khuzistan's Provincial Governor, Gholamreza Shariati, told a gathering on February 6, 2017, "We still have children in Khuzistan who are deprived of education. The largest number of those deprived of education are women." (The state-run Mehr news agency, February 6, 2017)

○ Ahwaz deputy in the mullahs' Parliament, Javad Kazen Nasab al-Baji, also admitted that in some deprived regions and villages in southern Khuzistan Province, girls' education is restricted to the elementary level. (The state-run Mehr news agency, December 16, 2017)

○ In 2016, Khuzistan officials had stated that "In some parts of Ahwaz, one out of every four girls can earn a high school diploma" and that "the number of girls deprived of education doubles the number of deprived boys." (The state-run Mehr news agency, September 17, 2016)



Unacceptable educational space and classroom safety

○ Girl children of Qeshm study in tents because the classrooms are very old and badly worn out. (The state-run IRNA news agency, February 1, 2017)

Comprised of 59 villages and towns, Qeshm is an island in the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf, 2.5 times the size of Bahrain.

○ Girl students in Karaj, west of Tehran, face dysfunctional heating systems, shortage of educational space, and weak building structures in their schools. Limited educational space has practically brought about a situation where 60 per cent of the schools in this area work in two shifts. Karaj is situated 20 kilometers west of Tehran, at the foothills of Alborz Mountains. It is the fourth largest city in Iran.

○ The ceiling of a classroom in Sirik Village collapsed on April 13, 2017. A girl student was injured in the eye and taken to hospital. Sirik village is located in Hormuzgan Province in southern Iran. (opposite photo) School buildings in villages and districts of this province are not safe and cause a lot of damage to students every year. (The state-run ISNA news agency, April 15, 2017)

○ Fire at a girls' school in the city of Meshginshahr, northwest Iran, led to the complete destruction of the roof. The school was shut down and 300 students remained out of school on the eve of the new academic year. (The state-run Mehr news agency, September 8, 2017)

UNESCO's Education 2030 document revoked

The UN 2030 document on education was officially rescinded on June 23, 2017, in a meeting of the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution, presided by the mullahs' president, Hassan Rouhani.

On July 9, 2017, Rouhani's cabinet also officially voted to annul the Education 2030 document and dismantle the working group formed for its implementation.

The document signed by Vice President Is'haq Jahangiri was published by the state-run media. (The state-run Iranian News Network (IRINN), July 12, 2017)

The Iranian regime had signed the UNESCO's document 2030 with reservations. Khamenei's representative in Mashhad, Mullah Ahmad Alamol-Hoda, said the document contradicted the regime's values. (The state-run Fars news agency, June 2, 2017)

On June 21, 2017, the mullahs' supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, criticized implementation of the UNESCO's 2030 document which he described as "very dangerous" and "colonialist." He said, "It is a very important and dangerous issue that under the banner of various United Nations centers, including UNESCO, some people are creating an intellectual, scientific, cultural and practical system for all nations to follow."

"The 2030 document is part of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals by which the world's domineering powers want to control all nations in a deficient and erroneous move," (The state-run Gilan Fars news website, June 22, 2017)



Nomad girl Susan Rashidi, kick boxing champion, sometimes pays her food money to get to the club for training



CLIMBING A MOUNTAIN OF OBSTACLES

Women's sports in Iran

Despite numerous obstacles created by Iran's ruling regime to exclude women, they are actively involved in the sports arena. Iranian women are not only talented but really motivated and hard working to show their competence at every opportunity at home or abroad, despite lack of any form of government support. Women also face numerous restrictions and punishments due to the Iranian regime's discrimination against women. This section will review the various types of obstacles for female athletes.

Lack of funds

- The girls' basketball team was removed from the Asian U16 games because of the Iranian federation's 325\$K debt to FIBA. The team was to take part in the official event for the first time after 37 years. (The state-run ISNA news agency, October 21,2017)
- The tournaments of the women's futsal teams were held on December 3, while the two teams of Esteghlal of Sari and Municipality of Rasht were not able to face their rivals due to financial problems. (The state-run ISNA news agency, December 4,2017)
- Tehran women's Naft futsal team was suspended on December 12,2017, following

a letter by the General Director of Youths and Sports of Tehran Province, informing them that the team's sponsor is not going to support them any longer. (The state-run ISNA news agency, December 12,2017)

Champions abandoned

- Hajar Taktaz, shot put record holder among blind women and the fifth Paralympics champion, has to earn her living by selling handmade pickles. Since 1998, she has been a shot put record holder. She won two Asian vice championships in the Para-Asian tournaments in 2005, and then won the fifth rank in the Paralympics. She has to pay all her training costs in addition to her medical treatment expenses. (The state-run Asr-e Iran website, December 23,2017)
- Atousa Abbasi, a bronze medal winner in the Asian Bicycling Race and a record holder in women's speed cycling in Iran, had to peddle in the streets due to financial problems. (The state-run Mashreq website, October 18,2017)
- Sousan Rashidi, champion of women's kick boxing for eleven terms, is a nomad girl living in Kermanshah but has not received any prize for these wins. (The state-run Fararu website, October 18,2017) She starts work early in the morning, baking bread, shepherding, bringing logs, etc. Ms. Rashidi said, "Some days, I did not have my transportation fare to go for training. Sometimes, if I were given some money to buy an egg to eat, I saved the money to pay for my transportation."
- Mahshid Ashtari, member of Iran's national Ping Pong team, was told by the Education Department to concentrate on her studies instead of doing sports. Instead of rewarding her for winning medals, they told her to quit sports and study instead of engaging in sports. (The state-run ISNA news agency, January 21,2018)



Mahshid Ashtari

Violation of FIFA universal rules

The Iranian Football Federation briefed the teams participating in the Women's Football League that players would be shown the yellow card if they do not properly cover all their hair during the games. If repeated, they would be shown the red card and sent off the field.

