

**Istanbul Aydın University Model United Nations  
(IAUMUN 24)**

**United Nations Commission on the Status of Women  
(UNCW)  
Study Guide**



**Agenda Item:** Examining Iranian Women's Rights  
in the Aftermath of Mahsa  
Amini's Tragic Death.

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## **Letter From the Secretary-General**

Greetings everyone!

Firstly, I would like to welcome all of you to the first edition of İstanbul Aydın University's Model United Nations, an edition that will surely go down in history!

As you dive into your study guides to prepare for the big day, I wish you a fruitful journey of research and learning. The world of Model United Nations is one of diplomacy, collaboration, and critical thinking, and I have no doubt that each of you will rise to the occasion with passion and intellect.

As you engage in debates, negotiate resolutions, and forge alliances, remember that you are not just representing countries, but embodying the spirit of global citizenship. The challenges we face today require innovative solutions, and it is through events like MUN that we can cultivate the leaders of tomorrow.

I encourage you to seize every opportunity to engage with your fellow delegates, share perspectives, and craft resolutions that reflect the diverse voices of our world. Whether you are an experienced delegate or new to the world of Model UN, this experience promises to be one of growth and camaraderie.

On behalf of the entire team, I extend my sincerest wishes for your success. May your debates be dynamic, your resolutions impactful, and your memories lasting.

Welcome to IAUMUN 2024!

## Letter from the Under Secretary-General

Dear Delegates,

Greetings to all participants of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCW) In Istanbul Aydın University Model United Nations (IAUMUN). I am honored to serve as your Under Secretary-General for this esteemed committee. My name is Ece Sude Baybaş, a 21-year-old 3rd grade dental student, and I have been actively engaged in Model United Nations (MUN) conferences since 2018.

Your dedication to addressing the critical issues surrounding gender equality and women's empowerment is commendable. The UNCW serves as a pivotal platform for advocating women's rights, advancing gender equality, and fostering inclusive societies. Through collaboration and policy formulation, we have the opportunity to address challenges facing women and girls worldwide.

As we convene in this committee, I encourage you to engage actively, listen attentively, and collaborate constructively. Your perspectives and ideas can shape the outcome of our discussions and drive positive change globally.

Please review the provided guide, which offers valuable insights to inform our discussions. Should you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Thank you for your commitment to the cause of gender equality. I look forward to our productive discussions. Warm regards,

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## **Introduction to the Committee**

Established in 1946, the UNCW operates under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), tasked with monitoring progress, facilitating dialogue, and formulating policies to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women. Through its annual sessions, thematic discussions, and reports, the commission provides a forum for Member States, civil society organizations, and stakeholders to exchange ideas, share best practices, and mobilize action towards transformative change.

The mandate of the UNCW is guided by key international agreements, including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These frameworks underscore the importance of gender equality as a fundamental human right and a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development, peace, and social justice.

As delegates in the UNCW, you are entrusted with the critical task of addressing a wide range of issues affecting women, including access to education, healthcare, employment, political participation, and freedom from violence and discrimination. Your role is to engage in constructive dialogue, propose innovative solutions, and advocate for policies that promote gender equality and women's rights at the national, regional, and global levels.

## **Introduction to the Topic**

The tragic death of Mahsa Amini, a 37-year-old Iranian woman, has thrust the issue of women's rights in Iran into the global spotlight once again. Mahsa Amini, along with others who were detained alongside her, reported that she was subjected to physical assault inside the transport van. Following three days of detention, Amini was transferred to a hospital where medical personnel attempted resuscitation efforts. She experienced cardiac arrest attributed to "brain death" and was declared deceased. While Iranian authorities attributed her death to preexisting health conditions, her family contested this assertion. UN experts indicated that certain accounts suggested Amini's death resulted from "alleged torture and ill-treatment." It was reported that she was rendered unconscious after being severely beaten, allegedly due to not wearing the mandatory hijab securely enough. Amini's untimely demise on 16 September 2022, under suspicious circumstances while in police custody, has reignited long-standing debates surrounding the treatment of women and the broader landscape of human rights within the Islamic Republic. Her story serves as a poignant reminder of the persistent challenges and systemic inequalities faced by women in Iran, as well as the urgent need for reform and accountability within the country's legal and social structures.

