

# SHIRIN EBADI

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A prominent lawyer and former judge, Shirin Ebadi founded the Defenders of Human Rights Center in Iran to increase the rights of women and children and protect prisoners of conscience and those accused of political crimes. Ebadi has seen how women are frequently mistreated in Iran and has personally faced discrimination, threats of imprisonment and exile for her human rights work.

At the age of 22, Ebadi was appointed one of the first female judges in Iran. She was poised to become a chief justice until the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was overthrown in a revolution and succeeded by the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Khomeini created a conservative theocracy in which women and minorities did not have equal rights. As a result, Ebadi and all of her fellow female judges were dismissed from their positions and, in some cases, re-assigned to lower posts. Ebadi was re-assigned to a clerical position in the courtroom where she once presided. She requested early retirement and established a private practice dedicated to defending political dissidents and women and children. Her defiance resulted in multiple arrests, but also cemented her place as one of the most prominent lawyers in Iran, and gained her international recognition as a human rights defender.

In 2003, Ebadi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to promote human rights, the rights of women, children, and political prisoners in Iran. She is the first Muslim woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, and only the fifth Muslim to receive a Nobel Prize in any field.

Shirin Ebadi also established numerous non-governmental organizations in Iran, including the Million Signatures Campaign to end legal discrimination of women in Iran. Along with fellow Nobel laureate Jody Williams, Ebadi founded the Nobel Women's Initiative in 2006, to engage female Nobel laureates in a united effort for peace and justice. Ebadi has published numerous articles and books concerning human rights in Iran that have been translated into 14 languages around the world.



Shirin Ebadi ©Architects of Peace Foundation

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“IF HUMAN RIGHTS FAIL TO BE MANIFESTED IN CODIFIED LAWS OR PUT INTO EFFECT BY STATES, THEN, AS RENDERED IN THE PREAMBLE OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, HUMAN BEINGS WILL BE LEFT WITH NO CHOICE OTHER THAN STAGING A ‘REBELLION AGAINST TYRANNY AND OPPRESSION’”

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*EXCERPTS FROM SHIRIN EBADI: 2003 NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LECTURE*

I feel extremely honoured that today my voice is reaching the people of the world from this distinguished venue. This great honour has been bestowed upon me by the Norwegian Nobel Committee. I salute the spirit of Alfred Nobel and hail all true followers of his path.

This year, the Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to a woman from Iran, a Muslim country in the Middle East.

Undoubtedly, my selection will be an inspiration to the masses of women who are striving to realize their rights, not only in Iran but throughout the region—rights taken away from them through the passage of history. This selection will make women in Iran, and much further afield, believe in themselves. Women constitute half of the population of every country. To disregard women and bar them from active participation in political, social, economic and cultural life would in fact be tantamount to depriving the entire population of every society of half its capability. The patriarchal culture and the discrimination against women, particularly in the Islamic countries, cannot continue forever.

Honourable members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee!

As you are aware, the honour and blessing of this prize will have a positive and far-reaching impact on the humanitarian and genuine endeavours of the people of Iran and the region. The magnitude of this blessing will embrace every freedom-loving and peace-seeking individual, whether they are women or men.

I thank the Norwegian Nobel Committee for this honour that has been bestowed upon me and for the blessing of this honour for the peace-loving people of my country.

Today coincides with the 55th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a declaration which begins with the recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family, as the guarantor of freedom, justice and peace. And it promises a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of expression and opinion, and be safeguarded and protected against fear and poverty.

Unfortunately, however, this year's report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as in the previous years, spells out the rise of a disaster which distances mankind from the idealistic world of the authors of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In 2002, almost 1.2 billion human beings lived in glaring poverty, earning less than one dollar a day. Over 50 countries were caught up in war or natural disasters. AIDS has so far claimed the lives of 22 million individuals, and turned 13 million children into orphans.

