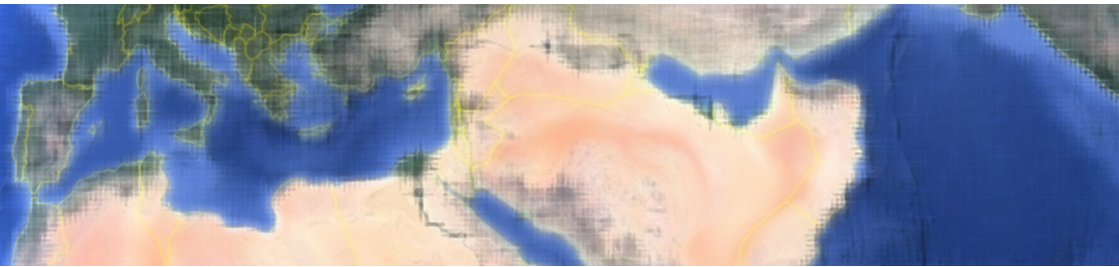


SPORTS BOYCOTT OF COUNTRIES



ENFORCING SEXUAL APARTHEID IN SPORTS

French Coordination for the European Women's Lobby
League for International Women's Rights



SUMMARY

In Iran and Saudi Arabia sexual segregation is everywhere. Sports is no exception. The international sports community must act against these practices contrary to fundamental rights and to sports rules.

We demand a sports boycott of these countries, and that federations and international officials firmly condemn and punish these practices and promote and effectively apply a charter of religious and political neutrality.

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PRACTICES CONTRARY TO FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

TWO COUNTRIES FORBID WOMEN TO HAVE ACCESS TO STADIUMS: IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA



Illustration from the blog 'The Turbulent World of Middle East Soccer' of James M.Dorsey

IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA LIMIT THE PARTICIPATION OF THEIR SPORTSWOMEN IN INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS:

- to those wearing *Islamist garb*
- in 'women only' events
- to specific sports

SAUDI ARABIA:

- forbids sports and gymnastics to girls in public schools
- has no infrastructure enabling women to practice sports.

INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE TEXTS



CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women

For the purposes of the present Convention, the term "discrimination against women" shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.



The International UNESCO Charter of physical education, of physical activity and of sports

The practice of physical education, physical activity and sport is a fundamental right for all: Every human being has a fundamental right to physical education, physical activity and sport without discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property or any other basis.



The Olympic Charter:

Fundamental principle N° 4: The practice of sport is a human right. Every individual must have the possibility of practicing sport, without discrimination of any kind (...)

Rule 50.2: No kind of demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda is permitted in any Olympic sites, venues or other areas.

DECLARATIONS WHICH JEOPARDIZE UNIVERSAL SPORT CRITERIA REGARDING THE DRESS CODE FOR WOMEN

● **2008 Accept and Respect Declaration for women and sport¹** : *We urge international sport federations to show their commitment to inclusion by ensuring that their dress codes for competition embrace Islamic requirements, taking into account the principles of propriety, safety and integrity.*

● **2011 EPAS/ Council of Europe Handbook on “gender equality in sports”** demanding that governments and other concerned organizations *tailor sports provisions to women’s requirements, among which specific classes and time-slots reserved for women (...). Take account of specific ethno-cultural and/or religious characteristics (...).*
In other words, look into the possibility of satisfying specific demands such as the provision of women only areas, women trainers, and the possibility of wearing veils.

● **2013 Ministers of Physical Education and Sport Berlin Declaration²** requiring : *appropriate facilities, equipment and dress options taking into account both ability and cultural specificities, particularly for women and girls.*

● **2015 Unesco Revised international Charter requiring adequate and safe spaces, facilities, equipment, and dress-options must be provided (...)** *to meet the needs of participants mindful of different needs associated with climate, culture, gender, age and disability.*

¹ International Association of Physical Education and Sport for Girls and Women, study Group, Oman meeting, 11-16 February 2008

² 5th International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport, Berlin meeting, 28-30 May 2013

THE *ISLAMIST* DRESS CODE IN SPORTS IS A REGRESSION



Iranian swimmers before...



and after the Islamic revolution.



