



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-seventh session

6–17 March 2023

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to  
the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly  
entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and  
peace for the twenty-first century”**

### **Statement submitted by Imam Ali’s Popular Students Relief Society, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

### Concerning status of women in Iran and Afghanistan

Over the past few years, different regions in the Middle East especially Iran and Afghanistan have been experiencing major systematic violence against women. Despite all efforts by civil society and non-governmental organizations, violence against women and girls still remains as one of the greatest human rights challenges in these regions. From educational deprivation of girls and school attacks in Hazara neighbourhood, in Afghanistan to structural violence in the context of policing and the violent suppression of protestors including young girls and youth in Iran.

Imam Ali's Popular Students Relief Society as a non-governmental organization with the mission of eradicating poverty and social exclusion by empowering women and children of underrepresented communities throughout Iran and the Middle East has witnessed this systematic violence against women for decades, particularly in marginal neighbourhoods. In many cases the shortage in systematic and legal supports has directed us towards weak solutions and women in deprived areas as the ones who are tolerating double injustice, always face more harms.

In addition to violence against women, the massive repression of the civil society in Iran and Afghanistan has made work for non-governmental organizations very difficult in the last few years. Many women and children who were supported by civil society and non-profit organizations lost their supports. After the approval of the dissolution of our office in Iran, all women who were receiving supports from our organization are under massive social and economic pressures, particularly women who are heads of households.

Today we are witnessing that instead of the rapid approval of preventing domestic violence against women, different forms of violence are being imposed by the officials in Iran and Afghanistan. Unfortunately, on the verge of the international girl's day, in Iran, a number of high school girls have been arrested due to security charges and protesting.

We are deeply concerned about women suffer under a system of discrimination and inequality in Afghanistan and Iran. We call on all international and human rights organizations around the world to support the oppressed women in these regions.

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