At the same time, in the past two years, some states have violated the universal principles and laws of human rights by using the events of 11 September and the war on international terrorism as a pretext. The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 57/219, of 18 December 2002, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1456, of 20 January 2003, and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights Resolution 2003/68, of 25 April 2003, set out and underlined that all states must ensure that any measures taken to combat terrorism must comply with all their

obligations under international law, in particular international human rights and humanitarian law. However, regulations restricting human rights and basic freedoms, special bodies and extraordinary courts, which make fair adjudication difficult and at times impossible, have been justified and given legitimacy under the cloak of the war on terrorism.

The concerns of human rights advocates increase when they observe that international human rights laws are breached not only by their recognized opponents under the pretext of cultural relativity, but that these principles are also violated in Western democracies, in other words countries which were themselves among the initial codifiers of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is in this framework that, for months, hundreds of individuals who were arrested in the course of military conflicts have been imprisoned in Guantanamo, without the benefit of the rights stipulated under the international Geneva conventions, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the [United Nations] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Moreover, a question which millions of citizens in the international civil society have been asking themselves for the past few years, particularly in recent months, and continue to ask, is this: Why is it that some decisions and resolutions of the UN Security Council are binding, while some other resolutions of the council have no binding force? Why is it that in the past 35 years, dozens of UN resolutions concerning the occupation of the Palestinian territories by the state of Israel have not been implemented promptly, yet, in the past 12 years, the state and people of Iraq, once on the recommendation of the Security Council, and the second time, in spite of UN Security Council opposition, were subjected to attack, military assault, economic sanctions, and, ultimately, military occupation?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to say a little about my country, region, culture and faith.

I am an Iranian. A descendent of Cyrus The Great. The very emperor who proclaimed at the pinnacle of power 2,500 years ago that "... he would not reign over the people if they did not wish it." And [he] promised not to force any person to change his religion and faith and guaranteed freedom for all. The Charter of Cyrus The Great is one of the most important documents that should be studied in the history of human rights.

I am a Muslim. In the Koran the Prophet of Islam has been cited as saying: "Thou shalt believe in thine faith and I in my religion." That same divine book sees the mission of all prophets as that of inviting all human beings to uphold justice. Since the advent of Islam, too, Iran's civilization and culture has become imbued and infused with humanitarianism, respect for the life, belief and faith of others, propagation of tolerance and compromise and avoidance of violence, bloodshed and war. The luminaries of Iranian literature, in particular our Gnostic literature, from Hafiz, Mowlavi [better known in the West as Rumi] and Attar to Saadi, San'aei, Naser Khosrow and Nezami, are emissaries of this humanitarian culture. Their message

manifests itself in this poem by Saadi:

“The sons of Adam are limbs of one another  
Having been created of one essence.”  
When the calamity of time afflicts one limb  
The other limbs cannot remain at rest.”

The people of Iran have been battling against consecutive conflicts between tradition and modernity for over 100 years. By resorting to ancient traditions, some have tried and are trying to see the world through the eyes of their predecessors and to deal with the problems and difficulties of the existing world by virtue of the values of the ancients. But, many others, while respecting their historical and cultural past and their religion and faith, seek to go forth in step with world developments and not lag behind the caravan of civilization, development and progress. The people of Iran, particularly in the recent years, have shown that they deem participation in public affairs to be their right, and that they want to be masters of their own destiny.

This conflict is observed not merely in Iran, but also in many Muslim states. Some Muslims, under the pretext that democracy and human rights are not compatible with Islamic teachings and the traditional structure of Islamic societies, have justified despotic governments, and continue to do so. In fact, it is not so easy to rule over a people who are aware of their rights, using traditional, patriarchal and paternalistic methods.

Islam is a religion whose first sermon to the Prophet begins with the word “Recite!” The Koran swears by the pen and what it writes. Such a sermon and message cannot be in conflict with awareness, knowledge, wisdom, freedom of opinion and expression and cultural pluralism.

The discriminatory plight of women in Islamic states, too, whether in the sphere of civil law or in the realm of social, political and cultural justice, has its roots in the patriarchal and male-dominated culture prevailing in these societies, not in Islam. This culture does not tolerate freedom and democracy, just as it does not believe in the equal rights of men and women, and the liberation of women from male domination (fathers, husbands, brothers ...), because it would threaten the historical and traditional position of the rulers and guardians of that culture.

