



IRAN – The Mystical Country

International Café

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(English: Catriona Valenta)

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.

At the event on 23 March, Ronak Rajabi told us about her life in Iran and her new start in Germany. She was born in 1993 in Iran; because of difficulties presented by the government she was not able to complete studies in her chosen field of IT. At the age of 20, she came as a refugee to Germany.

She told us about the 1980 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 any more, resulting in a massive interference in many aspects of daily life. Women can only be seen in public if they are veiled and a vice-squad makes sure that these rules are obeyed.

The suppression of freedom and denial of human rights naturally bring resistance and protest. Many people, especially the youth, have been imprisoned and are subjected to mistreatment and torture.

Ronak 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 young people in Iran and 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.

It is Ronak's wish to make people in Germany and Europe aware of the situation in her country and to draw attention to the suffering of the inhabitants.

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 mankind.