

# the rise of fitnah

*Ready to Cause Affliction: Exclusive Interview with Maryam Namazie*

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# interviews

## THE RISE OF FITNAH

The below interview was published on [Women's eNews](#).

**Women's eNews:** *Why did you label the campaign 'Fitnah'? In the email received yesterday, you say women are seen to be the source of fitnah or affliction, could you please elaborate?*

**Maryam Namazie:** In Islam, women are seen to be the source of fithah or affliction. In one hadith, Mohammad, Islam's prophet, said: "I have left behind no fitnah more harmful to men, than women." [Al-Bukhari, Muslim]. This is a recurring theme in all major religions. There is a Jewish prayer that says: "Blessed are you, Lord, our God, ruler the universe who has not created me a woman". In the Bible, there is one verse that says: "Her filthiness is in her skirts". [Lam.1:8-9] There are of course many examples of religion's misogynist perception of women.

In practice, this translates into an obsession with the control and restriction of women in order to maintain everything from family honour to societal order. This is most visibly experienced for women living under Islamic laws because of Islam's access to political and state power via Islamism or political Islam.

To the extent that Islamism has power, veiling is enforced by morality police and women are imprisoned for escaping forced marriages or stoned to death for adultery.

The extent of hatred towards women runs deep. Recently in Marivan, Iran, a judge ordered a young man to be dressed in women's clothing and a hejab and paraded around the city by security forces in order to humiliate him. Being a woman is considered the greatest of humiliations.

Whilst the term fitnah is perceived to be a negative one if one looks at it from the perspective of religion and Islamism, it represents something very different when looked at from another viewpoint. It is always the woman who transgresses norms that is deemed to be "fitnah". It is the woman who refuses to submit, the one who resists and is disobedient. In that sense, the women's liberation movement is a source of fitnah for those who insist on women's oppression. Our movement is Islamism's worst fitnah.

**Women's eNews:** *What sparked this campaign? - Is it a campaign against religion? men? religious men? a state? Who are you specifically targeting with this campaign?*

**Maryam Namazie:** Fitnah represents a new movement for a new era. The brutal era of unbridled Islamism, US-led militarism and free market reign is over. Today is an era of the 99% movement and revolutions and uprisings in the Middle East and North

*Continued on next page*





Africa – many of them female-led. Whilst it may still be hard to see given the perceived “gains” by Islamists in the region (in fact as counter-revolutionary forces aimed at suppressing the revolutions), the change of era is palpable.

Fitnah is a movement of women and men defending freedom, equality and secularism and calling for an end to misogynist cultural, religious and moral laws and customs, compulsory veiling, sex apartheid, sex trafficking, and violence against women.

Whilst our focus is on Iran in particular, and the Middle East and North Africa in general, it’s an international movement. We don’t see women’s rights as being western. As women’s rights campaigners opposing compulsory veiling in Iran said during a mass demonstration in 1979: “women’s rights are not eastern or western but universal”.

We also don’t see rights as culturally relative. Rights have been fought for by the working class and progressive social movements and belong to all humanity. The right to vote is not considered western even though the first country to have the right to vote was in the west. This idea of rights being western and culturally relative is stressed in particular when it comes to women rights and freedoms.

Also, whilst all religions are anti-woman, our focus is on Islam and political Islam given its impact on our region and the world.

US suffragette and abolitionist Elizabeth Cady Stanton said “The Bible and the Church have been the greatest stumbling blocks in the way of woman's emancipation”. This is true in particular with regards Islam and Islamism today.

Of course when speaking of Islam or any religion, we are not referring to religion as a personal belief. Everyone has

a right to religion and atheism but Islam today is not a personal matter but an industry.

Fitnah represents our era - our time to shine. It is we who are now on the offensive. Fitnah is a warning to Islamists: it will be our women’s liberation movement that will bring it to its knees.

***Women’s eNews: Do you consider 'Islamism' as a form of 'Radicalism'?***

**Maryam Namazie:** Radicalism means going back to one’s roots. Whilst Islamism sees Islam as a tool for the far-Right restructuring of power structures, the movement is not fundamentally about going back to Islam as an ideology but about political Islam (gaining power and ruling via Sharia law). That is why different states and groups impose different rules and norms depending on their access to power and in an effort to maintain power. Some see these differences as evidence that this movement has nothing to do with Islam but this is because of political expediency rather than ideology. Also, depending on the strength of the women’s liberation and secular movement in the specific geography they operate, their version may seem more ‘moderate’ though they are all fundamentally the same.

