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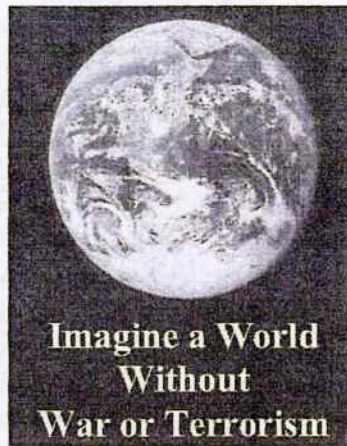
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OCT 11, 2003

## Nobel Peace Prize

# Iranian awarded Peace Prize for human rights work

By Azadeh Moaveni and Sebastian Rotella  
*Los Angeles Times*

PARIS — Iranian jurist and activist Shirin Ebadi was awarded the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize Friday in Oslo, Norway, for her longtime fight for human rights in her native land, becoming the first Iranian and the first Muslim woman to win the honor.



**Shirin Ebadi is the first Iranian and first Muslim woman to win the honor.**

Ebadi has battled Iran's hard-line Islamic rulers on behalf of women, children and pro-democracy students; she is also a practicing Muslim who insists that Islam and democracy are fully compatible.

Choosing Ebadi over contenders such as Pope John Paul and former Czech President Václav Havel, the Nobel Committee praised her work for nonviolent reform and described her as a beacon of hope for Muslims everywhere.

In Paris, where she was visiting after attending a conference on women, the soft-spoken 56-year-old said she was at first surprised, then happy because "this gives me enough energy to help me continue my fight."

**NOBEL continues on A23:**  
— A list of past winners.



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**NOBEL from A1***'The duty of life is to fight in a difficult situation'*

"As a lawyer, judge, lecturer, writer and activist, she has spoken out clearly and strongly in her country, Iran, and far beyond its borders," the Norwegian Nobel Committee said in its citation.

Ebadi is the 11th woman and the third Muslim to win the prize, which is worth \$1.3 million. She was chosen from among a record 165 nominees.

Speaking at a news conference in the courtyard of the Paris-based International Federation of Human Rights Leagues, Ebadi appeared without a head scarf. That was an act of defiance, friends said, against the strict Islamic government she so frequently opposes, which believes that women must cover their heads as a show of piety.

"The duty of life is to fight in a difficult situation as there is in Iran," Ebadi told journalists. "If I were living in a country where the rights of women were respected, I wouldn't be as happy as I am today."

**Unlikely troublemaker**

Ebadi was Iran's first female judge. When the Islamic revolution came, she embraced the cause, joining the Ministry of Justice's strike committee.

The embrace was not returned. The ruling clerics who created the Islamic Republic decreed that women were too "emotional" to be judges. Ebadi was demoted to legal assistant in 1979. Since then, she has bedeviled the country's hard-line leaders and fought for liberalization, democracy and human rights.

Ebadi was a pioneer but an unlikely troublemaker.

She earned her law degree from the University of Tehran, where she teaches today.

When many professional

women left the country after the revolution, Ebadi stayed. She worked as a legal assistant for five years, started her own law practice, became a consultant to a number of companies and began writing books. She has two daughters.

Ebadi has worked closely with political activists struggling to apply the rule of law in Iran. But she has also criticized the reformers for ignoring the issue of women's rights, which she says is as urgent a priority as the freedoms of expression and assembly.

In 2000, the Iranian regime put Ebadi on trial on charges of publicizing evidence of official involvement in attacks on pro-democracy forces, and convicted her in a closed trial. She served three weeks in jail, got a suspended sentence and was barred from practicing law for five years.

After her release, she described the despair of solitary confinement in a magazine article.

"I try to remember who said 'We are not born to suffer' " she wrote. "I can't remember. Wrathfully, with the end of a spoon I try to engrave on the cement wall of the cell: 'We are born to suffer because we are born in the Third World — space and time are imposed on us. Therefore, there is nothing to do except to stay patient.'"

**Reaction**

The state-run Islamic Republic News Agency reported the award several hours after it was announced. Reaction in Iran was divided.

"This prize carries the message that Europe intends to put further pressure on human rights issues in Iran as a political move to achieve its particular objectives," said Amir Mo-

**RECENT RECIPIENTS**

**2002** — Former President Jimmy Carter.

**2001** — United Nations and Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

**2000** — Kim Dae-jung, South Korea.

**1999** — Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders).

**1998** — David Trimble and John Hume, Northern Ireland.

**1997** — Jody Williams and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, United States.

**1996** — Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo and Jose Ramos-Horta, East Timor.

**1995** — Joseph Rotblat, Britain, and the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs.

**1994** — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat; Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, Israel.

**1993** — Nelson Mandela and F. W. de Klerk, South Africa.

**1992** — Rigoberta Menchu, Guatemala.

**1991** — Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar.

**1990** — Mikhail Gorbachev, Soviet Union.

hebian, an editor of the hard-line Resalat newspaper.

But the news agency reported that Vice President Muhammad Ali Abtahi, a leading reformist, had called the award "very good news for every Iranian" and a sign of the active role played by Iranian women in politics.

Women played a critical part in the 1997 presidential election of reformist Muhammad Khatami.

The award "is a victory for women in general and Muslim women in particular," said Siham Hattab, an English literature professor in Baghdad and a city council member. "Injustice exists at all times and in all

places, but this gives us hope that justice will triumph."

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan described Ebadi as a "courageous woman" whose Nobel prize would underscore the importance of expanding human rights and women's rights throughout the world.

Former President Jimmy Carter, last year's Nobel Peace Prize winner, called Ebadi "an inspiration to people in Iran and around the world."

"She proves that one person, standing on principle, can make a positive difference in the lives of many," he said.

*The Washington Post and Associated Press contributed to this report.*

**Note:** The Nobel Laureates from 1996 on have been honored at Augsburg College, at the Annual Nobel Festival — co-sponsored by World Citizen, Inc. A few highlights:

- 700 to 1,000 students from Peace Site Schools
- February 19<sup>th</sup> Jimmy Carter to be honored
- President Carter will come to J.J. Hill Peace Site School, Saturday February 21<sup>st</sup>. (Not open to the public)

For more information contact  
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