

Human Rights Council

The Issue of Women's Rights in Iran



Forum	Human Rights Council
Issue:	The Issue of Women's Rights in Iran
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Introduction

The Islamic revolution in Iran took place from January 1978 till February 1979, resulting in the establishment of the Islamic republic of Iran, which was said to be founded on mainly misogynistic ideologies, not only have Iranian women been forced to wear the veil, but they have been forbidden from singing, dancing, attending sports matches, riding bicycles or running for president, they must also always sit at the back of the bus and cannot travel unless accompanied with their husband's permission.

The death of Mahsa Amini has sparked awareness about the situation of women in Iran, a woman who was beaten to death on September 16 2022 by police after being arrested for incorrectly wearing the mandatory hijab. The young woman's death resulted in protests in over 80 cities.

The existence women's rights serve as a fundamental indicator of how much a state commits and respects human rights, it is protected and secured by treaties, resolutions and mentioned in several articles in the universal declaration of human rights as well as the UN charter, by which every sovereign state must conform to. Breaking these articles would be considered going against international law, losing the trust of other states, and weakening a state's presence and legitimacy in intergovernmental organizations. The Islamic republic of Iran has undoubtedly disrespected the rights of women and girls multiple time following their establishment.

Definition of Key Terms

Term 1



Misogyny: Dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women.

General Overview

The mandatory head covering

Since the Islamic republic of Iran was established, there has been a lack and violation of women's rights. Iranian women experience discrimination in law and in simple ways of life, which deeply impact their lives, one of this being the mandatory head covering which all women above the age of 9 must wear in public and although the multiple protests against this law, the government shuts them down. The Iranian Islamic penal code states 'women, who appear in public places and roads without wearing an Islamic hijab, shall be sentenced to ten days to two months imprisonment or a fine of 50,000-500,000 rials' (article 638) the article also states a sentence of 'two months in prison or up to 74 lashes for anyone who openly commits sinful acts, in addition to the punishment provided for the act. Women who do not comply to this law tend to be harassed by the 'morality policed', whether this be detainment or being fined.

During December of 2017, the police chief announced that officers would pause arresting and charging women for dress code violations, this however was resumed later that month due to the nationwide protests happening against the regime. This also resulted in the zero-tolerance policy against protestors and that 'although the sentence for not wearing a hijab is two months in prison, anyone encouraging others to take off their hijab will be jailed for 10 years, this would be since it goes against the 'inciting corruption and prostitution' under article 639 of the Islamic penal code. These laws only got stricter, where if women were not wearing the 'complete hijab' (only covering hair, not shoulders) they would be prohibited from using any public units, the regime also increased patrols of the morality police in order to monitor the hijab compliance, this could go from detentions to beatings for even if a few strands of hair were not covered.

The protests resulting from Mahsa Amini's death

On September 13, 2022, the morality police arrested Mahsa Amini in the street in Tehran, they told her brother that she was being detained for 'improper' hijab and that she would be taken to an 'educational and orientation class'. However, according to witnesses, Mahsa was thrown into a van and was beat up inside the vehicle on her way to the police station, two hours after her arrest the police informed her brother that she had suffered from a heart attack and brain seizure. He reported that when he saw her, her face was black and blue. Mahsa Amini died on 16 September



2022, Mahsa's father was refused surveillance footage of his daughter's trip inside the van.

Thousands of civilians across the country took the streets to protest against the regime after Mahsa's death, chanting 'women, life, freedom', publicly removing their veil, burning it or cutting their hair.

Domestic violence

Domestic violence is not a crime under Iranian law and criminal penalties for murder via domestic violence or sometimes known as 'honour killings' are lighter than the penalties for other acts of murder. The Iranian parliament still hasn't enacted the draft legislation which was written over 9 years ago that would criminalize gender-based violence, five years after it was launched, it was then approved by the Rouhani administration in May 2017, however Iran's chief sat on the bill for over two years. In September 2019, the judiciary had finally cleared the legislation after heavily amending and therefore weakening it, the centre for human rights in Iran (CHRI) criticized the edited bill since it 'doesn't provide effective and sufficient guarantees to protect women against violence and, in many cases, promotes stereotypical discriminatory, and sexist views towards women', this was amongst the other issues which included:

