



WOMEN OF COLOUR AUSTRALIA Championing Australia's Women of Colour

Submission of Women of Colour Australia
Inquiry into the Human Rights Implications of recent Violence in Iran
Nov 2022

Women of Colour Australia welcome the opportunity to make a submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade on human rights implications of recent violence in Iran.

This submission focuses on the global relevance that the violation of human rights against girls and women occurring in the Islamic Republic of Iran has on gender equality all around the world, including Australia.

About Us

Women of Colour Australia (WoCA) is a not-for-profit organisation whose vision is a world where girls and women of Colour are afforded equitable opportunities to reach their full potential. Its purpose is to advocate for, support, and strengthen the lives and experiences of Women of Colour in all places and spaces in Australia.

Led and conformed by many first-generation migrants and immigrants themselves, WoCA aims to support and provide a space of belonging to all Women of Colour living in this country. The term "Women of Colour" is a solidarity definition, emphasising the commitment to work in collaboration

with other oppressed women¹ and allies to bridge the gap and to work to dismantle inequitable systems and structures.

Key points

Our key points, in relation to the inquiry Terms of Reference, are outlined below:

a. the recent violence against women and girls by Iranian authorities

d. the appropriateness of Iran's ongoing status on the UN Commission on the Status of Women

It has been internationally recognised that the IRI is a regime based on the premise that women and diversity are not equal to men². Under this assumption, girls and women endure a life of systemic gender-based discrimination. Women cannot take up many of the same roles and places of office as men, such as being a judge and cannot take part in decision-making or politics³. There is no protection against domestic violence, and women do not have the same rights to divorce as men. Divorced mothers are particularly mistreated by a legal system that is designed to punish and deter women from seeking divorce by denying them custody of their children after the age of 7. Women have no freedom of speech or freedom of movement, as they are legally required to obtain permission from their spouse, father or male relations before travelling anywhere. There is no equal access to education, and every aspect of their life is subject to the rules of what is known as gender apartheid.

With the recent outburst of protest in IRI that started on the 16th of September, the conditions and safety of women and diversity protesters are precarious. More than 336 people have already been killed, including 52 children, and over 15 thousand have been arrested with an average age

¹ Women- Transgender and cisgender, all those who experience or have experience oppression as women, including non-binary and gender non-conforming people and all those who identify as women. Self-definition is at the discretion of the individual. Credit: wire.org.au

² Global gender gap report (2022), World Economic Forum.
<http://reports.weforum.org/globalgender-gap-report-2022>.

³ Tajali, M. (2017). Protesting gender discrimination from within: women's political representation on behalf of Islamic parties. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 44(2), p. 186.

of 17 years old⁴. More than 112 Universities are in a strike, and every Wednesday protests are in place.

Iran's regime totally ignores the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and has systematically persecuted and oppressed ethnic and religious minorities, members of the LGBTQI community and any other person who raises their opinion against the regime's ideology⁵.

Under these conditions, it seems ludicrous that Iran has a seat on the UN Commission on the Status of women or that Australia would ignore the numerous human rights violations against women while also occupying a seat on so commission.

Recommendations

- Calls for no executions of protestors.
- Facilitate and allow for refugee visas specifically for women being persecuted under the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).
- Impose Magnitsky-style sanctions against the IRI, the IRGC, their officials and individuals connected with each.
- Freeze the assets of the diplomats, and IRI and IRGC affiliated.
- Impose travel bans against individuals affiliated with the IRI, the IRGC and the Iranian regime.
- Expel the IRI's ambassador from Australia, along with those who are closely connected with the IRI.
- Formally recognise the IRI as a terrorist nation and the IRGC as a terrorist organisation.
- Put in place appropriate measures to avoid Australian taxpayers' money is not used to support the brutality of the IRI and its regime.

⁴ <http://womenlifefreedomaustralia.com.au/submission/>

⁵

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/women-led-protests-iran-evolve-regime-controlled-industries-are-next-targets>

Summary

When governments are committed to the realization of human rights principles, actions that supports and align with those values should be prioritised within the international agenda. In particular when such violations are being fought on the streets by women of colour that did not have the privilege to be born in Australia. Securing women's human rights within the territory begins with ensuring an accountability system of international human rights law to other nations with which Australia has political relationships.

Brenda Gaddi (she/her)
Founder & Managing Director
Women of Colour Australia (WoCA)

For further information please contact, Brenda Gaddi at
brenda@womenofcolour.org.au