

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK OF ACADEMIES AND SCHOLARLY SOCIETIES

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

September 5, 2012

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Statement by the Executive Committee

Regarding Recent Restrictions on Higher Education for Women in Iran

Iranian women no longer have access to 77 fields of undergraduate study. The Iranian government announced this decision shortly before U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's visit to Iran last week, when it hosted the international Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit. The subjects now prohibited to women include chemistry, nuclear physics, computer science, engineering, archaeology, and other scientific and non-scientific fields. It is unclear whether the Secretary-General or, indeed, the representatives of the 120 some "non-aligned" countries that met in Tehran used their positions to condemn such intolerance and bias in the country that has taken over the NAM chairmanship. If they did not—perhaps out of courtesy to their host—they should do so now, in behalf of women around the world and for the credibility of their movement.

Our International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies fosters and promotes respect for basic human rights by and for scientists, engineers, and health professionals, including non-discrimination and equal access to higher education on the basis of merit.

To impose, in the 21st century, such restrictions on the higher education of Iranian women, who currently make up 65% of university students and about 70% of science graduates, is appalling. The harmful consequences of this "alignment" against women for the future of Iran are incalculable, as are its effects on the reputation of the Iranian government in the eyes of the world.

We call on the government of Iran to rethink this ill-advised policy for the sake of the future development of its country and the well-being of all of its people.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Carol Corillon

SECRETARIAT

Committee on Human Rights
The National Academies
500 Fifth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001, USA
tel: (202) 334-3043
fax: (202) 334-2225
email: chr@nas.edu

nationalacademies.org/humanrights

Academies in the Network support and promote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, assist unjustly incarcerated nonviolent professional colleagues, address grave science-related human rights issues, and advocate for member institutions whose independence is threatened.

(The U.S. National Academies, non-profit, non-governmental honorary societies, host the Network secretariat.)

www.nas.edu.hnetwork

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