One has to say to those who have mooted the idea of a clash of civilizations, or prescribed war and military intervention for this region, and resorted to social, cultural, economic and political sluggishness of the South in a bid to justify their actions and opinions, that if you consider international human rights laws, including the nations’ right to determine their own destinies, to be universal, and if you believe in the priority and superiority of parliamentary democracy over other political systems, then you cannot think only of your own security and comfort, selfishly and contemptuously. A quest for new means and ideas to enable the countries of the South, too, to enjoy human rights and democracy, while maintaining their political independence and territorial integrity of their respective countries, must be given top priority by the United Nations in respect of future developments and international relations.

The decision by the Nobel Peace Committee to award the 2003 prize to me, as the first Iranian and the first woman from a Muslim country, inspires me and millions of Iranians and nationals of Islamic states with the hope that our efforts, endeavours and struggles toward the realization of human rights and the establishment of democracy in our respective countries enjoy the support, backing and solidarity of international civil society. This prize belongs to the people of Iran. It belongs to the people of the Islamic states, and the people of the South for establishing human rights and democracy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the introduction to my speech, I spoke of human rights as a guarantor of freedom, justice and peace. If human rights fail to be manifested in codified laws or put into effect by states, then, as rendered in the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, human beings will be left with no choice other than staging a “rebellion against tyranny and oppression.” A human being divested of all dignity, a human being deprived of human rights, a human being gripped by starvation, a human being beaten by famine, war and illness, a humiliated human being and a plundered human being is not in any position or state to recover the rights he or she has lost.

If the 21st century wishes to free itself from the cycle of violence, acts of terror and war, and avoid repetition of the experience of the 20th century—that most disaster-ridden century of humankind—there is no other way except by understanding and putting into practice every human right for all mankind, irrespective of race, gender, faith, nationality or social status.

In anticipation of that day.

# HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL, IRRESPECTIVE OF RACE, GENDER, FAITH, NATIONALITY OR SOCIAL STATUS

## SHIRIN EBADI

LESSON GRADE LEVEL: 9–12  
HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE:  
EQUAL RIGHTS

### UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS:

**Article 1:** Right to Equality

**Article 2:** Freedom from Discrimination

**Article 3:** Right to Life, Liberty, and Personal Security

**Article 5:** Freedom from Torture and Degrading Treatment

**Article 7:** Right to Equality before the Law

### GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- Are human/gender rights defined by culture and ethnicity?
- How have cultures violated human/gender rights under the auspice of protecting the persons whose rights are being violated?
- What is power?
- How is power obtained?
- What is justice?
- Can women's rights be violated without affecting the general legitimacy of overall human rights?

### TIME REQUIREMENT:

180–200 Minutes

### OBJECTIVES:

After this lesson, students will be able to:

- Analyze the complexities of the struggle for women's rights across diverse societies and cultures.
- Assess the effects of these complex issues on Muslim women.
- Identify effective measures for defending the rights of women.
- Become defenders of human rights by participating in a social justice advocacy program and/or a meaningful service learning program.

### COMMON CORE LEARNING STANDARDS:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7

### VOCABULARY:

- Muslim
- Fundamentalism
- Ayatollah
- Hijab
- Taliban
- Decadence
- Revolution
- Fanatics
- Degenerate
- Sentiment
- Subversive
- Shunned
- Imperialists
- Regime
- Console
- Rebellious
- Carnage
- Belligerent
- Systematically
- Veritable
- Asylum
- Euphoria
- Expelled
- Proletariat

