

PRESS RELEASE

Boycott Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT ó As Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad makes plans to travel to the United Nations on Monday, the Iran Human Rights Documentation Center (IHRDC) urges the world to protest his government's continued violations of the fundamental human rights of Iranians. While the issue of human rights in Iran has fallen off the front pages, the Iranian government is escalating its crackdown on dissent. Hundreds of activists and members of minority groups have fled the country out of fear for their lives.

In a particularly galling move this week ó while Iran is attempting to dismantle the women rights movement - Iran was given a seat on the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women. Soon after the 1979 revolution, women sought to change the discriminatory laws enacted by the fledgling Islamic Republic. Over the last 30 years, the movement has developed into one of the most sophisticated civil movements in Iran. Activists have demanded equal rights for women in marriage; equal rights to divorce; an end to the practice of polygamy and temporary marriage; the right to pass on nationality to their children; equal *dieh* (compensation for bodily injury or death); equal inheritance rights; equal testimonial rights; and the removal of all laws that discriminate against women, including stoning sentences issued in cases of adultery.

Women's rights activists were targeted leading up to and following the June 12, 2009 presidential election in a concerted effort to cripple the movement. Prominent activists were forced into exile or imprisoned. Defense attorney Shadi Sadr was imprisoned and forced into exile. Writer and activist Aida Saadat was also forced to leave after being beaten in a Tehran street on her way home from a lengthy interrogation. The Iranian government continues to threaten, arrest and imprison not only veteran activists but less-prominent supporters. Women rights activists remain in prison. Others are now fleeing Iran because they know that, unlike in years past, they will not be jailed for a short time and then released. This time, there is a good chance they will be executed and that bail will be set so high that their families will not be able to afford their freedom.

The women of Iran and the rest of the world deserve better. The United Nations and the world must not let Mr. Ahmadinejad and the government he leads continue to violate the human rights of Iranians. These violations will not be ignored or forgotten.

IHRDC is a nonprofit organization based in New Haven, Connecticut that was founded in 2004 by a group of human rights scholars, activists, and historians. Its staff of human rights lawyers and researchers collect evidence relating to human rights in Iran and produce comprehensive and detailed reports on the human rights situation in Iran since the 1979 revolution. The Center's goal is to encourage an informed dialogue in both Iran and abroad, and to encourage accountability. The human rights reports and an archive of documents are available to the public for research and educational purposes on the Center's website: www.iranhrdc.org.

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