

# COMMITTEE ON IRANIAN AFFAIRS



## ***Letter to the People:***

Honorable Delegates,

Welcome to the fifth annual Freeman Model United Nations Conference! It is our privilege to welcome you to the Iranian parliament specialized agency.

My name is Dwani Suresh and I will be your main chair along with vice chair Zach Bender. Dwani is a sophomore in the Center for Leadership, Government and Global Economics at Freeman. She has been participating in MUN and speech for over four years now and loves the public speaking experience it comes with. She's on the cross country and track team and loves being involved in the school as an SCA member and a class officer. Zach is a freshman in the Center for Leadership, Government and Global Economics at Freeman. He has been apart of MUN for 4 years now and loves to hear the unique perspectives of every delegate in the committee. Outside of MUN, Zach looks forward to the Swimming and Diving team at freeman, as well as FBLA. We hope this committee will help delegates love MUN as much as we do.

This committee will be based present time and give delegates a chance to discuss and work diligently together to come up with solutions to a wide range of issues within Iran. This committee is set up to have multiple views pertaining to the Iranian parliament in hopes to bring to light issues and solutions that can be the stepping stones to change. The first topic is Iran-US relations and which will delve into discussing nuclear weapons, treaties, and military operations. And our second topic - Women's rights, covers modesty rules, assault domestic violence and unfair treatment. We hope to see lots of thoughtful ideas to inspire change during this conference!

Awards will be given based on performance in not only the front room (on-the-spot debate), but also in unmods and private directives. Position papers are strongly recommended. We hope that your experience at FreeMUN will be just as rewarding as ours has been, and we are looking forward to meeting everyone! If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us at [freemunviranp@gmail.com](mailto:freemunviranp@gmail.com).

Your Chairs,

Dwani Suresh and Zach Bender



*Douglas S. Freeman High School Model United Nations Conference*

## **Committee on Iranian Affairs**

*Specialized Agency*

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**Topic I:** *U.S.-Iran Relations*

**Topic II:** *Women's Rights*

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### **Introduction**

Iran is a large country in Western Asia with a rich history and complex culture. Its landscape consists mostly of a high, dry plateau surrounded by mountains, which makes farming difficult in many areas. Because of its location, Iran has been a crossroads for different cultures and religions for thousands of years. Iran was historically known as “Persia” but during the reign of Reza Shah, a reformist ruler who was in power from 1925 to 1941, a new name for the country was adopted to restore Iran’s historical legacy. Some additional changes implemented by the Shah were the centralization of the government and expansion and modernization of their education system.

In 1979, Iran became an Islamic Republic. This means that the country's laws were based on Islamic teachings. Because of this, Iran has different ideas about human rights and politics than many other countries, particularly those in the west. Some examples of laws considered more extreme are same-sex relationships, which are illegal for both men and women. Penalties include corporal punishment and death. Iran has strict codes of dress and

behaviour. Women are required by law to wear a headscarf and loose-fitting clothing covering their arms and legs. There is also intense debate about Iran’s large nuclear program and the global safety considerations surrounding it.

Some of the biggest challenges Iran faces today include economic problems, water shortages, and tensions with other countries including a proxy war with Saudi-Arabia.

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### **Topic I: U.S.-Iran Relations**

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#### **Nuclear History and Current Status**

The United States and Iran had a cooperative relationship before 1979. The US supported Iran's government and economy, contributing to its economic and social advancement.

The U.S. helped Iran create its nuclear program in 1957 by providing Iran with its first nuclear reactor and nuclear fuel and after 1967 by providing Iran with weapons grade enriched uranium. This was

before Iran became an Islamic Republic. At the time, they were considered a strategically-located western ally in the Middle East. This dynamic changed with the 1979 Iranian Revolution, which replaced the monarchy with an Islamic Republic. The new government was anti-American and U.S.-Iran relations went downhill, especially after the 1979 Iran Hostage Crisis in which Iranian students seized the US embassy in Tehran and held diplomats captive for 444 days.

Differences in political systems—democracy versus the authoritarian Islamic Republic—further strained relations. Economic sanctions imposed by the U.S. due to Iran's nuclear program heavily intensified the conflict and severely affected Iran's economy, leading to high inflation, unemployment, and reduced access to essential goods. The first U.S. president to impose sanctions on Iran for nuclear leverage was President Clinton in 1995 through the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act. These sanctions have been continuously extended under each administration and were last extended by President Obama in 2016 for 10 years. Similar economic sanctions have also been imposed against the Central Bank of Iran, the Space Agency of Iran, and Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). This caused Iran to feel cornered economically; subsequently, Iran accelerated its nuclear activities, which the U.S. and its allies viewed as a threat. Ongoing issues include Iran's nuclear ambitions and its support for groups in the Middle East. Despite some diplomatic efforts, the relationship between the U.S. and Iran remains tense and complex.

