



## **MASTER EXHIBIT SERIES**

**IRAN**

### **STATUS OF WOMEN**

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All the sources of information contained in this document are identified and are publicly available.

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**STATUS OF WOMEN IN IRAN**  
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**A. Non-Governmental Organization Reports**

A1. Amnesty International, Urgent Action Appeal (Nederland, CO), August 22, 1997.

On August 11, 1997, Zoleykhah Kadkhoda was reportedly arrested, charged with engaging in sexual relations outside marriage, and immediately sentenced to death by stoning. On the same day she was buried from the waist down in a ditch and stoned.

A2. Amnesty International, Urgent Action Appeal (Nederland, CO), January 29, 1997.

According to Iranian newspaper reports, an Iranian woman was sentenced to death on charges including "organizing corrupt gatherings and ...immoral contacts." She may have been executed on January 31, 1997. Amnesty International believes her arrest is connected to the case of her husband, who was executed a month earlier.

A3. Human Rights Watch, World Report 1997: Events of 1996 (NY: Human Rights Watch, 1996), pp. 281-286.

"Restrictions on personal liberty had a harsh impact on women. In Nov. 1995, the security forces announced that they had detained 86,000 suspects in the previous 12-months. "Most of them were thought to have been women detained for violating the dress code ...."

A4. Committee for Humanitarian Assistance to Iranian Refugees (CHAIR), "Fact Sheet: Gender-Based Persecution" (New York, NY), November 1996.

Discusses gender-based persecution as it relates to Iranian women, including sexual discrimination, imputed persecution, sexual violence, and penalties imposed due to women's transgression of social norms.

A5. Iranian Christians International, "Women at Risk: The Status of Women's Rights as a 'Social Group' in the Islamic Republic of Iran" (Colorado Springs, Colorado), August 1996.

"Iranian women, as a group, have been denied police protection, tortured, and/or executed because of their gender. Mistreatment of women is not only condoned but also promoted by the Islamic Republic of Iran; the Islamic laws, beliefs of Ayatollah Khomeini and Islamic jurisprudence support it." Cites writings from Koran, Ayatollah Khomeini, human rights organizations, and current laws in Iran.

A6. Committee for Humanitarian Assistance to Iranian Refugees (CHAIR), "Fact Sheet: Status of Women in Iran" (New York, NY), January 1996.

Covers legal, social and economic situation of women in Iran including women in the constitution, employment, legal standing, dress code, segregation, temporary marriage, divorce and child custody, inheritance, adultery, sexuality, citizenship and treatment of women prisoners. Facts indicate institutionalized discrimination against women in Iran.

A7. Human Rights Watch, World Report 1996: Events of 1995 (NY: Human Rights Watch, 1995), pp. 276-282.

Women continued to be hounded by to comply with petty restrictions by extra-governmental enforcers of Islamic orthodoxy. In May, police authorities began implementation of decree prohibiting women from riding in the front seat of taxis. Detention of women for failure to observe a rigid dress code continued. In an interview, president Rafsanjani "urged women to accept the 'limitations' nature had impose on them."

A8. Amnesty International, Urgent Action Appeal (Nederland, CO), July 14, 1995.

Two women are sentenced to execution by stoning for adultery in western Iran. Amnesty International considers stoning to death a particularly cruel and inhuman form of punishment.

A9. Human Rights Watch, World Report 1995: Events of 1994 (NY Human Rights Watch, 1994), pp. 269-275.

Cites increasing arbitrary harassment of women. In June 1993, police issued statement condemning women's smiles as arousing corruption in men. In September, women riding motorcycles with men were condemned by the Minister of the Interior as being un-Islamic. In August, in the city of Tabriz, hundreds of demonstrators were arrested and some were killed in protests after the *Basij* (militia) attacked young women who had mixed with men at the end of a soccer match. The government forbids social mixing of women and men. Reports two cases of women stoned to death for adultery.

A10. Amnesty International, Women in the Front Line: Human Rights Violation Against Women (London: AI, 1991), pp. 22, 27, 28, 32.

"The Islamic Penal Code of Iran provides for punishment of adulterers and certain other offenders. The Penal Code stipulates the 'in the punishment of stoning to death, the stones should not be so large that the person dies on being hit by one or two of them, nor should they be so small that they should not be defined as stones.' At least 24 of the more than 40 people reportedly stoned to death for adultery in Iran were women, executed for offenses such as adultery and prostitution." Men imprisoned in Iran have often reported that interrogators threatened their wives, mothers and sisters with torture or rape.

A11. Amnesty International, "Iran: Women Prisoners of Conscience" (London: AI, 1990).

