

# The western media on Iran and the 'New Middle East' wars

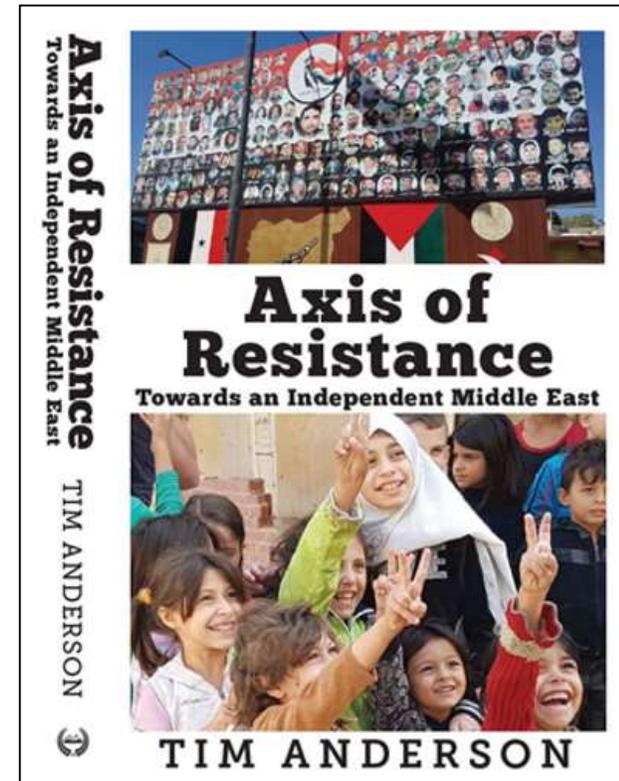
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Presentation to the Journalists' Support Committee,  
London, March 2020

## Consistent western media distortions over Iran:

1. The jaundiced view
2. Regular distortions
3. Misinformation over the Republic
4. Education and women
5. Iran and terrorism
6. Iran - a license to kill?
7. Embedded state and corporate media
8. Minorities in Iran
9. Iran: a threat to Washington's New Middle East'
10. A terrible economic war



# 1. Obvious: western media presents a negative view of Iran



New York Times, 24 Dec 2019

Mourners protest during the funerals for those killed during a demonstration in Eslam Square, in Tehran, in 1978. Bernett/Contact Press Images



Jerusalem Post, 12 February 2020



Donald Trump, Twitter, 12 February 2019



Amnesty Intl (UK), 2019

## 2. In fact, western headline stories about Iran are often misleading

Amnesty International UK

**IRAN: 42 YEARS IN PRISON FOR PROMOTING UNVEILING**



**Iran and Saudi Arabia race to pass gender reforms as Tehran relaxes headscarf arrests**

Daily Telegraph, December 2017



Since late 2017 there has been no *formal* policing of headscarf use in Iran

The **Amnesty UK** 2019 claims that Mojgan Keshavarz, Yasaman Aryani and Monireh Arabshahi were charged "for not wearing veils" or, regarding Yasaman, "simply for removing her hijab in public" were not correct.

A group of **UN rights experts**, while condemning the jail sentences, pointed out that the three were "convicted of assembly and collusion in acts against national security, propaganda against the state and "encouraging and providing for [moral] corruption and prostitution".

Western reports rarely point out that warnings and fines for not wearing a head scarf in Iran stopped in late 2017, and that Iranian authorities have been mostly reacting to organised **NED and western-funded campaigns** against Iran.

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24897&LangID=E>



Each year the US Government agency the NED hands out hundreds of thousands of dollars for 'civil society' campaigns over 'women's rights' in Iran

### 3. Washington: '40 years of failure'? The UNDP does not agree



Regarding Donald Trump's claims of "40 years of failure, the UNDP in 2018 cited Iran as having made the second strongest (after China) sustained growth in human development, between 1990 and 2017. This was mainly due to huge advances in education (at near gender equity) and child health (UNDP 2018).



Average annual HDI growth	
1990-2017 (%)	
HDI rank	1990-2017
<b>HIGH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT</b>	
60 Iran (Islamic Republic of)	1.21

TABLE 2

"Between 1990 and 2017, the Islamic Republic of Iran's life expectancy increased by 12.4 years [and] mean years of schooling increased by 5.6 years."  
<http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/IRN.pdf>

## UNDP on Iran: strong improvements in education, 1980-2018

	Iran, I.R.		HHD average
	1980	2018	2018
Mean years schooling	2.1 (1980) 4.2 (1990)	10.0	8.3
Female/Male		9.9 / 10.1	8.0/8.6
Female illiteracy rate	83% (1970) 61% (1985)	97.7/98.2 (Youth 2006-2016)	

[http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/219/hdr\\_1990\\_en\\_complete\\_nostats.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/219/hdr_1990_en_complete_nostats.pdf)  
[http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2018\\_human\\_development\\_statistical\\_update.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2018_human_development_statistical_update.pdf)  
<http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr2019.pdf>

### Great times under the Shah?

In 1980 the average Iranian child got 2 years in school. By 2018 the average Iranian child got more than 10 years in school (UNDP 2019).



