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The Association of Women of the Islamic Republic

The Association of the Women of the Islamic Republic was founded in 1987 and was the first officially registered party. All of the founders were women, including many relatives of the regime's high-ranking elite. The peak of its activity was in its first decade; afterwards, members joined other groups and parties and continued their activities. It has sixteen main members and nine substitute members. Its Secretary-General since its inception has been Zahra Mostafavi, the daughter of Ayatollah Khomeini. Other prominent founders include Marzie Hadidchi (Dabbagh), the only woman to be a commander in the Corps of the Revolutionary Guards; Fatemeh Karrubi (Mehdi Karroubi's wife); and Zahra Rahnavard, the former president of Al-Zahra University (and Mir Hossein Mousavi's wife). Later, other women joined the Society including Fatemeh Tabataba'i, the daughter-in-law of Ayatollah Khomeini; Fatemeh Rake'i, a university professor, member of the sixth parliament, and later a member of the IIPF; Soheila Jelodarzadeh, a member of the fifth, sixth, and seventh parliaments and an active member of the labor associations called the Worker House and the Islamic Labor Party; and Ashraf Boroujerdi, a deputy of the Ministry of Interior in the Khatami administration.

In the 1997 and 2001 presidential elections, the group supported Mohammad Khatami. In 2005, they supported Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and in 2009 endorsed Mir-Hossein Mousavi. The party's main goal was to improve women's rights in connection with inheritance, family, employment, and divorce, and to defend the presence and activity of women in the public sphere. They have held some international conferences on these issues. A chief strategy was to initiate dialogue with segments of the Ulama who were more open to new ideas and to convince them to issue fatwas in support of women's rights. They have also been active in charity work, especially supporting poor women.