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Worker-communist Party of Iran

## Let's turn International Women's Day into a day of protest against the regime of sexual apartheid in Iran!

8 March, International Women's Day, is approaching. This day is the international day of protest against all forms of oppression and discrimination against women. To mark this day, the Worker-communist Party of Iran (WPI) and Equal Rights Now - Organisation against Women's Discrimination in Iran (ERN) call for the condemnation of the Islamic Republic of Iran for its systematic misogyny and sexual apartheid. We also call for the political isolation of the regime as a solidarity measure with the women's liberation movement and the people in Iran.

Today, apartheid is no longer identifiable with racial apartheid but with the sexual apartheid of regimes like the Islamic Republic of Iran. This regime has intensified, legitimised and strengthened the subjugation of women with its laws and legal system. From the outset, it has enforced compulsory veiling as a physical barrier to isolate and segregate women from men and has done so with brute force, including by throwing acid on unveiled women's faces and imprisoning and flogging those deemed to be transgressors. Like the former racial apartheid of South Africa, it has also segregated women in buses, workplaces and all other public places.

In addition to segregation, sexual apartheid aims to push back women into the home. Women are barred from many occupations. They don't even have the right to enter sport stadiums. According to Sharia law, women are the property of men and have no duty but to serve their male 'guardian' and take care of their husbands and children. Women's right to inheritance is half that of men's. Women's testimony is worth half of that of men's. Women can hardly get a divorce without their husband's permission yet men can divorce their wives without reason and even without their being present. Women don't have the right to travel, work, study and more without their male 'guardian's' permission. The marriage of an adult woman is not valid and cannot be registered without her father's consent. Sexual relations outside of marriage are punishable with death by stoning, the most brutal form of execution. Any protest against sexual apartheid and women's enslaved position is met with brute force. Moreover, the regime's propaganda machinery and its officials have made the humiliation and enslavement of women business as usual.

In light of this stark reality, the Islamic Republic of Iran must face the same public outrage and condemnation as did Apartheid South Africa. The institutionalised and legalised misogyny against women in Iran is sufficient reason for public opinion to demand the political isolation of this medieval regime internationally. The organised and brutal oppression and suppression of women in Iran is enough to demand that the heads of this regime be tried in an international tribunal for crimes against humanity. The abysmal status of women is sufficient reason to demand an end to this situation.

The Islamic Republic of Iran must be condemned and isolated by 21st century humanity. The political isolation of Apartheid South Africa in the early 90's is a successful example of the shared efforts of people across the world in getting rid of an inhuman regime. The Islamic Republic of Iran can and must meet the same condemnation and expulsion. Any appeasement toward this regime only helps it at the expense of the rights and lives of people in Iran.

The WPI and ERN call for solidarity on March 8 with the egalitarian struggle in Iran. Over the last 30 years, the movement against sexual apartheid has been taking shape in universities and schools, in factories and workplaces, in the family and on the streets. This movement is becoming increasingly expansive and is intensifying. According to official statistics, in Iran, hundreds of thousands of youth and women are arrested and punished annually for not observing the hijab. They are sometimes lashed. This shows not only the regime's injustice and oppression but also the massive scale of resistance and struggle. The appeal against the situation of women in Iran under the Islamic regime in Iran is an appeal against a reactionary regime and the political Islamic movement that is resorting to terror and medievalism. The emancipation of women in Iran is a call for the emancipation of women in countries and communities ruled by political Islam and Sharia and will strengthen the women's liberation movement internationally.

On March 8, we call on public opinion to support the women's liberation movement in Iran by demanding an end to political relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, and an end to sexual apartheid.

## **Equal Rights Now – Organization against Women's Discrimination in Iran**

**Worker-communist Party of Iran- Organization Abroad**

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