

سپیدار حزب زنان ایران

**We are the Sepidar,
standing tall while our roots reach ever deeper.**

We become a sheltering canopy.

We endure both frost and scorching heat.

In mourning broken branches,

we do not bend in defeat;

instead, we rise again, renewed, and in bloom.

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The Collapse Puzzle: The Downfall Loop

By M.H. Labafbashi

What is taking shape around the Islamic Republic today is no longer a collection of separate pressures. The signs are gradually becoming connected; the nuclear file, the Strait of Hormuz, economic sanctions, human rights, domestic protests, internet communications, and the question of Iran's political future have each emerged through different channels, but they converge at one point: pressure on the Islamic Republic's power structure and an increase in the cost of its decisions.



In the nuclear file, the issue is no longer simply the level of enrichment. The International Atomic Energy Agency says that, due to the lack of effective access, it has lost the ability necessary to verify the status of the Islamic Republic's nuclear program. At the same time, the Islamic Republic's nuclear file has returned to the UN Security Council, and concerns over undeclared activities and underground facilities have increased. This means that the nuclear issue has evolved from a technical dispute between Tehran and the West into an international security issue; Israel also directly links it to its own security.

On the other side is Hormuz. The strait that the Islamic Republic has considered one of its most important instruments of power for years has now become one of the main subjects of negotiations with the United States. Tehran has proposed reopening Hormuz in exchange for a reduction in military pressure and the lifting of the blockade and sanctions, and recent reports indicate that phased negotiations are underway to reopen the strait in exchange for the removal of some of the pressure from the United States. At the same time, however, an official from the Islamic Republic has said that even if the Hormuz proposal is accepted, Tehran is not prepared to make a nuclear concession.

This is where the confusion is not limited to outside Iran; the people of Iran are also facing a series of contradictory messages. Pezeshkian says in an interview with Fox News that the Islamic Republic is prepared to dilute its 60-percent enriched uranium and accept a form of oversight of its nuclear program, while another message emerging from Tehran says that no nuclear concessions will be made in exchange for reopening Hormuz. For a citizen living with inflation, shortages, economic pressure, and concerns about war, these contradictions create one simple question: who is actually making the decisions, and what is the Islamic Republic's real decision?

Meanwhile, economic pressure is following its own course. Sanctions are no longer merely a diplomatic tool; the United States has sought to target financial and commercial networks linked to the Islamic Republic and restrict the government's access to oil revenues and financial resources. On the other hand, the government

continues to try to circumvent part of this pressure through channels such as opaque trade and transactions with China. Iran's economy has therefore become a field of confrontation; a field in which the main cost is being paid not by the decision-makers, but by ordinary people through declining purchasing power and everyday uncertainty.

At the same time, human rights and domestic protests are not separate from this puzzle either. As repression, arrests, and crackdowns on families seeking justice continue, the Iran issue for foreign governments does not remain limited to the nuclear file and regional security. Even in the field of communications, we are witnessing a new connection. In his recent speech at the United Nations, Benjamin Netanyahu presented a Starlink terminal as a symbol of the possibility of communication between the people of Iran and the outside world. Regardless of one's political position on this action, its message is clear: the Iranian people's access to free information and communications has also become part of the pressure equation.

Outside Iran, the discussion of "pressure for behavioral change" is also gradually becoming intertwined with the discussion of Iran's political future. On one side, the Islamic Republic is trying to show that it still controls the governing structure, negotiations, and decision-making; on the other side, Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, at the request of the Iranian people, is speaking about the shape of the transition period and the future of Iran's political system. Therefore, the issue is no longer simply what concession the Islamic Republic will make in a nuclear agreement; the larger question is who inside Iran would have the capacity to implement such an agreement if one is reached, and if no agreement is reached and the regime seeks to continue, who will pay the cost

Perhaps this is why many Iranians today are facing a major contradiction more than ever before. On the one hand, the country is facing economic pressure, the risk of conflict, sanctions, the nuclear file, and international pressure; on the other hand, some officials continue to use rhetoric as though Iran is in a position to dictate terms to the United States and the world. From "reopening Hormuz" to "not giving up even a single nuclear concession," from readiness to negotiate to declarations that the Islamic Republic will not surrender, the messages keep changing.

Perhaps the central issue lies precisely here: political overreach becomes dangerous when the gap between claims and the country's actual capabilities grows. A government can take a hard line at the negotiating table; but when its political decisions directly affect the lives of millions of people, the people have the right to know what the cost of each decision is, who made it, and who will be responsible for its consequences.

