

Heard in Iran - International Human Rights Day

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Shirin Ebadi holds her Nobel diploma as she receives the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo

Activists Speak Out On Human Rights Day

On the occasion of International Human Rights Day, Radio Farda aired interviews with prominent Iranian human rights activists about the human rights situation in their country:

Lawyer and Nobel Peace Prize winner Shirin Ebadi believes the human rights situation in Iran is as bad as it has ever been. She said that aggression and suppression of protesters is both directed and systematic. People have been hired to attack and kill youth, she says. She pointed to the government's attempt to ban memorial services for victims of post-election violence as just one example of these violations. "I am warning the UN. Mr. Ban Ki-moon should travel to Iran as soon as possible, before Iran becomes another Zimbabwe," Ebadi says. "Why does the UN remain silent about these atrocities that take place in Iran?"

Lawyer Nasrin Sotudeh emphasized the large number of violations that have taken place in Iran in past few years, such as the shutdown of the Defenders of Human Rights Center, attacks on Shirin Ebadi and confiscation of her Nobel Prize by the government, mass arrests of human rights lawyers, and the ban on international travel for nearly all human rights lawyers.

Journalist Narges Mohammadi said that even though 61 years have passed since the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted, some governments still violate its principles. "We cannot expect governments that violate human rights to attempt to improve human rights," she said. Mohammadi added that, thanks to the Green Movement, she is optimistic about the future of human rights in Iran.

Lawyer Mohammad Ali Dadkhah noted several recent rights violations, such as government interference in the judiciary, the banning of students from universities, interference with the free flow of information, and monitoring of people's personal belongings such as laptops and personal weblogs. Dadkhah said that increasing public awareness is the very first step in improving human rights in Iran.

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She actually deserves a Nobel, unlike whasisname.

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