No place for training

- The women's cycling team had to travel to Malaysia from a long time ahead of the tournament, because Iranian women do not have any cycling tracks for practice. Fatemeh Hodavand, member of women's cycling team said, "The bikes provided by the Federation are too big for women and we have to pay for our bikes without having any financial support." (The state-run Mehr news agency, February 3,2018)
- Young women, members of the national Track and Field team, had to practice on their own to prepare for Indoor Asian championships. Haniyeh Samari, member of the Track and Field team, told news agencies, "Everyone was told to practice in her home province. They promised to give each player 40,000 toumans a day for one week (a total of 280,000 toumans) to provide for their food expenses, but we have not received it, yet and it is not clear if they would make the payment at all." (The state-run ISNA news agency, January 23,2018)
- The Vice-President of Women's Basketball, Fatemeh Karamzadeh, said the absence of a basketball court for women is a real predicament for women's basketball. "In a country that so much underlines gender segregation in sports, women do not have even one court to play their games," Karamzadeh admitted. (The state-run ISNA news agency, November 1,2017)

○ Some of the teams participating in the Football League had not been allocated a field where they could play. The fields where the games took place were peppered with holes and ditches making it impossible for the players to dribble. It was also reported that the restrooms and locker facilities were not adequate for the teams to get ready for the game. (Iranwire news agency, November 3,2017)

Women bicyclists attacked

○ Matin Mo'azezi, Iran's speed skating champion, was attacked by an unknown motorcyclist who rode next to her and kicked her off her bike. The news on this attack was published on January 20, 2018.

○ On January 8, 2018, a young woman bicyclist was attacked in the city of Qom and hurt in the face and the head. According to eyewitnesses, her bike was deliberately hit in the back by an unknown motorcyclist. As a result, she lost her balance and was thrown off to the ground.

○ Two young women were arrested in Dezful, Khuzistan, for riding a motorbike and posting their pictures on the internet. (The state-run Aftab website, October 2017 ,24)



Matin Mo'azezi



Women banned from cycling

Ali Khamenei, the mullahs' supreme leader: "Women's bicycling in public areas and in places that could be seen by strange men is not allowed." (The state-run ILNA news agency, November 26, 2017)

Removed from team for removing the veil

○ Dorsa Derakhshani, member of the Iranian Women's National Chess Team and the sixth world champion in under18- games, got expelled from the national team for not covering her hair in the Tradewise Gibraltar Chess Festival. (The state-run Fars news agency, February 18, 2017)

○ A famous league player in Iran, Shiva Amini, 28, was set aside from the national team for removing her veil while on vacation in Switzerland. She had posted pictures of herself in the social networks showing her playing football without covering her hair. (The state-run ROKNA news agency, December 12, 2017)

○ An Iranian gymnastics champion, Kiana Abdipour, 10, was summoned to the Disciplinary Committee of Iran's Gymnastics Federation to be deprived of participating in tournaments for publishing photos online showing her practicing in Armenia without observing the veil. (The state-run ISNA news agency, December 25, 2017)



Shiva Amini



Dorsa Rakhshani

Kiana Abdipour

Religious scholars underline prohibition of women's entry to sports stadiums

Mullah Makarem Shirazi: "The issue was tabled by the previous government but the Supreme Leader and other religious authorities opposed it... It is a deviation to bring up this issue, again." (The state-run ISNA news agency, November 29, 2017)

Mullah Nouri Hamedani: "It is not permissible for men and women to be present in the same sports event because women cannot properly hold their veil." (The state-run Razavi news agency, November 29, 2017)

At least 35 women got arrested for trying to enter Azadi stadium, where Gianni Infantino, FIFA president, was attending the derby between Esteghlal and Persepolis in Tehran. Zohreh Haratian, FIFA representative in Iran and head of IFMARC (Iran Football Medical assessment and Rehabilitation Center) was not invited to the ceremonies.

Husbands prevent 8 national team members from travelling abroad

○ Eight Iranian women, national team members, were forbidden by their husbands from leaving the country to participate in international tournaments. The women banned from leaving the country due to their husband's disagreement included Niloofar Ardalan, captain of women's national futsal team, and Zahra Nemati, member of the shooting national team and the standard bearer of Iranian athletes in the Olympic games.

○ The regime's law obliges women to obtain written permission from their fathers, and if married, their husbands, in order to be able to obtain their visa and passport to travel abroad.

○ The bill proposing reform in the law granting men the right to prevent their wives from travelling abroad, faces numerous obstacles in the parliament. Tayyebeh Siavoshi, member of the mullahs' parliament, said, "In addition to the opposition of some MPs, there have been opposition from other executive bodies including the passport department of the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Intelligence, and the Passport Department of the State Security Force." (The state-run Magiran.com, October 8, 2017)



Women defy stadium-entry ban

○ Sunday, February 12, 2017, eight young women who attempted to enter Tehran's Azadi Stadium to watch the game between Persepolis and Esteghlal football teams, were arrested during inspections before passing the entrance gate. (The state-run ISNA news agency, February 14, 2017)

○ A young woman dressed in boys' outfit got arrested by security forces in Tehran's Azadi Stadium during a football match between Esteghlal and Al-Ein teams. (The state-run Parsineh website, May 23, 2017)

○ The State Security forces expelled three young women who were attempting to enter Azadi Stadium to watch the football match between the two most prominent Iranian football teams. The incident took place on October 26, 2017. The female fans had donned men's clothes in a bid to enter the stadium. (The state-run Rokna.ir, October 26, 2017)

○ Fatemeh Paghaleh Nejad entered Tehran's Azadi Stadium on Friday, January 26, 2018, to watch the game played by Esteghlal football team.

○ Two young women, Shabnam and Zeinab, managed to enter Qadir Football Stadium in Ahwaz, capital of the southwestern Iranian province of Khuzistan, and watch their favorite football team to the end. One of the girls wore men's clothes and the other painted beard on her face. In a selfie footage showing her at the stadium, Zeinab says, "All the boys recognized that I was a girl but no one did anything. I hope the day comes when we are all free." (The state-run ILNA news agency, December 25, 2017)



World's Top Executioner of women

At least
82 women
have been executed
in Iran under Hassan Rouhani

11 women
have been executed
since January 2017



The 82nd woman:

Mahboubeh Mofidi, 25, executed in Noshahr on January 30, 2018. She was 17 at the time of crime.

Stoning

A stoning sentence was issued in Lorestan on February 3, 2017, for a man and a woman identified as S.M.

Blinding

A blinding sentence was issued for a woman in Kohgiluyeh, on February 3, 2017.

