

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF IRANIAN WOMEN

ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF 12 JUNE 2006 DEMONSTRATION

We, the undersigned, representing international women's and human rights organizations, express our solidarity with Iranian women, on 12 June 2008. This is the day identified by women's rights activists in Iran as their national day of solidarity in objecting to laws that discriminate against women.

Three years ago, on this day, women's rights activists organized an unprecedented protest in front of Tehran University, demanding that laws which discriminate against women be revised. They pledged to keep up their activities until their demands were met by authorities. On 12 June 2006, Iranian women's rights activists took to the streets again and planned a similar protest in Haft-e Tir Square, in Tehran, with similar objectives and demands. The protest was violently broken up and over 70 persons arrested. This was the first major crackdown against peaceful women's activism in Iran.

Since then, scores of women's rights activists in Iran have been summoned, charged, arrested and sentenced in relation to their peaceful activism and their demands for equality. Last year, because of security pressures, women's rights activists celebrated their day of solidarity in their private homes. But as witnessed in the continued summonses to court and persecution of activists involved in the One Million Signatures Campaign, the security forces won't even tolerate the convening of meetings by activists in their private homes.

On this day, we the undersigned thus want to express our solidarity with women's rights activists in Iran and send them and their government the message that the international community is watching. We are watching closely their struggle for equality and admire their creativity, persistence and determination under difficult circumstances.

We urge the Iranian government to stop its harassment of equal rights defenders, to drop all charges against activists who have peacefully advocated for the human rights of women, especially those involved in the One Million Signatures Campaign, to allow women's rights activists to use civil means to address their concerns about discriminatory Iranian laws, and to raise awareness about their concerns among the public.

Lastly, we urge the Iranian authorities to take concrete steps to bring laws governing the lives of women in line with international human rights standards, and in line with Iran's own international commitments. We urge them to recognize that, while Iranian women have achieved a great deal socially, laws lag far behind the realities of women's lives in Iran.

And in closing, we urge the Iranian government to allow women to celebrate their day of solidarity unimpeded.

Endorsed By:

- 1. Action Now, Kenya**
- 2. AIDOS, Italy**
- 3. Aim for Human Rights, the Netherlands**
- 4. Amargi Woman Cooperative, Istanbul**
- 5. Amnesty International**

6. **Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, Thailand**
7. **Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)**
8. **BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights, Nigeria**
9. **Campaign for Peace and Democracy, New York**
10. **Diakonia, Colombia**
11. **Education Society of Malopolska, Nowy Sacz, Poland**
12. **Feminists of Ankara Initiative**
13. **Forum for Human Rights, Hyderabad, India**
14. **Forum for the Empowerment of Women, South Africa**
15. **Foundation For Women's Solidarity, Ankara**
16. **Front Line**
17. **Fuerza de Mujeres Wayce: Wayuu Women Force, Colombia**
18. **Human Rights First**
19. **Human Rights Watch**
20. **Interdisciplinary Group for Human Rights, Colombia**
21. **International Association of Women Ministers**
22. **International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran**
23. **International Friends for Global Peace, Sri Lanka**
24. **KAGÝDER , Women Entrepreneurs Association of Turkey**
25. **Kaos GL Association, Ankara**
26. **Komnas Perempuan, National Commission on Violence Against Women, Indonesia**
27. **MULABI, Latino American Sapce Working on Sexualities and Rights, Colombia**
28. **People changing the World, Kyrgystan**
29. **The Global Campaign *Stop Killing and Stoning Women!***
30. **The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) and the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH)**
31. **Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO)**
32. **Women Against War, United States**
33. **Women for Women's Human Rights (WWHR) – New Ways, Turkey**
34. **Women Learning Partnership**
35. **Women Living Under Muslim Law**
36. **Women's Resource Center, Sri Lanka**
37. **WOREC, Nepal**