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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Women's Human Rights International Association, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[11 February 2019]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



Violence against women in the Islamic Republic of Iran

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The situation of women in the Islamic Republic of Iran is far from having improved in 2018. Gender segregation and discrimination, as well as repression, have been unrelenting. In 2018, the World Economic Forum ranked Iran 142nd (out of 149 countries) in terms of gender parity.

Violence against women occurs in various ways:

Executions

During 2018 at least five women were executed, two of them (Zeinab Sekaanvand and Sharareh Almassi) who were minor at the time of their death sentence..

Mahboubeh Mofidi, 25, was executed on 30 January 2018 in Nochahr in northern Iran. The family made great efforts to prevent this terrible execution, but to no avail. She was only 17 years old at the time of the alleged offence.

A woman, whose name remains unknown, was hanged in the Central Prison of Oroumieh at dawn on Wednesday, July 4, 2018, along with two other male prisoners. The conditions in the women's ward of the Central Prison of Orumieh is abysmal because of over-crowded cells and lack of hygiene.

Zeinab Sekaanvand is the 84th woman to be executed under Rouhani. She was only 24 at the time of execution, on October 2, 2018. She was from a small village in Makou, in Western Azerbaijan Province. She had been forced into marriage at the age of 15. She lived two painful years, being battered everyday by her husband. She was arrested on the charge of killing him at age 17. This Kurdish woman was a minor under 18 years of age at the time of committing the crime. International laws ban execution of minors. Zeinab Sekaanvand was a victim of poverty and the misogynous laws of the clerical regime which allow early and forced marriage of girls.

A young woman named Sharareh Almassi was hanged on 13 November 2018 in Sanandaj Central Prison after five years in detention. Sharareh Almassi, 27, was arrested and imprisoned for five years for killing her husband, Kaveh Gholam Veissi, in a family conflict.

A young woman identified as Noushin, aged 25, was hanged on Saturday, December 22, 2018, according to ROKNA news agency.

Suppression

Women political prisoners and prisoners of conscience conducted numerous hunger strikes to get a minimum of rights, such as medical care. Women dervishes imprisoned in Iran began a hunger strike at Qarchak prison in Varamine on June 17 after being attacked and beaten on June 13, 2018. Women arrested for their religious beliefs have been subjected to violence such as Sufi, Christian and Baha'i.

Early marriages

In Iran, early marriages of girls have multiplied, due to poverty. Official figures speak of tens of thousands of early marriages each year in Iran, resulting in thousands of divorced or widowed teenagers or even younger.

Parliament refused in December to raise the minimum age for girl marriage which is 13 and sometimes as young as 7 years old. Allahyar Malekshahi, Chairman of the Committee on Judicial Affairs, explained to the Fars Agency on 23 December that "[t]he Committee on Judicial Affairs has held several meetings to discuss this issue... Finally, the committee concluded that it is not possible to discuss this bill further because it contains religious and

social deficiencies. It was therefore decided that a delegation of the commission's members would propose another motion that could resolve some of the problems raised by the (rejected) plan. »

Mohammad Ali Pour-Mokhtar, a member of this commission, had already announced that the bill “contradicts the teachings of Islam”. He added: “The members of the Commission believe that, in the current circumstances, marriage must be encouraged and facilitated and that it has priority over raising the age of marriage.” (Nasim Online Site - December 17, 2018)

The early marriage of girls in Iran has disastrous consequences and is one of the most obvious examples of child abuse being official. Childbirth for girls aged 15-19 is twice as dangerous as for women over 20.

Early marriages also lead to early divorce and widowhood. According to the figures, there have been 18.000 divorces of girls under 19 years of age.

According to official statistics, 180,000 early marriages take place in Iran each year and represent 24 per cent of the total number of marriages.

A social expert revealed that currently, 41,000 early marriages of girls under 15 years of age take place each year in Iran.

Mandatory dress code

Throughout the year, arrests of women who did not comply with the mandatory veil continued and the authorities called for harsher sanctions and prison sentences .

The prosecutor of Tehran, Jafari Dolatabadi , announced that the police would do their duty against under-veiled women. He gave written instructions to confiscate cars whose drivers do not wear the veil.

Iran's Interior Minister ordered police on April 15 to crack down on women who do not comply with the mandatory dress code.

Illiteracy

There are 1.8 million illiterate women in Iran between the ages of 10 and 49 . However, the data indicate that the actual number is much higher. In an interview published by the official media, Ali Bagherzadeh, Deputy Minister of Education and Head of the Organization of the Literacy Movement, announced: "There are about 2.7 million illiterate people aged 10 to 49 in Iran, of whom nearly 1.8 million are women".