The other point that is important to make when discussing Islamism is that this movement is a contemporary one and resulted from abandoned modernisation efforts and the decline of the secular-left. Islamism, however, would have remained marginal had it not been an integral part of US foreign policy during the Cold War, i.e. to create a “green” Islamic belt around the then Soviet Union. Of course Islamism’s coming to power in Iran via the suppression of a Left-leaning revolution helped to strengthen this movement and make it into a global power source.

*Continued on next page*

**Women's eNews: Some Muslim women would not be against the fact of having their rights within the framework of Islam if the religious law was properly interpreted. What is your take on this point?**

Islamic "feminists" like Shirin Ebadi will say that women have full rights under Islam and if they don't it is because of the practice and interpretation of states. There are several problems with this position. Firstly, the Koran and

Hadith (which are the saying and actions of Mohammad, Islam's prophet) upon which Sharia law is based are full of anti-women rules and regulations (even if you choose to leave Islamic jurisprudence to one side). Stoning to death for adultery, for example, is in the hadith whilst wife-beating is in the Koran. Secondly, often when there is a discussion about women having full rights, you must ask what is meant by "rights". Even Islamists will say women have full rights under their rule but that is because to them women and men are not equal but complementary thereby justifying difference in "rights".

"I question whether a 'good' interpretation is possible. If you follow the arguments made by the "good" interpretations you will soon realise the absurdity of this line of defence."

Also, the problem with interpretation is that yours too is just one of many. Even if you have a "good" interpretation, it is usually a regressive imam or Sharia judge deciding for you. But more importantly I question whether a "good" interpretation is possible. If you follow the arguments made by the "good" interpretations you will soon realise the absurdity of this line of defence. Take Sura al-Nisa (the Women) in the Koran 4:34 where it says: "As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (next), refuse to share their beds, (and last) beat them (lightly)..." You have Islamic feminists saying that men are only meant to beat their wives with thin sticks or feathers. For Sharia judges (at least in the UK where domestic violence is a crime), as long as it is not on the face and genitals and leaves no mark, this does not constitute violence. The point is though that no woman should be beaten. Full stop.

Clearly, one cannot leave women's rights and lives at the mercy of religious rules and forms of interpretation. Religion is a personal matter. When it comes to religion in the state and law and educational system, then it becomes a matter of political power and control.

The separation of religion from the state and law is an important step in improving the status and rights of women. Looking at things on a large social scale, a majority, even if they are Muslim would prefer to live under secular rules. The conflation between Islamism and Muslim in order to enable Islamists to feign representation has meant that Islamist demands are seen to be the demands of those living

in the Middle East and North Africa. But this is not the case. None of the revolutions in the region had Islamist demands, which are compulsory veiling, sharia law and Islamic states. In reality, people who have lived under Sharia law or its threats are its most ardent opponents.

Finally if people really wanted to live under medievalism, if it was really people's culture, Islamists would not need to impose their rules with such sheer brutality. The fact that they must control the streets and arrest and fine people for what they wear and what they think is evidence enough that their rule is an imposition.

Of course there might be those who prefer Sharia law to secular law as there might be people who prefer to bring back slavery or racial apartheid but that is irrelevant here. Sharia law and Islamic states are oppressive. There is no "right" to oppress.



Amina Tyler, a young Tunisian activist, was arrested following a Facebook post in March 2013 in which she posed topless with the words "Fuck your morals" written on her body. She was released in August.

**Women's eNews: What are you planning on doing?**

**Maryam Namazie:** Our movement plans to bring an end to Islamism. Whilst misogyny will not end with Islamism, the situation of women will improve greatly across the world as one of the leading proponents of femicide is brought to its end. □

# newsflash

## IRAN

There has been a marked increase in [CCTV cameras](#) being installed in girls' schools, particularly private ones causing concern for girls and their parents.

