



MAHBOUBEH ABBASGHOLIZADEH

IRAN: WOMEN'S RIGHTS DEFENDERS DEFY REPRESSION

“Women in Iran and the region are at the centre of the wars, conflicts and the debate over Islam and the West.”

Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh, quoted in *Biographical Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East and North Africa*, 2007

“**ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO WOMEN IN IRAN FOUGHT TO ESTABLISH GIRLS' SCHOOLS. TODAY 64% OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ARE WOMEN. I HOPE THAT OUR CHILDREN COULD ONE DAY SAY THAT OUR PARENTS WENT TO JAIL FOR OUR GENDER EQUALITY AND DEMOCRACY.**”

Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh, quoted in *Biographical Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East and North Africa*, 2007

Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh is facing possible imprisonment for her part in a protest in 2007 against the trial of five women for organizing a demonstration in June 2006 calling for an end to legal discrimination against women in Iran.

Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh is a well-known journalist, writer, publisher, civil society activist and women's rights defender. She became the editor of the *Farzaneh* women's studies journal in 1993. She founded the Association of Women Writers and later the NGO Training Centre, which works to strengthen women's civil society organizations, which was closed down in 2007. In 2004, she helped to organize the "Beijing + 10" conference in Bangkok and attended the European Social Forum. In 2005 she was among a group of women who defied a ban on women attending football matches in Iran, and suffered a broken leg when guards tried to push her and the hundred or so other women out

by closing a gate. In 2006, she helped found the "Stop Stoning Forever" campaign which aims to end to the practice of stoning to death in Iran.

Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh was among 33 women arrested on 4 March 2007 while protesting at the trial of five women charged with organizing the June 2006 demonstration. She was released on bail after over two weeks in Evin Prison, some of which she spent in solitary confinement. In August 2007 she was charged with "illegal assembly, collusion against national security, disruption of public order and refusal to obey the orders of the police" in connection with her arrest in March 2007. No verdict on this has yet been issued.

Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh has also been harassed by the security forces, particularly from the Ministry of Intelligence, including a month's detention in 2004 and a travel ban.

ACT NOW

Write politely worded letters to the Head of the Judiciary.

- Call for the dropping of all charges against Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh that are connected to her peaceful campaigning for equal rights for women in Iran or against the punishment of stoning.
- Call for an end to her harassment by security forces.
- Urge him to review Iranian legislation with a view to ending all legalized discrimination against women.

WRITE TO:

Head of the Judiciary
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh (Office of the Head of the Judiciary)
Pasteur St, Vali Asr Ave, south of Serah-e Jomhuri,
Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (subject line: FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi)
Salutation: Your Excellency

Amnesty International
International Secretariat
Peter Benenson House
1 Easton Street
London WC1X 0DW
United Kingdom
www.amnesty.org
February 2008
AI Index: MDE 13/020/2008

**STOP VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN**

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



IRAN: WOMEN'S RIGHTS DEFENDERS DEFY REPRESSION

**STOP VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN**
**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**