To address these tensions, the US, the EU, China, Germany, France, Russia, the UK, and Iran agreed upon the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also known as the Iran Nuclear Deal, to limit Iran's nuclear activities in exchange for sanctions relief. The JCPOA established frameworks for monitoring and restricting Iran's nuclear capabilities, including reducing uranium enrichment and allowing inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). More specifically, Iran had to reduce its stockpile of enriched uranium by 98% over fifteen years, cut the number of operating centrifuges by two-thirds over ten years, and provide inspectors access to enrichment facilities within twenty-four days if the IAEA suspects violations. Economic sanctions targeting Iran's economy, including its oil exports and financial transactions, have also been imposed to pressure compliance.

This temporarily eased nuclear tensions. However, in 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump ended the deal, reimposing sanctions and saying it “[had] not served the best interests of the US”. The Trump Administration also stated that Iran was given “too much for too little”. Today, Iran continues to make ballistic missiles since only nuclear missiles were covered in JCPOA. This withdrawal from the JCPOA has caused the U.S.-Iran relationship to further deteriorate.

Since the U.S. left the JCPOA Iran has generally remained in compliance with the agreement but has violated some terms. In May 2019, Iran lifted its cap on the stockpile of uranium permitted, since making 27% more than agreed upon.

Iran also has been enriching its uranium up to 83.7% while the weapon grade amount is 90%. Recent security threat screenings show that three nuclear weapons could be made in less than a year's time with the amount of uranium charged.

### **Military Conflict History**

Beyond supporting allied groups in the Middle East and engaging in arms sales elsewhere, Iran is reported by U.S. officials to possess “the largest inventory of ballistic missiles in the region” and has developed a variety of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). These capabilities enhance Iran's regional influence, which the Iranian government has further reinforced by bolstering its economic and military connections with China and Russia. For instance, Iran has exported UAVs to aid Russian military efforts in Ukraine and has sold oil to China. The U.S. government has used various tools, including comprehensive sanctions, limited military action, and diplomatic engagement with leaders in Iran and other countries to counter what the U.S. officials describe as Iranian threats to U.S. interests. The Iranian government faces some challenges at home but retains considerable influence in the Middle East region and remains able to contest U.S. interests in the region and beyond.

### **Governing Differences**

The U.S. government views Iran as the leading state sponsor of international terrorism, estimating that Iran spends over one billion dollars annually on terrorist activities. For example, the IRGC is a military force tasked with protecting the

Islamic Republic and its interests, distinct from the regular army. The IRGC is known for its involvement in regional conflicts in many proxy groups across the Middle East, including Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Gaza, and various militias in Iraq and Syria. It is also believed that between 140,000 and 185,000 IRGC-Quds Force affiliates are active in countries such as Afghanistan, Gaza, Lebanon, Pakistan, Syria, and Yemen. In April 2019, the U.S. designated the IRGC a terrorist organization—marking the first time the United States classified part of a foreign government as such.

At first glance, the U.S. and Iranian governments appear similar in some respects: both have a president, a legislature, and a powerful judiciary. However, a fundamental difference is that Iran operates as an Islamic theocracy, where the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah, holds significant ideological and political authority over a system predominantly controlled by clerics who oversee major state functions. The Ayatollah are the religious leaders who are granted with authority to interpret the Sharia. Additionally, despite the enthusiasm with which Western governments greeted the election of Mohammad Khatami in 1997 and his re-election in 2001—thanks to his reputation as a moderate cleric with progressive views—there are substantial limitations to his influence. Khatami had minimal control over key aspects of the Iranian power structure, such as the military and certain other powerful institutions, which remain under the direct authority of the Supreme Leader and the Iranian President/ clerical leader. This distinction highlights the deeper complexities of Iran's

governance compared to the U.S. political system.

### **Recent Steps**

Recently the members of Congress under Joe Biden's administration have conducted talks with people of authority in Iran in efforts to ease casualties and infrastructure damage for allied countries in the ongoing state of war. These interactions and attempts at peacemaking have not had any further effect. Allowing Iran to continue to grow their military and nuclear influence may lead to a bloody international war.

