

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon
The Secretary-General
The United Nations
New York, NY 10017
U.S.A.

April 13, 2015

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

The UN's election on Friday of Iran to the Executive Board of UN Women, the world agency for gender equality and the empowerment of women—by an overwhelming two-thirds majority of the UN Economic and Social Council—is a moral outrage that threatens to undermine your own recent report on Iran's pervasive discrimination and gender inequality against women.

We urge you to speak out and condemn this hypocritical decision, which sends a dangerous message to the world and to Iran's women's rights defenders, just as your colleague at UNESCO, Director-General Irina Bokova, rightly [criticized](#) the election of Syria's Assad regime to two UNESCO human rights committees in 2011.

As you rightly indicated in your [2015 report](#) on the situation of human rights in Iran (A/HRC/28/26), Iran is ranked as one of the worst countries in the world on women's rights, ranking no. 137 out of 142 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index for 2014 of the World Economic Forum.

Your report documents Iran's abysmal record on child marriages, forced head-covering enforced by morality police, acid attacks, domestic violence, spousal rape, state-enforced control of women by their husbands, and gross inequality in the workplace, education and public sphere.

And what sets Iran apart from other countries is its persecution, arrests and imprisonment of women's rights activists for exercising their rights to freedom of association and freedom of expression and opinion.

Accordingly, we urge you to speak out forcefully against this cynical attempt by Iran to undermine the global struggle for women's equality and empowerment.



Hillel C. Neuer
Executive Director