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Public Statement

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Iran: Amnesty International calls for action to end discrimination against women

Amnesty International has been informed that Iranian women will meet in Seventh of Tir Square in Tehran at 5pm on 12 June 2006 in order to call for the implementation of a series of measures which, if implemented, would significantly reduce legal and other discrimination against women in Iran. They include measures for which Amnesty International has also called publicly, including in a statement entitled *Iran: Amnesty International urges new President to make human rights a top priority*, (AI Index MDE 13/041/2005), and which the organization continues to advocate. The Iranian government should give urgent attention to these calls for reform and should take prompt action to address those laws and practices which continue to discriminate against women in Iran and deny them full access to their fundamental human rights. In addition, Amnesty International urges the Iranian government to ratify, without reservation, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The Iranian authorities should furthermore ensure that the policing of the meeting should be consistent with international standards on law enforcement such as the United Nations Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials and should respect the internationally recognised rights to freedom of expression and assembly. On 8 March 2006, Iranian police, Revolutionary Guards and others forcibly dispersed a gathering of about 1,000 women celebrating International Women's Day in Tehran, beating some of them (see *Iran: Amnesty International condemns violence against women demonstrators in Iran*, AI Index MDE 13/024/2006). Amnesty International urged the authorities to investigate this excessive use of force. An official complaint by nine women injured by security forces on 8 March was lodged in May 2006 with Branch 11 of the Office of the Public Prosecutor of Tehran's General and Revolutionary Court, but to date it is not clear what action, if any, the authorities have taken to investigate the complaint and hold to account any members of the security forces responsible for human rights abuses.