



International Liberty Association Newsletter

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EDITORIAL

When we wrote in our last newsletter that 2020 had “all the makings of being a very eventful and momentous year” we had no idea how prophetic those words would become.

As with the “Beast from the East” that roared in without warning on 22 February 2018, who would have thought we would be preparing our Spring newsletter in the grip of a virus that is paralysing and devastating the world.

Sadly, largely due to the cynical denial and negligence of the ruling mullahs, the virus is running out of control in Iran with an enormous number of casualties. The official figures issued by the regime bear no comparison to the statistics gathered on the ground throughout the country by activists and the numbers continue to escalate.

Of particular concern are the political prisoners, whose living conditions we have exposed many times as overcrowded and unsanitary and their treatment inhumane. Many of the prisons are full of people whose only crime was to join in the huge street protests of November 2019 and should now be released to relieve the overcrowding which is a breeding ground for disease.

With containment measures being put in place across the globe to reduce the spread of the virus, the majority of events and meetings have been cancelled. This includes our NoRuz and Easter event planned for April. We are very pleased, however, that before this happened we were able to celebrate International Women’s Day with two well attended gatherings.

This seems very fitting as women play such a large role in the struggle for human rights in Iran and in this ... *continued on p.3*

RULING MULLAHS IN DENIAL AS COVID-19 ENGULFS IRAN



As of 10 March, the time of writing this article, there are far more deaths in Iran due to Coronavirus than in Italy and the whole of Europe combined. The figures collected by activists contacting hospitals across Iran put the death toll to over 3,000, yet the Iranian officials continue to lie about the true figures and arrest anyone who exposes their lies. Nurses, doctors, workers at cemeteries and others who have been filming the dead and mass graves have been arrested.

At least 23 medical staff, doctors and nurses, have died after contracting the virus due to lack of protective equipment and sanitation supplies that have been hoarded by the IRGC (the notorious Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps). It is ironic that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has not been reporting the depth of this catastrophe and has relied on figures supplied by discredited Iranian officials. Many reports by doctors, nurses, activists and ... *continued on p.2*

IWD EVENT IN UK PARLIAMENT LOOKS AT THE PLIGHT OF WOMEN IN IRAN



In a meeting in the Boothroyd Room at Portcullis House, Westminster on 25 February, cross-party MPs and Peers joined with prominent jurists and women’s rights activists to discuss women’s rights in Iran for the occasion of International Women’s Day (IWD).

The conference was chaired by Kirsty Brimelow QC, former president of the Bar Human Rights Committee and winner of First 100 Years Inspirational Woman Barrister of the

Year in 2018. “I welcome everybody to this early celebration of IWD but with an emphasis on the situation of women in Iran from various perspectives. I come at this from a legal perspective and my work on Iran is in relation to the 1988 massacre and calling for an independent UN set-up inquiry into these mass executions”, she said in her opening remarks.

Panellists stressed that women’s situation in Iran is alarming and continues to deteriorate, especially in recent years during the tenure of the so-called moderate president, Hassan Rouhani. ... *continued on p.2*



Ruling mullahs in denial

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even some members of the Islamic parliament have all been ignored by WHO.

The IRGC imported the virus from China via Mahan Air, the airline owned and operated by the Guards. After most nations stopped air travel to and from China, Mahan Air announced a deal with Chinese authorities for carrying passengers.

Observers revealed that the epicentre of COVID-19 in Iran was the city of Qom, where the schools for Shia clerics exist. It is widely believed that the virus was imported by over 400 Chinese Shia clerics who had gone to China for the Chinese New Year and came back with Mahan Air without proper precautions. The first cases of the existence of the virus in Qom were reported in January but the authorities, one after the other, appeared on TV and denied these reports and threatened those who had



Social media posts showing people falling ill on the streets of Iran.



published them. The regime’s motive for this criminal behaviour stemmed from the desire to portray a big turnout in the so called parliamentary elections which were due to take place in February. The authorities felt that the news of the existence of the virus in Iran would keep people at home instead of going to vote.

After a video was published on social media that showed a huge number of COVID-19 victims in special bags in a mortuary in the city of Qom, Iran’s state TV announced the next day that the person who shot the film was arrested; not the officials who lied about the disease and put millions of lives in danger.

Videos put on social media show people falling ill in the streets and

shopping centres.

