**Iran's War on Women**

The U.N. invited Tehran's misogynist Islamists to join its 'Commission on the Status of Women.'

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This past Saturday marked the first anniversary of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's fraudulent reelection, which sparked Iran's Green Movement and its demands for accountability, democracy and human rights. The regime's response was one of naked aggression. Opposition activists were murdered on the streets or sentenced to death in kangaroo courts. Thousands were arrested and brutally beaten. Just over a month ago, on May 9, five political prisoners, including female activist Shirin Alam Holi, were executed in secret. Not even their families or lawyers were notified beforehand. At least 25 other men and women await the same fate.

Female activists, who are growing in numbers, emerged as the new arch enemy of the ayatollahs. After all, as we recently learned from Iranian cleric Hojjat ol-eslam Kazem Sediqi, women cause widespread death and destruction.

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The 2003 Bam earthquake killed 30,000. For the ayatollahs, this may have been a woman-made disaster..

"Many women who do not dress modestly lead young men astray and spread adultery in society, which increases earthquakes," Mr. Sediqi, one of the main Friday prayer leaders in Tehran, told viewers in his televised sermon in April. In a country where tens of thousands have died in earthquakes, blaming women for these sort of natural catastrophes is a particularly vicious attempt at demonization. Only if Iranians take "refuge in religion" and adapt their lives to "Islam's moral codes" can they apparently stop the earth from trembling, Mr. Sediqi concluded. In the minds of the Islamic regime, stronger moral codes are more important than stronger building codes, since apparently, the righteous won't be smitten in an earthquake.

The world, although stunned, treated the remark mostly as a joke. Tens of thousands joined the "Boobquake" campaign, which quickly became a sensation on Facebook and Twitter. Nearly a quarter million women volunteered to show a little more cleavage than usual to test Mr. Sediqi's claim. Luckily, no earthquakes were reported in participating cities.

Iran's leaders, however, are deadly serious. "We cannot invent a system that prevents earthquakes, but God has created this system and that is to avoid sins, to pray, to seek forgiveness, pay alms and self-sacrifice," said Sadeg Mahsooli, minister of welfare and social security. Other officials and Friday prayer leaders made similar remarks. Even Parliamentarian Ali Motahari, otherwise a strong critic of Ahmadinejad, said that "if we let go of our standards in regards to the veil, we won't be able to control it (earthquakes) and things will get out of hand."

While the international community was laughing about Iran's absurd earthquake theories, it turns out the joke was on them. Only a few days after the regime's misogynist statements, Iran won a seat on the United Nations' Commission on the Status of Women. Not a single member state—including the United States, Canada, Australia and 10 European countries—objected to Iran's promotion. It is a particularly disturbing development in light of the Islamic regime's brutality against women, which includes stoning adulterers on the flimsiest of evidence.

Under the late Shah, beside the obvious right of choosing their own cloths, Iranian women had equal rights to vote, get an education, and a career. They also benefited from laws protecting their rights. Women couldn't be married before the age of 18, could divorce their husbands, and could win custody of their children. Iran before the revolution had nearly 100 female judges, one of whom was Shirin Ebadi, who later won the Nobel Peace prize.

Immediately after the revolution, the newly established theocracy moved to repeal these laws. Women were banned from certain occupations and Ms. Ebadi and her female colleagues lost their jobs. Marrying-age for girls was now reduced to nine in accordance with Sharia law. Only after years of protests from Iranian women's-rights activists and international organizations, was it raised to 13. Polygamy is now permitted and in fact encouraged by the government. Women have also lost their right to divorce their husbands.

This is the Islamic regime's legacy that will be brought to the corridors of the U.N.'s Commission on the Status of Women. Now, the likes of Sediqi will help set policy on gender equality and women's rights around the globe. In order to justify their track record at home they will do their outmost to impose similar restrictions on women worldwide or, at least, strive for loopholes and exceptions to U.N. rules for Muslim countries.

More than 200 Iranian women activists had warned in an open letter that the Islamic Republic's membership would be a "serious threat" to the goals and mission of the U.N. commission. But their voices—to the U.N's eternal shame—were ignored.

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