

Neda, one of the video's stars, told IranWire prior to the group's arrest that despite the joyous appearance of the video she was frightened throughout much of the filming.

"We were really afraid," Neda said. "Whenever somebody looked out of a window or someone passed by, we ducked behind a door to make sure we were not seen."

Rofugaran said the group may try to appeal the court's decision.

"I will do what my clients want me to do," Rofugaran told IranWire. "We are happy that both the prison sentences and the lashes are suspended."

---

## **During the last 9 months of 2013 more than 30,000 girls below the age of 15 were forced to marry**

Justice For Iran (07.07.2014) / <http://justice4iran.org/english/j4iran-activities/during-the-nine-months-of-2013-more-than-30000-girls-below-the-age-of-15-were-forced-to-marry/> - On Thursday 3 July 2014, Navi Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, expressed her concerns regarding the impending execution of juvenile offender, Razieh Ebrahimi, who murdered her husband following her marriage at the age of 14. During 1385-1392 (2006-2007 and 2013-2014), more than 1/3 of Iranian brides were below 19 years of age.

New research carried out by Justice for Iran (JFI) shows that during 1385-1392 (2006-2007 and 2013-2014) the rate of marriages among girls below 15 years of age was on the rise. Based on statistics published by Iran's [National Organization for Civil Registration](#), during the first nine months of 1392 ( March-December 2013) more than 5% of women married were below the age of 15. According to the same source, more than 1/3 of women whose marriages were registered were below the age of 19. Based on Iran's international commitments, citizens below the age of 18 are considered as minors. Although statistics published by Iran do not specify those below the age of 18 or those between 18 and 19, the high rate of women married below the age of 19 serves as a warning pointing to the need for more precise research in this field.

During the 3 July meeting of the 5+1 talks in Vienna, the High Commissioner for Human Rights highlighted the need for inclusion of human rights in nuclear negotiations: "I do encourage that any talks with Iran fully cover the human rights situation. We do need a commitment on the part of Iran that they will protect the human rights of their citizens." [1] Prior to this development, in a [statement](#) issued on 26 June she pointed out that according to international laws Razieh Ebrahimi's death sentence is illegal.

Razieh Ebrahimi was forced to marry at the age of 14. At 15 she gave birth to her first child. As a result of continued physical and emotional abuse by her husband, at 17 she murdered him. Condemned to death, at 21 years of age, her death sentence for committing murder as a minor was halted, but once again she is facing execution.

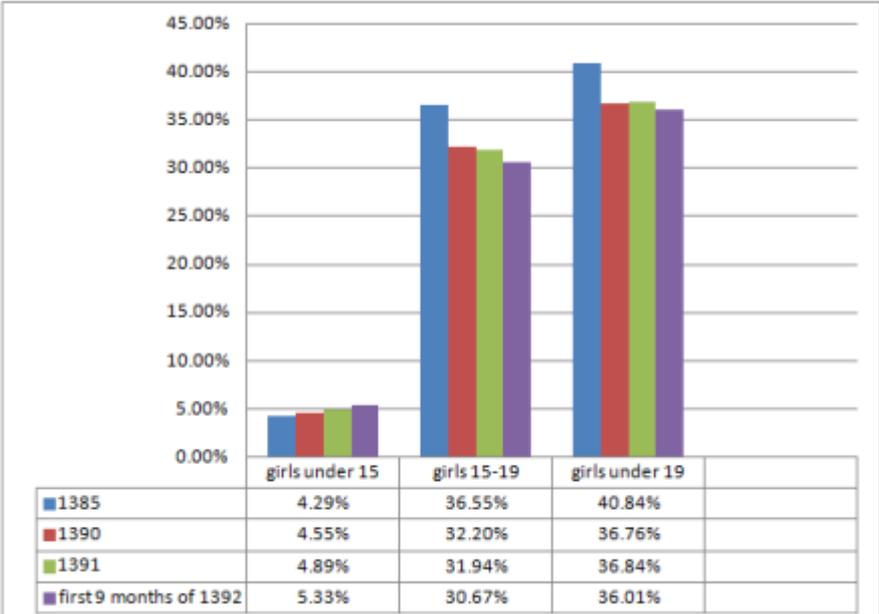
JFI welcomes Navi Pillay's remarks regarding inclusion of human rights in nuclear negotiations, and demands particular attention to the issue of early marriage given the fact that 1/3 of Iranian women, like Razieh Ebrahimi, are victims of early marriage.

