**Islamic State Executes Female Human Rights Lawyer by Firing Squad After Facebook Post**

September 25, 2014

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Washington Post

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\_east/islamic-state-executes-female-human-rights-lawyer-by-firing-squad-after-facebook-post/2014/09/25/c44b0a38-44f6-11e4-9a15-137aa0153527\_story.html

A female human rights lawyer in the northern city of Mosul was executed by firing squad at the orders of Islamic State extremists, activists said Thursday, sparking international outrage. But she was not the first to suffer such a fate in a city where the militants’ rule is increasingly oppressive — especially for women.

Samira al-Nuaimy, known locally for her pro bono legal and humanitarian work, was executed last week, according to rights activists and residents. The United Nations said that she was killed in a public square and that her body showed signs of torture when it was returned to her family.

Since [seizing control](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/insurgents-seize-iraqi-city-of-mosul-as-troops-flee/2014/06/10/21061e87-8fcd-4ed3-bc94-0e309af0a674_story.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)of the Iraqi city in June, the Islamic State has[expelled religious minorities](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28381455%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)and steadily stepped up its oppression of those who remain.

New rules ban women from working in jobs other than health care and education, where they are deemed necessary to treat and teach other females.

A regulation requiring all women to fully veil their faces was initially unenforced. But now, breaking that rule can trigger heavy penalties, including beatings.

Women such as Nuaimy, who refuse to submit to the militants, risk losing their lives.

“Samira was not the first,” said Suha Oda, a 29-year-old social activist from Mosul who has moved to the Kurdish-administered area nearby but monitors human rights issues in the city. Four women have suffered a similar fate over the past month, she said, including three doctors who were executed last week. Iraqi media reports said the women had been killed because they refused to treat a wounded Islamic State fighter.

A female politician also is believed to have been killed, but militants have refused to return the body to her family, Oda said.

Professional and educated women have been a particular target, rights groups say, with women who took part in [parliamentary elections](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/malikis-bloc-leads-in-iraq-election/2014/05/19/f7e695cb-414b-4a63-879e-bd13df8ad8d7_story.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)this year especially at risk.

“This horrifying public execution — of a courageous woman whose only weapons were the words she used in defense of the human rights of others — lays bare the bankrupt ideology of ISIL and its affiliates,” said the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, Zeid Raad al-
Hussein, using an acronym for the Islamic State.

Working as a human rights lawyer in Iraq has never been easy; for decades Saddam Hussein ran a rigidly authoritarian system.

In the years after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion, advocates and judges were targeted for their work at a time of widespread sectarian bloodshed.

The Islamic State did not publicly acknowledge Nuaimy’s killing, but U.N. officials said a sharia court had sentenced her to death for apostasy — or abandoning the faith.

Nuaimy had sought to run in the elections but did not end up competing, Oda said. The lawyer had spoken out on her Facebook page against the militants’ destruction of historic sites, the U.N. office for human rights said. The Islamic State has blown up ancient tombs, ripped down
statues and destroyed Shiite mosques — which it considers idolatrous or heretical under its extreme interpretation of Islam.

“She refused the terrorists and Daesh,” Oda said, using the Arabic acronym for the group.

While U.N. officials said the execution was public, Oda and several Mosul residents questioned whether it took place in the open.

When the extremist group publicly executed a man this month on an accusation of sorcery, pictures of the killing were circulated online.

In Nuaimy’s case, no pictures appeared.

Initially, there were doubts about reports of Nuaimy’s killing, especially after the Gulf Center for Human Rights, a regional group, mistakenly posted with its release on the case a picture of a writer based in the United Arab Emirates.

But Rupert Colville, a spokesman for the U.N. human rights commissioner, said the agency had done extensive research into the killing. “Our United Nations human rights staff in Iraq knew her well,” he said.

While public executions are still not common in Mosul, in
the Syrian city of Raqqah, the
de facto capital of the territory seized by the Islamic State, the group has carried out numerous public beheadings and[crucifixions](http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-27245852%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank). In one particularly gruesome episode, the heads of slain Iraqi soldiers were displayed on spikes around the city.

In Mosul, as in Raqqah, the Islamic State had initially taken a softer approach, apparently to avoid alienating the population. But the group’s sharia courts now mete out increasingly harsh punishments, residents say.

Oda says a Mosul friend left the house without her hands covered and was punished by having them beaten with a stick by the Hisba — an Islamic State unit tasked with ensuring that the populace adheres to the militant group’s strict rules, such as women covering all flesh in public.

“They are finished with the minorities,” said Hanna Edward, a prominent Iraqi women’s rights activist, referring to the group’s expulsion of people with different religious or ethnic backgrounds. “Now they are turning their focus on the people living there, and the women.”