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Ebrahim Raisi
President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and
head of Supreme Council of National Security
**c/o** Embassy of Iran to the European Union
Avenue Franklin Roosevelt No. 15
1050 Bruxelles,
Belgium

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Dear Mr Raisi,

**Women and girls in Iran are facing a renewed assault on their human rights, dubbed the «War on Women» by Iranian human rights defenders and social media users**. Since mid-April 2024, when the authorities announced the implementation of a new nationwide campaign called the «Noor (light) Plan», security forces across the country have intensified their violent enforcement of compulsory veiling. In recent weeks, there has been a visible increase of security patrols on foot, motorbike, car and police vans in public spaces enforcing compulsory veiling through surveillance of women’s hair, bodies and attire. Disturbing videos have emerged on social media showing security forces physically assaulting women and girls in public and arresting and detaining women and girls by violently throwing them into police vans in a manner resembling abductions. The videos show the distressed women and girls screaming while being attacked and dragged away by security forces. Women have also reported security forces using electric shock devices during arrest and being subjected to unjust prosecutions, car confiscations and fines.

The crackdown intensified after Iran’s Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, issued a statement on 3 April 2024, stating that compulsory veiling is a «religiously mandated decree and obligatory for women» and that its non-compliance is being driven by «foreign interference» and should be addressed. On 13 April 2024, the Commander of Tehran's police force, Abbas Ali Mohammadian, announced that «From today, the police in Tehran and other provinces will [confront] individuals who promote social abnormalities like appearing without a headscarf. People who ignored previous police warnings will be specifically warned…and legal action will be taken against them.» On 21 April 2024, the Commander of the Revolutionary Guards in Tehran, Hassan Hassanzadeh, announced the formation of trained groups to enforce compulsory veiling in public spaces called «Ambassadors of Kindness», without specifying their exact composition and institutional affiliation. On 23 April 2024, the Commander-in-Chief of Iran’s police force, the Law Enforcement Command of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FARAJA), Ahmadreza Radan, announced that the «irreversible Noor Plan» was being implemented with the approval of the parliament, judiciary and government. On the same day, FARAJA issued a statement equating defiance of compulsory veiling with «organized criminal gangs…involved in corruption, prostitution, pornography.» A.«Bill to Support the Culture of Chastity and Hijab» is nearing adoption in Iran’s parliament. If passed into law, it will codify the Iranian authorities’ assault on women and girls for defying compulsory veiling.

**I call on the Iranian authorities to stop punishing women and girls for exercising their rights to bodily autonomy and freedom of expression, religion and belief; to immediately repeal all compulsory veiling laws and regulations; and to disband all security forces tasked with enforcing compulsory veiling. I urge you to unconditionally release anyone in detention for defying compulsory veiling and ensure that any officials involved in violating women’s rights through implementation of compulsory veiling are held to account.**

Yours sincerely,

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**Copie**

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