Iran bans women from 77 university degree courses

Thirty-six universities in Iran have announced that a number of their courses will be "single gender" this year.

Iranian human rights activist and Nobel laureate Shirin Ebadi has written a letter of complaint about the ban to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay.

"[I]t is part of the recent policy of the Islamic Republic, which tries to return women to the private domain inside the home as it cannot tolerate their passionate presence in the public arena," Ebadi wrote in the letter, which was also sent to Ahmad Shaheed, the UN's special rapporteur for human rights in Iran.

"The aim is that women will give up their opposition and demands for their own rights," she continued.

Iran's senior clerics support the ban over concerns that increased education for women are causing social side effects such as declining birth and marriage rates, the International Herald Tribune reported.

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Iranian high school students sit for their university entrance examination in Tehran. (Mona Hoobehfekr/AFP/Getty Images)

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Iranian high school students sit for their university entrance examination in Tehran. (Mona Hoobehfekr/AFP/Getty Images)
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“Some fields are not very suitable for women’s nature,” said Abolfazl Hasani, a senior Iranian education official, according to Rooz Online.

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