- It does not clearly define the term 'violence' and does not use the term 'domestic violence'
- It does not remove legal and enforcement obstacles to protect women from and prosecute their abusers
- Only requires abusive husbands to provide financial support for their wives for three months after they separate, thereby encouraging battered women into returning to their spouses
- Requires women who seek justice in the courts after being battered or sexually abused by their husbands or fathers to go through a one-month required period to a dispute-resolution body
- Prevents an abused woman from getting a divorce on the grounds of abuse until her husband is convicted three times of engaging in violence against her

Following another year of delay, the cabinet approved an even more edited and reversed bill on January 3rd 2021, the human rights watchdog stated that 'although a step forward in providing legal definitions surrounding violence against women and measures to support victims, the bill lacks provisions for criminalizing marital rape and child marriage. Although the government doesn't have an official statistic about 'honour killings' academic research indicates that around 375-450 honour killings are committed each year.



Rape and sexual exploitation of girls

Marital rape is legal in Iran. Iranian law also prevents most of non-marital rape victims from reporting to authorities, rape victim who come forward can face prosecutions for crimes such as adultery (which is punishable by execution), 'indecentcy' or 'immoral behaviour'. Accused rapists can only be convicted upon the testimony of multiple witnesses, and it has been reported that 80% of rape cases are not reported. It is also against Iranian law to execute virgins; this results in the raping of girls before they are killed.

Under Iranian law, girls may be legally married at 13 years old, the regime has revealed that there are over 40,000 registered marriages of children in Iran. The United Nations has expressed concern over the increasing number of child marriages and there have been efforts to raise the age of marriage, however these requests have been waived.

Major Parties Involved

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

UN women urges and calls for relevant authorities to support the expression of women's full human rights in a safe environment without fear of violence. They urge the need to ensure the release for all women who have been detained and with special procedures, hold a private investigation on the death of Mahsa Amini.

Human Rights Watch

The human rights watch wants to launch a fully private investigation on the situation of women in Iran, including an investigation on the death of Mahsa Amini as well as previous attempts of resolutions to solve the issue

Women's Foreign Policy Group

Offers detailed articles about the situation of women in Iran in order to spread awareness and educate people around the world on their current living crisis, they also offer other resources in which you can find detailed cases about women in Iran.



Guidance Patrol

This is the main Islamic religious police in the law enforcement force of the Islamic republic of Iran. (commonly known as the morality police)

World Health Organization

The WHO has aimed to conduct a study to investigate the sexual and reproductive health care needs of women in an urban area of the Islamic republic of Iran, this would be by carrying out a cross sectional study on around 500 women (with consent) as well as taking in ethical principles to assert their health care needs.

Unites States of America

The USA has openly condemned the lack of women's rights which have been present in Iran, as a result of this, the united states has urged other countries to remove Iran from the UN commission on the status of women, stating that they will not allow the commission's work to be 'undermined from within'.

Timeline of Key Events

Date	Description of event
April 1 st 1979	Establishment of the Islamic State of Iran.
April 1983	Hijab became mandatory by law in Iran.
June 12 th 2009	Start of green movement.
December 28 th 2017	The economic protest
January 3 rd 2021	Approval of domestic violence bill
September 2022	Mahsa Amini protest

UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- National report on women's status in the Islamic republic of Iran (Beijing +25)



- The Answer of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Questionnaire to Governments on Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) And the Outcome of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000)
- The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (27 February 2023)

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

- The economic and social council has passed a draft resolution to kick the Islamic republic of Iran from the commission on the status of women.
- The sustainable development goals for women in Iran, which are set in place however still not being met.

Possible Solutions

The Islamic republic of Iran has had these regimes and laws which belittle women since they have been established in 1979, solutions to the women's rights crisis would need to consist of external involvement, this can include economic sanctions on the state until they conform by international law. Another way other states can get involved is by continuing to expel Iran from intergovernmental or multigovernmental organizations, this limits the state of Iran's reliability on others and would also limit their interaction with other states, making them less trustworthy to work and cooperate with. It has been made clear that ever since the regime's establishment in 1979, women's rights in Iran have been violated and disrespected, the regime has proven itself to not be able protect and ensure the security of its female citizens, a solution for the crisis of women in Iran would to possible establish a new regime or form of government and for them to apply women's rights.

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