In the aftermath of Mahsa Amini's death, waves of protests and expressions of outrage have swept across Iran and reverberated throughout the international community. From the streets of Tehran to social media platforms worldwide, voices

demanding justice for Amini and advocating for women's rights have grown louder and more resolute. Yet, amidst the outcry, deeper questions emerge about the status of women in Iranian society, the efficacy of legal protections, and the prospects for meaningful change in the face of entrenched patriarchal norms and authoritarian governance.

This study guide endeavors to delve into the multifaceted dimensions of Iranian women's rights, contextualizing Mahsa Amini's case within a broader framework of historical, legal, and social dynamics. By examining the events leading up to Amini's death, the responses it has elicited, and the underlying factors shaping women's experiences in Iran, we aim to foster a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding gender equality and human rights in the country. Through informed analysis and dialogue, we aspire to contribute to ongoing efforts to advance women's rights and promote justice and dignity for all individuals in Iran and beyond.

## **General Background of the Topic**

Iran, a country rich in history, culture, and tradition, has long been a focal point of global attention, particularly concerning its treatment of women and adherence to Islamic principles within the framework of governance. The Iranian Revolution of 1979, which culminated in the establishment of an Islamic Republic, ushered in a period of profound political, social, and religious transformation. While the revolution promised to empower marginalized groups and challenge the hegemony of Western influence, its aftermath witnessed a complex interplay of competing ideologies and power struggles, often at the expense of women's rights and freedoms.

In the decades following the revolution, Iranian women have navigated a landscape characterized by legal constraints, social norms, and cultural expectations that shape every aspect of their lives. While advancements in education and healthcare have expanded opportunities for women, deeply entrenched patriarchal structures and discriminatory laws continue to perpetuate gender disparities and limit women's autonomy and agency. The imposition of mandatory hijab laws, restrictions on mobility and employment, and unequal treatment within the legal system underscore the persistent challenges faced by women in asserting their rights and challenging systemic injustices.

Against this backdrop, women like Mahsa Amini have emerged as voices of resilience and defiance, challenging prevailing norms and advocating for gender equality and justice. Amini's tragic death, shrouded in controversy and suspicion, serves as a stark reminder of the risks faced by those who dare to speak out against oppression and injustice. As the world grapples with the implications of her untimely demise, the case of Mahsa Amini serves as a catalyst for reflection, action, and solidarity in the ongoing struggle for women's rights in Iran and beyond.

## **Historical Background of Women's Rights in Iran**

The struggle for women's rights in Iran is deeply intertwined with the nation's complex history, which encompasses periods of cultural flourishing, political upheaval, and social change. Throughout the centuries, Iranian women have played pivotal roles in shaping their society, often confronting formidable obstacles rooted in tradition, religion, and patriarchy.

### **Pre-Islamic Period**

Prior to the advent of Islam in the 7th century, ancient Persia (modern-day Iran) boasted a rich tapestry of civilizations, including the Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sassanian empires. While historical records vary, women in pre-Islamic Persia are believed to have enjoyed certain rights and privileges, including property ownership and participation in economic and cultural life.

### **Islamic Era**

The arrival of Islam in the 7th century brought significant changes to Iranian society, introducing new religious and legal frameworks that influenced women's status and rights. While Islam granted women certain rights, such as the right to inheritance and protection from abuse, interpretations of religious texts and traditions often reinforced patriarchal norms and restrictions on women's autonomy. Safavid and Qajar Dynasties:

During the Safavid and Qajar dynasties (16th to early 20th centuries), women's rights in Iran were largely circumscribed by traditional Islamic law and cultural practices. Women from noble families often faced constraints on their mobility and participation in public life, while those from lower socio-economic backgrounds engaged in agricultural and artisanal labor.

### **Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911):**

The Constitutional Revolution marked a pivotal moment in Iran's history, as diverse social and political forces coalesced to demand greater democratic governance and civil liberties. While the revolutionaries' primary focus was on constitutional reform and national sovereignty, women actively participated in political and social movements, advocating for expanded rights and representation. Pahlavi Era (1925-1979):

The rise of Reza Shah Pahlavi and the establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty ushered in a period of modernization and secularization in Iran. Reza Shah's reforms aimed to centralize state authority, promote Westernization, and secularize the legal system. Women were granted expanded rights, including access to education, employment, and participation in public life, albeit within the framework of a top-down authoritarian regime.

## **Islamic Revolution (1979):**

The Iranian Revolution of 1979, led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, culminated in the overthrow of the Pahlavi monarchy and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran. While the revolution promised to usher in an era of justice and equity, the imposition of strict Islamic law and adherence to conservative social norms curtailed many of the rights and freedoms previously enjoyed by Iranian women.