STATE-BACKED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

At least 82 women have been executed in Iran under Hassan Rouhani. Eleven women have been executed since January 2017.

Flogging, blinding and stoning sentences were also issued and carried out over the past year. Following are some examples:

○ A sentence of 80 lashes was carried out on September 19, 2017, for Leila Bayat. She had sought refuge in Norway but was deported back to Iran in March 2017. She was lashed for drinking alcoholic beverages at a party in 2007.

○ Civil rights activists Nahid Babazadeh, Baharak Azarnia, Zahra Shafii and Melika Kavandi were sentenced to 91 days in prison and 30 lashes each on May 23, 2017 for gathering and demanding freedom of a prisoner of conscience.

○ A student activist, Zamaneh Zivi, was sentenced to 50 lashes of the whip and 800,000 toman (\$US 225) as cash fine for participating in rallies in support of the referendum on the independence of the Kurdistan of Iraq.

○ 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. (The state-run Kashan website, February 3, 2017)

○ 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. (The state-run Tasnim news agency, February 3, 2017)

○ Nahid, 32, was sentenced to 15 years in prison and 99 lashes for illicit relations with a man who drugged, raped, filmed and blackmailed her in 2011. (The state-run Rokna.ir, February 18, 2017)

WOMEN FACE NUMEROUS RESTRICTIONS IN MUSIC

Must be married, sit behind men to play

○ The University of Kashan issued a directive on November 9, 2017, announcing a number of restrictions for the young women who wish to play music in the school's monthly events: Female students who wish to play music along with men could do so if they are married, if they observe a suitable Hijab (i.e. they should not wear tight clothes, short clothes and short sleeves, should use headbands, the color of their clothes must be suitable and not bright) and if they do not do any extra movements other than what is needed to play their instrument. As for the stage, they must sit in the margins, or behind other members of the group.

Deprived of going on stage

○ Women players of the National Orchestra of Isfahan were not allowed to go on stage in their concerts on January 12 and 13, 2018.

A member of the orchestra told the media, "Women always take part in the rehearsals but are not granted permission to participate in the actual performances."

He added, "Women musicians of Isfahan have not had the permission to go on stage for years." (The state-run ILNA news agency, January 15, 2018)

○ Members of an all-women music group, Hanareh, were not granted license to perform in concert.

Baran Rezaii who sings with this group said, "I have applied to receive license for a women's concert a number of times in Rasht, Isfahan, Karaj, Kermanshah, Yazd, Saqqez, and Shiraz, but I did not receive such a permission on any of these occasions." (The state-run ILNA news agency, July 17, 2017)

○ Dirak Khatoon, an all-women's music group, was not allowed to perform in Kermanshah's Ethnic Festival.

The state-run Mersad website, affiliated with the Revolutionary Guard Corps, announced on January 18, 2017, that the group's performance would trample "all moral and religious values".



Leila Bayat was lashed 80 times in September.

Violence by state agents

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

○ A pregnant woman suffered a miscarriage after intelligence agents raided her residence in Sanandaj, capital of the Iranian Kurdistan. According to a report published on November 6, 2017, Sara Farhadi was alone at home when agents of the Department of Intelligence violently broke into the house, and carried out a thorough search in a bid to find her husband.

○ A Kurdish woman, Touran Mehraban, was beaten up and tortured in the detention center of the Department of Intelligence of Orumiyeh, capital of West Azerbaijan Province, NW Iran. Ms. Mehraban was studying at Nazlou University of Orumiyeh when she was arrested on December 31, 2017, for taking part in protest against economic corruption.

○ The news of suspicious death of a woman, formerly imprisoned in the same ward with Kurdish political prisoner Zeinab Jalalian, was disseminated on January 6, 2018. The corpse of former prisoner, Zahra Azadseresht, was found at her home in Kermanshah on October 14, 2017. Ms. Azadseresht was under pressure of the Intelligence Department of Kermanshah for her relations and contacts with Zeinab Jalalian.

○ A 30 year-old woman was repeatedly raped by one of the workers at the facility. It was also found out that this was not the first case of rape by the assailant but he had previously assaulted two other mentally disabled women in the center. (The state-run Mehr news agency, September 3, 2017)

○ Tehran Municipality agents roughed up a defenseless woman peddling on the street on September 1, 2017. The woman subsequently suffered a heart stroke.

○ The State Security forces in the village of Agh-dareh in the town of Takab attacked a peaceful rally on June 15, 2017, and wounded a number of women. Some participants were arrested and transferred to an unknown location.



Mahdis Mir-Ghavami, 26, committed suicide after being sexually assaulted while in detention

Honor killings

○ A young woman was stabbed to death by her husband on February 2, 2017, and her body dumped into a well. Her husband later said he was suspicious of some of her behavior.

○ A young woman was stabbed to death by her father in Qa'emshahr, northern Iran. After going to a party, she got into a fight with her father and was killed on February 2, 2017. (The state-run rokna.ir, February 6, 2017)

○ A teenage girl was shot dead by her brother because of resisting against forced marriage. Narges Ali Shojaei, 17, lived in one of the villages of Behbahan, in southwestern Khuzistan Province. Narges's funeral was held on July 4, 2017.

Domestic violence

○ 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. In addition to broken legs and hip, she had also suffered brain damage. 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. (The state-run IRNA news agency, May 3, 2017)

○ A 64 year-old woman was hospitalized after she was badly battered by her husband. Doctors at the hospital were concerned about the condition of her eyes. The defenseless woman asserted that she had no desire to return home for fear of her life. (The state-run ROKNA news agency, May 14, 2017)

○ The Coroner's Office of Tehran declared that it had registered the names of 12,159 women as victims of violence in four months since March 21, 2017. (The state-run Mehr news agency, September 23, 2017)

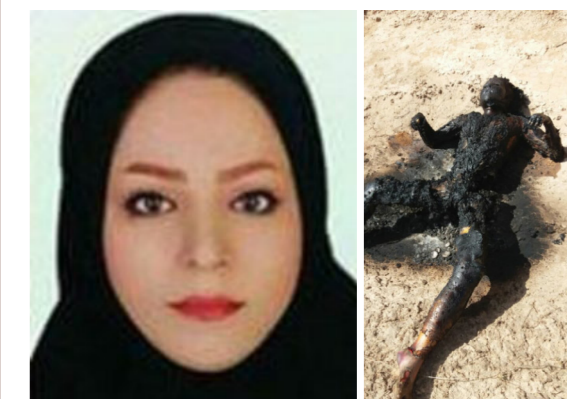
○ In the four months since March, 255 women have filed complaints against their husbands' abuse with the forensics offices in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, southwestern Iran. (The state-run Bam-e Dena website, August 21, 2017)