### **Questions to Consider:**

1. How can this committee diplomatically come to common grounds about weapons production?
2. Alongside military and nuclear threats, how can the committee improve the Iran-US relations?
3. How can the U.S. send allied nations support without disrupting normal operations and/or sending signals for war?
4. How do US-Iran tensions impact security dynamics in the Middle East, including relationships with allies like Israel and Saudi Arabia?
5. How can nuclear production from either side help/harm the other?

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## **Topic 2: Women's Rights**

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### **Overview**

Women's rights in Iran are severely restricted under a legal and social framework that enforces gender inequality. Women are mandated to wear the hijab and face various limitations on their freedoms, including travel restrictions. Iran uses Sharia law, religious regulations based on teachings of the Qu'ran, and places women at a disadvantage in marriage, divorce, and custody matters. Men have a higher place of respect in their society and although women have access to education and employment, they often encounter significant discrimination that limits their opportunities, especially in high-level positions. Political participation is also constrained, with women having lower representation in government and facing systemic barriers to higher roles. Activists advocating for women's rights frequently face harassment, arrest, and imprisonment. Sharia was a big influence on this.

### **Women in the Workforce**

In Iran, women's rights are restricted due to the country's strict interpretation of Islamic law. In the workforce, while women can work in a variety of sectors, they face significant barriers in about 30% of professions deemed unsuitable for their gender by conservative standards. Women are prohibited from working in marketing or being a judge or clergy. Women's participation in sports is also curtailed; they cannot attend men's sporting events and face restrictions in competing in mixed-gender events, which affects about 40% of their sports options. Furthermore, women are limited in their ability to travel without a male guardian's permission, and their

involvement in certain cultural and social activities is also constrained. Despite these challenges, women continue to pursue higher education, with over 60% of university students being female, though they are often restricted in their choice of fields of study. Additionally, while women have the right to vote and run for office, the number of women in political positions remains disproportionately low compared to their male counterparts. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the labor force participation rate among females was 14.4% compared to 70.6% among males in 2023. Women are also not offered benefits and leadership roles in the workforce.

### **Clothing and Modesty**

In Iran, women are subject to strict dress codes mandated by Islamic law. They are required to wear hijabs, a headscarf that covers their hair, and loose-fitting, modest clothing that conceals their arms and legs in public. This dress code is rigorously enforced, with violations often resulting in fines ranging from \$100 to \$500, detention, and exorbitant prison sentences. Women must also avoid clothing that is considered too tight or revealing, and brightly colored or flashy attire is discouraged as it is deemed incompatible with modesty standards. For instance, even the length of a woman's coat must extend below the knee, and it should not be form-fitting. These regulations significantly impact women's freedom of personal expression, with reports indicating that over 80% of women in Tehran have experienced some form of enforcement action related to dress codes. Social and legal pressures to adhere to these dress

codes reflect a larger set of societal expectations that constrain women's public and personal lives. In spite of these challenges, Iranian women have navigated unfair treatment with resilience, many of them advocating for greater freedom and expressing their personal styles within the confines of the law.

### **Violence and the Morality Police**

Around 66% of Iranian women suffer from domestic violence, and an estimated 43% are victims of violence from police officers and other authority figures in communities. Women have been publicly shamed and attacked for not adhering to strict modesty rules. For instance, on September 16, 2022, 22-year-old Mahsa Amini was severely beaten, arrested, and killed by Iranian policemen for not properly wearing her hijab. Amini died in detention from brutal brain injuries. Her story traveled across the country, inciting protests both nationally and internationally.

These protests have been met with excessive police force, resulting in injuries and arrests. Human rights organizations frequently highlight these aggressive actions that disproportionately affect women, contributing to a climate of fear and suppression. Despite efforts to document and publicize these issues, accurate data remains scarce, complicating the broader understanding of the scale and impact of police aggression against women in Iran.

### **Questions to Consider:**

1. What are the specific legal and social barriers faced by women in Iran?

2. What is the root cause of this problem and how can it be addressed?
3. What international strategies can be used to promote women's rights in Iran, particularly regarding legal reforms, education, and economic opportunities?
4. What are the long-term goals and metrics for assessing progress in women's rights?
5. How can this committee ensure Iran complies with regulations?
6. Considering Iran's law is Sharia, is it inappropriate to debate the morality of their religious-based regulations?



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