**Stone women to death, get appointed to UN women's rights body**

By Araminta Wordsworth

May 03, 2010

National Post

Original Source: *http://network.nationalpost.com/NP/blogs/fullcomment/archive/2010/05/03/no-it-s-not-a-joke-iran-elected-to-un-women-s-rights-body.aspx*

Full Comment’s Araminta Wordsworth brings you a regular dose of international punditry at its finest. At first glance, the headline looks like a joke — “Iran wins a seat on UN Commission on the Status of Women.”

But this is no laughing matter. The country that sees women as second-class citizens and stones adulteresses to death has won a place by default on the world body’s commission charged with improving the lot of women around the world.

Worse still, it acquired — I refuse to use the word “won” — the place by default, thanks to the UN’s bloc voting procedure. It’s the second time the mullahs have used manipulation of the rules to land a place on the commission.

As a U.S. official told Fox News, “there is no opportunity [to object]. That is not how the procedure works.”

Blogging for Britain’s Sky News, Tim Marshall explains the stitch-up.

“United Nations staff, aware that the joke about electing Libya to chair the Human Rights Council a few years back has become bit stale, have come up with a new one.

This one starts, ‘Have you heard the one about Iran’s election to the UN Women Rights Council?’

Iran, having lost the battle for a place on the Human Rights Council, managed instead … to get onto the ‘Commission on the Status of Women’(CSW ) a body dedicated ‘exclusively to promote gender equality and advancement of women’.

Iran was ‘elected’ by acclaim, meaning no-one voted, but no-one opposed membership in a classic UN stitch up by the Asian bloc. A campaign by women’s rights champions inside and outside Iran calling on the UN not to take this step fell on deaf ears.

Theoretically Iran will now join other enthusiastic upkeepers of human rights such as China and Congo, tirelessly working to ensure the safety and equality of women around the world, naming and shaming countries without fear or prejudice.

In practice the CSW has only ever issued one resolution condemning a country, and that country was … Israel.”

In an opinion column, The Wall Street Journal notes,

“Call it another example of your UN at work.

We’re told Iran’s victory was due to a dearth of competition for the spot. Heaven forfend the commission should let a vacancy go unfilled, rather than elect a regime that recently announced it would arrest suntanned women, and which has blamed provocative female dress for earthquakes.

Those are just the most recent outrages, but far from the most serious. The world — along with, apparently, the UN’s ‘principal global policy-making body’ for equal gender rights — has grown used to Tehran denying women’s right to choose their own husbands; the right to protection against violence; and the right to seek custody of their children in the event of divorce. Death-by-stoning for ‘adulterous’ women is another of the Islamic Revolution’s contributions to the advancement of women. Iran’s penal code doesn’t recognize rape as a distinct offence, and allows a man to murder his wife and her lover if he catches them in the act …

Ending the kind of nightmares lived by Iranian women was precisely what Eleanor Roosevelt had in mind in 1946, when she read an open letter to ‘the women of the world’ that would help inspire the UN’s women’s commission. Its goals were lofty and remain as important. Reality, as practised by the UN, has been otherwise.”

Writing in The Cypress Times, Bob Beauprez, a former Republican representative for Colorado, thinks it’s high time the U.S. withdrew from the UN.

“Iran would seem beyond just a curious choice as a member … We shall see if the absurdity of Iran’s election to the Commission on the Status of Women sparks outrage among feminist organizations and the liberal dominated media. For our part, it is another demonstration of the hypocrisy, corruption, and disgusting waste that has consumed the United Nations. It is time the United States shake the UN dust from our feet and leave it to rot in its own filth.”

He’s echoed by Anne Bayefsky at Fox News, who asks,

“How could a country that stones women to death for adultery possibly be chosen to serve in a leadership role [on the UN commission]?

Having welcomed Iran into its exclusive club with open arms, the challenges facing Iranian women will obviously not be on the CSW agenda any time in the future. It should be noted that the likelihood of CSW caring one whit about the fate of Iranian women was remote …

Iran’s election to the leading UN women’s rights agency indicates two things. First is the low regard held for women’s rights on the U.N.’s list of priorities. Iran had originally wanted to become a member of the UN Human Rights Council but various players decided that Iranian membership might be even more embarrassing than current HRC members and UN human rights authority figures like Saudi Arabia, China, Cuba, Angola, Egypt, and Krygyzstan. Women’s rights were the consolation prize. Second is the continuing muscle of the Organization of the Islamic Conference at the UN Nobody challenged Iran’s entitlement to membership on at least one major rights body. Nobody dared to.

This is another example of just one more UN body created to do one thing and now doing the opposite, for which American taxpayers foot 22% of the bill. And it will continue unless those with their hands on the spigot in Congress finally decide to turn off the tap.”