HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN

The sustained attention of United Nations has provided opportunities for human rights improvement in Iran, but the situation in the country remains dire.

THE DEATH PENALTY

Iran remains the world leader in executions per capita. Capital offense trials consistently fail to meet fair trial standards. Some executions are carried out in public. Most executions are for nonviolent drug-related offenses, which is not permitted under international law. Authorities also continue to execute juveniles yearly.

Evidence of International Impact

United Nations human rights bodies have spoken out strongly against the death penalty for drug-related offenses in Iran, which account for approximately 60% of executions in the country. In July 2017, Iran’s parliament passed an amendment to the drug law which, if approved and implemented, would eliminate the death penalty for a large number of drug-related offenses. The amendment must now be approved by Iran’s Guardian Council.

Cases of Note

On 14 September 2016, an appeals court upheld a death sentence against Sina Dehghan for allegedly “insulting the Prophet” of Islam on a messaging application. Dehghan claimed his confession and expressions of remorse were spurred by interrogators telling him these actions would lead to a pardon.

On 10 August 2017 authorities executed Alireza Tajiki for a homicide and rape he reportedly committed when he was 15 years old. His trial was grossly unfair, relying on confessions allegedly coerced through severe beatings and suspension torture.

On 18 October 2016, an appeals court upheld a six-year sentence for Esmail Abdi for his work as the head of the Iranian Teachers Union. Abdi helped organize several strikes to protest low teachers’ wages.

FREE EXPRESSION, RELIGION, AND ARBITRARY DETENTIONS

National laws and practices continue to severely restrict fundamental freedoms, especially the right to freedoms of expression and religion. Journalists, social media activists, human rights defenders, and religious practitioners continue to be harassed, detained, and sentenced to harsh prison terms for criticizing the government or their expressing options and beliefs.

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WOMEN’S RIGHTS
As a result of laws and state police, women in Iran continue to experience discrimination in most aspects of public and private life.

Women in Government

EXECUTIVE BRANCH The Guardian Council blocked all women candidates from running in the 2017 presidential election. Rouhani appointed no women to his cabinet.

JUDICIARY Women are not legally allowed to be judges in Iran.

CITY COUNCILS During the 2017 elections, women made up 18,000 of 269,000 candidates for city or village office. Results were mixed:

415 Women elected to office in Sistan-Balochistan

17/289 Seats held by women in Parliament

Number of women elected to public office decreased in 16 provincial capitals. It increased in 11, including Tehran.

Women and Unemployment

Unemployment Rate (Overall)

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<th>Economic Participation</th>
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<td>Women</td>
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<td>15.9%</td>
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World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index in Iran 2016

The Global Gender Gap Index is an index designed to measure gender equality in 144 major and emerging economies.

Health and Survival

Educational Attainment

Political Empowerment

SOURCE: HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

CHILD MARRIAGE

Child Marriage Records

IN 2015-16, UNICEF ESTIMATES

36,938 Recorded marriages involved girls under the age of 15

196,592 recorded marriages involved girls under the aged 15-19

SOURCE: IRANIAN STATISTICS ORGANIZATION

Evidence of International Impact

The international community at Iran’s Universal Periodic Review and the Special Rapporteur on Iran has repeatedly raised alarm at Iran’s child marriage rate. As a result, several members of Parliament have begun drafting a law that would raise the minimum age of marriage in Iran.