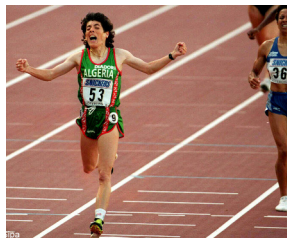
Iranian footballers before...



and after the Islamic revolution.

The first North African gold medalists competed bare-headed, bare-armed and bare-legged

1984, the Moroccan Nawal El Moutawakel at the Los Angeles Olympics,
1992, the Algerian Hassiba Boulmerka at the Barcelona Olympics,
2012, the Tunisian Habiba Ghribi at the London Olympics.



ACTIONS

to be carried out

BOYCOTT OF ALL INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS

organized by Iran or Saudi Arabia and prohibition of all sports contact with those two countries, as long as they refuse to allow women to enter in their stadiums.

URGE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE AND INTERNATIONAL FEDERATIONS,

to firmly condemn and punish sexual segregation in sports and refuse all dispensations to the common rule dictated by religious reasons.

DEVELOP A CHARTER OF POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS NEUTRALITY

- In view of effective prohibition of all political or religious signs or demonstration (costumes, various symbols, prayers, etc.) on sports sites (fields, lockers or others).
- To favor gender mixing in training and competition and ban choice of activity, dress and gender grouping based on religious requirements.
- To prohibit any sports contact with countries which practice sexual segregation in sports.

RULES FORBIDDING DISCRIMINATION AND POLITICAL OR RELIGIOUS INTERFERENCE IN SPORTS DO EXIST.

South Africa has been banned from international competitions for thirty years because of racial apartheid.

The United Nations have condemned racial apartheid in sports and approved the international convention against racial apartheid in sports (entered in force April 3rd 1988).

Kuwait has been suspended in October 2015 by IOC and FIFA because of political interferences in sports. Kuwaitis athletes were deprived from Rio Olympics and Mundial 2018 qualifications.

THESE RULES MUST BE APPLIED TO SEXUAL APARTHEID

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE ISSUE?

Woman fights for gender equality with ‘Let Iranian Women Enter their stadiums’ sign at Olympic volleyball match. Based in Belgium, Darya Safai is the founder and director of “Let Iranian Women Enter Their Stadiums” and an activist against gender discrimination. Although the group’s focus is the sports world, Safai sees the stadium ban as a much broader issue “the stadium is like a little society. Whenever you put women out of it, it looks like you put women out of society”, she said “and that’s what they are doing with us inside the country. So, I think we should show that we are not for that and we fight it” (Vice Sports, Aaron Gordon, March 24, 2015 ; Feb 18, 2016 ; August 15, 2016 & AP/ Jeff Robertson, August 13, 2016)



Female chess players threaten boycott after being told to wear hijabs at world championship in Iran. Grandmasters lined up to say they would boycott the 64-player tournament and accused FIDE, the game’s scandal-hit governing body, of failing to stand up for women’s rights. FIDE officials, meanwhile, called on participants to respect *cultural differences* and accept the regulations (...). Players claim that FIDE is turning a blind eye to sexual discrimination. Nazi Paikidze, the U.S. women champion, said: *It is absolutely unacceptable to host one of the most important women’s tournaments in a venue where, to this day, women are forced to cover up with a hijab.* Paikidze added: *I am honoured and proud to have qualified to represent the United States in the Women’s World Championship. But, if the situation remains unchanged, I will most certainly not participate in this event.* (...) Susan Polgar, the chairwoman of FIDE’s commission on women’s chess, defended the federation, saying that women should respect *cultural differences*. (Leon Watson, *The Telegraph*, September 30, 2016.)

Two films about women banned from stadiums:

The Iranian filmmaker, Jafar Panahi won International acclaim (Golden Lion at the Berlin Film Festival) for his documentary *Offside* that tells the story of a group of young girls who dress up as boys to pass through stadiums gates only to be detained. A second more recent movie, *Shirin was a Canary*, recounts the tale of a girl who is expelled from school for her love of soccer. (Blog James M. Dorsey, May 22, 2012).

Ghoncheh Ghavami jailed for attending a volleyball match in Tehran.