Misinformation about education and gender in Iran, from the MEK

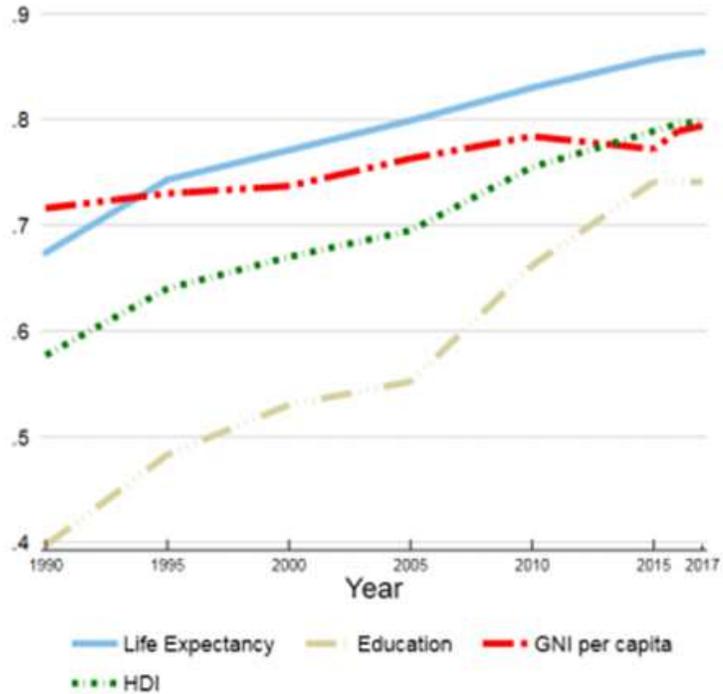
Illiteracy rampant and growing among Iran's women and girls

MEK site "More than 60 per cent of the country's 9.5 million illiterates are women":  
<https://women.ncr-iran.org/2018/09/08/illiteracy-rampant-growing-among-iran-s-women-girls/>

UNDP 2018, statistical update

HDI rank	SDG 4.6 Literacy rate	
	Adult % ages 15 and older	Youth (% ages 15-24)
	Female	Male
	2006-2016 <sup>a</sup>	2006-2016 <sup>a</sup>
<b>HIGH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT</b>		
60 Iran (Islamic Republic of)	84.7	97.7
		98.2

