



March 2015

## Join the Campaign for Women's Rights in Iran!

Let's make 8 March, International Women's Day, a platform for genuine solidarity with Iranian women, with the teachers and nurses who came out campaigning for their rights in recent weeks. Join the campaign for equal rights, for an end to gender-based discrimination, for the abolition of all oppressive and anti-women policies and for the release of women's rights activists from prisons in Iran! **Join CODIR!**



One of the most vicious aspects of the Iranian regime's policies since it came to power in 1979 is its total disregard for women's equality. Women are discriminated against in education, politics, employment, inheritance, health, public and family life, custody of their own children and even attendance at sporting events. Many women have been forced out of their jobs and

professions. In Iran under the theocratic regime women cannot choose their own destinies. Women are abused, imprisoned, tortured and stoned to death.

**What is absolutely essential now is that we raise our voices in support of our sisters in Iran and organise the widest possible campaign in solidarity with them.**



## Defend the Rights of Teachers in Iran

The National Union of Teachers (NUT) exists to stand up for teachers. We believe that the teaching profession must have: remuneration that is commensurate with the importance of the profession; good conditions of work; and professional autonomy. Attracting and retaining teachers, who in turn are accountable to their pupils, can only be achieved in a world that values the profession.

Today in Iran teachers are faced with threats against their pay and pay progression. They are faced with difficult working conditions, job insecurity and privatisation in education. Furthermore, there is little room for dissent and trade unions voices are silenced. Nonetheless we stand in solidarity with the teachers of Iran.

As part of our current campaign 'Stand up for education,' the NUT believes that the role of teachers should be valued – both nationally and internationally.

In solidarity

**CHRISTINE BLOWER**  
NUT General Secretary

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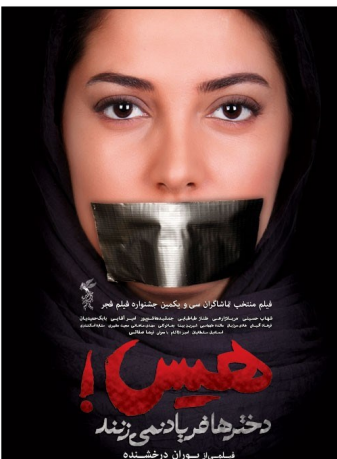
CODIR calls for a campaign to defend gender equality:

***In Iran women's rights are violently repressed by theocracy***

# But the Struggle Continues...

Almost 160 years ago, on March 8<sup>th</sup> 1857, a number of women garment workers in New York protesting about their "sweatshop" conditions and demanding equal rights were beaten by the police. Still, after all these years, we are witnessing violence against women in every shape and form, from domestic violence to sexual assault by strangers, from social oppression and economic exploitation to cruelty and the crimes inflicted in the name of faith by extremist religious groups. In particular, the expanding influence of so-called political Islam around the world, the enactment of reactionary and misogynist statutes against women and girls in a growing number of countries and the atrocities of criminal groups such as ISIS in the Middle East have led to the unfolding of a colossal disaster that must be halted by the combined action of women's rights activists and all progressive people everywhere.

Iranian women have suffered in every aspect of their lives for many decades and yet have never ceased to fight for their human rights, to achieve



**On March 8, Join Women Fighting for Their Rights in Iran on International Women's Day**

**WOMEN JAILED**  
Tens of thousands are imprisoned, many for minor hijab errors

**CHILD MARRIAGES**  
Girls married under the age of 15 rose to 43,459 in 2009, up 30 percent in 3 years

**FEWER RIGHTS**  
Threats, intimidation and worse for those who speak out

Help Support Women's Rights in Iran  
Join the Campaign on Indiegogo: <http://bit.ly/MVyFxc>

gender equality and for a decent life. In particular, the struggle of Iranian women during the past 36 years of Islamic rule, under the burden of its most demeaning rules, has been exemplary. The active involvement of women during the uprising of 2009 in protest against the fraudulent election of Ahmadinejad and in campaigning for the legitimate rights of women during the presidential election of 2013 are just two examples. Despite every offensive of the ruling fundamentalists, Iranian women have made significant gains but it is clear that they are fighting under the most difficult of circumstances. The Islamist regime sees women only as wives and mothers and attempts to keep them at home, under the strict rules of "hijab" (Islamic cover for women) rather than viewing them as major contributors to the development of the society. Ali Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of the Iranian regime, when he met with women last spring, said that emphasis on women's potential in the economic sphere, such as in employment, was a "Western view" and constituted "viewing

women from a business perspective to satisfy men's lust". At the same time in the Islamic Republic of Iran of today, men can legally have four wives at the same time and in addition have "temporary marriages"!

