One Million Signatures Campaign in Iran wins Anna Politkovskaya Award 2009

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The winner of RAW in WAR’s third annual Anna Politkovskaya Award is The One Million Signatures Campaign for Equality (Iran). The grass roots campaign, launched in 2006, aims to collect one million signatures of Iranian nationals to a petition demanding an end to legal discrimination against women in Iran.

Leila Alikarami, a lawyer and human rights activist, accepted the Anna Politkovskaya Award on behalf of the Campaign, which was presented to her by Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Mairead Maguire, at a special award ceremony at Kings Place in London. Working with the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Shirin Ebadi, Leila Alikarami has defended many of the women members of the Campaign including Aliyeh Eghdam Doust, who was the first women’s rights activist in Iran to be imprisoned for the full term of her 3-year sentence.

In Iran legislation values evidence given by a woman in court only worth half that given by a man. Girls under the age of 13 can be forced to marry once her father permits it. Women do not have equal rights with men when it comes to marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance. Although campaigning peacefully and legally, activists are often subject to arbitrary arrests and imprisonment. The recent political protests have increased government pressure and persecution of those actively supporting the campaign. Charges against members range from acting against the national security of the state and propaganda against the state to membership in the One Million Signatures Campaign itself. Many activists are serving suspended sentences and face regular harassment and persecution by the government.

Sign the petition