○ The Director General of Khorassan Razavi's Coroner's Office, announced that they had registered the names of 6,923 women from March 2016 to March 2017 (Iranian year 1395), who had reported being abused by their husbands. (The state-run Mashreq News website, June 25, 2017)

○ A government official announced that 12,000 cases of child abuse and 11,000 cases of domestic violence had been registered by the National Welfare Organization. (The state-run ILNA news agency, March 4, 2017)

A woman was found scorched in the mountains

The charred body of a young woman, a teacher, was found in the mountains of Ramhormoz, in the southwestern Khuzistan Province, on February 27, 2017. The woman was identified through her mobile to be Zeinab Beziyoun, otherwise her body had completely burned. Her disappearance had been reported a few days before. Her body was found by a shepherd on the top of a mountain.





TEACHERS, NURSES BEAR THE GREATEST PRESSURE

Women make up almost half of the teachers' population in Iran. They are inflicted with severe poverty and at the same time face numerous social and legal discriminations because of their gender.

○ Every official employee of the Ministry of Education earns 1.4 million tumans per month (\$US 400) while the poverty line stands at 4 million tumans (\$US 1180). This means that teachers officially earn about one-third of what they need to subsist.

○ To avoid paying the teachers' meager salary, the Education Ministry refuses to officially employ them. Therefore many teachers work on temporary contracts despite long years of experience, and their monthly salary is between 300 to 450,000 tumans (\$US 88 to 133).

○ Teachers working on temporary contracts do not enjoy any benefits, and their income is way below the minimum wage of 930,000 tumans (\$US 275), and still, it frequently happens that teachers do not receive any salary for months.

○ Teachers working on temporary contracts fill in for the shortage of teachers at schools and include a large number of women.

○ The Ministry of Education prevents leakage of information on the number and gender of teachers working on a temporary contract.

○ The Education Ministry does not retire women who have more than 25 years of work experience to take advantage of their cheaper service. (The state-run Afkar news, May 2, 2016)

○ Many teachers work two or three shifts to be able to provide for the needs of their families, instead of concentrating on the quality of teaching.

○ Teachers have been staging repeated protests across Iran to protest low wages, temporary employment, difficult working conditions, lack of insurance and non-payment of past due wages for consecutive months. They also demand freedom of imprisoned teachers rights activists, and balancing of retirement pensions, elimination of discrimination, full enactment of Article 41 of the Labor Act, and immediate increase of the salaries of working and retired workers and teachers based on the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB).

○ Women teachers have participated in at least 88 protests over the past year.

Despite their heavy-duty involving a lot of work, pressure and harms, the majority of nurses in Iran do not have official employment. They work on temporary contracts. They are offered a small salary and even that small salary is not regularly paid.

○ Nurses have staged some 30 protests last year to demand between six to 11 months of their past due wages and unpaid salaries.

○ 17 nurses have died in Iran over the past two years. All of the victims are suspected of dying due to work-related stress.

Ali Mohammad Adabi, president of the Nursing Organization, said, "The 17 nurses working at public and private hospitals, were between 25 to 45 years old and were considered young but all of them had endured tremendous pressure at work before they suddenly die. None of their deaths were due to illness or any other parameter." (The state-run ILNA news agency, February 9, 2018)

○ Ali Mohammad Adabi added, "No action has been taken to complete the hospitals' nursing staff since the Plan to Change the Health Regime was implemented. This has forced nurses to do heavy overtime work. In addition, economic problems have also compelled them to work in other medical centers in addition to their main employer to provide for their living expenses. At any rate, when the number of



people referring to a certain public or private medical center increases, it jeopardizes the health of nurses and doctors." (The state-run ILNA news agency, February 9,2018)

○ Work pressure has built up on nurses, mostly women, working in public hospitals in Iran. Hossein Ali Nessaii, member of the Supreme Council of the Nursing Organization, said this and added, "The Plan to Change the Health Regime attracted more people to public hospitals to receive medical services while no measures were adopted to increase the number of nurses. This is why pressure has built up dramatically on the existing nurses." (The state-run ILNA news agency, January 17,2018)

○ Alireza Azarpanah, Head of the Nursing System in the city of Doroud, in western Lorestan Province, said, "Job-related stress rapidly frazzles nurses. The fatigue caused by compulsory overtime work, complex shifts as well as having to do things unrelated to their profession, bring about psychological and physical harms for them." (The state-run House of Nurses website, November 6,2017)

○ The Supreme Administrative Court announced on November 7,2017, that the Law on Early Retirement after 20 years of work in harmful jobs is applicable to nurses. However, in light of the shortage of 100,000 nurses and the simultaneous lingering of 11,000 unemployed educated nurses in the country, the implementation of this law seems to be adding pressure on nurses rather than reducing it. (The official IRNA news agency, November 7,2017)

○ Mohammad Sharifi, Deputy Director of the National Nurses' Organization, admitted that the nurses' conditions have deteriorated under Rouhani and that some 500 nurses leave the country every year. He also confirmed that the nurses' fees had not been paid for 11 months in some centers and that the nurses' community is in a volatile state. (The state-run ILNA news agency, October 24,2017)

○ Some 6,000 nurses are retired every year without being replaced, said Maryam Hazrati, deputy for nursing at the Ministry of Health. She added, "At the same time, the number of hospital beds have increased without hiring new nurses. This has increased the pressure on the existing nurses. While as a rule, for every nurse leaving, one should be employed." (The state-run IRNA news agency, February 5,2018)

