



IRAN CHALLENGED TO FULFIL OBLIGATIONS TOWARDS WOMEN AND MINORITIES

Women's and minority rights in Iran must not be overlooked while the world focuses on the country's nuclear issue. That's the conclusion of an important new pamphlet from the Foreign Policy Centre being launched on November 25 to coincide with UN International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

In the pamphlet entitled, 'A Revolution Without Rights: Women, Kurds and Baha'is Searching for Equality in Iran', authors Geoffrey Cameron and Tahirih Danesh examine the religious, legal and social obstacles to equality faced by women, Baha'is and Kurds in Iran, comparing the experiences of the three groups. They evaluate the Iranian government's compliance with its own constitution and look at how Iran's treatment of women and minorities measures up to the international agreements it has signed.

The pamphlet lays out practical steps that British and European policy-makers can take to support the equal treatment of women and minorities in Iran. These include:

- Diplomatic pressure to ensure human rights remain on the agenda
- Access for the UN to monitor the situation on the ground
- EU trade incentives such as the EU-Iran Trade and Cooperation Agreement linked to human rights improvements
- Technical and political support for Iran's WTO membership
- Option of travel bans and financial restrictions for individual regime members responsible for human rights abuses

Foreign Office Minister Lord Mark Malloch Brown, who describes the report as an 'important contribution to the debate, and an important part of ensuring that improving Iran's human rights record stays firmly on the agenda worldwide' said:

"Iran consistently fails to meet the international commitments that it is signed up to. It ignores its own laws and terms of its own constitution such as arbitrary arrest and the denial of due process. And it is increasingly – and worryingly – using vague, national security-related charges such as 'acting against state security' and 'propaganda against the system' against individuals who are exercising their right to peaceful protest."

"The international community must take responsibility to lobby the Iranian government and support those within Iran who are bravely fighting for their human rights."

Foreign Policy Director Stephen Twigg said:

'This report challenges Iran to fulfil its obligations to its own citizens under international law and its constitution. We must support the tireless work of Iranian human rights activists working to bring change in their own country and make sure their struggle is not overlooked as the international community focuses on the nuclear issue.'

Notes to editors

1. A PDF copy of the pamphlet is available at: <http://fpc.org.uk/fsblob/1013.pdf>. Please contact us if you would like a hardcopy.