The Islamic Assembly or Majlis in Iran passed a bill allowing a male guardian to marry his adopted child upon court approval. Children's rights advocates denounced the bill saying it would endanger the welfare of the child, violate her rights, and is nothing more than legalised paedophilia. According to Children First, one Majlis representative [said](#) that sexual relations with adopted children is permissible under Sharia under marriage as they are not considered real children. According to one [report](#), officials in Iran have tried to play down the sexual part of such marriages, saying it is in the bill to solve the issue of hijab [head scarf] complications when a child is adopted. An adopted daughter is expected to wear the hijab in front of her father, and a mother should wear it in front of her adopted son if he is old enough. As many as 42,000 children aged between 10 and 14 were married in 2010, according to the Iranian news website Tabnak. At least 75 children under the age of 10 were wed in Tehran alone.

Iran stoning case, Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani, wrote an open letter [asking](#) the media and public to ask Rouhani why he doesn't release her. She says: "I want to hold my children in my arms. Please help me! For three years I have been consumed by longing for liberty and the chance to breathe freely. They told me that if I collaborated on a film for Press TV, I would be released. Press TV made its film and went on its way and there was no more talk of my freedom. They say that my case is in Tehran and must be decided there. I entreat you to ask President Rouhani, a resident of Tehran, whether he has any news of my case. Doesn't he want to free me so that I might finally travel with my son and embrace freedom once more?"

According to the International Committee Against Execution, since the election of Hassan Rouhani, at least 213 prisoners have been [executed](#), including a number of women.

Per official [figures](#), there are 600 women judges in Iran, most of who work in family courts. They are however not allowed to sign their decisions; a male judge must do so on their behalves.

Ali Jannati, a senior cleric in Iran urged [tougher restrictions](#) on women in streets, universities and state institutions. He said the hijab of female students should be checked at university gates and students graded based on their covering. He said: "why is it that female students who want to study take off their Islamic dress after they enter the university and taint themselves? Student wants a good grade and will do anything for it." "If her veiling is bad, don't let her into the university and let her feel it in her grade. This is not troublesome. Start here! If you put someone at the university gate and tells students that if they don't observe proper veiling it would affect their grades, they would certainly pay heed."

According to one [report](#), over seventy Allameh Tabatabaei University students who had been thrown out of their faculties or suspended from their departments gathered outside the dean's office and demanded that he allow them to return to their courses. Also, a group of women's rights activists and student activists filed an official complaint with the Iranian Supreme Court of Justice. They were objecting to a new plan which regards women as 'unfit' for certain courses, and prohibits some of the major universities from enrolling them. The protestors made three demands to the Science Ministry and the Department of Higher Educational Assessment, namely the withdrawal of the scheme, the restoration of rights to students affected by it, and a ban on similar schemes in the future.



Photo Credit: AFP/Getty

"I entreat you to ask President Rouhani, a resident of Tehran, whether he has any news of my case. Doesn't he want to free me so that I might finally travel with my son and embrace freedom once more?"

Sakineh Ashtiani

A recent [study](#) found school books to be predominately male-oriented with very few female photos, characters and writers. Also the males were shown to be smarter, stronger, more worthy than the females in the texts.

In a new [law](#) on families, temporary marriages do not need to be registered any longer. Temporary marriage is a fixed or short term marriage permissible in Shia Islam for which the duration and compensation is decided in advance.

During the election campaign, Rouhani said that he would strive to ensure that women feel secure on the streets from patrol harassing women who they deem to be improperly or badly veiled. He [said](#): "Girls must maintain their own chastity and hijab." He also said the youth "should obey religious norms." After the election, harassment of women and youth has been stepped up.

Mohammad Shahroudi Hosseini, the Kurdistan representative of the supreme leader Khamenei has [said](#): "The best way for women to achieve happiness is to see less of men and for men to see less of women."

Women wearing leggings called "supports" are being put under pressure. Some officials have [said](#) leggings lead to a "violation of the mental and physiological peace" of Iran's youth and are urging their arrest. Niloofar, a student in Tehran says: "If more than ten women do something in this country, it suddenly becomes an offence and they start looking for ways to stop it."

The Iranian regime has freed 11 political prisoners, including human rights lawyer [Nasrin Sotoudeh](#) and 7 other women. Many political prisoners remain in jail.