Contrary to scientific advice against gatherings and close contacts, the regime clerics encouraged people to go to crowded holy sites and pray as a means to ‘cure’ the disease.

Pilgrimage to the holy shrine in Qom has been the main source of spreading the deadly virus all over Iran and to other countries in the region, as well as distant countries like Canada and Australia that have large populations of Iranian descent who travel to Iran frequently.

We at ILA have decided to limit our activities, cancelled all planned events and visits until further notice and remain vigilant all the way until we arrive on the other side of this epidemic.

IWD in Parliament *continued from p.1*

Speakers at the conference condemned the Iranian regime for treating women’s rights activists and defenders as ‘enemies of the state’.

Baroness Boothroyd, former Speaker of the House of Commons, said: “although we are early in celebrating international women’s day, which is not until March 8th, I think there is no better candidate for us to recognise and celebrate than the brave women of Iran. And in recent months, I’m sure you’re all aware of this, we witnessed their bravery as they led the wave of national protests against that religious dictatorship that has taken millions of Iranians hostage



for more than four decades.”

“My friends, if any of our comments are being recorded and are shown in Iran, if they get through today or in the next coming weeks, please let it be known to the Iranian people and the Iranian women in particular, we are here in support of them, we admire their courage, and we cheer them on,

and do whatever we can to help at this end”, she continued.

Rt Hon Theresa Villiers said: “I pay tribute to all the women who have taken part in those political protests across Iran. They are incredibly brave and it is clear that women in Iran are at the forefront of demands for democratic change, and reform and human rights.”

Other speakers included: Mary Glendon MP; Rt Hon David Jones MP; Jim Shannon MP; Dr Matthew Offord MP; Sir David Amess MP; Martin Vickers MP; Baroness Eaton DBE; Prof Lord Alton of Liverpool; Baroness Verma; Lord Cotter; and former MEP, Struan Stevenson.





NEW CASES FILED AGAINST ATENA DAEMI BY THE IRGC AND PRISON AUTHORITIES

IRGC and the authorities of Evin Prison have filed new cases against political prisoner Atena Daemi.

The anti-death penalty activist has been accused of collusion and assembly against national security for “celebrating during prison’s silence hours on November 11, 2019 during the holy month of Muharram; issuing a statement against the death penalty on 8 October 2019; releasing a statement along with 17 other inmates on the imprisoned mothers’ plea for justice on 8 November 2019; holding a sit-in outside the prison office for several hours to protest being denied family visits and demanding to know the reason while being supported by 21 of her inmates; insulting and accusing prison guards for being deprived of family visits on 2 November 2019; participating in a sit-in on 21 December 2019 along with 7 other inmates; and forcing her fellow inmates to pass her statements out of prison.”

Threats at the interrogation session

The political prisoner was threatened during her trial on 26 January 2020, to be exiled to a prison in a distant city.



In addition to the head of the women’s ward, Fazeh Abdolhamidie, 17 other staff of the ward testified against Ms Daemi.

The new charges against Ms Daemi were filed while she has been barred from meeting her lawyer. She was verbally informed of the ban during a family visit 11 months ago, but not in writing.

Comments of her father

Atena’s father, Mr Hossein Daemi, said about his daughter: “They did not allow us to visit Atena. We saw

her as she was being returned from the Prosecutor’s Office of Evin. My daughter’s physical condition is not good. But she has high spirits and strong will. So long as I’m alive, I’ll continue to be her voice, and I will expose the oppressor.”

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issue we focus on paying tribute to the many who have chosen a path that has led to their incarceration just for following their passion and doing their job: a lawyer defending women accused of not wearing their hijab correctly, a campaigner against the death penalty, many human rights activists exposing and challenging the regime’s draconian measures to repress and control the populace, environmentalists raising awareness of issues such as pollution and erosion that causes desertification, floods and no end of other ills.

All these women want is to make their world a better place. By their arrest and the long prison sentences given to them on trumped up charges the regime has made it very clear that they have no interest in the health and welfare of the people, or the country. By their courage and steadfastness in continuing their resistance from their prison cells they are shining symbols of hope for the future of Iran and of humanity.

Our hearts go out to all the people suffering in Iran, but also to people all over the world, and especially to you who have stood by us so steadfastly over the years, now experiencing the impact of restrictions and challenges in your own lives.

