

During the first cycle of UPR on Iran, the Islamic Republic accepted at least ten recommendations that directly address the State's duty to protect women and girls' right to free and informed marriage.<sup>1</sup> Despite its response, the Islamic Republic has failed in its commitment to implement the relevant recommendations.

## **FACTS**

[Stolen Lives, Empty Classrooms: An Overview on Girl Marriages in the Islamic Republic of Iran](#)<sup>2</sup> and its recent updates, provide statistics and gender-based policies that endorse infringements on dignity and autonomy of women and girls, including their right to free and informed consent to marriage at the legal age:

- According to the founding father of the Islamic Republic, sexual intercourse with wives below the age of 9 lunar years is not allowed. However, "other forms of sexual pleasure" including "rubbing penis between the buttocks and thighs... of even... a nursing baby" is permitted.
- Legal guardians can marry off girls below 13 and boys before 15 years of age pending a judge's approval.
- Article 27 of the Bill of Adopted and Neglected Minors legalises marriage between parents and adopted children. In Iran, every 15 minutes a girl between 10 and 14 years of age faces marriage.
- During the last 9 months of 2013 more than 30,000 girls below 15 years of age were forced to marry.<sup>3</sup>
- Girls who face marriage at an early age suffer from high rates of illiteracy, economic disparity, marital rape, mental, physical and sexual abuse and violence, high rates of chronic medical problems and infant mortality.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Since the Islamic Republic is party to the International Bill of Rights and duty bound to protect and promote equal rights, JFI recommends that the Islamic Republic:

- Sign the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age For Marriage and Registration of Marriage with no reservation.
- Take effective legal measures to hold accountable the judges directly responsible for the approval of forced child marriage cases as well as other private actors, including the guardian of the adopted child.
- Judicial authorities introduce national codes and laws to prohibit forced marriage and revise existing laws so to prohibit marriage with one's adopted child.
- Sign the Convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and take effective measures to eliminate marriage with girls below the age of 18, parents or guardians with their adopted children, and provide reparation for victims of girl marriages.

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<sup>1</sup> Recommendations by Chile, Estonia, Germany, Indonesia, Viet Nam, Austria, Bangladesh, Ireland, Qatar, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> <http://justice4iran.org/english/issues/stolen-lives/>

<sup>3</sup> For more information please see a recent update by JFI available on-line at: <http://justice4iran.org/english/j4iran-activities/during-the-nine-months-of-2013-more-than-30000-girls-below-the-age-of-15-were-forced-to-marry/>