A [bill](#) being debated in Iran's Majlis aims to limit employment opportunities for single girls and childless married women. Many see it as yet one more state ploy to keep women in the home.

Gholam Reza Hassanpour Ashkezari who is in charge of the National Merchants Guild has [called](#) on merchants to refuse to sell to badly veiled women and to post religious teachings in shops to advise badly veiled women to properly veil.

There has been an [increase](#) in Iran's morality police detaining women who they deem are improperly veiled. Mehr news agency quoted the Iranian Police Chief Brigadier General Esmail Ahmadi-Moghaddam as saying that the moral security plan has not been halted and a new phase has begun.

Elham Asghari was [denied](#) a swimming record because her Islamic bathing suit was deemed too revealing and showed her feminine features. "I'm not going to submit to bullying, and I ask you not to submit either," she said. "I ask you to give your utmost effort to achieve your goals. I won't give up! I beg you not to give up in the face of their lies. Swimming is not exclusively for men. We ladies can do well, too!"

During Hassan Rouhani's [inauguration](#), women journalists sat on the floor whilst men were seated.

Official organs of the Islamic regime, including an organisation representing the Supreme Leader in Iranian Universities, have refuted claims of rape prior to execution for the first time. In a recently published book and documentary, Justice for Iran [demonstrate](#) once more the rape of virgin girls who were executed for their political activities

during the 1980s through the means of temporary marriage in at least a few cities as part of an organised process carried out with the knowledge of senior officials.

## SAUDI ARABIA

A new [campaign](#) urging Saudi Arabian women to hold a "day of defiance" against the country's driving ban is underway. An online petition entitled "Oct 26th, driving for women", had, at time of press, amassed more than 11,000 signatures in just two days. A Saudi sheikh has recently [said](#) women's driving will affect the pelvis and ovaries resulting in children born with "clinical disorders." In the past the highest religious council [said](#) women driving would mean no more virgins and an increase in homosexuality.



*Saudi Arabia is the only country in the world that prohibits women from driving.*

When attorney for a raped Saudi Arabian woman appealed a Sharia Court decision of 90-lashes for being raped and beaten by 7 men, the court doubled the punishment. The court also [said](#) that the "charges were proven" against the woman for having been in a car with a strange male, and repeated criticism of her lawyer for talking "defiantly" about the judicial system, saying "it has shown ignorance."

## MALAYSIA

KA Malaysian Municipal Council [ordered](#) hair salon operators to take down posters of women with uncovered hair or risk having their operation licences revoked.

## AFGHANISTAN

Afghan experts and advocates [say](#) the number of women and girls fleeing intolerable domestic conditions has skyrocketed, keeping the handful of urban shelters constantly full. In addition, according to Afghan human rights groups, the number of girls and women charged with moral crimes (usually some variation of zina, or sex outside marriage) has increased 50 percent in the past several years. Nearly 400 are [imprisoned](#) for moral crimes.



Photo Credit: AFP

"I'm Sudanese. I'm Muslim, and I'm not going to cover my head."  
*Amira Osman Hamed*

## TUNISIA

The Tunisian interior minister has [called](#) for a stop to young Tunisian women leaving for Syria on "sexual jihad." The Arabic term (jihad al-nikah) describes a phenomenon of women traveling to the battlefield to provide comfort—and sexual favors—which Islamists consider the practice a legitimate complement to Holy War. "After the sexual liaisons they have there in the name of 'jihad al-nikah,' they come home pregnant." The minister did not say how many women have traveled to Syria, though local media reports have suggested hundreds of women have done so. He added that the government has prevented some 6,000 Tunisians from traveling to Syria.

## SUDAN

Amira Osman Hamed [says](#): faces trial in the Sudan for refusing to wear the hijab and will be flogged if convicted. She says she's prepared to be flogged to defend the right to leave her hair uncovered in defiance of a "Taliban"-like law. She says: "I'm Sudanese. I'm Muslim, and I'm not going to cover my head."

## PALESTINE

The Supreme Religious Court in the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip is [considering](#) legal amendments allowing women to divorce their husbands when they can show proof that their married life cannot go on.

## PAKISTAN

Two months ago, Arifa Bibi, a young mother of two, was [stoned](#) to death by her relatives on the order of a tribal court in Pakistan for having a mobile phone. She was buried in a desert far from her village.

