



HELSINKI COMMISSION HEARING

UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON
SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Testimony :: Ms. Manda Zand Ervin

Founder - Alliance of Iranian Women

Mr. Chairman, members of the Helsinki Commission, and ladies and gentlemen, since the time is short I will get to the point.

Life in Iran is a battle ground between the people and the forces of the regime every day. Lack of interest, by the regime, in reinvesting and up keeping the old industries has been constantly increasing the joblessness and labor uprisings around the country. The regime owns the majority of the industry. As a result the regime cracks down on the protesting unemployed by a well prepared and equipped paramilitary force.

Every month, as there are discontent laborers, there are teachers who have not been paid in months, sitting in front of the parliament, protesting and asking to be paid. They are confronted by the same forces, beaten up, injured or killed.

In the struggle of forming a union to get their salaries paid, the bus drivers are getting beaten up, fired and often times disappear. They are asking ICFTU and FSN for support.

Three weeks ago in the province of Khoozestan, southwest of Iran, there was an uprising that lasted for days. The people cannot continue living in the ghettos and wanted jobs. They met the regime's paramilitary with the full force and over 100 people were killed.

The soccer games are an occasion for the people to show their discontent. Two weeks ago after the Japan vs. Iran match, the demonstration lasted all night and ended up with the paramilitary forces killing four people and the people setting fire on their vehicles. I should mention that women are not allowed in stadiums to watch the games.

There are students on hunger strike and sit-ins at the universities around the country, at all times. Of course they face assaults, threats and harassments by the regime's plain clothes forces called Basiejies. Last Wednesday a group of Basiejies attacked the students at the University of Khoy and injured many of them.

The student leadership, throughout the universities in Iran have boycotted the elections. Hashemi Rafsanjani has made himself a candidate for the President for the third time, and no doubt that he will miraculously be elected by a large number, despite the fact that the elections are boycotted by the people. On the city walls, busses, telephone booths and trees the people spray paint: "No; to elections YES: to referendum" or "The election has been boycotted by the

Iranian people” and many other slogans.

For the last two weeks the members of the media have been participating in sit-in strikes for the freedom of some of their fellow journalists from prison.

In February the paramilitary forces broke down the doors of many houses and after beating them up arrested a large numbers of activists, including some of the members of our organization.

The prisoners of conscious in the infamous Evin prison are on hunger strike in protest.

The regime is regularly arresting people, especially student dissidents. Last week’s arrestees are Mr. Moradi, Mr. Parandokht and Mr. Javid Hebrani from the Democratic Party of Iran.

The regime of Iran practices Gender Apartheid and legal abuse of children. The constitution of this regime belongs to the 7th century and is unacceptable to 21st century societies. The people of Iran are asking for condemnation of this regime not only words, but by action.

This is what one Iranian woman had to say; “We understand the fear of the nuclear threat and the danger of supporting terrorism by the regime of Iran. But the policy has been not to cave in to blackmail of the terrorists. Iranian regime uses terrorism for blackmailing purposes, uses the threat of nuclear program for the purpose of Blackmailing America in to submission. The only way to solve these issues is by removing the regime, not making deals with them. The more the west caves in the more threats and demands they will face” we know our Mullahs, she said.

We believe; by supporting the 50 million young Iranians, who are the future of Iran, we will guarantee a loyal friend in the region for our children.

We have submitted packages of information that will reveal the horror of Gender Apartheid and legal abuse of children by the ruling clergies in Iran.