

The green revolution in iran

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



On June 12, 2009, a series of protests broke out after the results of the presidential election in Iran. The riots started in the capital city of Tehran, and quickly spread throughout the Islamic Republic. Protestors gathered in other major cities around the world, including New York City (Mackey). Hundreds of thousands, if not millions of Iranians were protesting against President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's reelection, which was allegedly the result of electoral fraud. These allegations have been investigated by parties in and outside of Iran, including London's Chatham House and the Institute of Iranian Studies, University of St. Andrews in Scotland, which co-published a report after the election.

The report was written by Chatham House's Daniel Berman and Thomas Rintoul, and edited by St. Andrews' Professor Ali Ansari. The following is an excerpt from that report's summary: In two conservative provinces, Mazandaran and Yazd, a turnout of more than 100% was recorded. In a third of all provinces, the official results would require that Ahmadinejad took not only all former conservative voters, all former centrist voters, and all new voters, but also up to 44% of former reformist voters, despite a decade of conflict between these two groups. 2) The people of Iran are demanding change and a freer government. Now is the time for the United States to recognize a potential new ally. America should support the Green Revolution—named after opposition candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi's campaign color—because a regime change in Iran would strongly promote world peace by removing the Abadgaran[1] regime and its nuclear ambitions; it would remove a regime with a history of violating the basic human rights of its

citizens and foreigners; and it would open up the potential for a new ally and trading partner in the Middle East.

Iran's nuclear policy has changed dramatically since the Ahmadinejad presidency took control of it in August 2005. It has shifted from being open to compromise with the global community to increasing its power and imposing Iran on the region (Chubin 32-33). Paralleling Iran's nuclear program is a troubling missile program. The Shahab-4, a variant of Iran's favorite missile, the Shahab-3, has a range of 1, 200 miles (FAS). This coupling highly suggests a nuclear weapons program. The Abadgaran regime's history of violating the human rights of its citizens ranges from harassment to wrongful imprisonment or execution to murder.

Women have been harassed by police since the Islamic Revolution for allegedly wearing their hijab[2] improperly. Several hundred women were arrested in Tehran in April of 2007 for their " bad hijab" (Harrison). The persecution of Baha'is in Iran erupted after the Islamic Republic was established in 1979. Despite being Iran's largest religious minority group at that time, the rights of the Baha'i community are not mentioned in the Republic's constitution. It is legal for Iranians to assault, even murder Baha'is because they are left legally unprotected, and labeled " infidels" (BIC).

Another example of Iran's discrimination is its so-called " solution" to homosexuality. The government pushes homosexuals to undergo gender reassignment surgeries to conform to its theocratic views on sexuality. These procedures are paid for by the government, and for many poor gays and lesbians in Iran, especially those living in the Republic's rural areas, it is the

only option to “ be like others” (Hays). To conclude assessing the human rights violations of Iran’s theocratic government is the case of 27-year-old Neda Agha-Soltan.

Neda was an average young woman in Iran, except that she was taking singing lessons, which is illegal for women in Iran. On June 20th, Neda and her singing instructor got out of her car to get a breath of fresh air near the protests, and she was shot by a Basiji[3] in Tehran (Fathi). She was defenseless, and public attempts to mourn her were broken up by the government. “ Her name means voice in Persian, and many are now calling her the voice of Iran,” said Nazila Fathi in her report of Neda’s death for The New York Times.

President George W. Bush’s “ axis of evil” speech undermined support of Iranians who argued for better relations with the United States. When Bush made that speech in 2002, Mohammad Khatami, a reformer, was the president of Iran (Freedman 473). The United States sanctions against Iran have helped to further the Abadgaran regime’s agenda by giving justification to a group that is desperate for it; the sanctions have allowed them to consolidate their power and further oppress Iranians who go against the government’s policies.

Iran’s current state is best described in Lawrence Freeman’s A Choice of Enemies: The [Bush] administration found it consistently difficult to get the measure of Tehran. Bush depicted it as a “ nation held hostage by a small clerical elite that is repressing and isolating its people,” but the reality was far more complex . (482) A regime change in Iran could see the lifting of

American trade sanctions against Iran; U. S. sanctions have had an impact on Iran's oil economy.

Mohammed Akacem, a petroleum expert at Metropolitan State College of Denver said, " U. S. oil companies would love to go to Iran, so sanctions have retarded a little bit of Iran's ability to improve its oil sector (qtd. in Beehner). " Securing another efficient source of oil would help to ease the American economy as alternative energy sources are developed, and workers are trained to perform the tasks necessary to operate these new facilities. The Iranian government's response to this movement is violent and choking.

In late July, a mass trial was conducted against over 100 reformist figures, accused of—as reported by Robert F. Worth and Nazila Fathi—" conspiring with foreign powers to stage a revolution through terrorism. . . (1)". Ayatollah Ali Khamenei went so far as to say questioning the election was " the biggest crime (qtd. in Dareini). " The people of Iran are now rising up and demanding their emancipation, and they need support from the global community. The United States needs to support the Green Revolution if it seeks to make a friend of Iran.

The proper support could see a regime change and the establishment of an Iran open to cooperation with America, enriching both Iranian and American societies. The average American can help as well if there are organizations set up to aid the opposition movement in Iran by donating and volunteering, and corporate America can set up the aforementioned organizations, and increase the media's focus on the movement in Iran. All this can be done without any military involvement by the United States. The American

Revolution freed us from oppression; let us help the Iranian people free themselves as well.