May we all remain safe and strong, taking time to nurture and find joy in the simple things of life, to bring beauty into our everyday existence, but also to feel the spirit of life that surges through nature, dedicating this time to strengthening the desire within each one of us to live in a more peaceful and harmonious world. Let it be so.

IMPRISONED LAWYER SOHEILA HIJAB WAS BRUTALIZED BY EVIN PRISON GUARDS



Prison guards beat up imprisoned lawyer Soheila Hijab who was then transferred to Taleghani

Hospital after being assaulted but was returned to prison without receiving medical care.

The lawyer Soheila Hijab is currently kept in Evin Prison’s dispensary. According to the doctor who examined her in Taleghani Hospital she needs surgery. Prison guards, however, prevented the operation and threatened the hospital’s doctor to postpone the operation. When a passer-by at the hospital attempted to take a video of this prisoner, the guards prevented it and dispersed the people forcefully.

Thirty year-old Soheila Hijab was arrested in June 2019 by security forces and transferred to Evin Prison.

Following the uprisings in Iran in November 2019 and January 2020, in an open letter addressing the regime’s officials, Ms Hijab pointed to the various events where the people of Iran had lost their lives and wrote: “I think of Iran as a sore pain in the throat. The pain and suffering of those killed in the November protests, in the overturning of buses, in the plane crash, in the floods in Sistan and Baluchistan, and in thousands of other disasters that occur one after another due to the policies of incompetent rulers, and the lack of scientific preventive measures and advanced equipment. And our noble and patient compatriots have been engulfed in great sorrow and sadness.”

This letter was written on 13 January and prison officials assaulted her for that.



REPORT OF THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN TO 43RD SESSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL



The report prepared by **Javard Rehman**, the Special Rapporteur on human rights

situation in Iran highlights many shocking realities of the abuses that are being carried out in Iran under the rule of the mullahs for over 40 years. In his report to 43rd session of the Human Rights Council he emphasised that he “is shocked at the number of deaths, serious injuries and reports of ill-treatment of persons detained during the November 2019 protests. According to reports, detainees are being tortured

or are suffering other forms of ill-treatment, sometimes to extract forced confessions. There are also reports of denials of medical treatment, including for injuries caused by the excessive use of force by the security forces, with some other detainees being held incommunicado or being subjected to enforced disappearance.” He is also “concerned about reports that families of individuals killed by the security forces have been threatened not to speak out.” In his report Mr Rehman emphasises that he “remains highly concerned about the continuing restrictions on freedom of expression. Although access to the Internet has been restored since it was shut down at the peak of the protests, the policy of intimidation and

harassment of journalists and their families has continued.”

The Special Rapporteur also remains concerned about “the use of the death penalty in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including for child offenders.” These concerns are compounded by the fact that he has “consistently received reports indicating serious violations of fair trial standards, including through the use of forced confessions as the basis for convictions.”

The Special Rapporteur acknowledges in his report that he “continues to receive reports of discrimination against minorities and women, and is concerned about the lack of legal protections for vulnerable groups, including children.”

1,200 HOURS UNDER TORTURE BY IRGC TO MAKE A FORCED CONFESSION



Imprisoned environmental activist **Niloufar Bayani**, wrote in an open letter smuggled out of prison that Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) interrogators subjected her to intense physical and psychological torture and threatened her with sexual abuse during at least 1,200 hours of interrogation to get a forced confession from her.

In the letter written in February 2020, Niloufar Bayani described the interrogations in some detail and wrote that the agents forced her to “mimic sounds of wild animals” and threatened to inject her with “crippling ampoules and air ampoules”. She was continually asked to write confessions that they dictated to her.

In one account, showing her the picture of Kavous Seyed-Emami’s dead body, interrogators threatened her

that “this is the fate you and all your colleagues and family members will face unless you write everything we want”. Kavous Seyed-Emami, director of the Persian Heritage Wildlife Institute and a prominent environmental activist, was arrested and charged with espionage by the IRGC on 24 January 2018. According to the judiciary officials, Professor Seyed-Emami committed ‘suicide’ at Evin Prison on 8 February 2018, but human rights activists and organisations, particularly those close to Prof Seyed-Emami have questioned this episode and demanded investigation which the regime did not allow.

Ms Bayani wrote that “during long interrogations” agents “repeatedly made the most filthy sexual insults... in detailed, disgusting, imaginary situations and wanted [to force] me to complete their sexual fantasies.”

