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[Overlooked and Forgotten: Human Rights in Iran](http://www.smudailymustang.com/?p=38476)

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“Human rights is not a left wing or a right wing,” said Mora Namdar in the Future of Democracy and Human Rights in Iran program on Sunday afternoon.

Mora, a graduate from SMU and former president of the Human Rights Club, was the moderator for a panel discussion that took place in the Hughes-Trigg Student Center.

Speakers Dr. Ali Reza Nourizadeh, Aliakbar Mousavi Khoeini and Oscar Guevara Morales spoke passionately to students on how they feel about the situation in Iran.

“The old generation is the issue of Iran,” said Dr. Ali Reza Nourizadeh. “The young generation wants to bring changes but doesn’t want to destroy what they have.”

He started by saying how amazed he is at how fast President Obama dealt with the crisis in Egypt a few weeks ago, but has yet to deal with the brutal government in Iran.

“Iran needs international support, the United States has the power to change this,” Nourizadeh said. “Egypts prisons are nothing compared Iran’s, the [U.S.] President who is known as the champion of human rights is closing his eyes to people being killed on the streets.”

Dr. Nourizadeh explained to students that the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, believes that by torturing and raping prisoners he is doing the “duty of God.” His soldiers read Qur’an verses while beating them and when they are finished, they think they have done their job well, and holy.

“This is a situation where you are dealing with a holy man who believes he is above 75 million other people,” Nourizadeh said. “You are a subject of him and they look at you as an animal. You are only looked at as a human being if you are willing to fight or give up your life for the regime.”

Aliakbar Mousavi Khoeni believes, “human rights should be the priority for the international community.” He is involved in communication and technology and is working on the freedom of internet in Iran.

“Thirty to 40 percent of Iranians do not have access to the correct information; the government does not ever have the wish of the people,” Khoeni said. “Thousands of journalists to woman rights activists are in prison.”

He told students his goal is to have a United Nations representative visit Iran in the next few weeks to find out what is really going on behind the prison cells. It is his hope that the mistreatment will be reported to the International Code Council.

The third speaker, Oscar Guevara Morales, believes that change is going to have to start in the younger generation.

“[They] have more access to information, they don’t conform to the mainstream media and they always seem to go the extra mile to find out more,” Morales said.

Through social media, he says people are finding ways to break sensorship in repressive societies and are able to organize revolts in no time.

“Citizen journalism is something that has recently been taking place,” Morales said. “Young people are taking courageous roles to produce what is really going on by risking their lives.”

Morales told students that everyone in Iran is so brainwashed and misinformed. He believes that it is going to take a catalyst, one single huge event or story that is painstaking, to actually make people move.

“It is hard for people to protest because they are driven by fear,” Morales said. “I want to see people taking this pro-regime and commend it, break it down and counter everything that they produce.”

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