### CONCEPTS:

- Change
- Human rights
- Justice
- Empathy
- Women's rights
- Social activism

### TECHNOLOGY REQUIRED:

- Computers/computer lab with Internet connection
- Projector

### MATERIALS:

- *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* by Marjane Satrapi, available either as a book or DVD. The DVD could be used as support for IEP students who need alternatives to reading.
- Articles about human/gender rights violations and inequities  
<http://www.mindanews.com/mindaviews/2008/04/commentary-hijab-a-symbol-of-liberation-and-not-of-oppression-by-warina-sushil-a-jukuy/>
- <http://matchingtracksuits.com/2008/04/22/why-hijab-is-oppressive/>
- Large sheets of butcher paper.
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils.
- Shirin Ebadi Biography and student handouts:  
[www.rfkhumanrights.org](http://www.rfkhumanrights.org) / click on **Speak Truth to Power** / click on **"Defenders"** tab

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

### ANTICIPATORY SET:

- Teacher will have students draw the outline of two girls on two separate large pieces of paper.
- Ask the boys in the class to describe the role of women in our society and how they are viewed by writing words or phrases within the outline on one piece of paper and ask the girls in the class to do the same on the other.
- The teacher should have each group present its body maps to the class.
- How was the boys view the girls different from how the girls viewed themselves?
- After they are done, the teacher will lead a discussion comparing and contrasting the two.
- To broaden the discussion the teacher will ask:
  - What famous women do you know?
  - In what ways are women in our society treated differently?
  - Do different cultural groups within the U.S. view women differently?
  - If so, why?
- To begin to equate international issues of women's rights to our students, the teacher should ask follow-up questions to further broaden the discussion:
  - What if women weren't allowed to drive?
  - What if women were not allowed to be judges?
  - Should governments outlaw any forms of dress, i.e., low-waisted pants, short skirts or hajibs?
  - Should women be required to wear clothing that covers their bodies?
  - Would it be liberating or oppressive?
  - <http://www.matchingtracksuits.com/2008/04/22/why-hijab-is-oppressive/>
  - <http://www.mindanews.com/mindaviews/2008/04/commentary-hijab-a-symbol-of-liberation-and-not-of-oppression-by-warina-sushil-a-jukuy/>
  - If you were a woman, a lawyer and a judge and you were forced out of your job solely because of your gender, would this be fair?
- Read Shirin Ebadi biography.
- After the discussion and readings, have students write a one-page reflection paper answering the question: Can you justify the restriction of someone's rights in the name of protecting them?

### ACTIVITY 1:

- Have students read the following selections from *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi as a combination in-class/homework assignment:
  - The Veil
  - The Bicycle
  - Sheep
  - The Trip
  - The Return
- To focus the reading, allow students to use the following questions as written assessments or class discussions. As a written assessment, students can choose one or two of the following questions.
- Thinking of the book as history:
  - What news stories, photographs or political figures have shaped your impressions of Iran and Iranians?

- How has your reading of *Persepolis* influenced these impressions?
- How is revolution portrayed in the book? In Satrapi's account, what are the stages of the revolution and what do these stages mean for the Iranian people?
- How are Islamic fundamentalists represented in the book? What suggestions does Satrapi make about the relationship between faith and fanaticism?
- In the introduction to her book, Satrapi says that she wrote *Persepolis* in part so "that an entire nation should not be judged by the wrongdoings of a few extremists." How does Satrapi herself seem to judge Iran as a nation by the end of her narrative?
- As a portrait of a culture, with a focus on social practices and traditions:
  - What does the book suggest about the role of religion in Iranian culture, especially in the lives of people like Marjane's family?
  - What does the book suggest about social class in Iranian society, especially, for example, in the story of the courtship between the family's maid and their neighbor (34-37) or the distribution of keys to paradise to boys drafted into the army (99-102)?
  - What role does the educational system play in post-revolutionary Iran?
  - What are the roles for women in Iranian society as depicted in the book? How do Marjane and her mother and grandmother both play into and resist those roles?
  - How important is family in Iranian society, according to Satrapi?
- As a memoir or an autobiography:
  - What difference does it make to your reading that this book is a memoir, a rendering of Marjane Satrapi's own life, rather than a fictional story about life in Iran?
  - American writer William Zinsser has written that "humor is the writer's armor against the hard emotions." Does Satrapi seem to be using humor this way when she says that "every situation offered an opportunity for laughs" (97) and again that laughter is "the only way to bear the unbearable" (266)? What instances of humor stand out to you? Why?
  - Who are the heroes of Satrapi's story? What makes them heroic? How do Marjane's ideas about heroism change in the course of her narrative?
  - How are the personal stories of individual citizens related to the history of their nation?
  - In *Persepolis* Satrapi tells many people's stories besides her own—her mother's memories of visiting her own father in prison, Anoosh's story of his Uncle Fereydoon, and others. How are these stories related to her own? What value does Satrapi attribute to storytelling?
- As a coming-of-age story, with a focus on connections to readers' own lives:
  - How would you describe the child Marji, to whom we're introduced at the beginning of *Persepolis*? To what extent is she like children anywhere? To what extent is she different from the child you were or the children you grew up with?
  - What do you make of Marji's career decision to become a prophet? Why aren't her parents worried about it?

