

PRESS RELEASE

IRAN'S MISTREATMENT OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVISTS MUST STOP

June 12, 2009

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT –

Today is Election Day in Iran. But, it is also the anniversary of what the New York Times called the “first public display of dissent by women since the 1979 revolution.” On June 12, 2005, seventeen days before presidential elections, hundreds of women gathered publicly in Tehran chanting and demanding equality under the Islamic Republic’s laws. The protests were quickly broken up amid allegations of clubbing and police detentions.

Today also marks the third year anniversary of Aliyeh Eghdam Doust’s arrest for her participation in a women’s rights protest in Haft-e Tir Square in Tehran. Other women were also arrested during the protest; however she was the first to have her sentence implemented. She was imprisoned in January 2009.

Arrests of women’s rights activists have escalated this year. In March, twelve women’s rights activists were arrested while meeting for a New Years visit of families of political prisoners. On May 7 and 8, two members of the One Million Signature Campaign—a campaign to end discrimination against women in Iran—were arrested after they investigated an honor killing.

Women continue to face legal and political discrimination in Iran. For example, a woman’s testimony is worth half that of a man in court, and women have unequal divorce and inheritance rights. In the 2005 election, like the one taking place today, Iran’s Council of Guardians rejected all the women who applied for candidacy.

The Iran Human Rights Documentation Center (IHRDC) calls for the release of all women’s rights activists in Iran who have been detained for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, and implores the Iranian government to repeal laws that discriminate against women.

The 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 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 among scholars and the general public in both Iran and abroad. The human rights reports and an archive of documents are available to the public for research and educational purposes at www.iranhrdc.org.

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