

UPF Giessen, Germany's International Café event life in Iran and Germany

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Giessen, Germany -- At an International Café event, a young woman spoke about her early life in Iran and her new start in Germany.

At the event on March 23, 2019, Ronak Rajabi said she was born in 1993 in Iran. Because of difficulties presented by the government, she said, she was not able to complete studies in her chosen field of information technology (IT). At the age of 20, she came as a refugee to Germany.

She told us about the 1979 Islamic Revolution and the dramatic consequences it had for the people of Iran, some of which still reverberate today.

Religion and politics are not separated anymore, which can be felt in many aspects of daily life, Ms. Rajabi said. Women can be seen in public only if they are veiled, and a vice squad makes sure that these rules are obeyed.

Many Iranians, especially the youth, have been imprisoned and tortured for protesting the suppression of freedom and denial of human rights, she said.

Ms. Rajabi escaped from this situation in 2013. She has lived since then in Germany and is doing an apprenticeship. Her parents were able to come to Germany three-and-a-half years later.

Her presentation stimulated many questions. One question pertained to the high standard of education, despite adverse conditions. The answer was very revealing: Because the university is the only venue where young men and women can engage with each other freely and become informed and knowledgeable, it is a very desirable place to be. This is why a lot of energy is invested in studying.

The International Café has become an established tradition in the Giessen branch of UPF. Over the years, many topics have been addressed, many countries and their traditions introduced, and many personal experiences shared.

There is always hope that one day all people can live in peace and that human dignity will be universally respected.

UPF, with its many events and connections at an international level, continues to make an important contribution to fulfill this dream of humankind.

(Translated from German by Catriona Valenta)