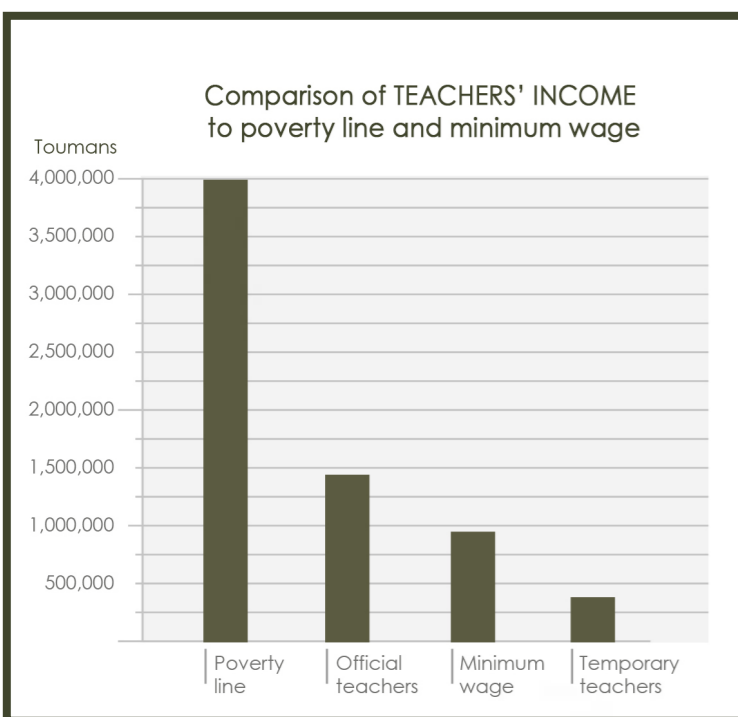
○ Hazrati said, "In addition to the nurses who are retired naturally, a large number of nurses retire early due to the difficulty of this job, high volume of work, compulsory shifts and night shifts. Nurses under 30 years of age request early retirement and leave the nursing system. And their numbers are not few."

○ Ali Mohammad Adabi warned that a Mafia-like phenomenon is emerging in the Ministry of Health. He said, "Nothing has remained from the Health Ministry and the implementation of the (training) plan was a shortcut to provide for the interests of a specific group of people." (The state-run Roozplus.ir, July 16,2017)

○ Many nursing graduates are dissatisfied with the system and emigrate for not having employment license.

Dr. Jaleh Ezzati, a deputy to the Organization of Nursing System, in an interview said, "We have documents that 97 per cent of nurses are deeply dissatisfied with the country's health system. The number of nursing graduates is not small, however, there are many who do not get employment licenses after graduation. Presently, many of the graduates decide to emigrate."

○ Ezzati also addressed the nurses' salary and said, "We are not complying with international standards. In Iran, every 15 patients have one nurse, while by the international standards every nurse has to attend to one or maximum of four patients. The difference in the salaries of a nurse and a doctor in 99 per cent of countries, is three folds at most. In Iran, however, the difference is 100 folds. We have even had payrolls that are 500 times greater than those of nurses. This is while many doctors say that they receive only the fee for visit or for surgery. They leave and



nurses have died in Iran over the past two years

All of the victims are suspected of dying due to work-related stress.

6,000

nurses are retired every year without being replaced

Every 15 Iranian patients have one nurse,



while according to the international standard every nurse has to attend to one or maximum of four patients



The difference in the salaries of a nurse and a doctor in Iran is

100 folds

Immigration of nurses from Iran has grown 300 folds in recent years.



all the work must be done by the nurse. In such circumstances, nurses cannot receive the salary they received eight years ago while the salary of their colleague is over 100 or 500 times more." She added, "Our research shows that immigration of nurses has grown 300 folds. The amount of work is so much that they see no reason for staying. They just leave everything behind, and leave." (The state-run Alef website, June 11,2017)

○ Ali Mohammad Adabi, head of the Nursing System Organization, in an interview with the media revealed, "There is a general shortage of nurses in all hospitals, however this deficiency is more evident in the emergency rooms, the operation room and the ICU" where nurses are under a lot of pressure but receive small wages. (The state-run ILNA news agency, April 30,2017)

○ A number of girl students of nursing in Tehran boycotted their exams and held a rally on July 10,2017, to protest a new directive by the Ministry of Health according to which hospitals will undertake training of nursing students and universities will cooperate with them in this regard. This is while in principle, universities are in charge of the training of nurses. One of the nurses who has graduated from the Medical School of Tehran University put a post in the social media which read, "Why doesn't the Ministry of Health employ the nurses who

are presently out of work? Why do they want to train new nurses in hospitals? Their objective is to spend less and have compliant forces. In this way, they are jeopardizing people's lives." (The state-run Eghtesad Online, ISNA news agency, July 9 and 10,2017)

○ Instead of compensating for the shortage of nurses in hospitals, official employment of educated nurses, eliminating the wide gap between doctors and nurses' salaries, paying benefits for harmful jobs, and issuing license for the employment of educated nurses, the Ministry of Health has offered a plan according to which hospitals with sufficient facilities are allowed to train nurses. The plan of the Ministry of Health for training nurses in the hospitals was first announced two years ago. On May 13,2017, the ministry renewed the directive on this plan. The Health Ministry seeks to take advantage of untrained graduates as cheap labor force, activists of the nursing community say. In addition, some experts believe that the plan will take back the nursing profession 50 years.

GROWING EARLY MARRIAGE AFFECTS SOCIETY

15,000 widows under
15 years of age

The phenomenon of child brides in Iran has taken on catastrophic dimensions. One of the main reasons is the law that sets the legal age of marriage for girls at 13 and allows fathers to wed them even earlier. At the same time, the mullahs' parliament has been refraining so far to pass a bill seeking to raise the minimum age of marriage for girls.