Human rights campaigners have said that Ghoncheh Ghavami, who was detained last June after staging a peaceful protest with a group of women outside Tehran's Azadi stadium to oppose a ban on women being allowed inside the grounds to watch men's volleyball matches, should now receive compensation for her ordeal. (...). Ms Ghavami, who split her time between Iran and the UK, was initially released within hours of her arrest last June but 10 days later she was rearrested and taken to Tehran's notorious Evin Prison. The law graduate was subsequently put on trial and found guilty of spreading anti-regime propaganda, before being released on bail for £20,000 five months into the year-long sentence she was serving. (...) Government officials claimed they were stopping women from attending stadium matches for their own good as they need protection from the lewd behaviour of male fans. (Katie Grant, *Independent*, March 26, 2015.)

ISLAMIST, NOT SPORTS CRITERIA

Excerpts from the speech delivered by HE President of Islamic Republic of Iran: *Muslims should be careful that women do not get involved with undesirable consequences of such sports and on the other hand we should do our best to fulfill their needs. (...) We have initiated such issue - by calling together in this Congress experts from the Islamic countries and those individuals who have the belief in preserving the purity of women and in the teachings of Islam - **to prevent the corruption which may result from simultaneous presence of men and women athletes in one and same arena.** (First Islamic Countries' Women Sports Solidarity Congress, Tehran 1993).*

Maryam Koushkie Jahromi, assistant professor, Shiriz University: *After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iranian women had to cover their heads and bodies in the presence of men in public spaces, in accordance with governmental and religious rules. All female physical education classes in schools and universities had to be run by female coaches, teachers and professors: a mixed-sex environment is not acceptable to our Islamic ethics and order... Women's competitions in the presence of men were stopped (...). By modifying sport dress, Iranian women can participate in indoor and outdoor international soccer, basketball, volleyball, and handball events, but participating in international events such as swimming, gymnastics and water-polo remains impossible because of the lack of suitable dress. (Muslim Women and sport, edited by Tansin Benn, Gertrud Pfister, Haifaa Jawad, chapter 6, p. 109).*

Islamist pressure on Tunisian Olympics medallist

In the London Olympics, Habiba Ghribi, first Tunisian to stand on the Olympic podium. She aroused the anger of the radicals who declared themselves offended by her *naked and indecent outfit* and covered her with insults and invectives for having *shamed the Tunisian woman*. (IObs.fr, August 14, 2012).

Riyadh Islamist requirements to send female athletes at the London Olympics. During the 2012 London Olympics, the media relayed the conditions posed by Saudi Arabia for participation (for the first time) of two Saudi women: no gender mix, Islamic costume, presence of a male guardian. Conditions accepted by the IOC. (L'Orient-le jour.com, July 4, 2012.)

SAUDI ARABIA FORBIDS SPORTS TO GIRLS

Denial of Women and girls' Rights to sport in Saudi Arabia. Saudi government policy effectively bans women and girls from playing sports. In schools, the Saudi government offers boys', but not girls', physical education classes. Only men gyms receive licenses, confining women facilities to 'health clubs', usually attached to hospitals. Of the 153 government-regulated sports clubs, none has a women team (...) The report Steps of the Devil exposes empty government promises to expand sports opportunities for women and girls, and calls on Saudi Arabia to protect women equal right to sport. (Steps of the Devil, HRW report, February 2012)

Saudi Arabia projects change, albeit at a snail's pace. Human Rights Watch, in a (new) report published this week (2016) timed to coincide with the opening of the Rio de Janeiro Olympics (...): *Inside Saudi Arabia, widespread discrimination still hampers access to sports for Saudi women and girls, including in public education.* (...) The group noted that *Saudi women were still denied access to state sports infrastructure and barred from participating in national tournaments and state-organized sports leagues as well as attending men's national team matches as spectators. Women have difficulty accessing the 150 clubs that are regulated by the General Authority, which organizes tournaments only for men. Similarly, the Saudi National Olympic Committee has yet to establish a women section"*. (Blog James Dorsey, August 4, 2016.)

WEAK PRESSURES BY INTERNATIONAL SPORTS BODIES

AGAINST IRAN

Asian Football Confederation puts Iran on the spot on women's rights.

