



IFIR pledges its commitment to Declaration of Political Freedoms

On 16 December 2002, the Worker-communist Party of Iran called on all political parties and groups to pledge their commitment to a Declaration of Political Freedoms which will ensure the people's right to determine the future government of Iran. Under conditions where the Islamic Republic of Iran's downfall is imminent, the provisions in the Declaration will provide the people with the possibility of deciding the future system of government consciously and freely under safe and secure circumstances.

The International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR) unequivocally recognises and pledges its commitment to the Declaration of Political Freedoms and calls on opposition parties and groups to publicly announce their commitment to fundamental freedoms.

Declaration of Political Freedoms

To establish the prerequisites and the possibility for free and safe political participation in society and for the people to be able to determine their preferred government freely and consciously, the Islamic Republic of Iran must be overthrown and the provisions of this Declaration must be realised.

1. Separation of religion from the state and education. Abolition of all laws, policies and regulations with a religious basis. Freedom of religion and atheism.

2. Unconditional freedom of thought, expression, press, association, organisation, political

affiliation and strike.

3. Complete and unconditional equality of women and men in civil and individual rights. Abolition of all laws and regulations that contravene this principle.

4. Equality of all citizens irrespective of gender, religion, nationality, race and citizenship.

5. Freedom of all political prisoners.

6. Abolition of capital punishment.

7. General access to state media and mass communication for all, in particular political parties and groups.

Islamic regime caves in to protests: Stonings suspended in Iran, Page 2

* In Commemoration of Fadime Sahindal, Conference on Honour Killings, oppression of women: culture and politics or cultural politics

* Middle East Centre for Women's Studies holds its Annual General Meeting,

Page 3

Islamic regime caves in to protests: Stonings suspended in Iran

According to the state-run press in Iran, the Islamic punishment of death by stoning has been suspended in Iran. The Islamic regime of Iran has retreated in the face of mounting protests, both inside and outside Iran, to put an end to this hideous crime. The head of the judiciary, Shahroudi, is reported to have written to his judges asking them not to use stoning as a sentence for extra-marital relations. Scores of people have been stoned to death in the Islamic Republic in Iran. The most recent cases were those of a woman and a man by the names of Goli Nikkhoo and Yunes Asady who were stoned to death in the city of Naghadeh. In the city

of Yazd, a woman, Nosrat Abouie, managed to set herself free during the stoning and is now in prison awaiting execution, as are four other women (Sima, Ferdows, Shahnaz and Ashraf) who have all received sentences of death by stoning.

The International Committee against Stoning has been campaigning for the abolition of the barbaric act of stoning for more than four years. In a meeting with the European Union last month, Mina Ahadi, Coordinator of the Committee, received assurances from officials that the Islamic regime in Iran would be pressured on the issue of stoning in

forthcoming negotiations. The halt to stoning in Iran is a tremendous victory for all those progressive organisations and individuals and women's rights groups and activists that have been campaigning for the abolition of stoning. The International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR) is a proud member of the International Committee against Stoning and extends its warmest appreciation and congratulations to Mina Ahadi, the Committee's Coordinator, all Committee and IFIR members and those involved in this campaign.

As reiterated by the International Committee

against Stoning, it is important to note, however, that stoning has not yet been abolished from the law in Iran. Extra-marital relations are still a crime. The heads of the regime are already discussing alternative forms of punishment - including execution - for sex outside marriage. We are strongly opposed to capital punishment and any form of punishment for extra-marital relations. Consensual sex between adults is their private affair which no state has the right to interfere in. The Committee will continue its campaign until the total abolition of stoning in Iran and everywhere and for the decriminalization of sex between consenting adults.

Oppose US immigration's detention and racist law

The International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR) unequivocally condemns the USA Immigration and Naturalisation Service's arrest of thousands of non-immigrant boys and men from Iran and other Middle Eastern countries. The USA's policy of registering all men and boys over 16 born in many Middle Eastern and North African countries and detaining thousands is racist, diminishes civil rights in the US and has nothing to do with fighting against terrorism. Send letters of protest to George Bush at President@Whitehouse.Gov condemning the USA law and detentions, calling for an end to the registration process and demanding the release of all detainees. Send copies of your e-mails to ifir@ukonline.co.uk.

Sample Letter: I/my organisation condemn(s) the USA law requiring all boys over 16 and men born in many Middle Eastern and North African countries from registering with the US INS. I/my organisation also condemns the detention of thousands who showed up to comply with the law. We call for an end to the registration system and law and demand the release of all those arrested. Send copies of your e-mails to ifir@ukonline.co.uk.