## **Post-Revolutionary Period:**

In the aftermath of the revolution, Iranian women found themselves navigating a landscape characterized by a complex interplay of religious, political, and cultural forces. While women's participation in education and workforce increased, they faced legal and social restrictions, including mandatory hijab laws, limitations on travel, and unequal treatment under the law.

Throughout Iran's history, women have remained resilient agents of change, challenging oppressive systems and advocating for gender equality and justice. Despite facing formidable obstacles, Iranian women continue to play active roles in shaping their society and striving for a more inclusive and equitable future.

## **Mahsa Amini's Legacy: Illuminating the Ongoing Struggle for Women's Rights in Iran**

The Mahsa Amini incident serves as a poignant reflection of the broader historical context of women's rights in Iran, encapsulating the ongoing struggle for gender equality and justice within the country's complex socio-political landscape. While Mahsa Amini's tragic death occurred in the contemporary era, its reverberations echo deep-rooted issues and systemic challenges faced by Iranian women throughout history.

### **Legacy of Patriarchy and Oppression**

The Mahsa Amini incident underscores the enduring legacy of patriarchal norms and oppressive structures that have historically marginalized women in Iranian society. From pre-Islamic times to the present day, Iranian women have confronted cultural, religious, and legal barriers that limit their autonomy and restrict their access to rights and opportunities.



## **Repression and Resistance**

Mahsa Amini's case highlights the ongoing tensions between state authorities and women's rights activists in Iran, where efforts to challenge discriminatory practices are met with repression and resistance. Amini's activism and defiance against oppressive measures, including the mandatory hijab law, reflect broader struggles for freedom of expression and individual rights within an authoritarian regime.

## **Continuity and Change**

The trajectory of women's rights in Iran, from pre-Islamic civilizations to the present day, is marked by periods of progress and regression, reflecting broader societal shifts and political dynamics. While Iranian women have made significant strides in education, employment, and public participation since the Pahlavi era, the imposition of conservative policies following the Islamic Revolution has curtailed many of these gains, perpetuating systemic inequalities and gender-based violence. Social Movements and Solidarity:

Mahsa Amini's death has galvanized social movements and fostered solidarity among women's rights activists, both within Iran and across the globe. The widespread outcry and protests following Amini's death illustrate the power of collective action in mobilizing public opinion and advocating for justice in the face of state-sanctioned violence and repression.

## **Call for Reform and Accountability**

The Mahsa Amini incident has reignited calls for legal reform and accountability within Iran's judicial and law enforcement systems, where impunity for human rights abuses remains a pervasive concern. Amini's case underscores the urgent need for transparent investigations, impartial justice, and meaningful reforms to address systemic issues of gender-based violence and discrimination against women.

In essence, the Mahsa Amini incident serves as an impactful reminder of the ongoing struggle for women's rights in Iran, encapsulating broader historical legacies, contemporary challenges, and aspirations for a more inclusive and equitable society. As Iranian women continue to navigate complex socio-political dynamics and assert their rights in the face of adversity, the legacy of Mahsa Amini's activism and sacrifice will endure as a symbol of resilience, courage, and hope for generations to come.

## **UN's Role in Advancing Women's Rights: Addressing Challenges in Iran and Beyond**

The United Nations has been actively monitoring and addressing human rights issues, including women's rights, in Iran. Regarding the specific case of Mahsa Amini and broader concerns about women's rights in Iran, the United Nations and its human rights bodies have taken several steps:

**Statements and Condemnations:** The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other UN officials have issued statements expressing concern over the treatment of women and the broader human rights situation in Iran. These statements often condemn violence against women and call for thorough investigations into cases of abuse and discrimination.

**Reports and Documentation:** Various UN agencies and bodies, such as the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, regularly produce reports and documentation highlighting human rights violations, including those related to women's rights, within Iran. These reports provide detailed analyses of the situation on the ground and make recommendations for improvement.

**Dialogue and Advocacy:** The United Nations engages in dialogue with Iranian authorities and civil society organizations to raise awareness of human rights issues and advocate for reforms. Through diplomatic channels and engagement with relevant stakeholders, the UN seeks to promote respect for human rights, including women's rights, in Iran.

**International Pressure and Sanctions Monitoring:** In cases where human rights violations persist despite diplomatic efforts, the United Nations may coordinate with member states and international organizations to apply diplomatic pressure or impose targeted sanctions on individuals or entities responsible for human rights abuses.