***Steady increase in the rate of early marriage among girls below the age of 15***

New official statistics published towards the end of 1391 (2012-2013) and the first nine months of 1392 (March to December 2013) point to an insignificant drop in the number of girls between 15 and 19 who faced early marriage, however, there is a significant rise in the number of early marriages among girls below the age of 15. In addition, each year a greater number of girls below the age of 10, who are less able to resist their parents' decisions and forced measures based on law and religion, fall victim to early marriage.

Based on official statistics published by the National Organization for Civil Registration, in 1391 (2012-2013)[2] 406,53 marriages involving girls below the age of 15 were registered, while more than 265,000 marriages registered involved girls between the ages of 15 and 19. Meanwhile in 1390 (2011-2012)[3] the number of registered marriages of girls below the age of 15 was 39,831 and in 1385 (2006-2007) more than 33,000.

Iran is a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Both instruments ban marriage at an early age and without informed consent. The UN Special Rapporteur on Slavery indicates forced marriage as a cause of modern slavery. While in Iran the minimum age for marriage is set at 13, pending a judge's permission, fathers or paternal relatives can marry their children at any age.



Percentage of early marriages during 1385-1392 (2006-2007 and 2013-2014) in Iran

Official statistics show that at least 36.84% of Iranian women whose marriages were registered in 1391 (2012-2013) were below the age of 19. More specifically, 31.94% of registered marriages during the same year involved girls between the ages of 15 and 19 and 4.89% of those were below 15 years of age.

They also point out that in 1391 (2012-2013) at least 235 girls below the age of 15 were married to men above the age of 35 and nearly 100 girls below the age of 15 were married to men above the age of 40, while 602 girls between 15 and 19 were married to men above 40 years of age. Percentage of early marriages involving girls and men below the age of 20 during 1385 and 1392 (2006-2007 and 2013)

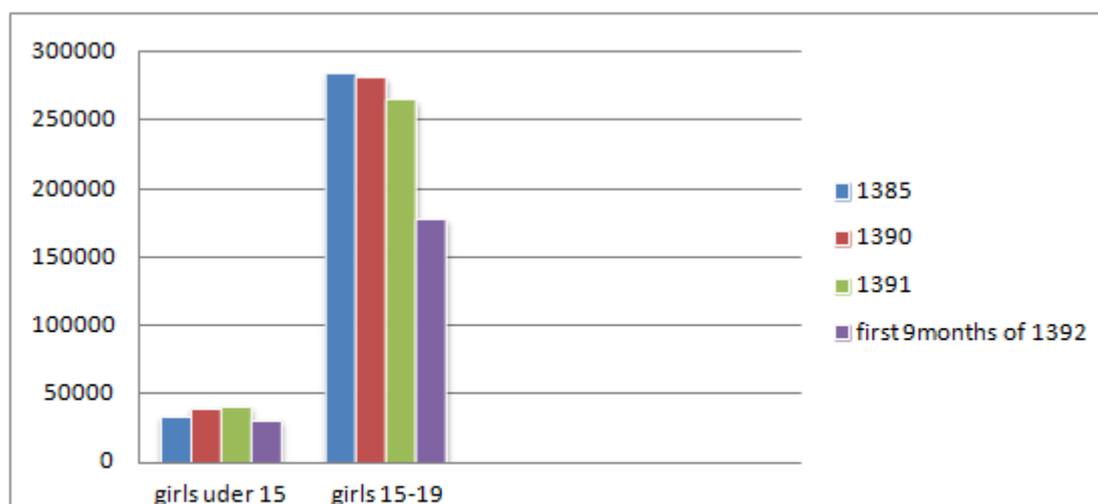
Age distribution at the time of marriage