○ Social scientist and writer, Rayebeh Mozaffarian: 41,000 children under 15 years of age get married every year in Iran. Early pregnancy inflicts the greatest psychological and physical damages on married girl children... Presently, nearly 1,700 pregnant mothers less than 15 years of age are experiencing their first pregnancy. (The official IRNA news agency, July 30,2017)

○ Parvaneh Salahshour, head of the women's faction in the mullahs' parliament: The data registered by the National Registration Organization indicate that in 2004 to 2014, nearly 420,000 girls under 15 years of age have got married. (The state-run ILNA news agency, July 15,2017)

○ According to the figures published by Rouhani's directorate for women and family affairs, the number of children given to marriage while under 10 years of age has been as the following:
220 children in 2011,
187 in 2012,
201 in 2013,
176 in 2014,
179 in 2015.
The numbers only consist of marriages officially registered while there are many more marriages that are not legally registered. (The state-run ISNA news agency, October 14,2017)

○ Mahrokh Bolouri, director of women and family affairs in Zanjan Province: 1,485 girls under 14 years of age were wedded over the past year in Zanjan, 47 of whom have already got divorced. (The state-run IRNA news agency, December 16,2017)

○ Kurdistan's Governor, Abdul-Mohammad Zahedi: 532 marriages of girls between 10 to 15 years old have taken place in the Iranian Kurdistan Province during the past Iranian year (March 2016 to March 2017). (The state-run Tasnim news agency, July 6,2017)

○ Saeed Seyed-ol Hosseini, a deputy to the Medical Regime Organization: Unfortunately, the largest number of marriages take place in the southern part of Sistan-o Baluchistan... Girls often are between 12 and 13 years old in these types of marriages. 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 daughters 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. (The state-run ILNA news agency, January 27,2017)

○ Shahrbanou Imami, member of Tehran's City Council and former member of the mullahs' parliament, told an IWD gathering at Tehran's Melli University that there were 15,000 young widows under 15 years of age in Iran. She said, "Today, our laws have regressed." (The state-run ILNA news agency, March 8,2018)

Consequences:

○ Parvaneh Salahsouri, head of the women's faction in the mullahs' parliament: Under-aged women and young girls are sold and traded under the pretext of marriage in some parts of Iran. Giving under-aged girls to marriage causes serious harms both to the individual and to society. 50 per cent of early marriages lead to the deaths of the mother or her baby. There is also 70 per cent higher chance of cancer in such mothers. (The state-run Shafaghna website, December 14,2017)

○ Tayyebeh Siavoshi, a member of the mullahs' parliament: At least 2,000 girl children in Iran have undergone repeated miscarriages and will soon become young widows... Children who are between 13 and 14 years of age become both widows and heads of household.

Early Marriage of Girl Children

41,000 children
under 15 years of age
get married every year in Iran

4,164 girls
between 10 and 15 years of age
got married in East Azerbaijan

532 girls
between 10 to 15 years old
got married in Kurdistan

1,485 girls
under 14 years of age were
wedded in Zanjan

At least 2,000 girl children
have undergone repeated
miscarriages and will soon become
young widows.



Another issue is that some of these children are forced to marry men who are old. Sometimes, the age difference is up to 30 years. And the girls are forced into such marriages. (The state-run Fararu news agency, August 14,2017)

○ Zahra Rahimi, director of Imam Ali Student Society, said the consequences of child marriages are not limited to families but affect the society, in general. 1,200 girl children under 14 years of age were added to the country's widows in 2015. 179 girl children under 10 and 36,000 girl children between 10 and 14 were married in 2015. A considerable number of girls under 9 have been wedded in the Hormuzgan Province (on the south coast). In the same year, 1,200 girl children were registered as divorced. (The state-run Iran newspaper, February 12,2018)

○ Recent researches show that that the cause of 45 percent of the total number of girls' school drop-outs has been early marriage. Girls quit school to do the housework and childcare. (The state-run Hoornews.com, September 28,2017)

○ Amir Taghizadeh, deputy for cultural and youth affairs in the Department of Sports and Youths of East Azerbaijan, said girl children between 10 and 15 years of age are forced to marry men between 29 and 35 years of age. (The state run Kayhan newspaper, September 5,2017)

○ "Girls under 15 and young women between 15 and 19 years of age face higher risk of death during delivery, respectively five and two folds greater than those women who deliver after 20," said Fereshteh Sarbazi, a member of the Association of Gynecologists and Obstetricians. Sarbazi reiterated, "Teenage pregnancies mostly happen in rural and poor societies who are not educated. Although mothers under 19 years of age need more medical care during pregnancy, they do not have the opportunity to see a doctor since such marriages mostly take place in low income families. (The state-run ILNA news agency, August 29,2017)

○ Samira, 8, is going to get married to a boy, 14 years old, to compensate for her father's debt to the boy's father. Samira's father works at a brick kiln in Pakdasht, Tehran Province. He had borrowed 20 million toumans from his friend, but is not able to return his debt, so he has decided to wed his daughter to his friend's son. (The state-run ROKNA news agency, January 31,2018)

POVERTY, ADDICTION TAKE HIGHER TOLL ON WOMEN

Social ailments have become widespread, deeming special and comprehensive attention. Social ailments have reached critical levels and have had an adverse impact on social security.

The most pervasive social problem today in Iran is poverty.

■ Poverty

Sale of body parts

○ Poverty compels many young women to sell their body parts to provide for their needs.

A young 28 year-old Iranian woman is among those who have to sell their body parts to earn their living. Donya has found no way but to sell one of her kidneys and part of her liver.

Her mother had eight children when she got divorced 15 years ago. She works at a dairy factory and earns 820,000 toumans (\$US 230) a month at best.

Donya has a B.A. in physical training but works as a secretary at a doctor's office. Together with her mother, they earn 1.37 million toumans (\$US 385) a month which is still 3 million toumans (\$US 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. (The state-run Salamatinews.com, December 12,2017)

Women abandon their newborns

○ With the spread of poverty, more destitute Iranian women have been abandoning or selling their newborns.

The Welfare Organization of Alborz Province announced that 119 infants had been abandoned in the province over the past year. (The state-run ISNA news agency, January 14,2017)

Sale of infants

○ Six-hundred newborn infants have been handed over to the National Welfare Organization of Iran. The organization's social officer said children and babies are sold in some parts of the country.

Habibollah Massoudi Farid added, "There are concerns about the pregnancy of addicted women, especially the homeless women. If the baby stays with his/her mother after birth, the baby will most likely be sold." (The state-run ILNA news agency, August 16,2017)

○ Homeless women have no other choice but to sell their children due to extreme poverty.

Tehran City Council's Fatemeh Daneshvar said, "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 toumans (\$US 27 to 53). (The state-run ICANA news website, July 4,2017)

Trafficking of infants of street women

○ A Tehran city official revealed that premature babies are smuggled out of the country for sale. Fatemeh Daneshvar, chair of the social committee of Tehran's City Council, announced on March 8,2017, that babies who are born premature from street women are smuggled to other countries to be sold. She said, "Most of these infants are taken abroad and we do not know whether they are sold to organs trafficking gangs, to families or to brothels."

