

Charter of Iranian Women's Progressive Demands

On the occasion of

International Women's Day 2023

In the

Woman Life Freedom Revolution

*Signed by a group of women's rights, workers' rights, teachers',
retirees' and children's rights activists*

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The Woman Life Freedom revolution that has started since the state murder of Mahsa (Zhin) Amini is a revolution to overturn the existing system rooted in repression, discrimination, reaction and misogyny. We had predicted that the prospect facing the people, who have been exasperated by poverty, lack of rights and repression, would be an immense political, social revolution in which women would be one of the main pillars; that women would remain at its forefront as the motive force of the protests; and that by smashing the Islamic hijab, chastity and Islamic laws, they would shake up the foundations of the ruling power.

The Woman Life Freedom revolution took place in September 2022 so as to put an end to the whole system of legal, state and judicial misogyny, thereby also aiming to free the whole Iranian society from oppression, injustice and discrimination. Now the world calls our revolution the first women's revolution in human history, representing an immense, historic renaissance against religion and misogyny; a revolution that by putting an end to the regime of gender apartheid, will no doubt have an important impact not only on the situation of women, but on the whole Iranian society, the Middle East and even the world; a revolution that will no longer let any force to regard women's human identity, dignity, thoughts and bodies as the property of the "man", the "family", the "state" and the "nation". We want the victory of this revolution to result in an end in inequality, women's oppression and sexual slavery in all its forms, and to usher in women's liberation from all forms of reaction.

We the signatories to the Charter of Iranian Women's Progressive Demands, while continuing with the fight for the complete victory of our revolution, and while declaring our link and solidarity with other protest movements that have played a decisive role in this immense historic revolution, believe that women and the people of Iran, whatever their ethnic or linguistic background, are entitled to progressive, modern and secular demands, based on the latest achievements of those progressive and universal movements. We fight towards the formation of a government that guarantees those demands, the key among which are:

- Freedom of dress and abolition of compulsory hijab
- Complete abolition of gender segregation at all levels of society, from public transport to education centres and public spaces
- The separation of religion from the state, the judiciary and education; abolition of religious classes and prohibition of religious ceremonies, including (the Islamic) *Taklif* ceremonies (performed particularly for girls at age 9, regarding them now as adults with Islamic duties, such as marriage)
- Freedom of thought, belief and expression; freedom of religion, of not having a religion and being an atheist; abolition of official religion
- Abolition of guardianship over women; recognition of women as human beings with an independent identity, free to decide over their individual and social life, their life style, their sexual orientation towards the opposite sex, the same sex or both sexes, as well as over the type or form of their relationship, emotional or sexual, without the interference of natural or legal persons
- Unconditional equality of women and men in the use of public spaces, including sports stadia
- Ensuring the sexual, physical and psychological security of women at all times and in all social spaces
- Prohibition of the virginity test
- The right to travel and leave the country
- Unconditional equality of women and men on legal, social, educational, sports, political, economic and judicial levels, and in elections and standing for office
- Equality in all labour and social welfare laws; equal pay for similar work, with due regard to legal provisions for periods of pregnancy and childbirth
- Menstrual leave and access to free period products
- Adequate unemployment insurance, sick pay and pension
- The right to living together, including through 'white marriages' (cohabitation), without the interference of religion, the state or any natural or legal persons
- The issuing of birth certificate to all children without exception
- Abolition of polygamy; abolition of *sighe* (Islamic sexual relations with women in exchange for money)
- Full equality in family laws, including in the running and management of all matters relating to housework, care of the children, finance and any other matters that concern the couple jointly; the revoking of all the privileges granted to man as the so-called 'head of the family'
- Women's access to free contraceptives and screening tests during pregnancy
- The right to safe abortion
- Equal right of divorce and custody of children
- Criminalisation and legal penalisation of any form of physical, mental and verbal violence and abuse, and any form of humiliation and restrictions on women in any field, under any religious, traditional, patriarchal and 'honour-based' pretexts
- Criminalisation and penalisation of honour killings
- Criminalisation and penalisation of rape and sexual abuse
- Putting an end to inequality imposed on women in the name of honour, and removal from written and verbal literature of labels such as miss, lady and sister which define women on the basis of virginity or lack of virginity, single or marital status or existing taboos
- Prohibition of hijab for children
- Free and equal education for all children without exception

- Prohibition of marriage of children under the age of 18; prohibition of selling children and women, including in *khoon-bas* (cease-blood)
- Recognition of the third gender, and citizenship rights and security for transgender people; the revoking of the legal compulsion for gender reassignment.

Woman, Life, Freedom

Signatories, in alphabetical order:

Yasaman Aryani – Civil and women’s rights activist

Shabnam Ashouri – Labour and child workers’ activist

Aliyeh Eghdamdoost – Women’s and labour rights activist, former political prisoner

Kokab Bodaghi Pegah – Teachers’ activist

Nosrat Beheshti – Retired teacher, women’s and workers’ rights activist

Rezvaneh Khan Beigi – Former political prisoner, author, civil rights activist

Elham Rasouli – Women’s rights and child workers’ activist

Narges Zarifian – Women’s rights activist

Monireh Arabshahi – Civil rights activist

Mahboubeh Farahzadi – Retired teacher

Fariba Fereydoni – Civil rights activist

Pouran Nazemi – Women’s rights activist and one of the signatories to the Women’s Statement calling for the resignation of Khamenei

7 March 2023

Translated from Farsi original (Explanatory notes in the brackets by the translator).