

Dr Shirin Ebadi (Academic Expert)



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Profile

Dr Shirin Ebadi joined Doughty Street's panel of Academic Experts in September 2017.

She was the first female Nobel Peace Prize Laureate from the Islamic World (2003). She was Iran's first female judge, served as president of the city court of Tehran from 1975 to 1979 and was the first Iranian woman to achieve Chief Justice status. After opening a legal practice in 1992, she began defending people who were being persecuted by the authorities. In the year 2000 she was imprisoned herself for having criticized her country's hierarchy. In addition to being an internationally-recognized advocate of human rights, she has also established many non-governmental organizations in Iran, including the Million Signatures Campaign, a campaign demanding an end to legal discrimination against women in Iranian law. Dr Ebadi has a doctorate in Law from Tehran University, and was a university professor. She has published over 70 articles and 13 books dedicated to various aspects of human rights, some of which have been published by UNICEF. In 2004, she was named by Forbes Magazine as one of the 100 most powerful women in the world. In January 2006, along with sister Nobel Laureate Jody Williams, Dr Ebadi took the lead in establishing the Nobel Women's Initiative.

Dr Shirin Ebadi was born on June 22nd, 1947 in Hamadan, Iran. Her father, Professor Mohammad Ali Ebadi was a lecturer in Commercial Law. His book "Commercial Law" was

later edited and updated by his daughter, Shirin.

When Shirin was only a year old, her family moved to Tehran where she received her education. In 1965, she started her law degree, completing it 3 years later. In 1970, after a period of internship, she became one of the first female judges in Iran. She soon progressed through the ranks and was appointed Chief Magistrate of 26th Divisional Court in Tehran in 1975 – again making her the youngest and first female for the post.

Shirin married in 1975 and has two daughters, Negar and Nargess.

In 1979, immediately after the Islamic revolution in Iran, all female judges were dismissed as the then revolutionaries believed that women were forbidden from passing judgment. She was demoted to the post of a magistrate's clerk in the very same court over which she once presided. Soon after, she opted for early retirement.

In 1992, she set up a private practice handling contentious cases. She was the defense lawyer for many controversial political and human rights cases in Iran including, Zahra Kazemi (a journalist murdered in Evin prison), Parvaneh and Dariush Foroohar (well-known political activists, murdered by security forces), Ezat Ebrahim Nejad (murdered in the dormitory of Tehran University, 1999), and Zahra Bani Yaghoob (a young doctor, murdered in detention). She also took on the case of the seven leaders of the Baha'i faith in Iran. All these activities led to her incarceration on charges of spreading and publishing lies against the Islamic Republic in 1999. She spent 25 days in solitary confinement. The court sentenced her to one-and-a-half years imprisonment and barred her from practicing law for 5 years. In the appeal process and due to international pressure, her sentence was reduced to a fine.

Dr. Ebadi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003. She used some of the prize money to set up an office for the Center for Defenders of Human Rights (CDHR) and support the families of political prisoners. This center became a prominent human rights organization. As a result it was honored by the National Human Rights of France in 2003. In 2008 the center was closed down by the security forces. They confiscated the building.

Dr. Ebadi left Iran shortly before the June 2009 presidential election to participate in a conference in Spain. She did not return to Iran owing to the severe restrictions imposed on human rights activists, and upon receiving news of her colleagues' arrests and many murders. She continued her activities in de facto exile. The Iranian government, disapproving of her actions, filed a case against her in the Islamic Revolutionary Court. The government confiscated her properties, including the office of the CDHR, on the pretext of unpaid taxes. Moreover, to blackmail and silence Dr. Ebadi, her sister and her husband were arrested by the security forces.

SOCIAL EXPERIENCES

- Founded the Society for Protecting the Rights of the Child in 1995 and chaired it until the year 2000
- Founded and chaired the Human Rights Defenders Centre in 2001
- Proposing a law to the Iranian parliament on protecting children and juveniles, (summer 2002)
- Founded and chaired the Mine Clearing Collaboration Association in 2003
- Collaboration with 6 other women peace prize laureates to fund the Nobel Women's Initiative in 2006. She is a member of the board of the latter
- Founded the Centre for Supporters of Human Rights in 2012
- Conducted several research projects with the Tehran office of UNICEF
- Member of UNITAR's board of trustees since 2007
- Teaching courses (free of charge) on the issues of children's rights and the Convention of the Rights of the Child for different groups
- Teaching courses (free of charge) on educating and promoting human rights and women's rights
- Participation in many legal and human rights conferences and seminars
- Lecturing at various Universities and Institutes around the world

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Lecturing Trade Law at Tehran Islamic Azad University between 1989- 1993
- Lecturing Law and Urban Planning Regulations at the Graduate and Postgraduate Schools of Fine Arts, University of Tehran between 1993-1999
- Lecturing Rights of the Women at the post graduate school of social sciences, Allameh Tabatabayi University between 2001-2004
- Lecturing at Tucson University at Arizona/ US in 2005

BOOKS

- Criminal Law in collaboration with Professor Abdolhossein Aliabadi (1973)
- The Rights of the child (1988) translated into English
- Medical Rights (1989)
- The Young Workers (1990)
- Literary and Artistic Rights (1990)
- Architectural Rights (1992)
- The Rights of Refugees (1994) translated into English
- History and Documentation of Human Rights in Iran (1994) translated into English
- Tradition and Modernity in the Iranian Legal System (1996)
- Comparative Children's Rights (1997) translated into English
- Iran Awakening: One Woman's Journey to Reclaim Her Life and Country (2007)

- The Golden Cage: three brothers, three choices, one destiny (2011) translated into 7 languages

HONORARY DEGREES

- Honorary doctorate, **Williams College/US**, 2004
- Honorary doctorate, Liege University/Belgium, 2004
- Honorary doctorate, **Brown University/US**, 2004
- Honorary doctorate, **University of British Columbia/Canada**, 2004
- Honorary doctorate, **University of Maryland, College Park/US**, 2004
- Honorary doctorate, **University of Toronto/Canada**, 2004
- Honorary doctorate, **Simon Fraser University/Canada**, 2004
- Honorary doctorate, Koc University/ Istanbul, 2004
- Honorary doctorate, **University of Akureyri/Iceland**, 2004
- Honorary doctorate, **Australian Catholic University/Australia**, 2005
- Honorary doctorate, **University of San Francisco/US**, 2005
- Honorary doctorate, **Concordia University/Canada**, 2005
- Honorary doctorate, **York University/Canada**, 2005
- Honorary doctorate, The University of York/UK, 2005
- Honorary doctorate, **Université Jean Moulin in Lyon/ France**, 2005
- Honorary doctorate, **Loyola University Chicago/US**, 2007
- Honorary doctorate, **Rutgers University Chicago/US**, 2007
- Honorary doctorate **The New School University/US**, 2007
- Honorary doctor of Laws, **Marquette University/US**, 2009
- Honorary doctorate, Genova University/Italy, 2010
- Honorary doctorate, Madrid European University/Spain, 2010
- Honorary doctorate, **University of Cambridge/UK**, 2011
- Honorary doctorate, University of Poitier/ France, 2011
- Honorary doctorate, University of Westfield/US, 2012
- Honorary doctorate, Law Society/Toronto, June 2012
- Honorary doctorate, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) London, July 2012

Related practice areas

Public International Law

International Human Rights Law

International Law