

# URGENT ACTION

## WOMEN AND GIRLS FACING VIOLENT CRACKDOWN

Iranian authorities are waging a “War on Women” to punish defiance of forced veiling in the wake of the “Woman Life Freedom” uprising. Since April, security forces have intensified their enforcement of compulsory veiling in public spaces through subjecting women and girls to constant surveillance, beatings, sexual violence, electric shocks, arbitrary arrest and detention, and other harassment.

### TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
- [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Urgent Action 39.24**. It’s important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

### Head of judiciary, Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei

c/o Embassy of Iran to the European Union,  
Avenue Franklin Roosevelt No. 15,  
1050 Bruxelles, Belgium

### Supreme Leader ‘Ali Khamenei

c/o Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to  
the United Nations  
622 3rd Ave, 34th floor,  
New York, NY 10017  
Email: [iranunny@mfa.gov.ir](mailto:iranunny@mfa.gov.ir)  
Salutation: Your Excellency

Your Excellency,

**Women and girls in Iran** are facing a renewed assault on their human rights, dubbed the “War on Women” by Iranian human rights defenders and social media users. Since mid-April 2024, when the authorities announced the implementation of a new nationwide campaign called the “Noor (light) Plan”, security forces across the country have intensified their violent enforcement of compulsory veiling.

I call on the Iranian authorities to stop punishing women and girls for exercising their rights to bodily autonomy and freedom of expression, religion, and belief; to immediately repeal all compulsory veiling laws and regulations; and to disband all security forces tasked with enforcing compulsory veiling. I urge you to unconditionally release anyone in detention for defying compulsory veiling and ensure that any officials involved in violating women’s rights through implementation of compulsory veiling are held accountable.

Yours sincerely,

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Since mid-April 2024, when the authorities announced the implementation of a new nationwide campaign called the “Noor (light) Plan”, security forces across the country have intensified their violent enforcement of compulsory veiling.

The crackdown intensified after Iran’s Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, issued a statement on April 3, 2024, stating that compulsory veiling is a “religiously mandated decree and obligatory for women” and that its non-compliance is being driven by “foreign interference” and should be addressed. On April 13, 2024, the Commander of Tehran’s police force, Abbas Ali Mohammadian, announced that “From today, the police in Tehran and other provinces will [confront] individuals who promote social abnormalities like appearing without a headscarf. People who ignored previous police warnings will be specifically warned...and legal action will be taken against them.” On April 23, 2024, the Law Enforcement Command of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FARAJA) issued a statement equating defiance of compulsory veiling with “organized criminal gangs...involved in corruption, prostitution, pornography.” A “Bill to Support the Culture of Chastity and Hijab” is nearing adoption in Iran’s parliament. If passed into law, it will codify the Iranian authorities’ assault on women and girls for defying compulsory veiling.

Since the announcement of the “Noor Plan”, women and girls have been documenting their ordeals and sharing them on social media. On April 13, 2024, one woman stated in her tearful video testimony: “[The agents] wanted to arrest me. The police agent came towards me, and I told him not to touch me. There was a van there [to take me away]. There were several female agents and one of them kept trying to forcibly pull my arm and bag. I was screaming for her to let me go and was stressed that they would confiscate my mobile. I fell in the middle of the street and all the drivers in the cars started tooting their horns in support [of me]. The female agents filmed me and were laughing at me. They eventually let me go, but I don’t know what will happen now. I can’t even tell you to look after yourselves because how can you do that unless we are [forced] to wear the hijab.”

On April 14, another woman, Atefeh Mahmoudi, posted on X (formerly Twitter): “Today, the morality police detained me ... They spoke to [me] using harsh language. In response to my protest asking where they were taking me and questioning their treatment, one of them replied [using insulting language in Persian] ‘It is none of your business’. When I told another agent that no [hijab and chastity] law had been officially passed, he started shouting. He threatened me and said, ‘I will detain you until you learn not to talk back.’ They released me after I signed a written pledge.” A student, Dina Ghalibaf, wrote about her ordeal on X on April 15, 2024: “Yesterday, in the police room of Sadeghiyeh metro station, I insisted that as long as I am paying taxes, I have the right to use the metro. They [security forces] violently dragged me into a room and gave me electric shocks. They handcuffed me the whole time and one of the agents sexually assaulted me.” On April 16, Dina Ghalibaf was arrested, and she was released on bail two weeks later, on April 30, 2024. A fourth woman whose ordeal was shared with BBC Persian on April 19, 2024 stated: “I saw two agents on motorbikes. A van and a car also came towards me; five-six female agents descended from the vehicles and dragged me on the ground. I was screaming. I heard a noise from behind me and felt pain in my back and side. I fell to the ground, and they put me into a van while filming and photographing me for the prosecutors...There were five other women and girls in the van...In the police station, there were about 30 of us, including a schoolgirl. They took me before a prosecutor who questioned me. I was in pain [from the beating] and a doctor told me that my kidney had been ruptured.”

In September 2023, UN human rights experts expressed concern about the “Bill to Support the Culture of Chastity and Hijab”, stating that “the draft law could be described as a form of gender apartheid, as authorities appear to be governing through systemic discrimination with the intention of suppressing women and girls into total submission”. In March 2024, the UN Fact-Finding Mission on Iran published its report in which it concluded that “punishments imposed on the basis of the mandatory hijab laws and policies against women and girls ... are arbitrary in nature and as such not permissible under international human rights law.”

In March 2024, Amnesty International published new research on the intensifying persecution of women and girls based on testimonies obtained from 46 individuals, which provide a glimpse into the frightening daily reality faced by women and girls in Iran. See:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/7770/2024/en/>.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Persian, English, or your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** July 2, 2024