It's important to note that while the United Nations plays a critical role in monitoring and addressing human rights issues, including those related to women's rights, its effectiveness relies on the cooperation of member states and the broader international community. The extent to which UN actions directly impact specific cases, such as the tragedy of Mahsa Amini, may vary depending on factors such as political dynamics, regional context, and the willingness of relevant parties to engage in dialogue and reform efforts.

## **Latest Updates Related to Mahsa Amini's Passing**

The Iranian government has introduced a "Chastity and Hijab Bill," which is perceived as an attempt to strengthen the mandatory dress code. The proposed legislation outlines penalties for breaching the hijab rule, ranging from fines for initial infractions to lashings, the withholding of government services, and lengthy prison sentences for repeat offenders.

As of now, the bill awaits approval from the influential Guardian Council of the country.

Even among women who strictly observe hijab regulations and express their intent to continue doing so, there seems to be an acknowledgment of shifts within Iranian society and a recognition of the importance of individual autonomy to some extent.

In Paris, France, the Eiffel Tower illuminated with the words "Femme. Vie. Liberté." (Woman. Life. Freedom) — the global rallying cry of the protest movement. In Sydney, Australia, crowds chanted: "say her name." In Turkey, demonstrators assembled, holding up images of Iranian women slain in the country's harsh crackdown on protests.

The term "brutal" aptly characterizes the Islamic Republic's violent reprisals. The response has been marked by widespread arrests, public executions of protesters, physical assaults, instances of sexual violence and torture, including against minors, military interventions, and the deaths of numerous youths.

Regarding the dress code violations that led to Amini's arrest, Iranian authorities are contemplating a severe new bill concerning hijab enforcement. This proposed legislation entails significantly lengthier prison sentences for non-compliant women, harsh penalties for violators, and the implementation of artificial intelligence to monitor adherence to the dress code.

As of April 4, 2023, at least 537 individuals have lost their lives at the hands of security forces. However, Iranian journalists argue that data from Iran's National Organization for Civil Registration suggests the actual figures could be substantially higher.



## Iran Protests - Daily Update

January 23, 2023  
Since September 17, 2022

Death Toll  
of protestors

**525**

Number of Children Killed	<b>71</b>	Number of Cities Involved	<b>164</b>
Number of Regime Forces Killed	<b>68</b>	Number of Universities Involved	<b>144</b>
Number of Individuals Arrested	<b>19,571</b>	Number of Convicted Protestors	<b>737</b>
Number of Detainees Identified	<b>5,034</b>	Total Prison Sentences in Months	<b>12,330</b>
Number of Students Arrested	<b>716</b>	Number of Executed Protestors	<b>4</b>
Number of Children Arrested (under 18)	<b>168</b>	Estimated Number of Protestors under the Impending Threat of Death Sentence	<b>110</b>
Number of Protests	<b>1,260</b>		

Notice these figures are not finalized



### Questions to Ponder

- How can the resolution address discriminatory laws against women in Iran, such as those pertaining to marriage, divorce, and inheritance?
- What specific measures can be proposed to ensure equal rights and protections for women under Iranian law?
- How can the resolution promote education and awareness initiatives to challenge gender stereotypes and empower women in Iranian society?
- What strategies can be implemented to improve access to education and promote gender-sensitive curricula that promote women's rights?
- How can the resolution hold the Iranian government accountable for its treatment of women and its human rights record overall?
- What mechanisms can be put in place to monitor and report on human rights violations, including those related to women's rights, within Iran?
- How can the resolution encourage increased international engagement and cooperation to support women's rights activists and organizations in Iran?

- What role can the international community play in advocating for reforms and promoting gender equality in Iran through diplomatic channels and multilateral forums?
- How can the resolution strengthen protections for women's rights defenders and activists in Iran who face harassment, intimidation, and arrest?
- What measures can be proposed to ensure their safety and provide avenues for legal recourse in cases of persecution or reprisals?
- How can the resolution address systemic gender-based violence and discrimination against women in Iran, both within the private and public spheres?
- What resources and support mechanisms can be established to provide assistance and rehabilitation for survivors of gender-based violence?
- How can the resolution promote economic empowerment for women in Iran, including access to employment, entrepreneurship opportunities, and financial resources?
- What policies and initiatives can be implemented to address barriers to economic participation and ensure equal pay and opportunities for women in the workforce?

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