Iranian women soccer fans expect the AFC's insistence that Iran adhere to the Asian soccer body's standards when it hosts this fall the AFC Under-16 Championship to grant them access to matches during the tournament but would like to see that spark a permanent lifting of the ban imposed after the overthrow of the Shah in 1979 (...). The AFC said it had received assurances from Ali Kaffashian, the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Football Federation (IRIFF) that it would comply with AFC regulations. (...) It would not be the first time that Iran opportunistically complies with international soccer requirements only to return to its discriminatory practice afterwards. Iran allowed women into the stadium during World Cup qualifiers played in the country in 2007 but maintained the ban for all other matches. (...) *Women looking at a man's body, even if not for the sake of gratification, is inappropriate. Furthermore, Islam insists that men and women should not mix*, said Grand Ayatollah Fazel Lankarani back in 2006 when Mr. Ahmadinejad failed to get the ban lifted permanently. (Blog James Dorsey, 22 May 2012.)

Blatter's call on Iran to allow women into stadia. Mr. Blatter commemorated International Women's Day by calling on Iran to lift its ban on women attending male sports events in stadia. (...) In his FIFA article, Mr. Blatter said that he had raised the ban on women in 2013 with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, *and came away with the impression that this intolerable situation could change over the medium term. However, nothing has happened. A collective 'stadium ban' still applies to women in Iran, despite the existence of a thriving women's football organization. This cannot continue. Hence, my appeal to the Iranian authorities: Open the nation's football stadiums to women!* (Blog James Dorsey, March 8, 2015.)

Volleyball in Iran: a litmus test for women's rights. An international volleyball tournament in the Iranian capital has thrown into sharp relief a debate in international sporting associations on how to deal with nations that restrict women's rights as athletes and/or spectators. At stake in the debate is whether international sports associations should refuse hosting rights to nations who restrict women's rights or use the awarding of tournaments as a means of fostering domestic pressure for the lifting of restrictions (...). FIVB, in contrast to world soccer body FIFA which refuses to award hosting rights to Iran, has argued that a

refusal would penalize players and males rather than female fans in the Islamic republic (...). For their part, opponents of engagement charge that Iran has repeatedly backtracked on promised concessions. At stake, the opponents say, given the failure of the engagement approach, is the need for international sports associations to uphold principles and their commitment to values of equality and universal human rights. (Blog J. Dorsey, June 24, 2016.)

AGAINST SAUDI ARABIA:

Sports associations step up pressure on human rights violators.

The International Olympic Committee rejected a Saudi proposal to jointly host an Olympic Games with Bahrain. The suggestion floated by Saudi Prince Fahad bin Jalawi Al Saud, a member of the Saudi ruling family, involved men and women competing in separate tournaments. Mr. Al Saud suggested the men's Olympics could be held in the kingdom while women could compete in neighboring Bahrain (...). IOC president Mr. Bach dismissed the idea out of hand, saying *a commitment to non-discrimination* would be mandatory for all future Olympics hosts. *If this is not applied, the bid would not be admissible. Countries like Saudi Arabia must really work to allow female athletes to freely participate*, Mr. Bach said. IOC spokesman Mr. Adams added that *you cannot simply outsource certain issues to another territory*. (Blog James Dorsey, 2 April 2015.)

Women: a benchmark of Saudi and Iranian Reform. In a slick document, entitled Vision 2030, that was drafted by Western consultants, Saudi Arabia identifies sports as *a mainstay of a healthy and balanced lifestyle* and promises to *encourage widespread and regular participation in sports and athletic activities*. Yet, the document makes no reference to facilities for women in a country that has so far refrained from introducing physical education for girls in elementary and secondary schools (...). As a result, the document in propagating sports makes no mention of complying with demands of the IOC and human rights groups that women, who under pressure of the IOC participated for the first time in the kingdom's history in 2012 in Olympic Games, be allowed to compete in disciplines that are not mentioned in the Qur'an. Nor does it acknowledge the economic benefits argued by Saudi Arabian Football Association president Ahmed al Harbi that the kingdom could reap from allowing women to attend men's sporting events (...). International sporting associations have played their part in this complacency and continue to do so. The associations' efforts to further women's sporting rights lack resolve and forcefulness not only in their attitude towards Saudi Arabia but also towards Iran, the world's only other country that

bans women from attending male sporting events. Yet, both Saudi Arabia and Iran, given their need for international contributions to their economic turn arounds may be more susceptible to pressure than they have been in the past. (Blog James Dorsey, April 27, 2015.)