**Figure 1: Trends in Islamic Republic of Iran's HDI component indices 1990-2017**



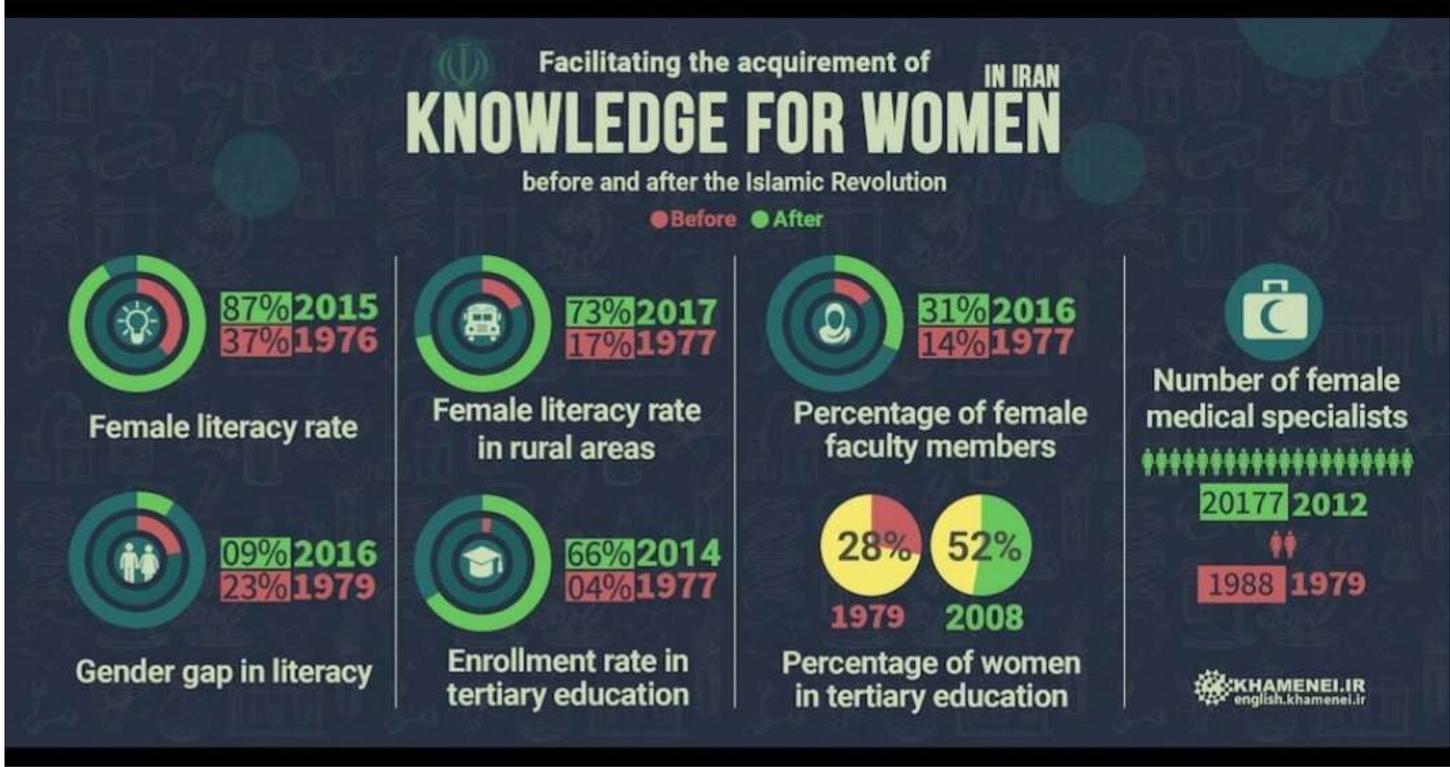
Between 1980 and 2017, average life expectancy in Iran rose from 54.1 to 76.2 years, and average years of schooling rose from 2.2 to 9.8, a more than fourfold increase, almost at gender equity (UNDP 2016; UNDP 2018a). Inequality and poverty fell substantially (UNDP 1999; World Bank 2019).

1990-2017: Iran's HDI grew on average 1.21% per year over those 27 years, and China's 1.51% (UNDP 2018b: Table 2). In the case of China this was due to exceptional and sustained per capita economic growth; in the case of Iran it was due to exceptional and sustained improvements in life expectancy - mainly due to health care improvements and child survival - and to improvements in education (UNDP 1999; UNDP 2018a).

From Axis of Resistance (2019) chapter 14

# 4. Education and the empowerment of girls and women in Iran

The Government of Iran draws attention to strong advances in female literacy, female university enrolment and female medical specialists.



## 5. Iran and Terrorism

*The New York Times*

### ***Iran Remains on Antiterrorism Blacklist, Continuing Sanctions***

The Financial Action Task Force said Iran would stay on its blacklist, and called on member states to sanction the country.

21 Feb 2020

### **Treat Iran's Revolutionary Guard as a terror group, says Tony Blair**



1 February, 2020

Of the 69 'terrorist' groups on the US 'foreign terrorist organizations' list (2020):

- 43 (62%) are extremist Sunni (Salafi, Deobandi) 'caliphate' groups, almost all sponsored by US client state Saudi Arabia; and
- 12 (17%) are Palestinian (6) and other Resistance groups (6 from Lebanon, Iran, Iraq and Bahrain), all supported by Iran.

<https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/>

**Foreign Terrorist Organizations**

BUREAU OF COUNTERTERRORISM

## 6. Iran = a license to kill? normalising wars of aggression



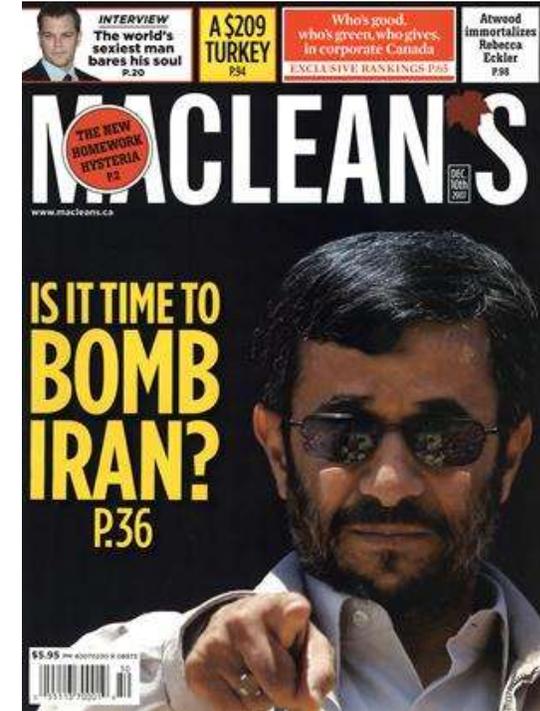
Arrogant western public discussions regularly argue murder and bombing because 'Iran'.