## YEMEN

An eight year old child bride [died](#) in Yemen on her wedding night after suffering internal injuries due to sexual trauma. Human rights organisations are calling for the arrest of her husband who was five times her age.

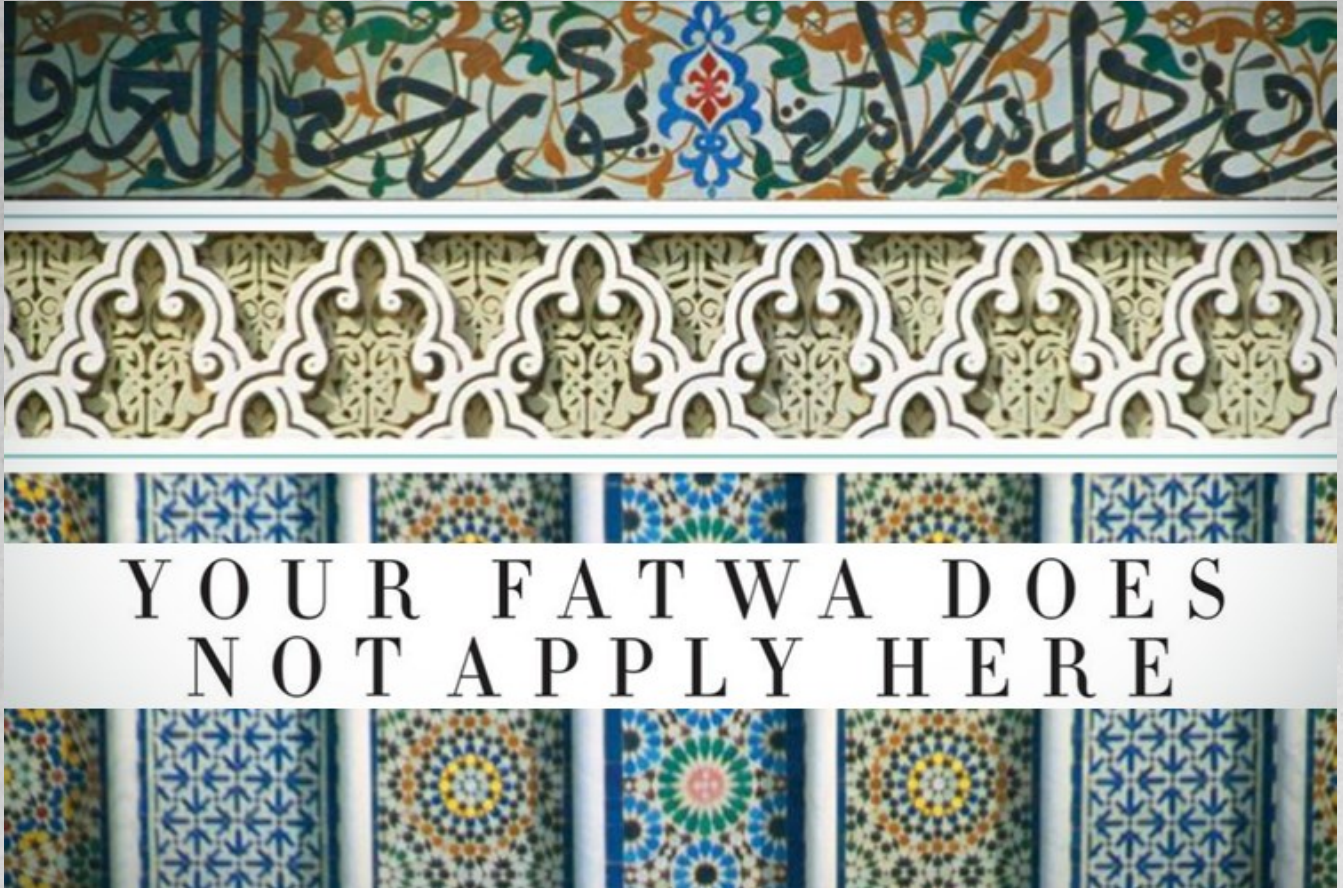
## MALDIVES

A 15-year-old girl who was sentenced to 100 lashes after being raped by her step-father has had her punishment [overturned](#) by a Maldives court after international outrage.

