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## I. Letter From The Secretary-General

Highly Esteemed Delegates,

First of all, I would like to thank all of you for your enthusiasm and interest in our conference. My name is Yaren Keçili and I would like to express my gratitude to be able to welcome you to the seventh annual session of Troy Model United Nations Conference 2024 as your Secretary-General. This year, as always, we feel great joy to present to you our hard work. Both the academic and operations teams have been working very hard to serve you to the best of their abilities and give you an unforgettable experience.

I would like to admit that this committee has a soft spot in my heart as I have been working on UN Women in the previous couple of years. This year we have decided to call attention to the matters happening in Iran. Our delegates will be focusing on The Struggle for Women's Rights in Iran. Our world has been facing similar challenges and has been struggling to promote gender equality for centuries. Many lives have been sacrificed to get the point across, this truly is a crucial matter that needs all the regard. Therefore, I genuinely hope to see fruitful debates being discussed during this committee. I also want to thank Mert Arda Özdemir who is going to serve as your Under-Secretary-General in UN Women. He and his board members need all the praise for their work.

Once again I would like to welcome you all to both the conference and the committee. Buckle up and get ready because we have prepared an incredible ride for you. Let's have three days full of fun, diplomacy, and memories not to be forgotten.

Yours Sincerely,

Yaren Keçili

Secretary-General of TroyMUN

## II. Letter From The Under-Secretary-General

Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of my chair board, I would like to welcome you all to the committee of UN Women in TroyMUN 2024. My name is Yaren Keçili and it is my utmost pleasure and honor to serve as your main chair in the committee and one of the Under-Secretary-Generals in this year's organization.

As the Chair Board, we believe that delegates with a passion for politics, equality, and international relations will undoubtedly make every effort to have a fruitful committee. This year's agenda item focuses on The Struggle for Women's Rights in Iran. We hope to raise awareness on the matter and give our delegates a broader view of the problem. This study guide aims to give background and general information about the committee and the agenda but it is expected for the participants to do further research and expand their knowledge on the issues at hand.

I would like to thank Ms. Çağlayan Nazlıca and Ms. Arzu Kotan for making this conference possible and for all their efforts. They have been working together for years in the creation of several previous conferences and it is always a pleasure to work with them.

I would like to welcome you all to TroyMUN'24 once again. I hope to meet you all soon. Let's have three days full of fun and diplomacy.

In case, you have further questions you can contact me via my email address.

yarenkecilimun@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Yaren Keçili

Under-Secretary-General responsible for UN Women

### **III. Introduction to the Committee: UN Women**

UN Women is the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.



The birth of the commission on the status of women was when United Nations commitments to the advancement of women began with the signing of the United Nations Charter in San Francisco in 1945. In its preamble, it reaffirms “faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small”.

During the inaugural meetings of the United Nations General Assembly in London in February 1946, Eleanor Roosevelt, a United States delegate, read an open letter addressed to “the women of the world”. A few days later, the Subcommission on the Status of Women was established under the Commission on Human Rights.

Throughout its over 70 years of existence and its 62 sessions, the Commission on the Status of Women has consistently advocated for the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and enjoyment of their human rights, in an effort to realize the substantive equality of all women and girls, everywhere. [1]

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system’s work in advancing gender equality, and in all deliberations and agreements linked to the 2030 Agenda.[2]

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were eight international development goals for the year 2015 created following the Millennium Summit, following the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. Sustainable Development Goal 5 concerns gender equality and is fifth of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations in 2015. Gender equality by 2030 requires urgent action to eliminate the many root causes of discrimination that still curtail women's rights in private and public spheres.

UN Women acts to empower women and girls across all its programmes and advocacy. With stepped up action on gender equality, every part of the world can make progress towards sustainable development by 2030, leaving no one behind.