Today, the pressures are no longer separate lines. The nuclear issue is connected to Israel; Hormuz to the United States; human rights to Europe and the United Nations; communications and protests to technologies such as Starlink; the economy to the sanction's networks; and the issue of opponents of the Islamic Republic to the discussion of a political transition. These links do not yet establish a definitive outcome, but they show that the Iran issue has moved beyond a single domestic crisis and become a set of interconnected cases.

And at the center of this loop are the people who are paying more than any other side; people who want to know who makes the final decisions, why they hear a new narrative every day, and how far they are expected to pay the cost of the decisions made by the country's rulers.



Anatomy of a Diplomatic Breakdown

By Leila Fathali

Historically grounded in broad economic engagement, industrial cooperation, and cultural exchanges, diplomatic ties between Iran and Sweden have now reached one of their lowest points in modern history. A deeper examination of recent trajectories reveals that this severe rupture is neither accidental nor the result of a minor misunderstanding; rather, it is the direct outcome of a structured, confrontational, and law-evading foreign policy pursued by the regime in Tehran. This behavioral pattern has not only brought bilateral relations with Stockholm and other European capitals to a complete standstill, but has also driven Iran into unprecedented international isolation.



In past decades, Sweden—as a neutral, highly developed, and reputable European nation—served as a reliable and enduring partner for Iran in technology transfer, industrial development, and infrastructure projects. However, the gradual supremacy of a security-ideological mindset within Iran's diplomatic apparatus systematically dismantled this constructive foundation. Converting embassies and diplomatic missions into hubs for monitoring, tracking, and pressuring political dissidents—while prioritizing extraterritorial confrontation over genuine national interests—marked the initial pivotal steps toward destroying this long-standing relationship.

The 2019 arrest of Hamid Noury at Stockholm Airport and his landmark trial for involvement in the 1988 mass executions of political prisoners created a point of no return in bilateral relations. By invoking the principle of universal jurisdiction, the Swedish judiciary delivered a clear message: international human rights standards and accountability for alleged crimes against humanity supersede routine diplomatic courtesies and political expedient considerations. The Islamic Republic's response to this fully legal process, instead of presenting credible legal defense, consisted of anger, persistent threats, and accusing an independent nation's judicial system of political bias—a reaction that further exposed the regime's fundamental inability to abide by standard international norms.

The regime's gravest strategic and moral error regarding Sweden and the broader European Union was its reliance on the arbitrary detention of foreign and

dual nationals as bargaining chips—a tactic widely characterized as hostage diplomacy. The detention of Johan Floderus, a Swedish diplomat for the European Union, on fabricated charges demonstrated how Tehran weaponizes innocent foreign citizens for political and security leverage. Similarly, keeping the death sentence of Ahmadreza Djalali—an Iranian-Swedish academic and physician—hanging in the balance for years epitomized the instrumentalization of human lives in political transactions. Although high-level pressure and negotiations eventually led to a prisoner swap exchanging Hamid Noury for Swedish citizens, this transactional formula inflicted irreparable damage on Iran's diplomatic standing, signaling to the world that the regime is willing to sacrifice basic international norms to rescue its security operatives.

The crisis extended beyond courtroom proceedings. Transparent reports from Swedish security and intelligence agencies (such as SAPO) unveiled an even more hazardous pattern, indicating that Iranian intelligence services had crossed fundamental security and sovereign boundaries. Relying on local criminal networks and organized crime groups within Sweden to target, threaten, and physically eliminate dissidents on European soil sent shockwaves through Swedish society and government. These reckless and unlawful activities triggered the revocation of diplomatic credentials, reciprocal expulsions, and severe diplomatic contraction, forcing Stockholm to conclude that the Iranian Embassy's activities posed a direct threat to its national security.

This severe friction with Sweden is not an isolated anomaly, but a clear reflection of Iran's broader international isolation. Built on perpetual adversary creation, regional misadventures, and open disregard for fundamental human rights, the Islamic Republic's foreign policy has pushed the country to the margins of the global economy and international decision-making. Devastating financial and oil sanctions, persistent blacklisting by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), and full disconnection from the international banking system (SWIFT) have deprived Iran of foreign investment, technology transfers, and open global trade. Furthermore, a European Union that once sought to preserve the JCPOA and build independent financial channels (such as INSTEX) has adopted a significantly harsher, unified, and sanction-heavy stance against Tehran—driven by severe domestic crackdowns, military hardware transfers in international conflicts, and ongoing security threats on European soil. As a consequence of this impasse with the West, Iran has fallen into a asymmetric, one-sided reliance on Eastern powers, where its national interests are frequently overlooked or traded off in larger geopolitical bargains.