- What stages do you recognize in Marji’s attempts to understand justice and forgiveness?
- How seriously are we to take the character of God in the narrative?
- What forms does teenage rebellion take among Marjane and her friends? In what ways are they like teenagers everywhere? How are they different?
- As a graphic text, with a focus on word and image as devices for storytelling:
  - Why do you think Satrapi chose to tell her story in words and images? What does the combination make possible that words or images alone would not?
  - What do you consider the main strengths of using images to tell this story? What are the main limitations of doing so?
  - How would you describe the style of Satrapi’s drawings? How does this style contribute to the story she tells?
  - Satrapi’s drawings are in stark black and white, but how black and white is the world that her drawings depict? To what extent does Satrapi manage to convey complex experience in such simple, even childlike, drawings?

## ACTIVITY 2:

### Internet Research Challenge Envelope

Teacher will have students research Shirin Ebadi and her struggle for women’s rights in the Middle East as well as the issue of women’s rights abuses in the Middle East. Here are a few sites for students who have difficulties navigating the Internet:

- Site with articles on stoning and Islam  
<http://violenceisnotourculture.org/content/stoning-and-islam>
- Saudi court ups punishment for gang-rape victim  
<http://www.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/meast/11/17/saudi.rape.victim>
- The brutal crackdowns only make Iran’s women stronger  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/jun/08/brutal-crackdown-iran-women-protest>
- Factbox: Facts about Iranian woman sentenced to stoning  
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1291166/Iranian-mother-faces-death-stoning-convicted-adultery.html>
- How do we convince Iran that stoning is barbaric?  
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/how-do-we-convince-iran-that-stoning-is-barbaric/article1376746/>
- Iran’s Neda killing “was illegal”  
<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2009/06/200962484755543950.html>
- Ebadi Blasts West for Hypocrisy  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/3306803.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3306803.stm)
- Following the research the teacher will introduce students to the Challenge Envelopes.

### Challenge Envelopes Instructions:

- Print the Challenge Envelope Questions using the sample questions below as a guide.
- Cut the questions into strips and glue each question on an envelope.
- Divide the class into small groups.

- Give each group of students an envelope.
- The envelope will have a higher-order-thinking question for each group, written on the front. The questions will help students review key concepts from the unit they have been studying.
- Have each group generate an answer to the question on the envelope and write the answer on a blank 3 x 5 note card. The note card should then be placed inside the envelope.
- The groups should rotate the envelopes through the class but should not read the responses previous groups have placed in the envelope. When a group receives a new envelope, group members should address and answer the question on a new note card and then place that note card into the envelope with the other note cards.
- They should then send the envelope back into circulation.
- As the envelopes begin to fill with responses, the groups should compare their responses to the others in the envelopes.
- When all groups have answered all questions, each group will pick the best response from their last envelope to share with the class. A class discussion can take place if necessary.