Working for the empowerment and rights of women and girls globally, UN Women's main roles are:

- To support inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms.
- To help Member States implement these standards, standing ready to provide suitable technical and financial support to those countries that request it, and to forge effective partnerships with civil society.
- To lead and coordinate the UN system's work on gender equality, as well as promote accountability, including through regular monitoring of system-wide progress.[3]

Headquartered at the United Nations in New York, UN Women promotes women's empowerment, rights and gender equality globally, as well as within and among individual countries through a network of regional, country and liaison offices. UN Women continues their work in several regions listed as : Africa, Americas and The Caribbean, Arab States and North Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia.[4]

## VI. Introduction to Agenda Item: The Struggle for Women's Rights in Iran

### A. Timeline of Women's Rights in Iran

- 1920: Women's rights were focused around the Veil. Education became more accessible
- 1930: The veil was banned in 1936  
Many women did not leave the house due to fear of being attacked by extremists.
- 1940: The ban against head coverings was removed, therefore becoming optional. The Iranian Women's Party was founded The first women's suffrage bill was brought forward though was denied by the government.
- 1950: Women gained the right to vote on a municipal level in 1952.
- 1963: Women got the right to vote, the right to run for parliament, the right to have/obtain a divorce and keep custody of their children.
- 1970: Women had 22 seats in parliament and more than 200 in local council.
- 1979: Revolution about women's rights and the compulsory hijab.
- 1980: Hijab was mandated and was brought to assent by the Islamic republic. Other rights that women had were also stripped away.
- 1990: "Pink Revolution" where women wore colorful hijabs/veils in protest of the "traditional" color of black
- 2000: Peaceful protests were held in objection to the discriminatory laws against women.
- 2010: The "My Stealthy Freedom" movement was started by Masih Alinejad in 2014 where Iranian women posted photos of themselves without the hijab or veil. Zanan Magazine, a women's magazine, started publishing after being shut down in 2008 by the government for how it portrayed women in Iran.
- 2020: Veils and hijabs are compulsory. Worldwide protests over the death of Masha Amini. Protests in Iran being led by women. Protesting against the Islamic Republic and the politicians who run the country. Criticism of the Morality Police [5]



## B. Main Reasons for the Struggle of Women's Rights in Iran

The women's rights problem in Iran drastically surged after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Prior to that, Iranian women were able to vote, attend school, work, and engage in a number of other activities. In itself, the revolution opened avenues for the creation of an Islamic Republic under Ayatollah Khomeini's rule, which had strict adherence to Sharia law.



Under the new regime, the greater part of rights that women had acquired were reversed. This stipulated the introduction of the obligatory hijab law, whereby women had to cover their hair and body in public. Women's legal rights, with respect to marriage, divorce, and child custody, were drastically limited, and there was a strict implementation of gender segregation in the public place. The age of marriage for girls was reduced to 13, and in some instances, even younger than that, with judicial consent. [6]

The issue of women's rights was deemed to be an afterthought under the new regime, and, thus, no immediate steps were taken by them to address their concerns. Instead, as was feared, women gradually lost their rights as strict control over their bodies was legislated. Women found themselves pushed out of the public sphere, losing all advancements made under the Shah's regime. In the 1990s, women activists focused on restoring some of their lost rights under family laws and succeeded in regaining the rights to initiate divorce and obtain child custody. Throughout this period, many women committed daring acts of disobedience to highlight the conditions they lived under. In February 1994, Homa Darabi publicly removed her hijab and immolated herself in protest against the mandatory veiling. In 2019, Sahar Khodayari became a symbol of the regime's oppression of women following her death by self-immolation after she was arrested for trying to enter a football game. Control over a woman's body has long had political overtones in Iran. [7]

This change gave way to the very long-term battle for women's rights in Iran. It is a non-stop battle of women's rights activists fighting against the government with huge repressions. For decades, women have continued to protest these unjust laws at the cost of imprisonment, torture, and even death. [8]

### C. Current Political Situation in Iran

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran , known simply as Nezam, is the ruling state and current political system in Iran, in power since the Iranian Revolution and fall of the Pahlavi dynasty in 1979.

Its constitution, adopted by an ex post facto referendum, calls for separation of powers, with executive, legislative and judicial systems. The Supreme Leader of Iran is the country's head of state and commander-in-chief of the armed forces. It is currently one of the three governments using the title Islamic republic.