Ultimately, the Islamic Republic's foreign policy toward Sweden and the broader international community reflects a structural breakdown. Mistaking diplomacy for blackmail and rule of law for ideological confrontation has yielded nothing but ruined foreign relations, damage to Iran's historical image, and severe economic and psychological hardships for its people. Until respect for human rights, compliance with international standards, and the genuine interests of the Iranian people are prioritized over ideology and unlawful extraterritorial conduct, this trajectory of isolation and diplomatic decline will only accelerate.



Iranian Women; The Right to Choose

By Shiva Amiri, Human Rights Department

Women's rights are not simply about laws concerning women; they are about human dignity and the right of every person to make decisions about their own life. In Iran today, women and girls continue to face a range of legal and practical restrictions affecting their freedom, equality, and autonomy. Amnesty International's annual review of human rights in Iran for 2025/2026 identifies violations of the rights of women and girls among the country's major human rights concerns. One of the most prominent examples is compulsory veiling, which Amnesty says affects rights including equality, freedom of expression, freedom of belief, privacy, and personal autonomy. The debate over the rights of Iranian women is therefore ultimately a debate about the right of every human being to choose and live with dignity.



The right to choose one's clothing is one of the clearest examples of this issue. Amnesty International has reported that compulsory-veiling laws impose penalties such as fines, imprisonment, travel restrictions, and other social restrictions on women who refuse to comply, while the legislation it examined provides for even more severe punishments for certain forms of opposition to compulsory veiling. The issue therefore extends beyond clothing itself, because enforcement can affect women's movement, employment, education, and participation in public life. From a human-rights perspective, personal appearance and clothing are connected to privacy and individual autonomy, and the state should not determine what citizens wear through threats and punishment.

Women's rights, however, extend far beyond the question of veiling and include equal opportunities in social and economic life. Women should have equal access to education, employment, social participation, and economic opportunity, and their abilities should not be restricted because of their gender. Economic independence is also an important part of

human dignity because access to education, employment, and the ability to support oneself strengthens an individual's capacity to make independent decisions about the future. From this perspective, women's equality is not merely a social slogan; it is part of human and economic development. A society that restricts half of its population through gender-based limitations also limits part of its own human potential.

Women's security is another fundamental element of human rights. A woman should not have to fear harassment, violence, or punishment when walking in the street, attending university, working, or participating in public life. Human rights reporting on Iran has documented surveillance, policing, detention, and punishment connected to the enforcement of compulsory-veiling rules, while the United Nations has emphasized the need for justice, accountability, and reparations for victims of human rights violations during the "Woman, Life, Freedom" protests. Protecting women has meaning only when the law can protect them from violence and when state institutions themselves are accountable for violations of their rights.

Women's rights in Iran are also connected to the right to participate in shaping society. Women should not merely be the subjects of policies; they should be able to participate in social, economic, and political life and have a role in determining their own future and the future of their country. Equality under human rights principles means that gender should not determine the value or rights of a person, and every citizen should receive equal protection under the law. This principle is not limited to Iran; equality and women's participation are recognized as important elements of human rights internationally. A future in which Iranian women can freely study, work, choose, speak out, and participate in public decision-making is therefore a future in which human dignity is taken seriously.

The rights of Iranian women should not be treated as a special privilege for one group; they are part of fundamental human rights. The experience of recent years has shown that restricting women does not only reduce their freedoms; it can also affect families, the economy, education, and society as a whole, while human rights organizations have documented continuing discrimination and repression against women and girls. A society that respects human dignity must recognize women as equal citizens before the law: people who have the right to make decisions about their bodies, clothing, education, work, family, and future. The right of women to choose is ultimately not only a women's issue; it is a measure of how seriously a society respects human freedom and human dignity.



Women's Brain Fog: Is Forgetfulness Really Just Distraction?