Total number of marriages	Men	Girls		Year
	Below 19	15-19	Below 15	
778,023	48,904	284,396	333,383	1385 (2006-07)
874,792	48,144	281,747	39,831	1390 (2011-12)
829,968	43,905	265,117	406,53	1391 (2012-13)
579,871	27,208	177,903	177,903	First nine months of 1392 (March to December 2013)

The latest statistics indicate marriages of 31,000 girls below the age of 15 were during the first nine months of 1392 (2013)[4] and 178,000 women married during this same period were between 15 and 19 years of age. However, at least 36.01% of women whose marriages were registered in Iran were below the age of 19.

They also show that during the first 9 months of 1392 (2013) the number of girls married who were below the age of 15 in 1391 (2012-2013) increased by 5.33%. Likewise marriage registrations of 3.67% of women belonged to those between the ages of 15 and 19.

This report is based on statistics published on the websites of Iran’s national and provincial organizations for Civil Registration. It is certain that the number of unregistered marriages is far higher than those registered.



**Comparison of annual statistics on girl marriages between 1385 and 1392 (2006-2007 and 2013-2014)**

***Statistics of early marriages in various provinces of Iran***

National Organization for Marriage Registration has published statistics based on different age categories for the first nine months of 1392 (2013-2014). However, statistics at the provincial level are not yet available. Nevertheless, limited statistics from various provinces demonstrate the fact that early marriages are not limited to specific regions of Iran. For instance, seven provinces of Tehran, North Khorassan, South Khorassan, East Azerbaijan, Gilan, Mazendaran and Kermanshah have published their statistics based on age categories for 1391 (2012-2013), all of which indicate high rates of early marriages. Although in Hamedan[5] no exact statistics are published, according to its Organization for Civil Registration, during the first nine months of 1391 (2012-2013), at least 38.12% of all marriages involved girls between the ages of 15 and 19.

Although some provinces have yet to publish the relevant statistics based on age, the age groups of mothers who have borne children in that year indicate the extent to which girls face early marriage. For instance, in Ardebil[6] in 1391 (2012-2013) 53 mothers of new born babies were below the age of 15 and 3177 girls between 15 and 19 became mothers during the same year. In 1392 (2013-2014) at least 54 girls below the age of 15 became mothers and 2240 were between 15 and 19.[7]

**Number of registered early marriages in 1391 (2012-2013) in some Iranian provinces**

Below 15 years of age	North Khorassan: 1225 <sup>1</sup>	Kermanshah: 783 <sup>2</sup>				
Between 10 and 14	East Azerbaijan: 3920 <sup>3</sup>	South Khorassan: 360 <sup>4</sup>	Mazendaran: 1591 <sup>5</sup>	Gilan: 930 <sup>6</sup>	Tehran: 1752 <sup>7</sup>	
Between 15 and 19	East Azerbaijan: 15545	South Khorassan: 3481	Mazendaran: 9502	Gilan: 8262	North Khorassan: 4801	Tehran: 1752

In October 2013 JFI published an in depth statistical report on early marriages between 1385 (2006-2007) and 1390 (2011-2012). Based on findings of this report early marriages among girls below the age of 15 in 1390 (2011-2012) compared to 1385 (2006-2007) increased by at least 35% while in 1390 (2011-2012) at least 1537 girls below the age of 10 and 29,827 girls between 10 and 14 years of age were faced with marriage.

-----

[1]Please see report: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/03/us-iran-nuclear-un-idUSKBN0F812020140703>

[2]National Organization for Civil Registration, marriage statistics for 1391 (2012-2013)

[3]National Organization for Civil Registration, marriage statistics for 1390 (2011-2012)

[4]National Organization for Civil Registration statistics published for the first nine months of 1392 meaning 21 March to December 2013.