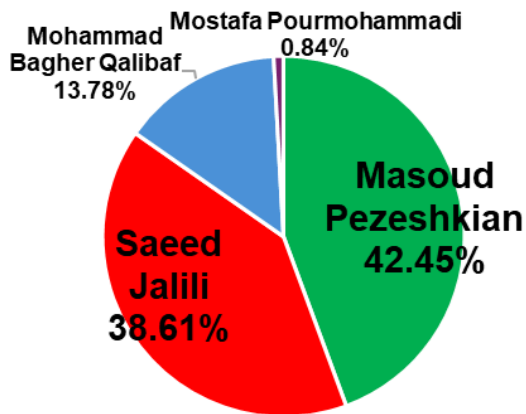


After the victory of the Islamic Revolution, a referendum was held by the Interim Government of Iran on the 30 and 31 March 1979 (10 and 11 Farvardin 1358), asking people to vote either Yes or No to an Islamic Republic. The results of the referendum were announced soon after by Ayatollah Khomeini on 2 April 1979, with 98.2 percent of the Iranian citizens voting in favor of an Islamic Republic.

Masoud Pezeshkian, born 29 September 1954, is an Iranian politician and cardiac surgeon, who has been the current president of Iran since 28 July 2024 who was elected after the sudden death of Sayyid Ebrahim Raisolsadati in a helicopter crash on May 19th 2024. The 2024 elections consisted of two rounds resulting in Masoud Pezhkian of the Reformist party winning by 54.76%. [9]

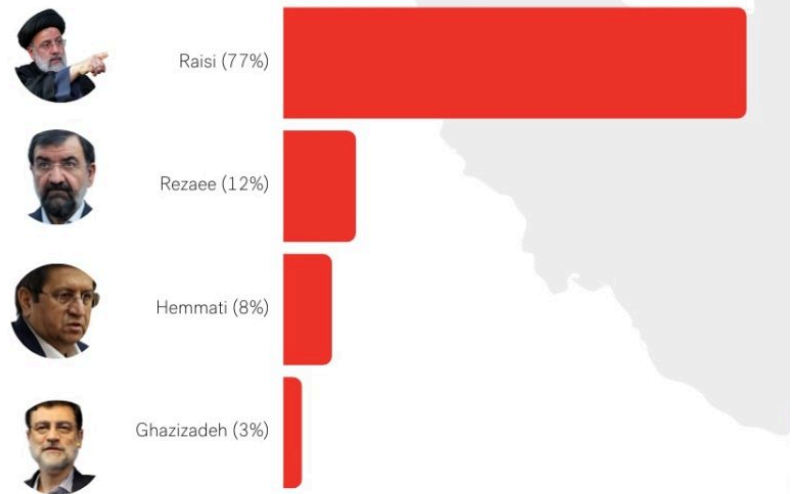


## June 28, 2024 Election Results



## Iran Presidential Election Prediction

June 16, 2021, excludes "don't knows"



### D. Protests From the Public and the Media

On September 16, 2022, the death of Mahsa Amini while in the custody of Tehran's religious morality police sent shockwaves through

Iran and launched a revolutionary movement, characterized by the slogan "Woman, Life, Freedom". The protests had been a response to the killing of 22-year-old Jina Mahsa Amini, an Iranian-Kurdish woman, by the morality police in September 2022. She was



detained for an alleged violation of the mandatory hijab laws, whereby she was found to have met her unlawful death due to physical violence on her body while in custody. Instead of conducting a thorough investigation, the State obstructed the truth and foiled justice.

The government quickly moved to suppress protests in cities across Iran, arresting more than 20,000 people and killing more than 500 young protesters. The regime subsequently employed facial recognition technology to enforce strict laws on wearing the hijab, resulting in the closure of numerous restaurants, shops, and even pharmacies who served uncovered women.