### Who's killing Iranian nuclear scientists?

By Josh Levs, CNN

🕒 Updated 2131 GMT (0531 HKT) January 11, 2012

Israel says struck Iranian targets in Syria  
200 times in last two years



'Exceptionalism': a contagious disease

## Zionist boasts - where apartheid takes human beings

### Israeli minister: We're the 'only country killing Iranians'

Tzachi Hanegbi says Tehran understands Jerusalem 'means business,' claims no need for concern about 'cautious' American response to Gulf crisis

By TOI STAFF

21 July 2019, 12:15 pm | 19



### A New Group Shows That Israel Is the Most Moral Army in the World

by Eliana Rudee



Colonel Richard Kemp, a retired British army officer, famously said that Israel has the most moral army in the world. He based his opinion on the measures taken by the Israel Defense Forces to minimize wartime civilian casualties. But the IDF's unique attention to at-risk civilians isn't limited to warning Gazan citizens about incoming attacks.

## 7. An embedded western state and corporate media

In an unprovoked act, President Trump orders the assassination of the top national heroes of Iraq and Iran, Generals Abu Mahdi Muhandis and Qassem Soleimani. Iran makes a disciplined retaliation against US air base in Iraq. Pentagon responds with misinformation.



The USA then repeatedly misleads the public on the impact of the retaliation. From "all well" (8 Jan) to "109 brain injuries" (11 Feb). Iran missile strike on US airbase in Iraq

**Pentagon confirms 109 US troops diagnosed with brain injuries after Iran missile attack**



## More fake news on Iran - 'fathers to marry daughters'?

### Iran lawmakers pass bill allowing men to marry adopted daughters

Human rights activists say approved bill, making girls vulnerable to the ruling from age 13, 'legalises paedophilia'



Now father can **marry his daughter** in Iran

THEYOUTH.IN

A controversial Bill passed in Iran, it allows men to marry daughters, flak from other nations

In fact:

- The story is from 2013 and was repeated for many years
- It refers to a parliamentary bill to **ban** parents marrying adopted children
- Facing controversy the law imposed **restrictions** on any such marriages

Real story here:

Anger, Confusion Cloud Iran's Adoption-Marriage Bill

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/10/irnp-iran-marriage-adoption.html>

## Fake news on Iran - 'homosexuals executed'?

2011 case, cited by The Guardian  
NB. Par 5: "ISNA [Iranian Students News Agency] said the men were also convicted of robbery and kidnapping" i.e. the 'homosexuality' was rape.

8 Sep 2011

**theguardian**

### Iran executes three men on homosexuality charges

Convicts were sentenced to death 'for acts against the Sharia law and bad deeds'



### Iran executes gay teenager for crime he allegedly committed as a juvenile

Hassan Afshar denied the allegations and claimed the sexual acts were consensual

4 August 2016

In this 2016 case the young man executed was convicted of kidnapping and rape. Homosexuality in Iran is illegal, but the western media lies about gays being executed.

## 8. Minorities in Iran

While the Islamic republic of Iran is a very prominent religious state, it is not sectarian in the manner of Saudi Arabia. Close allies include Palestine (90%+ Sunni Muslim) and Syria (pluralist).

**Photo:** Jewish Iranian woman casting her ballot in parliamentary elections today in Iran.

Iran's Armenians, Jews, Zoroastrians and Assyrians have their own reserved seats in Iran's parliament.

Only Bahais are not accepted, because (a) they try to convert Muslims and (b) their HQ is in Israel, so they are seen as a '5th column'



## 9. A terrible economic war on the West Asian region

While Britain and the EU did not agree with the Trump administration on the JCPOA and economic 'sanctions', nor have they shown the capacity to oppose them.

### Economic war on independent ME countries

Palestine	Blockade by Israel
Lebanon	Partial 'sanctions', worsening
Syria	Comprehensive 'sanctions'
Iraq	Partial 'sanctions', worsening
Iran	Comprehensive 'sanctions', despite JCPOA
Yemen	Blockade by Saudis

### US Economic Sanctions Harm Iranians' Right to Health

Unilateral US sanctions, joined at times by the EU, are mostly acts of warfare, in breach of international law, because:

- They aim at political coercion
- They often aim to harm whole populations
- They act to damage the rights of third parties

## 10. Iran - the strategic threat to Washington's 'New Middle East'

Those most obsessed by the threat of an 'Iranian land bridge' are Israel and some US and other western intel agencies.

Those likely to benefit from security, infrastructure and economic integration are the peoples of the ME region.



This 'menace' is based on the assumption that West Asian people are best kept divided and weak, contrary to the regional integration practised in the rest of the world.