
Kurdish Men Wear Women's Clothes for Gender Equality, 2013

- [included innovative organizational forms/communication forms](#) [1]
- [included participation by more than one social class](#) [2]

Timing

April 15th

2013

to:

May 18th

2013

Location and Goals

Country:

Iran

Location City/State/Province:

Marivan

[View Location on Map](#)

Goals:

To stop the use of forced crossdressing as a form of criminal humiliation

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 038. Marches

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols

Methods in 4th segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols

Methods in 5th segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols

Methods in 6th segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols

Segment Length:

5 days

Classifications

Classification:

Change

Cluster:

Human Rights

Group characterization:

- Male Feminists of Iran

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

Masoud Fathi and Dler Kamangar

Partners:

Marivan Women's Community, Members of Parliament

External allies:

International feminists

Involvement of social elites:

Rosario Dawson

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:

- Kurd Men for Equality
- Marivan Women's Community

Groups in 2nd Segment:

Groups in 3rd Segment:

Groups in 4th Segment:

Groups in 5th Segment:

Groups in 6th Segment:

Segment Length:

5 days

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

Islamic Republic Police and Court System

Repressive Violence:

Police violence against street protesters

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

6 points out of 6 points

Survival:

1 point out of 1 points

Growth:

3 points out of 3 points

Total points:

10 out of 10 points

Notes on outcomes:

The Islamic Republic Police Chief issued an apology to all Kurdish women, and announced that the officers responsible for carrying out the punishment were fired and that the situation would not happen again.

On 15 April 2013, policemen in Marivan, Iran executed a form of criminal punishment that quickly garnered public criticism. A 25 year old man, Tawfik Dabash, had been convicted of “disturbing public order,” and police later paraded him around the city in handcuffs wearing traditional Kurdish women’s clothes (similar to the bridal robe) in order to humiliate him. Later that day, Kurdish women of Marivan, who had been historically oppressed on the basis of both gender and ethnic identity, quickly organized into a 400-person march through the city to condemn the justice system’s choice of punishment and prevent the police from ever carrying it out again.

The Special Guard Unit of the police brutally attacked the protesters, who dressed in traditional wear similar to Dabesh. This was done in order to show their pride in their culture which was being misappropriated. The police arrested many and inflicted head injuries and a broken leg. In response, 17 Iranian Members of Parliament wrote to the Interior and Justice Ministry to condemn this form of punishment as “humiliating to Muslim women.”

As news of the injustices spread, Masound Fathi, a Kurdish Marivan native, looked for an outlet to express his disappointment in the justice system. He decided to have his friend Dler Kamangar photograph him dressed in traditional women’s attire to challenge the assumption that “being a woman is not a tool to humiliate or punish anymore”; a caption he added when he posted the picture to Facebook. On 18 April, the friends created the Facebook page “Kurd Men for Equality.”

Within one week, the Facebook page had gained 9,000 fans. Hundreds of Kurdish men posted pictures of themselves in women’s attire, holding signs with Fathi’s slogan. The demographics of the men spanned all ages and occupations; including men from outside of the country. Some pictures featured women dressed boldly in men’s attire. The page continued to grow rapidly and grabbed the attention of news outlets all

around the world.

One month after Fathi and Kamanger established their Facebook page, on 18 May, the Islamic Republic Police Chief issued an apology to all Kurdish women, and announced that the officers responsible for carrying out the punishment were fired and that the situation would not happen again. Two other criminals had been expected to face a similar punishment in the near future, but their punishments were cancelled at this time.

On Facebook, Fathi shared his feelings on the outcomes of the photo campaign: "This is a victory for all those who protested against the conduct of the police [in parading a male defendant dressed in women's clothes], for women of Mariwan, for all the men who dressed in women's clothes, for every single person anywhere in the world who joined the Being a Woman Is Not a way to Punish and Humiliate Anyone campaign or protested in any way against this action of the police."

Research Notes

Influences:

2009 protest in support of student and civil activist Majid Tavakoli

Sources:

The Kurdistan Tribune. 2013. "Kurdish Men for Gender Equality." The Kurdistan Tribune, 25 April. Retrieved 5 April 2015. <<http://web.archive.org/web/20150405225138/http://kurdistantribune.com/2013/kurdish-men-for-gender-equality/>>.

Facebook. 2015. "?? ???? ????? ????? ? ????? ?? ? ????." Facebook. Retrieved 5 April. <<http://web.archive.org/web/20150405225256/https://www.facebook.com/KurdMenForEquality>>.

The Jerusalem Post. 2015. "Iranian Men Don Dresses in Support of Women." The Jerusalem Post. 25 April. Retrieved 5 April 2015. <<http://web.archive.org/web/20150405225445/http://www.jpost.com/International/In-pictures-Iranian-men-don-drag-in-support-of-women-311076>>.

The Stream. 2013. "Kurd Men for Equality" The Stream. Aljazeera, 22 April. Retrieved 5 April 2015. <<http://web.archive.org/web/20150405225607/http://stream.aljazeera.com/story/201304222317-0022695>>.

Iran Human Rights. 2013. "Public Outcry in Kurdish City After Male Suspect Paraded in Female Clothing." International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, 18 April. Retrieved 5 April 2015. <<http://web.archive.org/web/20150405230035/http://www.iranhumanrights.org/2013/04/kurdishclothing/>>.

Name of researcher, and date dd/mm/yyyy:

Jasmine Rashid 04/04/15

[Back to top](#)

A project of Swarthmore College, including Peace and Conflict Studies, the Peace Collection, and the Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility.

Copyright Swarthmore College.

[Creative Commons License](#)

Global Nonviolent Action Database is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License](#).

Original website design and artwork created by [Daniel Hunter](#).

Permissions beyond the scope of this license may be available at <http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu>.

Registered users can [login](#) to the website.

Source URL (retrieved on 10/31/2020 - 14:52): <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/kurdish-men-wear-womens-clothes-gender-equality-2013>

Links:

[1] <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/category/pcs-tags/included-innovative-organizational-formscommunication-forms>

[2] <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/category/pcs-tags/included-participation-more-one-social-class>