

On International Women's Day,

We Stand In Support of Women's Human Rights in Iran

Today, the international community's attention is focused on Iran's nuclear activities and a possible military confrontation between the United States and Iran. We strongly oppose any military action against Iran that would result in great loss of life and do irreparable harm to the security of the Iranian people and destabilize this already volatile region for many years to come. At the same time, the Iranian government is exploiting the international community's preoccupation with the nuclear crisis to further repress peaceful human rights and women's rights activists. A most recent case in point is the closure of *Zanan* magazine, the only remaining independent print medium in Iran focusing on women's issues.

The Iranian women's rights movement is facing unprecedented obstacles and threats. On the occasion of March 8, International Women's Day, **we express our solidarity with Iranian women in their quest for equal rights and an end to pervasive legal discrimination against women.**

The Iranian government is preventing women from freely celebrating this important day of international solidarity. Its effort to stop expressions of support for women's rights is part of a general denial of basic social and economic rights in Iran. **We call on the Iranian government to remove all restrictions on peaceful assembly and expression as required by the Iranian Constitution and in accordance with Iran's obligations under international human rights treaties.**

Iranian women's rights activists have launched several peaceful campaigns for gender equality. *Change for Equality*, for example, is a grassroots campaign to collect one million signatures asking that Iranian laws to conform with international law requiring non-discrimination based on gender. The Iranian government continues harshly to persecute (and prosecute) the campaign's activists. Dozens of women's activists have been detained over the past two years and have court cases pending against them. Several have been sentenced to lengthy prison sentences. Security and intelligence forces routinely interrogate, harass, and intimidate campaign activists. **We call on the Iranian government immediately to halt repressive actions against women's rights activists and to work together with them to make Iran a place where women and men enjoy equal rights, and a country that upholds international human rights laws and standards.**

On this occasion of the International Women's Day, we, the undersigned, express our solidarity with Iranian women and men committed to universal human rights--now, and in the future.

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62. **Dastoor**, Dolly; *FEZANA and Zonta International*
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64. **Demers**, Mirlande; *National Anti – Racism Council of Canada*
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94. **Grosch**, Sudy; *Millevelk Circle IPPI*
95. **Gurumo**, Tumaini; *WSCF*
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160. **McManibal**, Paul; *PTP*
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