By Azadeh Sharafi, Health and Well-being Department

"Why am I forgetting so much? Why can't I concentrate? Why do I sometimes lose the word I want to say in the middle of a conversation?" These questions are familiar to many women. Sometimes we cannot remember someone's name for a few seconds; we walk into a room and forget why we went there; while reading, we find ourselves going over the same sentence several times; or, in the middle of a conversation, we suddenly lose our train of thought. Some women become frightened by these experiences, worrying that their memory is deteriorating or that they may be developing a serious illness. Others blame themselves, believing they have simply become "distracted" or "less attentive." But this is not always the case. What is commonly referred to as "brain fog" is not a disease or an independent medical diagnosis. Rather, it is a term used to describe a collection of experiences, including difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness, mental sluggishness, difficulty finding words, and a sense of mental exhaustion. These symptoms can have many different causes, and understanding them requires looking at physical, psychological, and environmental factors together.



Our brains do not function in a vacuum. When a person is under prolonged pressure, constantly worried about the future, not getting enough sleep, or struggling with anxiety and psychological exhaustion, attention and memory can also be affected. Research on chronic stress has shown that prolonged exposure to stress can influence certain cognitive processes, including working memory, attentional control, and cognitive flexibility. However, this relationship is complex, and its effects are not the same for everyone. For this reason, what a woman experiences as "poor memory" may sometimes be the result of a combination of mental fatigue, anxiety, inadequate sleep, and reduced attention. A tired mind is not necessarily a sick mind. Under prolonged stress, the brain may devote a significant amount of its resources to managing worry and psychological pressure rather than focusing on and processing new information as efficiently as it normally would.

For many Iranian women, psychological pressure is not limited to personal concerns. Financial hardship, uncertainty about the future, responsibility for children and family members, difficulties at work, migration and separation from loved ones, concerns about the safety of family members, and constant exposure to distressing news can all increase the psychological burden of everyday life. When these pressures continue for a long time, the body and mind may not have enough opportunity to return to a state of calm. The tragic events of Dey 1404 (December 2025–January 2026) were also a deeply distressing experience for many Iranians, accompanied by fear, grief, uncertainty, and concern for loved ones. Reports from the United Nations human rights office regarding the protests of December 2025 and January 2026 raised serious concerns about the human rights situation, including arrests and the treatment of

detainees. Regardless of political perspective, experiences of violence, loss, fear for loved ones, and repeated exposure to disturbing news can place a significant psychological burden on individuals. The effects of such experiences do not necessarily become visible immediately.

Psychological distress does not always appear as crying, obvious depression, or a panic attack. Sometimes it manifests as insomnia, persistent fatigue, irritability, physical discomfort, loss of motivation, or that familiar feeling: "My mind just doesn't work the way it used to." Recognizing these less visible signs of psychological strain is therefore extremely important.

For women, the situation can be more complex because hormonal changes at different stages of life can also affect sleep, mood, and cognitive experiences. One stage that has received increasing attention in recent years is the menopausal transition, a period that may involve hormonal changes, sleep disturbances, mood changes, and difficulties with concentration and memory. Many women report experiences such as forgetfulness, difficulty finding words, or feeling that their concentration has declined during this period. These symptoms should not simply be dismissed as "a normal part of getting older." At the same time, not every cognitive difficulty should automatically be attributed to hormonal changes. Sleep, anxiety, depression, physical health, medications, and many other factors can also play a role. The appropriate approach is therefore to consider women's health from a multidimensional perspective.

One of the first things affected by chronic stress is often sleep. A mind occupied at night by worries about the future, thoughts about the past, or anticipation of important news may struggle to enter restorative sleep properly. The person wakes the next day feeling tired, less focused, and mentally slowed down. This, in turn, can increase concern about their cognitive performance. A cycle can gradually develop: anxiety disrupts sleep, poor sleep reduces concentration, and reduced concentration creates more worry. For this reason, when someone complains about poor memory or reduced concentration, an important question is: How many hours are they sleeping, and what is the quality of their sleep? In some cases, improving sleep and reducing psychological stress can make a significant difference.

No. Forgetting someone's name, misplacing an item, forgetting a task, or needing a few extra moments to find a word—particularly when we are tired or under psychological pressure—does not, by itself, mean that a serious illness is present. The human mind processes a tremendous amount of information and stimulation every day, while attention itself has limited capacity. At the same time, not every cognitive difficulty should be attributed to stress. If problems with memory and concentration are severe, persistent, progressively worsening, interfere with everyday life, or occur alongside other physical or psychological symptoms, professional assessment becomes important. In some cases, the underlying cause may be psychological; in others, physical factors may also need to be investigated. Collaboration between a psychologist and a physician can help ensure a more accurate assessment and an appropriate course of action.