Yet despite this crackdown, the “Woman, Life, Freedom” movement is still alive today—the culmination of a gradual cultural paradigm shift that has unfolded over the past 44 years. This shift has touched every corner of Iranian society, encompassing religious and ethnic minorities, university students, professors, schoolchildren, factory workers, journalists, artists, and countless other citizens. Over the past twelve months, there has been a notable rise in Iranian professionals in various fields, including the arts, sports, music, and cinema, who have advocated for women’s issues. [10]

Kimia Alizadeh was the first Iranian female athlete to win an Olympic medal when she claimed bronze in Rio de Janeiro at age 18. Her win catapulted her to fame, but she grew frustrated with life in Iran. As she announced she was leaving her country four years ago, she accused Iranian officials of sexism and criticized wearing the mandatory hijab headscarf. At the time, she described herself as “one of the millions of oppressed women in Iran.” After heading to Germany, she became a member of the Refugee Olympic Team and came close to earning a bronze medal in Tokyo. “This medal is not just for me. I had an opportunity to represent refugees and I want to give this medal to all the refugees around the world,” she said. “And I hope it was a little bit of light for them.” [11]

As the world has advanced technologically, the form of protests has also evolved. Social media has become a new site for disobeying modesty laws, with women posting pictures without their hijab. The internet has provided a platform to form a virtual support community of Iranian women within and outside Iran. Social media campaigns such as My Stealthy Freedom and My Camera Is My Weapon, started by Masih Alinejed on Facebook, have allowed these women to connect and organize, generate proof of the harassment they face, and reveal the oppressive regime they live under.

Social media influencers and celebrities have also contributed to making these campaigns have more audience and reach more people. The World has started to hear the stories of suffering women in Iran. [12]

## E. Deaths During the Mahsa Amini Protests

Deaths during the Mahsa Amini protests refer to those people who were killed due to Iran's nationwide protests of 2022, triggered by the death of 22-year-old Kurdish Iranian Jina Mahsa Amini on September 16, 2022, in a Tehran hospital under suspicious circumstances.



As of October 5, 2022, HRANA registered 342 civil protest gatherings in all 31 provinces of Iran, including 266 street protests in 105 major cities and 76 student protests in all 69 universities in the country. The police and Basijis used tear gas, rubber and metal bullets and live ammunition to disperse the gatherings, killing hundreds of unarmed people. In the first three weeks, HRANA initially identified 200 fatalities, including 18 children and adolescents, largely through analysis of video footage and testimonies received from Iran/

By the end of October 2022, NCRI announced 280 identified protesters were killed in the protests and put the total death toll at 450 so far. By November 2, 2022, IHR registered at least 277 people killed in the protests and in custody, including 40 children. IHR is investigating numerous unconfirmed reports of further killings and also expects dozens of executions of those arrested on arbitrary death sentences. As of November 5, 2022, at least 314 people have been killed in protests in Iran, including 47 minors and 38 security forces, according to HRANA and more than 14,000 were arrested. Following a massacre by regime forces in Khash on November 4, 2022, NCRI reported 324 identified fatalities. By December 17, 2022, at least 469 people have been killed.

Human rights activists assume a high number of unreported deaths. A reason for this is that the Iranian regime arbitrarily arrests or kidnaps thousands of people, kills many without a process of law, and instead of handing over their bodies to their relatives, disappears them. Media research and criminal investigations are forbidden under the dictatorship of Iran, and are being done illegally and then associated with great risks and danger for witnesses, investigative journalists, human rights activists and lawyers. [13]

## F. Femicide Statistics After the Protests

According to Etemaad Daily, the period from March 20 to June 21 saw at least 35 women and girls in Iran killed by close male relatives, mostly husbands. The figures equate to a 25% increase from 28 murders in the same period of 2023 and a 59% rise from 22 in 2022. In 2024, 85% of the killings were committed by the women's spouses, and the cases have been spread across the country. The number of women killed by their husbands has increased to 27 in 2024 from 16 in 2022 and 15 in 2023. Women rights activists add that the rise of femicide since 2022 has to do with Iran's laws and patriarchal society according to Islamic law, which has contributed to the increase in murder rates.

The United Nations labeled the policies of Iran as "gender apartheid." It claimed that the state policies institutionalized violence against women. Honor killings can be for diverse reasons, including not wearing the compulsory hijab, which is regarded as shameful on the part of the relative. UN Women reports that globally, more than 133 women or girls are killed every day on average, which is characterized as the extreme end of the violence against them.