### Challenge Envelope Sample Questions

- Why do you think some cultures and religions treat women differently than men?
- Shirin Ebadi claims that Iran’s “brutal crackdown of women only make them stronger.” What did she mean by that?
- In Saudi Arabia a 19-year-old woman who was gang-raped was sentenced to 90 lashes. Why was she sentenced and why did her rapists only get short prison sentences? Could that happen in America?
- Sakineh Ashtsani, a 43-year-old Iranian woman was sentenced to death by public stoning for having an affair. Why was she sentenced to such a public punishment and would the sentence be justified if murder were involved?
- Shirin Ebadi criticizes the West (United States, England, France and other European nations) for being hypocrites and guilty of human rights abuses themselves while they are complaining about the violations of human rights by other countries. Why does she feel that way?
- The new fundamentalist government in Iran harassed, tortured and killed some of the people protesting their rule. Why didn’t they kill Ebadi?

### CULMINATING ACTIVITY:

#### Teacher Tip—RAFT

RAFT is an acronym for Role, Audience, Format, and Topic. In a RAFT, students take on a particular role and develop a product for a specified audience in a particular format and on a topic that gets to the heart of what matters most in a particular segment of study. At some points, a teacher may want to assign RAFTs and at other points a student may make the choice. RAFT assignments are typically of fairly short duration and can be completed at school or at home.

- The teacher will explain RAFT and divide the class into small groups of no more than five students. Each group will create roles that define the audience their character is trying to reach, the format, letter, e-mail, speech, drawing, etc. and the topic being addressed. For reference there is a sample RAFT chart at the end of this lesson.

## BECOME A DEFENDER

- Now that the students have seen the struggles women have in the Middle East, they can reflect on how best to effect change, in the Middle East and all over the world.
- The teacher will introduce the students to organizations like Amnesty International, Peace Jam, Human Rights Watch, Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights and others. Students will vote on which of the human rights campaigns they want to participate in as a class. They can make a documentary, take pictures to post on a blog or website, create a newsletter or posters and engage the school and/or community in their efforts. By doing so they not only have the satisfaction of becoming a defender but they can record their efforts as an example to future students.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### **Amnesty International:**

<http://www.amnesty.org/>

Amnesty International online provides free published articles, joint statements, video/audio, and other reports pertaining to important human rights issues around the world. Search “Shirin Ebadi” or “Iran” for a comprehensive collection of AI’s articles on the issue.

### **Human Rights Watch:**

<http://www.hrw.org/>

Human Rights Watch is one of the world’s leading independent organizations dedicated to defending and protecting human rights. By focusing international attention where human rights are violated, Human Rights Watch gives voice to the oppressed and holds oppressors accountable for their crimes

### **Peace Jam:**

<http://www.peacejam.org/>

Peace Jam is an organization which brings young people together with Nobel Peace laureates to tackle challenging issues facing the planet. Peace Jam addresses a broad range of issues, from basic needs, such as access to water, to basic rights, such as human security.

### **Civil Liberty Website:**

<http://civilliberty.about.com>.

Shirin Ebadi is Iran’s leading advocate for human rights, and a powerful voice for the rights of women and children in the Muslim world.

### **Nobel Women’s Initiative:**

<http://www.nobelwomensinitiative.org/>

The vision of the Nobel Women’s Initiative is a world transformed a non-violent world of security, equality and well-being for all. The Nobel Women’s Initiative’s mission is to work together as women Nobel Peace Prize laureates to use the visibility and prestige of the Nobel Prize to promote, spotlight, and amplify the work of women’s rights activists, researchers, and organizations worldwide addressing the root causes of violence, in a way that strengthens and expands the global movement to advance non-violence, peace, justice and equality. Shirin Ebadi founded the Initiative with five other Nobel Prize winners.

### **Guardian News Website:**

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/mar/08/shirin-ebadi-100-women>

The Guardian has a long history of editorial and political independence, including articles, news and opinions on current affairs. This article discusses the role Ebadi plays with regards to human rights in Iran, her establishment of the Defenders of Human Rights Centre, and the work it does.

### **Defenders of Human rights Centre:**

<http://www.humanrights-ir.org/>

The Defenders of Human Rights Centre (DHRC) was formed in 2001 by an initial group of five members who were also lawyers. Among the founding members was Shirin Ebadi. This centre aims to give pro bono legal assistance to political prisoners and children whose rights are infringed, and to protect basic human rights in Iran.