

PRESS RELEASE

Iran Human Rights Documentation Center Releases Report on Iran's Attempt to Dismantle the Women's Rights Movement

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT - The Iran Human Rights Documentation Center (IHRDC) today released a report documenting and analyzing the Iranian government's efforts to dismantle the women's rights movement in the months leading up to and the year following the June 2009 presidential election. Most of the report is based on interviews with Iranian women's rights activists including Shadi Sadr, Asieh Amini, Mahboubeh Abbascholzadeh, Parvin Ardalan and Aida Saadat.

The women's rights movement in Iran traces its history back to the Constitutional Revolution at the turn of the 20th century. Considering the movement an increasing threat, the current government took calculated steps during the months leading up to the 2009 election to silence women's rights activists.

Following the election, the regime used the cover of alleged national security threats to attempt to dismantle the movement. The authorities arrested activists during demonstrations, and continue to arrest them in their homes and in public, often without warrants. They have searched their homes and seized their belongings. They have detained activists and their defenders without charge and denied them access to their lawyers or families. Prison authorities have subjected activists to lengthy periods of solitary confinement, and lengthy and often violent interrogations. They have released some women but only after they and their families posted high bail amounts or produced financial guarantees. Other activists remain in prison. Some have been fired from their jobs because of their activism.

The members of the movement—from part time volunteers to world-renowned human rights defenders—have been faced with a stark choice—cease their activism in order to protect themselves, their families and livelihoods, or continue their work at the risk of facing criminal allegations, arbitrary arrest and detention, interrogation, torture and even death. Parisa Kakaee, a veteran women's rights activist, believes that “[t]here are three options: to become inactive, to go to prison or to leave the country.” Many have fled the country.

Silencing the Women's Rights Movement in Iran is available in English on IHRDC's website at

<http://www.iranhrdc.org/httpdocs/English/pdfs/Reports/Women's%20Rights.pdf>.

The Persian translation of the report will be available this fall.

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 a database of documents relating to human rights in Iran are available to the public for research and educational purposes on the Center's website.

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