

Shirin Ebadi

Biographical facts:

- Born in 1947, received law degree from University of Tehran, where she now lectures
- Married with two daughters
- One of first female judges in Iran, forced to resign after 1979 revolution
- First Iranian to win a Nobel Prize and first Muslim woman to be awarded Nobel Peace Prize
- Author of academic books and articles focused on human rights, including *The Rights of the Child: A History and Documentation of Human Rights in Iran* (Tehran, 1994, with support from UNICEF) and *History and Documentation of Human Rights in Iran* (New York, 2000)

Grassroots work:

- Established Centre for the Defense of Human Rights, Iranian NGO
- Founder and leader of Association for Support of Children's Rights in Iran, American NGO, 2000
- Established crisis telephone lines for children and raised awareness about issues like children in prison and forced child marriages

Major legal cases:

- Represented the family of **Zahra Kazemi**, Iranian-Canadian photojournalist who died while in Iranian custody in July 2003. Kazemi was arrested for taking pictures outside a prison during a student protest in Tehran. Although Iran initially said Kazemi died of a stroke, the government later acknowledged that she died as a result of being beaten. After an Iranian security agent was cleared of "quasi-intentional murder" in July 2004, Iran's judiciary abruptly ended the investigation, calling Kazemi's death an accident.
- Represented the children of **Darioush** and **Parvaneh Forouhar**, dissident intellectuals who openly opposed Iran's Islamic Government and were slain in their home in 1998, in an attempt to find and prosecute the couple's murderers. Iranian intelligence agents were charged with these and other murders of prominent writers and dissidents, but the case is still under investigation. Human rights groups and the victims' families have protested the secrecy of the trials and investigation.
- Represented the mother of **Arian Golshani**, a 9-year-old girl murdered by her father and stepbrother. Fought the law preventing a father from being convicted for murdering his own child. Golshani's stepbrother was convicted, and although the law has not been changed, this case drew attention as the first to challenge it and Ms. Ebadi continues to push for legislation protecting children. ["We asked people who object to the law to take white flower petals and throw them into the street," she says, "In a few minutes, the whole street was white with petals."]

- In June 2000, Ebadi was herself arrested and imprisoned in with another reformist lawyer. She was accused of distributing a taped confession of a member of a vigilante militia involved in violence against reformists. She was jailed for three weeks, sentenced by a closed-door court to 15 months in prison, and barred from practicing law for five years. Eventually, the sentence was suspended, and she was required only to pay a fine of about \$200.