## INDONESIA

A [plan](#) to make female high school students undergo mandatory virginity tests has been met with outrage from activists, who argue that it discriminates against women and violates their human rights. Education chief Muhammad Rasyid, of Prabumulih district in south Sumatra put forward the idea, describing it as "an accurate way to protect children from prostitution and free sex". "This is for their own good," Rasyid said. "Every woman has the right to virginity ... we expect students not to commit negative acts." The test would require female senior school students aged 16 to 19 to have their hymen examined every year until graduation. Boys, however, would undergo no investigation into whether they had had sex. □

# arts corner

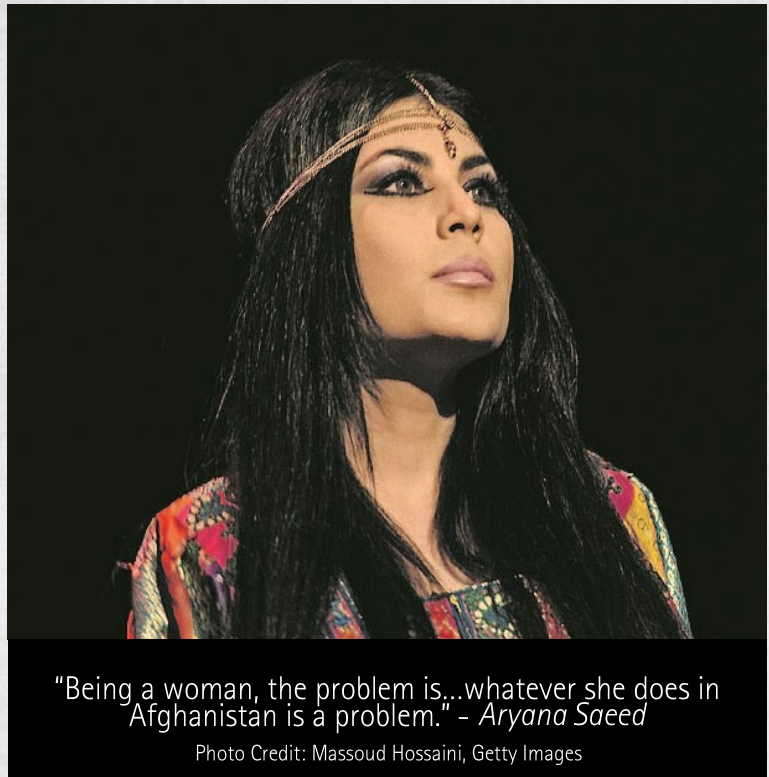


Karima Bennoune (*cover picture above*) has just published her first book: “Your Fatwa Does Not Apply Here: Untold Stories from the Fight Against Muslim Fundamentalism.” Inspired by her father Mahfoud Bennoune’s work in Algeria, it tells the stories of progressive people (journalists, artists, women’s rights activists...) who have risked everything to stand up to extremism and terror – stories rarely heard in the West. She interviewed nearly 300 people of Muslim heritage from almost 30 countries – from Afghanistan to Mali – for her book. □

Aryana Saeed (*picture right*), one of the judges of an Afghan singing competition *The Voice*, has received threats for appearing on TV unveiled. In an interview she says: “Being a woman, the problem is... whatever she does in Afghanistan is a problem.”

[Here’s her song about the plight of Afghan women.](#) It ends with:

I am the subject of stoning by the nation  
I am a dishonour to culture and tradition  
I am a black mark on faith and religion  
I am the Lady of the Land of Fire!





# upcoming events

## SAVE THE DATE: "RELIGIOUS-RIGHT, SECULARISM AND CIVIL RIGHTS"

*The Tower Hotel, London, UK  
11-12 October 2014*

Fitnah and One Law for All are holding a two-day international conference on the Religious-Right, Secularism and Civil Rights during 11-12 October 2014 at the Tower Hotel in London. Notable speakers from around the world will be joining us for a weekend of discussions and debates on the Religious Right, its attacks on civil rights and freedoms, and the role of secularism for 21st century humanity. The Arab uprisings, Sharia and religious laws, the burka and conspicuous religious symbols, freedom of expression and Islamophobia, faith schools and religious education, reproductive rights and secular values will be amongst the topics discussed.