The main interrogator, nicknamed Hamid Rezai, was so shameless that whenever interrogations dragged on into the darkness [of the night], I would shake all over in fear of being seriously assaulted.” She continued: “Because of his inexplicable sudden appearances and disgusting behaviour in various places like dark passages and in the detention yard, I didn’t feel safe anywhere. Intolerable anxiety never ceased.”

In her letter Ms Bayani mentioned many other examples of the Guards’ abusive behaviours like the daily threat of execution, the solitary confinement for 4 months, and the lengthy interrogation sessions during day and night with blindfolds, and insulting family members. The Guards also threatened to arrest and torture her 70-year-old parents.

It should be noted that Niloufar Bayani is among many environmental activists who have been arrested for their work in that field and many of them have been given long prison sentences on trumped up charges. Their condition remains a constant worry for human rights activists and organisations that are following their case, including ILA.



COURT UPHOLDS LONG PRISON SENTENCES FOR WOMEN ACTIVISTS



Monireh Arabshahi (centre), her daughter **Yasamin Ariany** (left) and **Mojgan Keshavarz** (right) have been sentenced to a total of more than 31 years in prison for defying the forced dress code in public.

The three women were arrested in April 2019 after dropping their headscarves in the Tehran underground and offering flowers to

other women on 8 March 2019 for the occasion of the International Women's Day. They then posted a video of their action on social media which was widely praised by Iranian women and pro equality men around the world.

After their arrest, the three women's rights activists who are held at the notorious Qarchak prison were charged with 'assembly and collusion to act against national security', 'propaganda against the regime', and 'inciting and facilitating corruption and prostitution' through promoting 'unveiling' of women.

In the first court they were given a total of 55 years prison term combined. Monireh and her daughter received 16 years each and Mojgan Keshavarz was sentenced to 23 years imprisonment.

The Court of Appeals in Tehran

upheld prison sentences for the three women for defying the forced veiling laws but reduced it to a combined 31 years and nine months; 9 years and seven months each for Yasamin and her mother and 12 years and 7 months for Mojgan.

According to Amir Raeesian who represents Monireh Arabshahi and her daughter, Yasamin Ariany, the Court of Appeal issued its verdict in the absence of the accused and their lawyers 'due to a Shiite public holiday', without even sending them a notice. He said he will further challenge the obscure decision.

A video clip widely viewed online shows the three women handing out flowers to other women in an underground metro cabin in Tehran on the International Women's Day last year.

MORE ACTIVISTS GIVEN LONG PRISON SENTENCES

The Iranian regime is trying to silence activists who are challenging its draconian measures and practices by imposing long prison terms for trumped up charges against them.



Civil rights activist **Rezvaneh Ahmad-Khanbeigi** received six years imprisonment

from Branch 24 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran for the charge of 'assembly and collusion against the national security and propaganda against the state'.

She was arrested on 18 November 2019 at her place of residence in Tehran. On 12 December she was transferred to one of IRGC's detention centres.

At the time of arrest her place of residence was searched by the Security Forces and both her and her husband's belongings were confiscated. She was eventually transferred to the women's ward of Evin Prison.

According to a source close to Ms Ahmad-Khanbeigi, she is suffering from seizure and epilepsy but the prison authorities have provided only

a portion of her medications.

In another development eight conservationists have been sentenced to a total of 58 years in jail for 'collaborating with the hostile US government'.

Morad Tahbaz and **Niloufar Bayani** were each sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment on the charge of collaboration and complicity with the hostile US government.

Hooman Jowkar and **Taher Qadrian** were each sentenced to 8 years in prison on the charge of 'complicity with a hostile government'. **Sam Rajabi** and **Hamideh (Sepideh) Kashani** were sentenced on the same charge to six years in prison.

Amir Hossein Khaleghi was sentenced to six years in jail on the

charge of 'espionage', and **Abdol-Reza Kouhpayeh** was sentenced to 4 years on the charge of 'association and collusion to take action against national security'.

The sentences were upheld by the Appeals Court despite earlier rejection of espionage charges by government officials including the director of the Environmental Protection Organization and the Minister of Intelligence.

All eight conservationists were members of the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation (PWHF) presided by **Professor Kavous Seyed-Emami**. They were arrested in February 2018 and have been detained under torture and mistreatment for more than two years.





