



FREEDOM  
FIGHTERS  
PORTRAITS



# WHO IS SHIRIN EBADI

**A Nobel-winning lawyer,** her defiance sparked a **global human rights movement.**



# IRAN'S FIRST WOMAN JUDGE

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At just **22 years old**, in 1969, Shirin Ebadi **became a judge** in Tehran, entering the courtroom as one of Iran's **very first female judges**.

Just six years later, in **1975**, she was appointed **President of Bench 24** (a judicial division of the Tehran court system).

She was the **first woman** ever **to preside** over a court in Iran.



# STRIPPED OF AUTHORITY, NOT OF VOICE

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A silhouette of a woman in a long-sleeved dress stands in profile against a dark brick wall. Her shadow is cast on the ground to her right.

With the rise of the Islamic Republic after the **1979 Revolution**, **all women judges** were stripped of their robes and **relegated to court clerks**.

Refusing to be silenced, Ebadi took early **retirement** and **reinvented herself as a human rights lawyer**.

# DEFENDER OF THE DEFENSELESS

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Requalifying as **a lawyer in 1992**, she committed fully to **defending political prisoners**, regardless of the cost :

*“Not only did I not make money, 20 lawyers who worked with us did not make money. We had **6,000 political cases** we defended **without charge.**”*



# FROM LAWYER TO MOVEMENT BUILDER

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In **1995** she co-founded the Iran's Society for the **Protection of Children.**

In **2001** she launched the **Defenders of Human Rights Center** with 12 co-founders, attracting 300 lawyers and activists in its first year.

In **2006** she co-founded the **Nobel Women's Initiative** with five fellow laureates to back women's rights worldwide.



# RECOGNITION AND RETALIATION

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At 56, Shirin Ebadi became the **first Iranian and Muslim woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize** for her work on democracy and human rights.

In the years that followed, her law center was shut down and her **Nobel medal was confiscated from her bank safe**. When authorities couldn't find her, **they arrested her sister**.

Her **husband was detained and coerced** into making a televised false confession.



# EXILE & GLOBAL VOICE

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**Forced into exile in 2009** after increased state repression, **Ebadi relocated to London**, where she continued her advocacy.

She became an **outspoken international voice** for Iranian civil society, lecturing at major universities and speaking at forums including **the UN and the EU Parliament**.

From exile, **she documents the regime's tactics** against her and others, and wrote *Iran Awakening* (2006) and *Until We Are Free* (2016).



*“Any person who pursues human rights in Iran  
**must live with fear from birth to death**, but I  
have **learned to overcome my fear.**”*

**Shirin Ebadi**