In an interview conducted by the Iran International, Mina Khani, an Iranian feminist and human rights activist, said there are no accurate statistics in Iran due to heavy censorship, corruption, and state involvement in femicide cases. She said official figures show the number of cases in Iran is "misleadingly low" compared to the figures of other countries. Cases of femicide in Iran are tracked by organizations like Hengaw, which has reported at least 50 cases in various cities since the beginning of 2024. [14]



## G. Case Studies

### a. Behnaz Amani

“I wanted the fact-finding mission to make the Islamic Republic responsible for its inhuman actions. All of us in prison, every day, were crying or weaving our anger, our fears, our frustrations into beautiful bracelets with thread for our parents, families and friends.” Behnaz Amani, a former academic from Iran, was imprisoned for supporting



the "Woman, Life, Freedom" protests, which erupted after the tragic death of Jina Mahsa Amini in 2022. The UN Human Rights Council established a fact-finding mission (FFMI) to investigate alleged human rights violations by the Iranian government during these protests. The FFMI collected extensive evidence and found that Iran committed severe violations, including unlawful killings, torture, and gender-based persecution, affecting women, children, and minorities disproportionately. [15]

### b. Masih Alinejad

Masih was arrested in Iran and faced major harassment and threats before leaving her own homeland. She has stated that Iran allegedly tried to have her killed in New York. Alinejad, who saw the incident as an attempt on her life by Tehran, said: "What the Iranian regime



did, first trying to kidnap me and now sending someone here trying to kill me, it's a pattern. It's a continuation of their way of oppressing dissidents inside and outside Iran.” Her activism focuses on the freedom of expression and women's rights in Iran. She is now an Iranian journalist and activist known for her opposition to compulsory hijab in Iran. She founded the "My Stealthy Freedom" campaign, which

focuses on encouraging women to share photos of themselves without hijabs. Masih faces significant threats and persecution for her activism to this day but continues her aspiring work from exile. [16]

### **c. Shirin Ebadi**

Dr. Shirin Ebadi is an Iranian lawyer, human rights activist, and Nobel Peace Prize winner. After founding the Defenders of Human Rights Center in Iran, she faced significant provocations and threats from the Iranian government as a consequence of her efforts to protect women's rights in Iran. Her activism led to



numerous challenges, including harassment, legal persecution, and ultimately, her forced exile from Iran. Despite these horrible difficulties, Ebadi has remained a vocal advocate for human rights globally and has continued her work from abroad, using her platform to fight against injustice and to support victims of human rights abuses. Her work has been exquisite in raising international awareness about the human rights situation in Iran and advocating for change. “I will continue to fight for human rights and justice. My hope is that one day we will live in a world where no one has to endure the suffering that so many of us have faced.” were here words describing her extraordinary passion to provide proper women rights for all. “ [17]

### **d. Shirin Neshat**

Shirin Neshat is an Iranian-born American artist whose photography, video, and feature films investigate how women find freedom in repressive societies. About her work, Neshat stated: “Everything I’ve done is a celebration of the power of women. The Western world sometimes views Iranian women as victims, and while they’ve been continuously oppressed by religion and difficult political situations, they’ve always fought back. They’ve always broken rules.” Neshat's work has been widely exhibited around the world and she has won multiple awards for her photographs and short-films representing the struggles and power of Iranian women. [18]

## H. Notable NGOs

- **\*International Campaign for Human Rights in**

**Iran (CHRI)\*:** CHRI is an independent,

nonpartisan, nonprofit organization working to

protect and promote human rights in Iran

primarily women rights. CHRI has significantly

advanced human rights by advocating for a UN

special rapporteur, reforming death penalty laws,

securing stays of execution for juveniles, exposing state violence, advancing women's and

children's rights, enhancing internet security, supporting political prisoners, raising

awareness of minority discrimination, and advocating for people with disabilities. [19]



- **\*Shirin Ebadi Foundation\*:** This organization is founded by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi, this foundation focuses on human rights, with a strong emphasis on women's rights. It provides legal aid, advocacy, and education to support victims of human rights abuses. Dr. Ebadi praises the courageous women of Iran and the men who have stood beside them against the brutality of the regime in their struggle for dignity and freedom with her organization. [20]

- **\*Association for the Defense of Women's Rights\*:** This organization is dedicated to promoting gender equality and addressing women's rights issues in Iran. It highly engages in advocacy, education, and support activities. They aim to advance feminist agendas through their work with policy makers, funders and activists in regional and global spaces. They also work to influence feminist and women's rights movements to center historically oppressed movements as part of efforts to strengthen our collective power and influence.