A familiar pattern in the lives of many women is putting the needs of others before their own. A woman is expected to be a good mother, a good partner, a good daughter, responsible at work, and the person who keeps the family going when circumstances become difficult. Amid all these responsibilities, there may be very little space left for the woman herself. But an important question remains: Who takes care of the woman who is always taking care of everyone else? Mental health is not a luxury, and caring for it should not be postponed until a person is completely exhausted. Adequate sleep, rest, talking about anxiety and grief, seeking professional support, and even acknowledging, "I no longer have the capacity I used to have," are not signs of weakness. They are forms of responsible self-care.

"Brain fog" may not be the name of a disease, but the experience itself is very real for the person who feels it. Behind a simple memory lapse there may be a sleepless night. Behind difficulty concentrating there may be months of anxiety. Behind mental exhaustion there may be years of accumulated responsibility and pressure. And for some women, hormonal changes may add another layer to this experience.

For Iranian women who have lived for years under a range of social, economic, and family pressures, and who in recent years have also faced painful collective experiences and profound uncertainty, paying attention to mental health is more important than ever. We cannot always control the external circumstances of our lives, but we can learn to recognize the signs of exhaustion earlier, talk about them, and seek professional help when necessary. Perhaps the first step is simply to replace self-blame and the thought, "I'm not the person I used to be," with a more compassionate question: "What have I been through that has left my mind and body this exhausted?" Women's health is not simply the absence of illness. True health means having the space, alongside the responsibilities of everyday life, to care for one's body, mind, and future.



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Censoring the Nation on the New York Podium

By Leila Kharazi

The meetings of the United Nations General Assembly have always provided an opportunity to reflect the political and social realities of societies. In this context, the failure of the regime's representative, Masoud Pezeshkian, to mention the demands, suffering, and civil struggles of the Iranian nation once again exposed the deep divide between the usurping ruling body and the core of society. In his speech, rather than addressing severe domestic crises and human rights demands, he focused on repeating ideological positions and justifying systemic failures. This deliberate censorship proved that the regime's diplomatic apparatus holds no legitimacy to represent the Iranian nation on the international stage.



In contrast, references by prominent international leaders, including Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu, to the courage, proud history, and struggles of the Iranian people resonated widely across global political and media circles. Their emphasis on separating the cultured Iranian nation from the repressive ruling structure demonstrated that the global community increasingly recognizes that the current regime is not the true representative of the Iranian people. These explicit stances neutralized the government's long-standing efforts to mute the nation's voice, echoing the calls for justice across the world's highest platforms.

This stark contradiction on the international diplomatic stage proved that the regime's internal legitimacy has completely dissolved. Officials who lack the capacity to face their citizens' basic demands are forced internationally to divert public attention away from domestic realities. Ignoring the nation's will in New York stems from the regime's deep fear of the consequences of recognizing internal civil movements. This passive

approach has only served to deepen the government's political isolation and escalate transregional pressure on its repression machine.

On the other hand, the reflection of the Iranian nation's voice in international speeches is the direct result of persistent internal struggles coupled with the continuous efforts of civil society and the united opposition abroad. This strategic bridge has led world leaders to separate the Iranian people from the regime's destabilizing actions. Growing global awareness regarding Iranians' democratic aspirations has constrained the maneuvering room for the government's diplomats more than ever before. This new balance represents a turning point in shifting the international perspective on Iran's political future.

In this arena, the authoritative diplomacy and clear guidelines of the national leader, Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, have played a decisive role in solidifying this global perspective. In his international engagements, he has consistently stressed the necessity of hearing the true voice of the Iranian nation and offering practical support for their democratic demands. This strategic guidance ensured that international bodies recognize the Iranian nation not as passive victims, but as a leading force for regional change and stability. Elucidating this reality has elevated the legal standing of the people's struggle.

The international community and free nations must move beyond words and take concrete steps to support the Iranian nation's will. Severing the financial lifelines of the repression machine, expelling regime representatives from international bodies, and recognizing the justice-seeking movement represent the bare minimum requirements to stand on the right side of history. Tolerating a government that does not represent its people jeopardizes global security and stability. The free world must realize that future peace in the region depends on fulfilling the Iranian nation's drive for freedom.

The tomorrow of Iran's freedom will witness the presence of the nation's true representatives at the United Nations and the restoration of the country's rightful status in global diplomacy. With the fall of this repressive structure, freely elected representatives will convey Iran's voice of rationality, peace, and progress to the world. Under the shadow of its national leader, Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, our homeland will rebuild international relations based on national interests and human dignity. The spring of national sovereignty is near, and tomorrow's light will erase the darkness of tyranny and distortion.