Almost two years into the presidency of Hassan Rouhani, the oppression of the Islamist regime against women still persists in its most demeaning forms. In recent weeks, another wave of protests and campaigns has taken place, including strikes and protests of teachers and nurses (significant numbers of whom are women) for decent jobs and pay, and demonstrations of students and workers for their basic rights. Iranian women are engaged in a battle that can benefit hugely from the international solidarity of progressive and human rights activists, unions and other democratic groups.

CODIR will continue to support Iranian women in their struggle for legitimate rights and will continue to campaign for international solidarity with them.

## AFFILIATE TO CODIR



**Solidarity with the struggle of the Iranian people for peace, equality, human rights**

**STARTS HERE!**

*CODIR supports the campaign for peace, human and democratic rights in Iran. We campaign for release of all political prisoners and for trade unions to have freedom to organise and campaign effectively. We supply news and analysis of events in Iran and related issues from the world.*

### Affiliation fees:

*Local organisations £20 - £50, Regional organisations £50, National Orgs: £100 to £250.*

**For information on CODIR please write to us at: CODIR- B.M.CODIR, London, WC1N 3XX**

**Visit us on: [www.codir.net](http://www.codir.net)**

**Rouhani reneges on election promises to women-**

# Iranian Regime's Misogynist Charter!

It is more than 20 months since Hassan Rouhani's election in June 2013. Iran's news agency, ILNA, recently published a table which listed Rouhani's election promises for improvements in women's condition, against a column dedicated to the promises that have been met. The latter column is conspicuously blank.

Symptomatic of the regime's approach to involving women is the case of Commander Ghalibaf, the Mayor of Tehran. Ghalibaf had no problem with men and women working in his campaigns, or election headquarters, but has implemented the segregation of women and men in the City Council. Under the pretext of considering women's comfort Ghalibaf prevents women's access to office jobs; 180 members of parliament have supported this restriction on women's employment.

President Rouhani promised to solve a number of problems on being elected. Among his statements were:

- ◆ *"The plan for segregating men and women is an unscientific plan and has no correspondence to the Iranian society";*
- ◆ *"Today as we need movement in our society, we must pay attention to the women who form 50% of our population and even dedicate some managerial posts for women";*
- ◆ *"In the Government of Counsel and Hope [the terms with which Rouhani described his government] social welfare services will be extended to cover women and there will be*

*greater prosperity for people, especially women";*

- ◆ *"In the last five years the number of women in employment has dropped by 23%. Their employment rates should find parity with their education".*

However, since Rouhani's election the neo-liberal economic policy of the regime has continued as before, the poor have become poorer and arrests have continued. Rouhani's government has continued to implement reactionary and misogynistic policies. He has offered ideological justification for unequal rights between women and men. He has treated this inequality as something natural. He has promoted a domestic role for women, away from social roles, employment and education. Even though his language is different, Rouhani's role is that of a loyal executor of the policies of the ruling clergy in Iran.

The government pursues plans that lead to removing women from employment, discriminates against women, promotes inequality as just and presents the right to education as an imposition on women.

These positions emanate from the assertion of Ayatollah Khamenei that "the idea of equality



between men and women is a misguided Western idea" and the idea that "we should distance ourselves from Western ideas in fields such as employment and equality of the sexes" (Excerpt from meeting of Khamenei with "expert and enlightened women" in March 2014).

The Health Ministry has restricted women's access to medical courses with the unfathomable reason that "women cannot be dispatched to underprivileged areas". Mohsen Zare'i, the General Manager of the Social cooperation of the Ministry of Sport and Youth, has asked that working women's



**Bahareh Hedayat, political prisoner**

child allowance should be cut.

