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## An Execution Wave Against LGBT Iranians

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President Barack Obama has long depicted himself as a defender of women's and LGBT rights not only in the United States but across the world as well. Yet, where is his voice when it comes to the growing number of executions and the persecution of the gay and lesbian community as well as the repression of women in the Islamic Republic of Iran? In addition, why has the LGBT movement not criticized the Obama administration or made a movement over these injustices, egregious actions, and human rights violations committed in the Islamic Republic against the gays and lesbians?

As the Obama administration continues to communicate and diplomatically negotiate with Iranian officials in Vienna, New York, and elsewhere, President Obama has not even slightly expressed his concern about the unfair actions, executions, discriminations and prosecutions of LGBT individuals, as well as the increasing repressions of women under the Rouhani administration. Where do the Islamic Republic's human rights abuses belong on President Obama's agenda?

Two weeks ago, two Iranian men, Abdulla Ghavami Chahzanjiru and Salman Ghanbari Chahzanjiri, were executed in the southern part of the Islamic Republic for reasons that included "consensual sodomy." [According to the Daily Beast](#), "Their deaths are part of a wave of executions in Iran, with more than 400 in the first half of 2014 alone, according to the NGO Iran Human Rights." One of the Iranian sources [pointed out](#) that Chahzanjiru and Chahzanjiri were executed in order to "promote community safety" as well as to "reduce the suffering of the victims."

Under the Islamist and Sharia law of Iran and Iran's Penal Code, the punishments for homosexuals range from lashings to executions. For example, [article 109](#) of Iran's Islamic Penal Code states, "In case of sodomy both the active and the passive persons will be condemned to its punishment."

Article 110 of Iran's Islamic Penal Code emphasizes on killing homosexuals, "Punishment for sodomy is killing; the Sharia judge decides on how to carry out the killing." Article 111 adds, "Sodomy involves killing if both the active and passive persons are mature, of sound mind and have free will."

According to other articles of Iran's Islamist Penal Code, even kissing or standing naked under one roof are considered crimes and subject to punishment. For example, article 124 asserts: "If someone kisses another with lust, he will be subject to Ta'azir of 60 lashes." Article 123 mandates: "If two men not related by blood stand naked under one cover without any necessity, both of them will be subject to Ta'azir of up to 99 lashes."

### **Mosaheqeh (lesbianism) Under the Islamist Sharia law of the Islamic Republic**

When it comes to laws regarding women and lesbianism, the same Islamist laws apply. For example, article 134 states, "If two women not related by consanguinity stand naked under one cover without necessity, they will be punished to less than [one] hundred (100) lashes (Ta'azir). In case of its repetition as well as the repetition of punishment, [one] hundred (100) lashes will be hit the third time."

It is crucial to point out that these Islamist and Sharia laws apply not only to Muslims but also to non-Muslims, "In the punishment for lesbianism there will be no distinction between the doer and the subject as well as a Muslim or non-Muslim."

More fundamentally, these executions, discriminations, prejudices and punishments with regards to the LGBT community in the Islamic Republic have created a tremendous sense of fear, horror, and panic among the gay and lesbian community through the imposition of Islamist laws that

criminalize sexuality.

Although Iranian LGBT individuals have been living underground for many years, there always exists the fright and likelihood that they will be arrested by the Islamic Republic's Revolutionary Guard Cops, the Islamist religious police, the moral police, or some state's affiliated militia groups such as the Basij, and then be persecuted, lashed and executed by Iran's Islamic Judiciary system.

The discrimination against the LGBT community in the Islamic Republic is solely anchored on the basis of their gender orientation.

When it comes to LGBT rights in the Islamic Republic, two crucial issues should be discussed. First of all, on the one hand, the Islamist and Shari'a law of the Islamic Republic clearly does not grant gays and lesbians equal rights and does not treat them as human beings. But more fundamentally and egregiously, the Islamic Penal Code of the Islamic Republic sentences people to death based on sexuality.

Finally, while the Obama administration is highly concentrated on striking a final and comprehensive nuclear deal with the Iranian regime, President Obama should not turn a blind eye to these executions, human rights abuses, prejudices and punishments imposed by Iran's Islamist laws against the LGBT individuals in the Islamic Republic.

Indeed, it is the obligation of every state and the international community— which is negotiating with the Iranian officials on nuclear issues— to bring the human rights of the Iranian LGBT community, its persecution, and the increasing repression of women, to the attention of Iranian ruling authorities.

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