Calls for the release of eight women imprisoned since 1983 who were, "subjected to lengthy pre-trial detention without judicial supervision during which they faced torture or other forms of coercion, then convicted at summary trials." They were detained for their own or their husbands' association with opposition political parties. Theft political acts were peaceful. Theft cases are described and 'represent a fraction of the thousands of political prisoners...who have been imprisoned, and in many cases executed, since the Islamic Revolution of 1979.'

## **B. Governmental and Inter-Governmental Reports**

B1. U.S. Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 1996, (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1997), pp. 1256-1265 (Section 5. Women, p.1263).

States that discrimination against women has increased since the revolution. It is difficult for many women, particularly outside large cities, to obtain any legal redress. "Although domestic violence is

known to occur, little is known about its extent. Abuse in the family is considered a private matter and seldom discussed publicly. There are no official statistics on the subject." The families of female victims of violent crimes often have to pay the assailant's court cost to bring him to trial. The government permitted women to attain the rank of judges, but does not permit female judges to preside over legal hearings.

B2. British Parliament, Parliamentary Human Rights Group, "Iran: The Subjection of Women" (London, 1994).

Documents status of women as "third class" citizens and establishes state accountability through discriminatory laws and direct action. Quotes high level government officials stating women's irrational decision making and smaller brains as reasons for women's subjection. Demonstrates that such reactionary views create a climate which officially sanctions acts of brutality and severe discrimination against women in the family, schools, economy, government institutions and the streets.

B3. Research Directorate, Documentation, Information and Research Branch, Immigration and Refugee Board, "Human Rights Briefs: Women in the Islamic Republic of Iran" (Ottawa, Canada, 1994).

Details situation of women in law and in practice. Under the penal code, the punishment for lesbianism is 100 lashes and the death penalty the fourth time the offense is repeated. Under the civil code, temporary marriage is limited by a period of time (minimum of one hour) and a predetermined sum to be paid to the woman. Rafsanjani has encouraged the practice. Cites a *New York Times* article saying that prostitution had increased and is practiced largely in the form of temporary marriage.

B4. United Nations Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights, "Report on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran," Jan. 1 1995, paragraphs 54-57, 106-107, 110.

States that situation of women did not change in 1994. Reports on step up in campaign against improperly veiled women, banning of women in football stadiums, separation of men and women in public transportation, hospitals and universities. A female student activist found dead on May 5, 1994 is believed murdered by government.

B5. UN Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights, Final report on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran," Feb. 2 1994, paragraphs 171-191, 258-260.

Recounts reports that many women in southwestern Iran are beheaded by their male relatives for real or imagined sexual misconduct and that killers often went free. Quotes a court official stating that every year large numbers of women and girls are beheaded. On May 23, 1993, a 24 year old woman had acid thrown in her face by Revolutionary Guards and lost her eyesight. On June 24, 1993, over 800 "inadequately covered" women were arrested and sentenced to flogging. A 20 year old woman was killed for the same offense on September 2. Iranian delegation to the U.N. flatly rejected Special Representative's criticisms saying the Special Representative is ignorant of Islamic precepts. Minister of Interior reported that women's employment is decreasing by 2 % annually.

B6. UN General Assembly, "Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran," Nov. 8 1993, paragraphs 59-66, 121-123.

The report takes exception to Iranian government's practice of imposing punishments aimed at curbing freedom of choice simply because a woman does not wear Islamic dress. States that women receive unequal treatment with regard to marriage, divorce, inheritance, criminal penalties, residence, travel and other areas of life. The position of women is different from men in situations where they have

the same capacities, as in capacity to give evidence: in some cases a woman's evidence is not considered valid and in others a man's evidence is equivalent to that of two women."

B7. UN Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights, "Final report on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran," Feb. 5 1993, paragraphs 196-206, 266.

Strict sexual segregation of teachers and students has resulted in the closure of many schools for girls, especially in rural areas. It was said that more than 40,000 women elementary and high school teachers were fired by the government between 1980-1985. Voices concerns over reports indicating that 89% of rural Iranian women are illiterate. On 14 Dec. 1992, the Secretary General of Imam Khomeini's Relief Committee stated that "...the deprived people living in Khorassan's northern areas sell their young daughters for up to 10,000 tomans. The buyers of these girls...take them there [Gonbad area] to work in the farms and workshops..."

### **C. Articles Concerning National and International Law**

C1. Mehranguiz Kar and Homa Hoodfar, "Personal Status Law as Defined by the Islamic Republic of Iran: An Appraisal," in Shifting Boundaries in Marriage and Divorce in Muslim Communities (Grabels, France: Women Living Under Muslim Laws, 1996) Special Dossier: Vol 1 (fall 1996), pp. 7-36.