[21]

- **\*Human Rights Watch (HRW) - Iran**

Section\*: An international organization that monitors human rights abuses globally, including women's rights violations in Iran. Additionally, HRW publishes reports and advocates for policy changes. [22]



## **I. United Nations Efforts in the Region**

- **UN Women**

In 2022 at the time of the tragic death of Mahsa Amini, UN Women stated that they support the women of Iran in their rightful demands to protest against injustice without facing reprisals and to freely exercise their bodily autonomy, including their choice of dress. Furthermore, they



stand by their efforts to seek accountability and uphold their fundamental human rights as outlined in the Charter of the United Nations. UN Women have a crucial role in women rights in Iran. They have focused on several key initiatives in Iran to promote women's rights and gender equality. Their efforts include supporting legislative changes to protect women from violence and discrimination, promoting women's economic empowerment through various programs, and enhancing leadership opportunities for women. They also collaborate with local organizations to improve and enhance women's access to education and healthcare and provide resources and support during humanitarian crises. UN Women's work in Iran is part of their broader mission to advocate for women's rights and foster gender equality globally. [23]



- **OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights)**

The OHCHR monitors and reports on human rights violations in Iran, especially including those affecting women. The OHCHR also provides detailed reports and recommendations aimed at addressing and rectifying human rights abuses. They advocate for the equal enjoyment of all human rights for women and girls, including freedom from violence, sexual and reproductive rights, access to justice, socio-economic equality, and participation in decision-making processes. [24]

- **UNICEF**

UNICEF engages in projects related to child and maternal health in Iran, which support women's rights and empowerment. Their work includes improving health services and education for women and children, contributing to broader gender equality efforts. For instance, in 2023 UNICEF held educational support through remedial school classes, stationery, and hygiene kits in several provinces to Iranian Refugees. [25]



- **UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)**

UNHCR works with the Iranian government to support refugee livelihoods through vocational training and employment opportunities. From 2018 to 2022, UNHCR trained over 11,700 refugees, focusing on expanding income opportunities, including for female-headed households. [26]

## J. United Nations Reaction to the Recent Events

Iran has been ousted from a UN body tasked with empowering women after world powers voted in favor of a motion submitted by the US, which said the Islamic Republic's membership was an "ugly stain" on the group's credibility.

Activists and rights groups have said Tehran's role in the 45-member commission on the status of women was a farce, considering the regime's forces have beaten and killed women peacefully calling for gender equality.

The US representative to the UN said female Iranian activists – some of whom were in the room in New York during the vote on Wednesday – had appealed to Washington to present a resolution that would expel Iran from the body.



"The commission is the premier UN body for promoting gender equality and empowering women," ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said. "It cannot do its important work if it's being undermined from within. Iran's membership at this moment is an ugly stain on the commission's credibility."

The UN Commission on the Status of Women, established in 1946, is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Its 45 members are elected for four-year terms by the ECOSOC.

The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has voted to expel Iran from the UN's premiere global body for gender equality over Tehran's brutal crackdown on women-led protests.

Following a campaign led by the United States, 29 members of ECOSOC voted to remove the Islamic republic from the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) for the remainder of its 2022-26 term.

Eight countries voted against and 16 abstained. A simple majority was needed to adopt the resolution, which strips Iran of its membership of the commission with immediate effect. [27]

## **V. Further Reading**

- <https://www.weeps.org/resources>
- <https://www.unwomen.org/en/resources>
- <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/annual-report>
- [https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories?f%5B0%5D=story\\_type%3A1460](https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories?f%5B0%5D=story_type%3A1460)
- <https://www.unwomen.org/en/partnerships>
- <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/10/28/womens-rights-iran>
- <https://www.wfpg.org/wfpg-in-support-of-iranian-women>
- <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women>
- The Politics of Women's Rights in Iran-Arzoos Osanloo, An Anthropology
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