Even though Rouhani has selected a woman, Shahindokht Molavardi, as a deputy, as pointed out by Marzieh Mortazi, an activist in the women's movement, "for Molavardi observance of the red lines drawn by political powers have priority over raising women's problems. The Deputy in charge of women's issues, should be a true mediator between political power and women, and should not reduce their role to the guardian of the red lines in which they do not believe".

The regime continues to do all it can to domesticate women and prevent them from playing their role in the social, political, economic and scientific arenas. Activists for women's rights are aware that the struggle must be advanced in various ways. They also know that women workers in Iran are under the greatest social and economic pressure at present. The misogynistic policies of the regime affect their lives even more adversely. Mobilising women is a vital step in securing advances for women in particular and society in general.

### International condemnation of acid attacks on women in Iran!

# They Are Trying to Drive Women Out ...

It is often said that there are two hallmarks of a civilized society - the way it treats women and the freedom of its members to speak out. On both measures, the theocratic state in Iran is found wanting for the contempt in which it holds women, the escalating violence against them and the systematic suppression of any attempt to protest against the brutality meted out to them. But this is not new. The oppression of women and use of terror aimed at keeping them in the domestic sphere, started the day after the victory of Iran's 1979 Revolution. From the outset, the regime was determined to return this massive force that had entered the social arena, back into the deepest recesses of the home. This it has done both through the

enactment of anti-women laws, such as "The Maintenance of Chastity and Modesty Act" which places unprecedented restrictions on women's employment and removes them from the workplace under the pretext of maintaining modesty, and by terrorising women who dare to inhabit the public space.

Most recently, the terror has taken the form of a spate of terrifying acid attacks by helmeted and visored men on motor bikes on young women in Isfahan going about their daily business - walking in the street, driving their cars, stopping to make a phone call. These have shocked the country and the world. The attackers have, however remained at large and their violence has been silently condoned, raising the suspicion that the



security services themselves are behind these hideous crimes. A new law passed in mid-October last year even encourages and affords protection to such vigilantes. By stark contrast, the brave women in Isfahan, Tehran and other Iranian towns and cities who have taken to the streets to protest and demand that the perpetrators are brought to justice have themselves

been attacked by the police and arrested, as have journalists and photographers who have tried to publicise the horrific violence.

**These atrocities against women and against civilization have been unequivocally condemned. They mark a regime that is brutal and inhumane for the whole world to see.**

## Women Fight Gender Discrimination in Sports Events

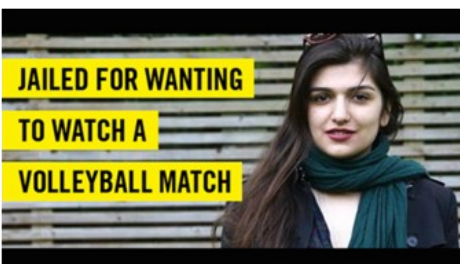


opportunity to go to sporting events. A few years ago, a movie was made by the renowned Iranian filmmaker Jafar Panahi called "Offside", in which a few young girls, dress like boys in order to get to the stadium to watch a football game. Just recently, the authorities noticed that Iranian women dressed like Brazilian citizens in order to get to the stadium and watch a volleyball match between the Iranian and Brazilian teams in Tehran. Last year, Ghoncheh Ghavami was detained for 126 days, including 41 in solitary confinement, after being arrested outside the Azadi stadium in Tehran where she was trying to watch a men's volleyball match.

Unlike the rest of the world, Iranian women are not allowed to go as spectators to sporting events where men are playing! This issue has led to resistance amongst women who want to be treated equally and have the

In a recent action in the fight

against gender discrimination in sports events, 190 civic and political activists wrote a letter to Sepp Blatter, FIFA president, to ask for FIFA's help to remove the ban on the attendance of women in Iran's sport events and stadiums.



The letter states that in relation to the ban, "Implementing such a policy against Iranian women is morally wrong, discriminatory, contrary to the constitution of FIFA and in violation of interna-

tional laws."

The letter goes on to assert that, "No one should be banned from football or volleyball games in stadiums solely based on their gender." It goes on to demand that, "...FIFA acts according to Article 3 of its constitution and suspend Iran's Football Federation membership, or at least like the proper action of the FIVB in 2014, bar Iran from hosting international games that are under the supervision of FIFA... to force Iran to put a stop to this gender discrimination against women."

The women of Iran await FIFA's response.