Under new personal status law (including return of arbitrary divorce, polygamy and temporary marriage), women must be under the constant guardianship of their husbands and fathers. Should a wife leave her husband's home due to physical abuse, she is likely to be denied economic rights if they are divorced. Physical abuse must result in permanent injury for it to be grounds for divorce. Courts frequently order women to return to their husband's home. Many remain in abusive marriages because they fear losing their children. Although the regime emphasizes women's role as mother, fathers and paternal grandfathers have exclusive right to child custody. While claiming to honor women and mothers, the state has rendered them second-class citizens.

C2. "Claims for Asylum by Iranian Women Who Refuse to Adhere to Fundamentalist Muslim Doctrine Made Easier by Ninth Circuit Ruling," Migration World Magazine (Staten Island, NY), Vol. 23, Nos. 1-2, 1995, pp. 42-43.

Saideh Fisher applied for asylum in the U.S., claiming she had been harassed for refusing to adhere to the regime's "moral codes". The Ninth Circuit found that the Board of Immigration Appeals had erred in failing to consider evidence of current enforcement practices in Iran in evaluating Fisher's claim and in evaluating persecution solely on the basis of physical sanction imposed by the Iranian regime. "...Fisher did not have to show that if returned to Iran she will take conscious steps to violate the moral codes..."

C3. Anne Elizabeth Mayer, "Universal Versus Islamic Human Rights: A Clash of Cultures or a Clash with a Construct?" Michigan Journal of International Law, Vol. 15:307, Winter 1994, pp. 389-405.

The more obvious the need to rely on legal sanctions and police measures to enforce what are officially described as 'cultural' norms (i.e. Islamic culture and religion), the more the legal regimes repressing women begin to resemble regimes of apartheid, in which the State establishes and maintains the domination of one group and the systematic oppression of another .... In February 1993, in response to a critical U.N. report on Iran's human rights...the Iranian government asserted that its dress requirements and personal status laws affecting women were part of religion and, as such, willingly accepted by Iranians. The government wrote · "...until now there have been no confrontations with females who do not observe the *Hijab* properly."

C4. Linda Cipriani, "Gender and Persecution: Protecting Women Under International Refugee Law," Georgetown Immigration Law Journal, 7 Geo. Immigr. L.J. 511, October 1993, pp. 1-3.

Countries whose legal systems are based on Islamic law, or *Sharia*, are perhaps the most well known examples of how religion has the potential to persecute women who do not follow its dictates... Calling for reforms of discriminatory practices would be, in effect, blasphemy. Cites the Koran: "men are the managers of the affairs of women because Allah has made the one superior to the other and because men spend of their wealth on women.." Women have been murdered when their virginity was not proven by a blood-stained sheet, and the law punishes the murderer with only six months imprisonment. The law states that if a man witnesses his wife in a situation which could be construed as intercourse, he is immune from punishment if he injures her. This law was used to excuse a man from killing his sister when he saw her get out of a taxi with a male stranger.'

C5. Sima Pakzad, "The Legal Status of Women in the Family in Iran," in The Eye of the Storm, Afkhami and Freidl, editors (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993), Appendix I.

Discusses legal issues relating to Iranian family's female members and highlights the contrast between the legal rights of men and women in the family. Covers laws relating to a woman as wife and daughter. For example, under inheritance, a husband inherits one quarter of his wife's estate, from all her property, while a wife inherits one eighth of her husband's estate, from movable property, buildings and trees. Each son's share of the inheritance from the parent is twice that of each daughter.

C6. "The Islamic Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Excerpts Relating to Women," in The Eye of the Storm, Afkhami and Freidl, editors (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993), Appendix II.

Lists articles in the Islamic Penal Code, implemented since December 1991, that concern women. For example, Article 300 states, "the blood money (compensation paid to the family of a victim) for the first or second-degree murder of a Muslim woman is half that of a murdered Muslim man." Under Article 209, if a man murders a woman, the penalty of retribution is applied only after the woman's family pays the murderer half of his blood money.

#### **D. Academic Articles**

D1. Akram Mirhosseini, "After the Revolution: Violations of Women's Human Rights in Iran," Women's Rights, Human Rights: International Feminist Perspectives, Peters and Wolper, editors (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 72-77.

Discusses mistreatment of women in the penal code, family law, employment, education and the arts. Women are not permitted to marry foreigners without written permission from the Ministry of the Interior. Married women may not work or travel without written permission from their husbands. In 1986, special camps had been established for women caught not observing the dress code. Other penalties include: "their feet may be put in a gunny sack full of mice and cockroaches, their faces splashed with acid or cut with razor blades." On June 15, 1991, several women were reportedly shot by Revolutionary Guards for protesting against the dress code. "It is considered meritorious to rape women prisoners, especially virgins...who will thereby be barred from heaven..."

D2. Shahrzad Mojab, "Iran Violation of Women's Rights to Education," Academic Freedom 3: Education and Human Rights, Daniel et al, editors, (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1995), pp. 152-159.