On the night of 11 October, participants can enjoy a delicious three-course meal in the company of our celebrity speakers preceded by a full evening entertainment package. The conference will be held at the Tower Hotel with spectacular views of the River Thames and the Tower of London.

A number of rooms have been reserved for attendees at a discounted rate. Attendees can make their own reservations by calling the hotel on 0207 680 6912 or 0871 977 0218 and using the code ONEL080314 to ensure they receive the discounted rate. Single occupancy bedrooms are £130.00 and double occupancy rooms are £140.00 (both inclusive of VAT and breakfast). A list of more reasonable hotels in the surrounding area will be made available soon.

Admission includes a two-day conference, lunches, cocktail reception and a Saturday evening dinner with entertainment.

*Conference sponsors include The Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science UK, Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain, Secularism is a Woman's Issue and Atheist Alliance International.*



The yellow sticker proclaims "You are entering a Sharia controlled zone. Islamic rules enforced." Photo Credit: George Rex/Flickr

**Special Early Bird Price:** unwaged £150, waged £160, organisations £170

**Price after 1 May 2014:** unwaged £155, waged £170, organisations £180

**Separate tickets can be purchased for the following:**

*Saturday or Saturday day-delegate rate (including lunch)*

**Special Early Bird Price:** unwaged £50, waged £60, organisations £70  
**Price after 1 May 2014:** unwaged £55, waged £70, organisations £80

*Saturday Dinner and Entertainment:*

**Special Early Bird Price:** unwaged £50, waged £60, organisations £70  
**Price after 1 May 2014:** unwaged £55, waged £70, organisations £80

**Registration fees are non-refundable after 1 May**

# editorial

## WHILST ROUHANI SMILES ABROAD, ATTACKS CONTINUE UNABATED



Hassan Rouhani, the new president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, has been hailed as a moderate and reformer. Whilst he smiles abroad, however, the attack on women and girls in Iran continues unabated.

Rouhani is not a reformer in any sense of the word. Reform in the real world means real changes in the laws and people's lives. Whilst Rouhani's rhetoric and style are clearly different from his predecessor Ahmadinejad, in substance they are fundamentally the same.

Everyone knows that anyone who has the opportunity to run for the office of president must be vetted by the Supreme Spiritual Leader and the Guardian Council. They must be a stalwart of the regime and Rouhani has proven his loyalties since its establishment. He was part of Ayatollah Khomeini's entourage when Khomeini returned from exile in 1979; deputy leader of the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s; a Member of the Islamic Assembly or Parliament for 20 years; Chairman of the Supreme National Security Council for 16 years; and Iran's Chief Nuclear Negotiator for 2 years.

When looking at the workings of a repressive state like Iran, one has to be able to read between the lines in order to see the realities at play. It is not Rouhani who wants or must be credited for any calls for change and an end to religion's intervention in people's lives. It is what the people of Iran want. Credit must be given where credit is due. When the head of a theocracy that has maintained itself by slaughtering an entire generation begins to speak of rights and freedoms, it is because he and his regime have been forced to do so by the sheer might of people's dissent and resistance.

Remember this. It is not Rouhani that must be hailed but the people of Iran, and especially its women's liberation movement.

Finally, saying Rouhani is more of the same old same old is not in any way a support of US-led militarism or a call for the continuation of the back-breaking economic sanctions that are adversely affecting the public. Threats of war and economic sanctions are the other side of the coin of the regime and its oppression of the people of Iran. They have to end. □

Guest commentary is welcome. Please e-mail the editor at [fitnah.movement@gmail.com](mailto:fitnah.movement@gmail.com).



Egyptian female cartoonist pokes fun at fundamentalists.

# our campaigns

## CONDEMN LEGALISED PAEDOPHILIA AND CHILD RAPE IN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

On 22 September 2013, one day before the start of the school year in Iran, the Islamic Republic of Iran's Majlis or parliament passed a law permitting a stepfather to marry his adopted child.

In defence of the law, one Member of Parliament said: "According to Islam, every child who is accepted as an adopted child is not considered a real child. Islamic jurisprudence and Sharia law allow the guardian of the child to marry and have sex with his step-child."

