

The Iranian Women's Campaign:

Shining Successes and Troubles Go Hand in Hand

The One Million Signatures Campaign: A Summary of the Events and Achievements of 2007-8 (1387)



Achievements in the Legal Domain

- * Inheritance law has been reformed so that wives may now inherit fixed assets from their husbands (February 2009).
- * Based on the promulgation of legal equality of women and men with respect to compensation payments (*diyyeh*), insurance companies are now obliged to treat women and men equally with regard to such payments (to be implemented in the coming year).
- * Success of the women's movement in having articles 23 and 25 of the Family Protection Bill struck out (according to article 23, a man may take another wife without the approval of the first wife, with the approval of a court, on condition that he have adequate pecuniary resources for their support, and that he treat them equitably. Article 25 of the same bill concerned taxation of the *mehriyyeh* (sum paid by the husband to the wife during marriage), and according to this the wife would be obliged at the start of the marriage to pay taxes on her *mehriyyeh*) (September 2008).

Events and Activities

- * A declaration of solidarity and support from 40 international human and women's rights organizations on the anniversary of 22nd Khordad 1385 (June 12th 2006), including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Human Rights First, the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, the New York Campaign for Peace and Democracy, the Asia Center for Human Rights and Development, Thailand, the Women's Development Society, Italy (June 2008).
- * The Campaign's domestic and international networks have spread: the Campaign is at the present time active in more than 20 Iranian cities and provinces and 13 countries around the world--Kuwait, Cyprus, Turkey, France, Britain, Austria, Germany, Canada, and the USA. Solidarity of bloggers with the Campaign in protest against the repression of its members, together with an appeal to international human rights organizations to keep a close watch on the condition of Campaign activists (January 2009). Collection of more than 2200 signatures for the coalition of human rights and women's movement activists, including Change for Equality and Feminist School, against the "Family Protection Bill".
- * Protest of more than 2000 students, human rights advocates, and civic activists concerning the condition of Zeynab Bayezidi, women's activist in Mahabad, and other jailed activists.
- * Formation of a campaign for the release of Zeynab Bayezidi, a women's rights activists given a 4 year custodial sentence along with internal exile (July 2008).
- * Formation of a campaign in support of the Center of Human Rights Defenders, as part of the efforts of women's activists to mobilize against violent attacks on the Center and on Shirin Ebadi (January 2009).

Pressures*

- * The sentence of three years imprisonment against Aliyeh Eghdamdoost, one of those arrested on June 12th 2006, was put into effect. At the present time 13 activists from the women's movement have been sentenced to prison terms ranging from 4 months to 4 years. All of these individuals faced charges like "propaganda activity against the state" and "endangering national security" and were ultimately convicted of these charges.
 - * 319 news items concerning systematic violation of women's rights in Iran, up until March 2009. 15 women's movement activists received court summons; 13 activists were interrogated in court; 20 activists were arrested; 14 activists were convicted; 22 activists were sentenced to jail sentences; 6 activists were forbidden to leave the country; 10 activists were obliged to pay bail; there were 30 instances of websites and weblogs run by women's activists being filtered; 50 cases of international human rights organizations offering support for Iranian women; 15 women's political, cultural, social activists were imprisoned; 9 women's political or cultural activists received prison sentences; the offices of the Center of Human Rights Defenders were ransacked, and Shirin Ebadi was attacked both in her office and at home (January 2009).
 - * The website of Change for Equality was filtered for the ninth time.
- *(Because civil society institutions are unable to function freely, and because of media censorship, this report includes only a small portion of the cases of violations of women's rights in Iran).

Deplorable News for Nowrouz 1388

More than ten members of the One Million Signatures Campaign were arrested in the street by security officers and taken to the Niloufar detention center. They had gathered together on the sixth day of the holidays in order to visit the family of Zahra Bani Yaghoub, a young doctor who had died while in custody, and the families of other political detainees. In addition two members of the group Mothers for Peace, before they were able to carry out their Nowrouz visit to the families of some of the prisoners, and to the family of Dr. Zahra Bani Yaghoub, were likewise arrested. Information provided by the families of the detained twelve indicates that Judge Matin-Rasekh has charged them with disturbing public order and inciting public opinion, and has set the bail amount at \$49,400. All those detained were transferred from the Niloufar detention center to Evin Prison.