OUR IWD EVENT

For the occasion of International Women’s Day we had an event at St John’s Church in Notting Hill on 7 March 2020. Keynote speaker at the event was **Baroness Verma**, former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of the Department for International Development and Chairwoman of UN Women - UK. Other speakers were **Azadah Zabeti**, co-chair of Anglo-Iranian Lawyers and **Kate Robertson**, founder and co-chair of One Young World.



In her remarks **Baroness Verma** said: “I really want to start by thanking you all for being here. It is so important that people like yourselves, who also believe very strongly in the rights of women and girls, actually for all people to have their human rights respected, that you are the voices for those people that don’t have a voice and I really do want to thank the International Liberty Association, because your support is so critical to ensure that we get our messages across to those people waiting in anticipation for the day to arrive when they themselves can stand up and have the freedom to be able to speak up, speak out without persecution, torture or ultimately death.

“Under the current regime half of Iran’s population, and there’s

80 million people so just above 40 million, are suffering a gender apartheid. They’re systematically discriminated.

“It is incumbent on each and every one of us to take every milestone that comes along for us to be able to raise that voice, and it is important that people know what’s going on because if we don’t speak up who does? You saw from the video that women are tortured and then they’re hung or stoned to death. In the twenty-first century that cannot be acceptable that we go silently by. We need to be those voices that say to our government.

“The long-term struggle that has been going on since 1979 and the murder of thousands of people in 1988, all of these events must make us think that we have got much more to do.

“I went to Albania and we met some people that had come from the camp. They are eerie stories, and I was reminded of the history books when I was growing up, reading the stories of World War Two and the persecutions of that time, and here we are in the twenty-first century, and here we are with more stories of people being persecuted. We have got to come together.

“Our job is to make sure that we remain a voice for the voiceless, those that are unable to speak out...It is important that we are the face for these people who depend upon us, and I want to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for being here.”

The event also included music by the **Saxafrass quartet** led by our friend **Nick Pentelow**, jazz singer **Beryl Hart**, solo guitar by singer **Hugh Wray** and Persian duets by **Vahid and Alireza**.





NEWS IN BRIEF

CORONAVIRUS FATALITIES ACROSS IRAN EXCEED 3850



On Saturday, 14 March, the number of COVID-19 victims in cities across Iran exceeded 3850. According to numbers collected from independent sources from 175 cities across Iran, over 700 have died in Qom, at least 650 in Tehran, 577 in Gilan Province, 350 in Mazandaran, 450 in Isfahan, 427 in Khorasan Razavi, 144 in Khuzestan, 151 in Kurdistan, 138 in Lorestan, 121 in Qazvin, 62 in Yazd, 48 in Sistan and Baluchistan, and 32 in Kerman Province have lost their lives due to Coronavirus.

SOCCER PLAYER ARRESTED FOR CRITICIZING AUTHORITIES' HANDLING OF CORONAVIRUS

Authorities in Iran arrested a soccer player for criticizing their handling of the COVID-19 crisis in northern Iran.

Mohammad Mokhtari, the 36-year-old captain of the Damash soccer team in the northern province of Gilan was arrested on 11 March by the order of the province's prosecutor.



Mokhtari had criticised the regime for its handling of the COVID-19 crisis in Instagram posts.

"In Gilan province alone, over one hundred people die every day from COVID-19", he wrote in one post.

"The bodies are stacked on top of each other, and they want to put a few in one grave to save space. Then they falsely announce the number of fatalities in the media which only covers a percent of the actual figures," Mokhtari wrote on another post.

PRISON SENTENCE OF CHRISTIAN CONVERT EXTENDED

Iranian regime authorities have decided to extend the prison sentence of a recently imprisoned Christian convert accused of support for 'Evangelical Zionist Christianity'.



Ismaeil Maghrebinejad, 65, was sentenced in January to three years in prison for 'insulting Islamic sacred beliefs', 'propaganda against the Islamic Republic', and 'apostasy'. Maghrebinijad, whose daughter and son-in-law live in the United States, is a former Muslim who converted to Christianity. The Islamist regime deems it illegal to leave the Muslim faith.

POLITICAL PRISONER'S LIFE IS IN DANGER



In a letter to the head of the Iranian Judiciary Ebrahim Raisi, **Ozra Bazargan**, the mother of political prisoner **Narges Mohammadi**, wrote that her daughter is being threatened by an inmate convicted of two murders, robbery, and drug trafficking.