[5] Provincial Organization for Civil Registration, <http://www.sabteahval.ir/Upload/Modules/Contents/asset87/azdvaj-9-%2091.pdf>

[6] Statistical report of the Ardebil Organization for Civil Registration for 1391 (2012-2013), <http://www.sabteahval.ir/Upload/Modules/Contents/asset84/asset13151/v91.pdf>

[7] Statistical report of the Ardebil Organization for Civil Registration for 1392 (2013-2014), <http://www.sabteahval.ir/Upload/Modules/Contents/asset84/k-%209-%2092.pdf>

[8]Report on age distribution of marriages registered in 1391 (2012-2013) in North Khorassan <http://www.sabteahval.ir/Upload/Modules/Contents/asset240/e3-1391-12.pdf>

[9]Analytical report on marriages and divorces registered in 1391(2012-2013) in Kermanshah (2011)[http://www.sabteahval-ksh.ir/fa/ftps/E-html/Ezdevaj\\_Talagh1391.pdf](http://www.sabteahval-ksh.ir/fa/ftps/E-html/Ezdevaj_Talagh1391.pdf)

[10]Analytical report on marriages and divorces registered in 1391 (2012-2013) in East Azerbaijan <http://www.eanocr.ir/amar/ezdevajtalag91.pdf>

[11]Report on age distribution of marriages registered in 1391 (2012-2013) in South Khorassan [http://skocr.ir/User\\_Files/amar/new/91/91year/e2-91.pdf](http://skocr.ir/User_Files/amar/new/91/91year/e2-91.pdf)

[12]Report on age distribution of marriages registered in 1391 (2012-2013) in Mazandaran <http://www.sabteahval.ir/Upload/Modules/Contents/asset82/e291.pdf>

[13]Analytical report on marriages and divorces registered in 1391 (2012-2013) in Gilan <http://www.nocrgilan.ir/fa/upload/bf83de0/d7839821.pdf>

[14]Analytical report on marriages and divorces registered in 1391(2012-2013) in Tehran [http://www.sabteahval-tehran.ir/App\\_Upload/Statistic/A392013257175044.pdf](http://www.sabteahval-tehran.ir/App_Upload/Statistic/A392013257175044.pdf)

---

## **The plight of Iraq's civilian population**

***The current conflict in Iraq is affecting all ethnic and sectarian groups, regardless of their political affiliations.***

By Donatella Rovera

Al Jazeera (05.07.2014) / <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/07/iraq-minorities-islamic-state-201474133540646195.html> - Thousands of Iraqi civilians displaced by the current conflict are stranded at checkpoints separating the areas controlled by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the rest of Iraq. At first civilians, who fled after the Islamic State (formerly known as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant - ISIL) captured large areas of northwestern Iraq, were being allowed to enter Iraqi Kurdistan, but in recent weeks and days, access has been severely restricted by the KRG.

Some of those who fled are seeking refuge in Iraqi Kurdistan while others want to travel southwards to the capital and beyond. The former are mostly Sunni Muslims who fear air strikes by government forces and their allies and the harsh rule of the Islamic State. The latter are Shia Muslims from the Turkmen and Shabak communities who are trying to flee southwards to government-controlled areas of Iraq where the majority of the population is Shia and where they feel there is no risk of an Islamic State takeover.

The sudden capture of Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, on June 10 by the Islamic State prompted a mass exodus of hundreds of thousands of frightened residents who have poured into the neighbouring autonomous Kurdish region, administered by the KRG.

With the withdrawal of the Iraqi army from northwestern Iraq, the KRG has gained control of the disputed oil-rich town of Kirkuk and other areas, and in recent days, it has announced plans for a referendum on independence, a move fiercely opposed by the Iraqi central government.