Daneshvar said, "This gang sells baby girls for a price higher than boys and sends the babies to unknown destinations." (The state-run Rokna.ir, March 8,2017)

Runaway girls

○ 3,000 young women and girls in Iran have run away from home during the period spanning between March and September 2017.

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. (The state-run Tasnim news agency, January 10,2018)

Infant mortality

○ Infant mortality rate in Iran is five times greater than in developed countries.

Ali Akbar Sayyari, deputy Minister of Health, "Every year, 15,000 infants lose their lives in Iran. That is, for every 1000 births, there are ten Iranian infants who die."

He also stressed, "Every year, some 300 mothers die in Iran." (The state-run Tabnak website, February 2,2017)

Divorce

○ The latest statistics provided by the Iranian Welfare Organization says, 21 divorces are registered per hour. In other words, 439 couples get separated every day.

174,000 divorces were registered between March 2016 and March 2017 which shows a 6 per cent rise compared to the previous year. 60 per cent of marriages ended by divorce before 5 years with 13 per cent of them lasting no longer than a year. Sixty per cent of divorce cases are filed by women. (The state-run Salamat news website, November 6,2017)

Widows

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

Roozbeh Kardoni, director general of the office of social ailments in the Ministry of Welfare, said, "Poverty is one of the most significant issues that affects the lives of these women and consequently afflicts them with other forms of violence..." (The state-run Khorassan newspaper, June 25,2017)

Single women heads of household

○ Only 18 per cent of women heads of household have jobs or some form of employment.

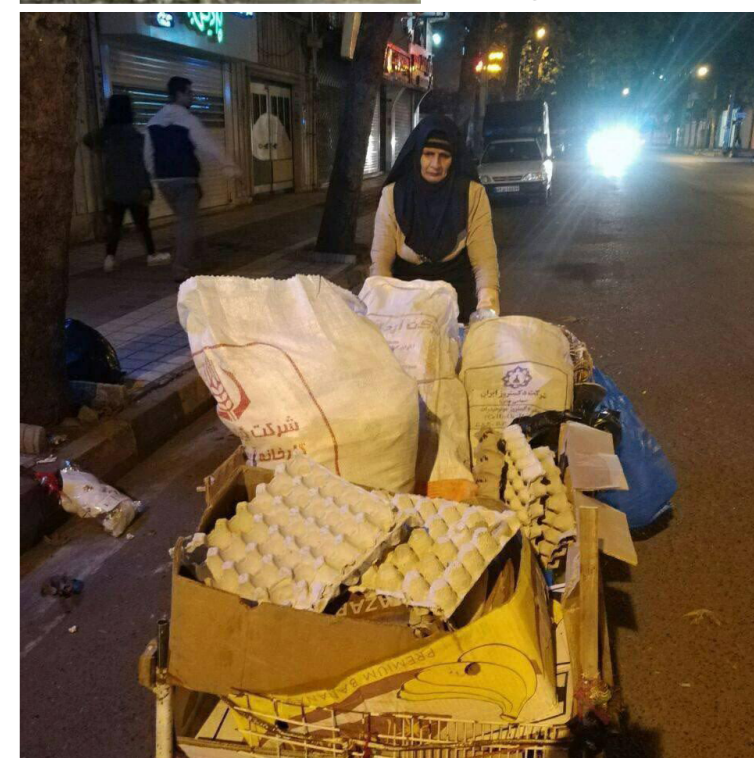
Ebrahim Ghaffari, General Director of Golestan's Welfare Organization announced in a meeting on February 12,2017, that according to the survey of 2011, of the total 21 million households in the country 2,557,700 are female-headed. He predicted that the figure will reach 3.5 million by the end of this (Persian) year in March 2017. He also added that only 18 per cent of these women have employment and the others are grappling with unemployment and poverty. (The state-run Tasnim news agency, February 12,2017)

○ Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpay, head of the National Welfare Organization, admitted, "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."

According to official sources, women's employment rate in Iran is 12 percent, at best. Mohseni Bandpay added, "180,000 women heads of household are consistently receiving aid from us and 100,000 receive social insurances. With regards to occupational loans to women without guardians or with bad guardians, however, the organization faces major challenges." (The state-run Tabnak website, February 13,2018)



From top, infant wrapped in a garbage bag and abandoned in the street; old woman uses the dark of the night to collect material from garbage bins to sell; paralyzed woman on a wheelchair scavenges for food.



■ Addiction

○ The total number of people addicted to narcotic drugs in Iran is estimated to be around 3 or 4 million. There is no accurate statistics on this and the figures officially announced are suspected to be grossly underestimated. (The state-run salammatnews.com, February 13,2018)

Feminine face of addiction

○ Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpay, head of the National Welfare Organization, said, "Addiction is becoming feminine. This is multiplied by other social ailments and increase the rates of divorce, crimes, and other problems." (The state-run Mehr news agency, February 13,2018)

○ The number of women entering the cycle of addiction in Iran has doubled compared to ten years ago.

Mostafa Hadizadeh, Isfahan Province's Secretary of the Counter-Narcotics Coordination Council, announced, "We have seen special developments over the past 10 years in the area of addiction including a drop in the age of addiction." (The state-run Fars news agency, November 13,2017)



One in every 10 addicts is a woman

○ The latest official statistics show that one woman is addicted in Iran for every 9 male addicts.

The figure was announced by Hamidreza Fat'hi, head of the Department for Prevention of Drug Addiction in the Ministry of Health. He said, "women's share of drug addiction is rapidly on the rise." (The state-run IRNA news agency, February 5,2017)

■ Suicide

Iran ranks first in the Middle East

○ Saeed Madani, a social researcher and criminologist, said, the overall suicide rate in Iran is highest in the Middle East.

He also said, women are more inclined to commit suicide, but men commit more fatal suicides.