This shocking law will encourage child 'marriages' and is nothing more than legalised paedophilia and child rape. It will further endanger the welfare of the child and violate her basic rights. It will deny the child any sense of security and safety in the home.

Fitnah – Movement for Women's Liberation and Children First Now unequivocally condemn this inhuman law. On 11 October, International Day of the Girl Child, we call on the public and rights organisations to condemn this legalised paedophilia and child rape. This law, like many other laws in the Islamic regime of Iran, violates the dignity and rights of children. And it must be stopped.

Here are **FIVE THINGS YOU CAN DO** on 11 October, International Day of the Girl Child, to condemn legalised paedophilia and child rape, and demanding dignity, security and rights for all girls and children in Iran and beyond.

### Tweet against the law:

#Iran #No2LegalPaedophilia

Sign our petition and forward it to 10 friends or acquaintances.

Write to Ali Khamenei, Iran's Leader, info\_leader@leader.ir, Twitter: @khamenei\_ir or to Hassan Rouhani, President, media@rouhani.ir, Twitter: @hassanrouhani demanding an end to child rape and paedophilia.

Publicise the campaign on social media including by changing your Facebook profile change to our campaign poster.

Do an act of solidarity on the internet, in your city square, at work, at your university in support of children's rights and against the law.



**TWEET:** #Iran #No2LegalPaedophilia

**SIGN:** [http://www.avaz.org/en/petition/An\\_end\\_to\\_legalised\\_paedophilia\\_and\\_child\\_rape\\_in\\_Iran/](http://www.avaz.org/en/petition/An_end_to_legalised_paedophilia_and_child_rape_in_Iran/)

## WE ARE HUMAN TOO; HALF OF IRAN AND THE WORLD

During the 14 June 2013 presidential "election", when asked about the women registering for Iran's upcoming presidential election, Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, a member of the Guardian Council, which vets all candidates, said: "It is reminiscent of the person who wasn't allowed to enter a village but was nonetheless asking to meet the village elder. The law doesn't allow women to run... The general conditions are specified in Article 115 of the constitution; it says 'one must be elected from amongst religious-political men'".

Fitnah condemned the "election" as a farce for women – but also men and stated that women and men in Iran – like people everywhere – have a fundamental right to democratic politics, equality, freedom and secularism. A precondition for real change is an end to the Islamic regime – not by US-led militarism or economic sanctions – but by the women's liberation movement and the people of Iran.

## MARIVAN CAMPAIGN

On Monday 15 April 2013, the Islamic regime of Iran's security forces paraded a man dressed in women's clothing and a hejab on the streets of Marivan, Iranian Kurdistan in order to punish and humiliate him. A judge had sentenced three men from two feuding families to be "humiliated" by wearing women's clothing in public. The regime's anti-women laws mean that women are seen to be the source of fitnah, corruption and harm; the greatest humiliation that can be bestowed on a man is to have him dressed as a woman!

On Tuesday, red-clothed women started a protest and called on others to join. 400 men and women joined in a march throughout the city. The police arrested some of the protesters; all of whom were subsequently released. On Friday 19 April, there was another public protest, in which there were banners saying: "Being a woman is not a source of humiliation or punishment". Many of the protesting women are wearing red. The protests are gaining prominence in Iran and elsewhere.

On Monday 21 April, there was a gathering in Iraqi Kurdistan in support of this move. Petitions are being circulated in towns and villages in Iran in support of the "red-clothed" women. *Fitnah* wholeheartedly defended the protest. □

# letters to the editor

Send questions and comments to [fitnah.movement@gmail.com](mailto:fitnah.movement@gmail.com) and we will respond in the next issue of the publication.

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**Design by Maha Kamal**

## join us

Fitnah – Movement for Women’s Liberation is a protest movement demanding freedom, equality, and secularism and calling for an end to misogynist cultural, religious and moral laws and customs, compulsory veiling, sex apartheid, sex trafficking, and violence against women. We remind the Islamic regime of Iran and Islamists everywhere that the women’s liberation movement is a source of fitnah for their rule alone. We are Islamism’s worst fitnah!

**To join Fitnah – Movement for Women’s Liberation, [visit here.](#)**

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