IMPACT ON WOMEN'S SPORTS

French Reports on Women and sports in sensitive urban neighborhoods.

The Report reveals an under-representation of girls and the specific cultural obstacles dealing with clothing (wearing the headscarf) and with the refusal of gender mix. Brigitte Deydier launches a warning signal: *The sports world must not watch the slow exclusion of girls from certain neighborhoods without reacting.* (report prepared under the direction of Brigitte Deydier, then Vice-President of the French Federation of Judo, April 2004.)

Sports practice differs greatly according to social status. *In families, with incomes below 1.830 Euros per month, only 45% of girls from 12 to 17 practice any physical and sport activities in a federation as compared to 75% of boys. In under-privileged urban neighborhoods, in addition to the financial and social difficulties that hamper women, new obstacles impede their access to sports. The public spaces in the territories were primarily thought out in terms of men and occupied by them. Only 32% of young girls therefore practice a sport in Priority Education Zones, whereas they are 51% elsewhere. Therefore, sport can no longer play its social integrating role.* (French key Figures Edition 2015/2016 Ministry of Social Affairs, of Health and of Women's Rights/secretariat of Women's Rights).

See also: *How Islamism Perverted Olympism*, by Gérard Biard, Annie Sugier and Linda Weil-Curiel, Chryséis editions, online publication, May 2017.

FRENCH COORDINATION FOR THE EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY

ASSOCIATIONS AFFILIATES SUPPORTING THE BOYCOTT :

Association pour le Développement des Initiatives Économiques par les Femmes - Association des Femmes franco-africaines de Paris - Association Française des Femmes Diplômées des Universités - Alliance des Femmes pour la Démocratie - Amicale du Nid - ANEF - Assemblée des femmes - Assemblée des femmes Paris-Ile-de-France - Association Ambroise Croizat - Association Evelyne Ancelot - Association Femmes et Musique - Conseil Européen des Fédérations WIZO - Collectif Féministe contre le Viol - Chiennes de Garde - Compagnie des Insoumises, Baladines, Enthousiastes et Lesbiennes - Club des Africaines Entrepreneurs d'Europe - Coordination Lesbienne en France - Comité ONU Femmes France - Du côté des femmes - ELLES AUSSI pour la parité dans les instances élues - Espace Simone de Beauvoir - Excision Parlons-en ! - FCI - FEMMES CONTRE LES INTÉGRISMES - Femmes pour le dire, Femmes pour agir - Fédération Pionnières - Féminisme et Géopolitique - Femmes au delà des mers - Femmes migrantes debout- Femmes Monde - FEMMES SOLIDAIRES- Clara Magazine - FORUM FEMMES MEDITERRANÉE - Femmes et Hommes, Égalité, Droits et Libertés dans les Églises et la Société - Festival International des Films de femmes de Créteil - FIT une femme, un toit - Forum Œcuménique des Femmes Chrétiennes d'Europe - Groupe des Femmes pour l'Abolition des Mutilations Sexuelles et les mariages forcés - Grand Chapitre Féminin de France - GENRE & VILLE - H/F Île de France - Institut en Santé Génésique - Le CAP - Ligue du droit international des femmes - Les Marianne de la Diversité - Ligue des Femmes Irlandaises pour la Démocratie - Livres MarianneS - Ligue Internationale des Femmes pour la Paix et la Liberté - Section française - Maison des femmes de Montreuil - Maison des femmes de Paris - Mouvement Européen France - Commission pour l'égalité des genres - MOUVEMENT JEUNES FEMMES - Osez le féminisme ! - PARITÉ - Réseau pour l'Autonomie des Femmes Immigrées et Réfugiées - Regards de Femmes - Réseau féministe " Ruptures" - Réussir l'égalité femmes-hommes - SOS SEXISME - Valeurs de femmes - WICUR - Initiative de Femmes pour la Citoyenneté et les Droits - ZEROMACHO - ZONTA CLUBS France NORD-OUEST

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