Pointing out that the average international suicide rate is 8 per 100,000 persons, Madani noted that in some Iranian cities the average is much higher, for example in Masjid Soleiman the average suicide rate stands at 27.2 and in Kermanshah at 26.2. (The official IRNA news agency, January 21,2018)

75 women committed suicides in one year

○ The data compiled by the Women's Committee of the National Council of Resistance of Iran over the past year, indicates that at least 75 women committed suicide over the past year from March 2017 until the end of February 2018.

Eight of those committing suicide were above 30 and the rest were younger.

○ A 43 year-old mother who 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.

○ In another shocking incident, 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.

○ Another shocking case belonged to Dr. Arezoo Ghobadi who hanged herself from a tree in Aveer Park in Sanandaj, capital of Kurdistan Province of Iran, on October 19,2017. The photo of her lifeless body hanging from the tree went viral for several days on the internet.

○ An 18 year-old girl by the name of Sanaz hanged herself from a tree in a park in Tabriz on January 21,2018. Her photo also went viral and shocked the world.



Sanaz, 18, pictured above in the background, committed suicide by hanging herself from a tree in a park in Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province on January 11, 2018.

Women's suicide rate rose 66 per cent in 5 years

○ The rate of suicide among Iranian women had a 66 per cent rise in five years. An expert on social ailments was cited by the state-run Khabar Online on November 3,2017. The article reveals that in the five years from 2011 to 2015, the rate of suicide among Iranian women had risen 66 per cent.

Over 16 per cent of Iranian women suffer from depression

○ The secretary of the Scientific Association of Psychiatrists, Arash Mirabzadeh, announced that some 13.5 per cent of the Iranian population suffer from depression. According to recent studies conducted in Iran, the number of depressed women is about 16 per cent and about 10 per cent of men have been reported to be depressed. (The state-run ILNA News Agency, September 19,2017)

Human trafficking

Iran is among the countries which has failed to combat human trafficking. For the past five years, Iran has been known to be a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor. A US State Department report issued in June 2017, highlights Iranian officials' involvement in human trafficking.

According to this report, "Some Iranian women, who seek employment to support their families in Iran, are vulnerable to sex trafficking. Iranian girls between the ages of 13 and 17 are targeted by traffickers for sale abroad; younger girls may be forced into domestic service until their traffickers consider them old enough to be subjected to child sex trafficking. In 2016, there was a reported increase in young Iranian women in prostitution in Dubai; some of these women may be trafficking victims.." Another part of the report states, "Temporary" or "short-term" marriages lasting from one hour to one week—for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation—are reportedly increasing in Iran. Trafficking rings reportedly use Shiraz, Iran, as a transit point to bring ethnic Azeri girls from Azerbaijan to the UAE for commercial sexual exploitation. Street children in Iran are highly vulnerable to trafficking. Organized criminal groups kidnap or purchase and force Iranian and migrant children, especially Afghan refugee children, to work as beggars and street vendors in cities, including Tehran. These children, who may be as young as three years old, are coerced through physical and sexual abuse and drug addiction.

EARTHQUAKE ADDED TO WIDOWS, SINGLE HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD

Four months past the massive earthquake in western Iran, survivors in most affected areas hardly have enough water, electricity or sanitation and most of them passed the winter in tents that could not protect them from the cold. Thousands died in the earthquake, many more after, in the absence of basic medical care. Then came the freezing cold of the winter to take the lives of dozens of children and elderly. 30 per cent of the livestock died. With no action to remove the corpses and the debris, the area became extremely unsanitary. Damaged sewage structures added salt to the wound. The earthquake widowed many women and destroyed their life assets. According to the state media, some 100 women lost their husbands in the earthquake and became single mothers to head their households, a conservative estimate. A Majlis deputy told the mullahs' parliament that at least 1,000 people had died in the earthquake, while local residents say thousands have been killed. (The state-run Salamat News website, November 19, 2017)

A Kermanshah health official announced the deaths of 11 pregnant women and 39 pre-school children in the quake-stricken areas. Ibrahim Shakiba, head of Kermanshah's Health Center, told a press briefing that the women had died in Sarpol-e Zahab. (The state-run ISNA news agency, December 5, 2017) In the first couple of days after the earthquake, three children died due to the freezing cold and government's failure to attend to the victims. The state news agencies published a story on January 24, 2018, reporting the death of a two-year-old girl in Kermanshah. Sarina died on January 18, 2018, after catching the flu. More than 70 days after the earthquake, her father said the authorities refused to provide his

family a trailer or any form of shelter. Sarina got sick and her condition got worse every day due to lack of an adequate shelter. "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 could not do anything for Sarina. They told me to take her to a hospital in Kermanshah." On January 18, Sarina died in a hospital in Kermanshah in his father's arms.

On January 25, Noushin Mohammadi, 17, died due to infection and swelling of her body due to severe chilblain. Noushin was from one of the villages in Sarpol-e Zahab.

Also, on January 26, 2018, news agencies reported the death of the 4 month-old Mohammad Seifouri who had lost his life on January 13 due to savage cold. His father, too, said their request to receive a trailer was not granted and they had to live in a tent in the severely cold weather. As a result, Mohammad caught a bad cold and in the absence of nearby doctors or clinic, his illness intensified and he ultimately died on January 13, 2018, by the time they could get him to a hospital. (The state-run Tasnim news agency, January 26, 2018)

Video clips showed harrowing scenes of the affected areas and told a whole lot more about the corruption of a ruling regime that did nothing for the suffering of its people.

A young man screamed, "They take away and sell the aid packages. If there was a rule of law, these people should have been executed. My wife and infant child are shivering in the cold in the street."

A victim laments, "All of our belongings are under the debris. Now, they demand our ID and national card to give us some aid. How am I going to find my documents from under the rubbles?"

Another man complains, "None of the officials came to ask how we are doing. I have lost two children. It's been four days but my wife and other children have no tents."

The state-run daily Entekhab wrote, "Relief aid is entering the cities struck by the earthquake but it is unclear what happens to it."

Meanwhile, security forces prevented people from taking aid to the hardest hit Sarpol-e Zahab and its surrounding villages. They stopped the trucks carrying aid, unloaded the tents and blankets, saying they needed to be distributed by the Red Crescent.



Mothers mourn their loved ones after the earthquake. Top right, Sarina, the two-year-old girl, and bottom right, Mohammad, 4 months old, who died in the cold winter of Kermanshah.

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