

Iran Passes A Law Allowing Men To Marry Their 13-Year-Old Adopted Daughters Just As The Country's New President Touts Himself As A Moderate

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<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2442270/Iran-passes-marriage-law-allowing-men-wed-13-year-old-adopted-daughters.html#ixzz2hEiWagyc>

A new law in Iran that allows men to marry their adopted daughters at the age of 13 has caused major concern that the country's new president is not as progressive as originally thought.

President Hassan Rouhani has been hailed as a new moderate voice in the controversial Middle Eastern government but the approval of the new law shows that the extreme beliefs in the intolerant country have not evaporated.

The law was approved by the Iranian members of parliament and maintains that girls can marry with the permission of their father at the age of 13 and young boys at the age of 15.

The timing of the law being passed through the first legal hurdle, as reported by **The Guardian**, comes just days after Rouhani's landmark phone call with President Obama- the first between the two countries leaders in 34 years- and an interview with CNN where he admitted the existence of the Holocaust- something that has long been denied by the religious extremists in Iran.

The law in question pertains to the legal marriage age, but the concern about incest is an additional factor for human rights advocates.

'This bill is legalizing pedophilia,' lawyer Shadi Sadr, who works for the group Justice for Iran, told the paper.

'It's not part of the Iranian culture to marry your adopted child. Obviously

incest exists in Iran more or less as it happens in other countries across the world, but this bill is legalizing pedophilia and is endangering our children and normalizing this crime in our culture.'

Iranian officials argue that the question of fathers marrying their adopted daughters comes out of practicality since adopted girls are forced to wear a hijab around their fathers and mothers must wear it around their adopted sons.

Ms Sadr argues that it is just a legislative ploy to get around the normal bounds of a paternal relationship- with the sexual aspect of a marriage still in full play even though it is being publicly downplayed.

'With this bill, you can be a pedophile and get your bait in the pretext of adopting children,' she said.

There is some question whether the law will get the final stamp of approval by the country's Governing Council, but the prospect has activists outraged. Underage marriage is a real concern in the country as the state news agency reported that there were 42,000 children between the ages of 10 and 14 who were married in 2010.

If it passes through the final legal hurdles to become enforceable, the law will come as a step back following a recent period of apparent modernization in Iran.

After Mahmoud Ahmadinejad stepped down from power in August, Rouhani has made clear efforts to be considered a progressive leader by launching an official Twitter account- and making it visible to the Iranian public who have limited internet access.

The biggest turning point undoubtedly came when President Obama announced that the two had a phone conversation in the days leading up to the federal government shutdown on Monday evening.

Obama said that the conversation 'underscores the deep mistrust between our countries, but also indicates the prospect of moving on that difficult history.'