Islamic state adopted policy of admitting university applicants who had proven their devotion to

the regime by passing ideological screening. Islamicization of male-female relations was intended "to restrict the professional and educational domains of women's lives and to restore them to what the regime considered women's primary role in society: domestic responsibility and child-bearing. A major method was to close certain fields of study to women on grounds that they are "emotionally and physically weak". Allowing women into the legal profession is against Islamic principles. Single women faculty members, students and researchers are not allowed to travel abroad. Concludes that there is direct, open and legal suppression of academic freedom.

D3. Yassaman Saadatmand, "Separate and Unequal Women in Islamic Republic of Iran", Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. XVIII, No. 4, Summer 1995, pp. 1-24.

Demonstrates that 'reforms' since the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, such as women parliamentary representatives, women in the labor sector, and the 1992 Personal Status Law (concerning remuneration for housework, women advisors to judges, divorce, etc.) have not had significant effects on lives of majority of Iranian women. Argues that regime cannot end sexual apartheid since its main doctrine advocates sexual apartheid. Concludes that the role of women in society has not improved since 1979.

D4. Azadeh Kian, "Gendered Occupation and Women's Status in Post Revolutionary Iran, "Middle Eastern Studies (London), Vol. 31, No. 3, July 1995, pp. 407-421.

"Men's authority over women in both public and private spheres is recognized and sanctioned by law because men are perceived as having an economic function outside the home..." If a wife refuses to comply with her husband's authority (including sexual demands), he is legally allowed to sanction her by refusing to provide her financial support. 'Personal status law grants excessive privileges to men on grounds of their economic function. For this very reason if women succeed in assuming functions outside of the family institution, the enforced Islamic laws on the subject would also be questioned.' According to government statistics, 10.8 % of all women were employed in 1976 - 1977 compared to 6.1% in 1986-1987.

D5. Homa Omid, Islam and the Post-Revolutionary State in Iran (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), pp. 178-204.

"The subjection of women has been paraded as the public endorsement and evidence of the continuing supremacy of Islamic law...Veiled women have become the symbols of the success of Islamicization. Women came out in mass demonstrations against imposition of the veil and Islamic law in 1979. Iranian president Rafsanjani argued:" In practice, women graduates do not go and serve the society so the money spent on them is wasted; even when they do work they don't work well enough..."

## **E. Articles In Periodicals**

E1. Mahin Hassibi, "Sexual Apartheid in Iran," On The Issues, Fall 1994, pp. 17-19.

"All issues regarding interactions between men and women - including sexuality - are referred to male clerics." Asserts that Ayatollah Khomeini believed "differences in men and women's 'natural propensities' point to God's informed consent to the subjugation of women in exchange for men's protection of them and their brood." Mentions inconsistencies such as a 9 year old girl being legally competent to enter into a marriage contract while a woman of any age is viewed to be 'too impulsive' to be given the right to initiate a divorce. Boys are treated as juveniles until they are 15 years old, but a female child of nine is tried and punished as an adult.

E2. "Nothing to lose but your chador," The Economist, Aug. 7 1993, p. 43.

Life for women in Iran has regressed steadily since President Ali Rafsanjani was elected in 1992. Dreaded patrols and roadblocks are back, checking women to see if they are wearing make-up and violating other codes.

### **F. Newspaper Articles**

F1. "Iranian women under attack for bicycling," Austin American-Statesman, May 5, 1996.

Members of the state-run volunteer militia attacked cyclists at the only complex where both men and women can cycle. Police called to the scene did not intervene in scuffles between the militia and cyclists. Women are not permitted to ride bicycles in public because, according to Islamic scholars, it is "indecent" and provocative. The daughter of President Rafsanjani has come under attack for waging a campaign in favor of sports for women.

F2. "Divorce Iranian Style: In Court, Islamic Law Honors the Husband," Wall St. Journal, Nov. 8, 1994, p. A1.

Women have paid the price of Islamic rule. "The Tehran family court today is like a horror chamber of male vengeance. Men, who can have up to four wives under Islamic law, may divorce any of them at will. A divorce is nearly impossible for a woman to obtain without her husband's permission." Cites Koran which says if wives are suspected of 'disloyalty and ill-conduct,' husbands may 'admonish them . . . refuse to share their bed...and beat them.' Wife beating is not grounds for divorce. Most child custody laws are equally futile for Iranian mothers. Under Sharia law, boys older than 2 and girls older than 7 belong exclusively to their fathers.'

F3. "In Iran, the Chador Has Begun to Chafe," Washington Post, October 26, 1992, p. A1.

Discusses women's struggle against repression in an environment where "...a secret report prepared by a special commission for the Supreme Council for Iran's National Security lists women among challenges to national security..."