Iran Wins Seat At UN Women’s Agency

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Iran’s deplorable record on women’s rights did not stop the Islamic Republic from winning a seat on UN Women, a United Nations body that was formed in 2010 to promote women’s empowerment and gender equality.

“In Iran, women are legally barred from holding some government positions, there are no laws against domestic violence, and adultery is punishable by stoning, making it wholly inappropriate that Iran assume a leadership role on women’s rights and welfare at the U.N,” [said](http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/04/10/us-usa-iran-un-idUSKBN0N121820150410) U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, in criticizing the decision to make Iran a member of the women’s rights body.

Power added that she was “extremely disappointed” in the UN group’s decision. Iran’s three-year term as a UN Women Governing Board member begins January 1, 2016.

“UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide,” reads a [statement](http://www.unwomen.org/en) on the UN Women website.

A UN body found last month that repression of women in Iran has gotten worse under “moderate” president Hassan Rouhani.

With the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran came repressive women’s rights policies in accordance with Sharia law.

In modern day Iran, women who have exposed any part of their body besides their hands and face can be punished and beaten for “[Bad hijab](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6596933.stm).”

While a man can marry multiple women and divorce their wives whenever he so chooses, women do not have such rights. In many cases, girls are married off at age 13, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reports. In one such example, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani [married](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/05/profile-hassan-rouhani-iran) his cousin when he was 20 and she was 14, according to reports.

Women are also forbidden from leaving Iran or obtaining a passport without the expressed consent of a male guardian, a 2014 HRW report stated.

[Several](http://www.unwomen.org/~/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/59/csw59_membership%20pdf.ashx) other states that uphold discriminatory policies against women are members of UN Women, including Burkina Faso, Egypt, Pakistan, Sudan, Tajikistan, and others.