Prizes

- * Awarded the International Simone de Beauvoir prize for efforts on behalf of the freedom of women, on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Simone de Beauvoir. This prize was received by Simin Behbahani representing the Campaign. The Campaign declined the monetary element of this award
- * Campaign awarded the Global Women's Rights Award by the Feminist Majority Foundation, in recognition of its innovative activities in search of putting an end to discrimination against women in Iran.
- * Awarded the "Freedom of Expression" prize by the organization "Reporters Without Borders" for the Change for Equality Website
- * International Committee for Human Rights, Italy, awarded a prize to Nasrin Sotoudeh, lawyer and member of the Center for Human Rights Defenders, in recognition of her activities in the field of human rights.
- * Campaign nominated for the "One World" prize for activities in the field of human rights.
- * "Iranian Women's Movement" nominated for the UN human rights prize
- * Campaign activists present at the high profile Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) conference.



The Campaign in California Is On Its Way. Can You

A Summary of the Activities of the One Million Signatures Campaign in California in 2008-9



Organizing a Variety of Events Furthering the Campaign's Aims

- "The One Million Signatures Campaign" conference at UCLA, with the participation of Dr. Nayereh Tohidi, Pari Esfandiari, and Roja Bandari
- Organization of a celebration in honor of Women's Day in Los Angeles, with speeches by Campaign activists, and poetic and musical performances by the distinguished artists Partow Nouri Ala, Mamak Khadem, and Sahba Motallebi
- Organization of a collective art exhibition in Irvine on the occasion of the Campaign's second anniversary
- Lighting candles at California State University, Northridge, for the release of Esha Momeni
- Organization of an event marking the World Day of Struggle against Violence against Women
- Organization of an evening of poetry and music "For Esha", in solidarity with Esha Momeni, Campaign volunteer



The Campaign Sets Out Its Stall: Introducing Itself and Collecting Signatures

- Participation with a booth at Mehrgan in Orange County, Mehregan in the Valley, and 13 bedar in Irvine
- Participation with a booth at the San Diego conference, "The Identity of Iranian Women in the Mirror of Time"
- Participation with a booth at the San Jose conference, "Evaluating Obstacles to the Realization of Human Rights in Iran"
- Presence at the Conference of the Middle East Studies Association, Washington DC



"We wish Iranian citizens resident in California to feel that they are not helpless spectators of the struggle for equality. Instead each individual is an activist, highly capable and creative and able to play a part in this common struggle."

Presence at Various Events and Locations In Order To Collect Signatures and Introduce the Campaign

- Collection of signatures at Shirin Ebadi's lectures at UCLA and in San Jose
- Collection of signatures at Simin Behbahani's lectures at UCLA and in Sacramento
- Presence and collection of signatures at Mehrangiz Kar's lectures at UC Irvine and Santa Monica College
- Collection of signatures and setting up a media information table at 13 Bedar celebrations in San Jose
- Collection of signatures and setting up a table at the Iranian Foods Festival, Sacramento
- Collection of signatures in Iranian centers and gathering places such as grocery stores, bookstores, and Westwood Boulevard, LA



Participation in Numerous Conferences and Interviews

- The Nobel Women's Initiative Conference, Ireland
- International Iranian Women's Studies Foundation Conference, Berkeley
- Conference on "Approaches to Defending Human Rights", UCLA
- Participation in a panel entitled "Different Perspectives on Iran and Iranian Women", Cal-State University, Northridge
- Interviews about the Campaign, its aims and the pressures it faces, including with KPFK, KIRN, VOA, and Andisheh TV.



The One Million Signatures Campaign is a grassroots non-political and non-ideological formation which took shape at the core of Iranian civil society. The Campaign is a historic movement for the change of laws discriminating against women in Iran.

<http://campaign-for-equality.org>