Mansoor Hekmat (1951-2002)

With the bloody suppression of the revolution in Iran and the imposition of an ultra-reactionary life on the people, tens of thousands of human beings, alone and without organisation, fled the Islamic Republic of Iran in search of security and tranquillity. Organising this vast human mass around the most modern and humane advances of humanity, unconditionally defending their right to asylum, and creating an international organisation without taking into consideration people's nationality, religion, sex and or political affiliation became an immediate necessity. Creating the International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR) was Mansoor Hekmat's response to these conditions. As he said: 'Our entire life story is changing the lives of human beings.'

In Commemoration of Fadime Sahindal

Honour killings, oppression of women: culture and politics or cultural politics

Maryam Namazie, the Director of the International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR) will be speaking at a conference entitled: In Commemoration of Fadime Sahindal - Honour Killings and oppression of women: culture and politics or cultural politics. The conference will be held in Stockholm, Sweden during 17-19 January 2003. The first day of the conference will be in Swedish, the second in English and the third day in Kurdish. The conference will commemorate Fadime Sahindal who was murdered on 21 January 2002 by her father in Uppsala, Sweden. Other speakers include: Azar Majedi, Azar Modaresi, Azam Kamguyan, Nasek Ahmad, Parvin Kaboli, Sara Mohammad, Halale Taheri, Nawal Sadawi, Taslima Nasrin, Elizabett Fritz, Gunilla Sterner, Maria Rashidi, Krister Gustafsson, Ayda Soleiman, Nazand Bagikhani, Lise Bergh, Nazaneen Rashid, Walide Molla, Nazanin Saleh, and others.

The themes that the conference will focus on are:

Support for vulnerable women and female refugees and asylum seekers.

Women's rights are human rights.

Women's rights: Battlefield between secularism and Islamic politics

Honour killings, oppression of women: culture and politics or cultural politics

Terror of women and the phenomenon of honour killings

How to create changes for women

Fundamental rights of women in Kurdistan

For further information, please contact Sara Mohammad, Chairwoman of the Never forget Pela and Fadime Association, E-mail: sara_mohammad1607@yahoo.se or pela_fadime@yahoo.se, Tel: 0046-70 44 11 075; Halale Taheri, Chairwoman of the Union for the Defense of the Human Rights in Kurdistan, E-mail: halale_taheri@yahoo.com, Tel: 0046-73 61 62 211; Asad Mohammad Kamal, Chairman of the Cultural Association of Kurds in Sweden, E-mail: nodinyan_a57@yahoo.se, Tel: 0046-73 65 35 567.

Middle East Centre for Women's Studies holds its

AGM

The Middle East Centre for Women's Studies successfully held its Annual General Meeting on 10 October 2002 during 2:00 to 4:00pm at its offices in Caxton House, London.

The AGM was opened by Nadia Mahmood, the Centre's founder and coordinator who then presented an annual report covering varying issues, including the reasons for the establishment of the MECWS, its aims and

objectives, completed activities, needs and obstacles, its impact, future plans and a financial report. She thanked the previous Management Committee, funders and other groups and organisations for their support. The report was discussed at length by those present, with particular focus on the Centre's immense impact on the lives and rights of women in the Middle East. The Meeting then discussed future plans, including developing a partnership project for ME women living in the UK with

Kurdistan Refugee Women's Organisation, initiating a new project with the Arab Culture Community to promote equality in the Arab community, conferences and a book on women's status under Islamic laws and values within ME communities, a radio program broadcast in ME countries, a fortnightly newsletter on ME women issues, more issues of Al-Nisa and so on. It was resolved that the Centre's name would be changed from the Middle East Centre for Women's Studies to the

Middle East Centre for Women's Rights to better reflect its work.

After adopting a future action plan, elections were held for a new Management Committee. The following were elected to the new Management Committee: Azar Majedi, Chairperson; Maryam Namazie, Secretary; Diana Nammi, Treasurer; Sawsan Salim and Houzan Mahmood, members. The AGM ended with a firm commitment to further the rights of women in the Middle East.

JOIN IFIR

* I wish to join **the International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR)** as:

Member (£25.00 p.a.) Affiliated Group (£100.00 p.a.)

* I wish to make a donation of: £ I wish to subscribe to Hambastegi English or Iran Monitor: (£50.00 p.a.)

Name: _____ **E-mail:** _____

Address: _____

Please make cheques payable to the International Federation of Iranian Refugees and mail to P. O. Box 27236, London N11 2ZF.

* I wish to make a standing order:

To: The Manager of (your Bank) _____

(Address of your Bank) _____

Please pay **the International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR)** the sum of £ each month / quarter / year (delete as appropriate) until further notice and debit my Account no: Sort Code: starting on (date):

Name: _____ Address: _____

Signature: _____

[FOR OFFICE USE ONLY] To: **International Federation of Iranian Refugees**, Lloyds TSB bank plc. Sort Code: 30-99-86, account no. 0057223.

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