Bazargan said that prison authorities are aware of the threats and that if anything happens to her daughter in the Prison of Zanjan, the Judiciary must be held to account for it.

Mohammadi was forcibly moved to Zanjan in December after being brutalized by the warden and guards in Evin Prison.

In Zanjan Ms Mohammadi who suffers from lung problems, is facing

grave risks to her health due to low levels of hygiene standards. The prison authorities refuse allowing disinfectants, even when Mohammadi offered to pay for them herself.

Nargess Mohammadi is serving 16 years for 'association and collusion against national security' because of her human rights work and working with various women's rights and environmentalist groups.

DETAINED PROTESTERS FACE GRAVE DANGER DUE TO CORONAVIRUS



According to reports by Iranian human rights activists, some of the protesters arrested during the November nationwide uprisings are kept among ordinary prisoners infected with coronavirus in halls 6, 7 and 9 of Karaj Central prison.

Some prisoners in hall 6 have contracted coronavirus and one of them has even died in this prison hall.

Because of regime's negligence and by refusing to give them furlough, the number of prisoners who contract coronavirus rises every day.

According to credible reports, many prisoners in Ghezalhesar Prison have also contracted coronavirus. The families and relatives of these prisoners are extremely worried about their loved ones.

A group of political prisoners who were arrested during the November nationwide uprising issued a statement on the situation and asked "the World Health Organization (WHO) and International human rights institutions to visit the situation in prisons and to act for saving the life of the prisoners and avoid a humanitarian disaster." In their letter they emphasised that "the reason for this situation is the virus that has ruled the country for forty years... the regime's suppression and secrecy has turned the virus into a national catastrophe."



REMARKS OF UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONER ABOUT IRAN



In her remarks to the 43rd session of Human Rights Council, **Michelle Bachelet**, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said: “I move now to the report of the Secretary-General on (A/HRC/43/20), and refer you to the section on the death penalty, including for child offenders. While the Secretary-General notes Government efforts to address this issue, including

constructive engagement with my Office, he reiterates calls for the strict prohibition of the death penalty against child offenders.

“The report also highlights discrimination against women and minorities, as well as the arrest, imprisonment and ill-treatment of labour rights activists, journalists, scientists, environmentalists and dual and foreign nationals. Recent court decisions confirm that women’s rights defenders and labour rights activists continue to be sentenced to harsh sentences for peaceful assembly and rights. Cases of arbitrary detention and unfair trials continue to be reported.

“Since the report was finalized, security forces have responded to the

nation-wide November 2019 protests with excessive force, and in some cases live ammunition, reportedly causing over 300 deaths. Over 7,000 protesters have been arrested; many remain in detention and are denied access to medical care and legal representation, with some reportedly subjected to other ill-treatment. Although the Government has informed the Office that a Committee will investigate these allegations, no further information has been provided.”



SHATTERED TALENTS OF IRAN



For the occasion of International Women’s Day it is worth remembering the talents of Iran’s sportswomen which have been shattered because of the mullahs disgraceful rules and restrictions. These women had excelled against all odds and deserve recognition.

Kimia Alizadeh is one of Iran’s best-known athletes, with six historic medals, among which the bronze at the Rio Olympics shines the most. At nineteen she became the youngest Olympic medallist in Iranian history. She had to leave Iran and seek refuge in Germany.

Zahra Nemati, earned the first Iranian women’s medal in Paralympics; a gold medal at the London Games in 2012. Four years later, she carried the Iranian flag at the opening ceremony in Rio in 2016 where she won gold again. But then,



because of misogynist laws in Iran and being banned from leaving the country by her husband who would not give her ‘permission’ to travel as a revenge for her request for divorce, she could not attend any more international competitions.



The photos in the previous column show **Shiva Amini** who played for the Iranian women’s football team. Outside of Iran she played once without a veil in a friendly game. The Iranian authorities banned her because she ‘played a friendly match abroad without Hijab’.



Dorsa Derakhshani, the Iranian chess champion and a grand master in international chess was expelled from the Iranian team due to her lack of ‘proper’ veil in international competitions. She had no choice, but to compete for the US national team.

At the age of eighteen she became only the second Iranian female chess player to win the title of Great Master Lady, in addition to the title of International Master at the World Chess Congress.

In her chess playing career for Iran she also won the Asian Youth Chess Championship in 2012, and gained sixth place in the World Youth Chess Championship, in 2015.