

Iran Punished For Treatment Of Women



Photo: Independent Media Institute

The Islamic Republic of Iran was the first UN member ever to be expelled from the prestigious Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), tasked with protecting women's rights and promoting gender equality.

In response to Iran's crackdown on protests, following the death of a young woman in police custody, Tehran's four-year term on the CSW came to an end on December 14 after the adoption of a resolution [introduced](#) by the United States, with 29 members voting in favor of the resolution, eight against, and 16 abstaining.

U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield called the vote "historic" and [told](#) reporters, "I think we sent a strong message to the Iranian government, and we sent a strong message to Iranian women."

The 45-member commission is nearly as old as the United Nations itself and was formed in 1946. The 54-member UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) that oversees the CSW, and which had previously elected Iran in [April 2021](#) for a four-year term to the CSW beginning [March 2022](#), adopted the resolution to oust it from the commission.

Based on increasing [evidence](#) gathered in the 1960s that women were disproportionately affected by poverty, the work of the commission centered on

the needs of women in community and rural development, agricultural work and family planning, and scientific and technological advances. The commission also encouraged the UN to provide greater technical assistance to ensure further advancement of women, especially in developing countries, according to "[A Short History of the Commission on the Status of Women](#)."

It is unusual to oust any government from a United Nations body. And several states questioned the legality of the move, especially Iran and Russia. But Canada's Ambassador [Bob Rae](#) countered this opposition by saying a vote has to be taken first in order to request an opinion.

Death of Mahsa Amini

The resolution was sparked by Iran's brutality against protesters who took to the streets in September [after](#) the death of a 22-year-old woman, Mahsa Amini, arrested by the "morality police" for not wearing a hijab, a head covering. She died in custody. As street protests spread across the country, political stability is being put to a potential test for the politically inexperienced president of Iran, conservative cleric Ebrahim Raisi.

At least [488](#) people have been killed since the demonstrations began, according to a November 29 [tweet](#) by the Iran Human Rights (IHR) group, which is monitoring the protests. Another [18,200](#) people have been detained by authorities, IHR said. Iran recently publicly [executed](#) two male protestors.

Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield spoke of the young woman, [saying](#): "Mahsa Amini just wanted to finish her studies. She wanted to start a family. ... She was just a student. But now she is a martyr... We know she was killed for the crime of being a woman."

According to the [Council on Foreign Relations](#), the protesters have no interest in reforming Iran's theocracy but, instead, want to do away with it, and the women-focused demonstrations have been attacking the regime's legitimacy. "Chants of 'woman, life, freedom' and calls to end mandatory hijab-wearing challenge the Islamist ideology that Iran's government is based on. These protests have unusually widespread support, unbound by class, ethnicity, or gender," [stated](#) the article by CFR.

Iran Objects

Iran's UN ambassador, [Amir Saeid Iravani](#), has, meanwhile, denied all allegations leveled against the country. Castigating the United States, he [said](#) that Washington demonstrated hostile policy toward the Iranian people, particularly women, "pursued under the guise of defending human rights." He questioned the legality of the vote, [saying](#) that "terminating an elected member's participation in a functional commission for any alleged reason" is not supported by the ECOSOC's rules.

Russia's deputy ambassador, [Gennady Kuzmin](#), said the purpose of the meeting was to purge the Commission on the Status of Women of a sovereign player, adding that each state has the obligation to maintain public order. But he said the Iranian government should take measures to prevent such tragedies like the death of Mahsa Amini in the future. He also questioned the legality of the vote.

Ambassador Gilad Erdan of [Israel](#), now in a proxy war with Iran, told the ECOSOC delegates that "this resolution must receive the support of all of us and whoever doesn't support it is complicit in the oppression and murder of women."

Those not supporting the resolution [were](#) Bolivia, China, Kazakhstan, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Russia, and Zimbabwe.

According to [Richard Gowan](#), a UN expert at the International Crisis Group, lots of delegates had second thoughts when reports of the U.S. action became known. "I have heard a lot of diplomats say they think Iran's actions are vile, but they worry that the U.S. will use these exclusionary tactics more in future. One day it's Iran, the next day it could be you."

The text of the [resolution](#) voiced concern over Iran "administering policies flagrantly contrary to the human rights of women and girls and to the mandate of the Commission on the Status of Women," and decided "to remove with immediate effect" Iran from membership in the commission for the remainder of its 2022-2026 term.

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