

IRAN

LIFTING THE VEIL

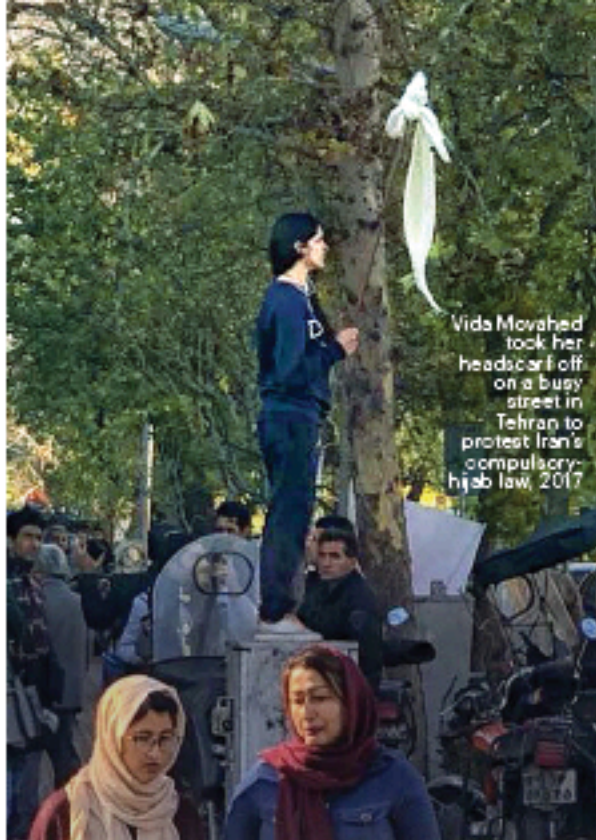
In her new memoir, the leader of the hijab protest movement encourages women to go head-to-head with the morality police



Masih Alinejad was 2 years old in 1979 when wearing a headscarf became law in Iran. Since then, the country's so-called morality police have been beating, fining, and jailing women for not only being unveiled, but also "bad hijab": wearing headscarves too loosely, or too far back, or otherwise failing to fully conceal hair. The law extends

beyond houses of worship, schools, and workplaces to include sidewalks and even private cars. "Growing up in Iran, a really familiar expression anytime I wanted to do something was, 'First cover your hair,'" says Alinejad, now 41. She recounts such experiences in her memoir, *The Wind in My Hair: My Fight for Freedom in Modern Iran* (Little, Brown and Company), out this month, which describes her journey from schoolgirl in a small village to igniter of the compulsory-hijab protest movement.

Alinejad, who faces arrest in Iran for her activism and now lives in Brooklyn, didn't plan to start a hair revolution. In 2014, she posted photos of herself on Facebook without a headscarf, in both London—where she was living at the time—and in Iran, and asked if other women back home ever slipped off their hijabs in public. "I was bombarded by pictures of unveiled women," Alinejad says. "I realized that with social media, the government can't control us—they can't censor us." Emboldened, she created the My Stealthy Freedom Facebook page, encouraging Iranian women to upload secret moments of themselves enjoying the wind in their hair. "I have nothing against the hijab," says Alinejad, whose mother and sister in Iran both



Vida Movahed took her headscarf off on a busy street in Tehran to protest Iran's compulsory-hijab law, 2017

wear one. "I'm against compulsion. I'm fighting for freedom of choice."

When the campaign's Facebook followers topped 1 million last year, Alinejad decided to take the movement to the streets. She started #WhiteWednesdays, urging women in Iran to wear white hijabs (which symbolize peace) or remove their hijabs completely—in public, every Wednesday. The movement gained steam in December, when 31-year-old Vida Movahed was detained for a month for waving a white headscarf on a stick on Enghelab (which means "revolution") Street in Tehran. Images of her bold act of defiance went viral, and within a month, at least 28 more women were arrested. While the government has no plans to change the law, for Alinejad, a major battle has already been won. "We have been ignored and censored for four decades," she says. "Now, even the state-run media inside Iran is talking about us. We cannot be ignored anymore." —*Jayme Moyer*

Genius!

ONE WOMAN,
ONE BRILLIANT IDEA



SONYA PASSI
MAKING FREEDOM
FROM DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE
AFFORDABLE

HER INSPIRATION

In 2012, during her second year of law school, Sonya Passi learned the top reason domestic-violence survivors stay in abusive situations is because they can't afford to leave. "I went up to my professor and said, 'We've got to do something!'" Passi recalls. With that, the Family Violence Appellate Project, which provides free appellate legal services, was born.

HER BIG IDEA

Passi didn't stop there. In 2016, the Los Angeles-based activist founded a second nonprofit called FreeFrom, which put survivors on a path to long-term financial stability by helping them build credit, get compensation for harm they have suffered, and launch small businesses. "To be able to make a wage they can live off can make all the difference between staying safe or going back," says Passi, 30.

THE RESULTS

She's been "blown away" by the response: Within 48 hours of launching FreeFrom, 25,000 women utilized its tools for obtaining compensation. In April, the nonprofit opened an online store (freefrom.org) selling goods made by survivors, including bath products, essential oils, candles, and cards. So far, 24 survivors have started businesses with FreeFrom's support; none have returned to their abusers. —*Savannah Scott*

U.S.

Ahead of the Game

Three women in tech created "Persist" to put men in our shoes

"You are poised and assertive with your boss while negotiating a salary increase. He calls you 'too emotional.'" "While on maternity leave, Eric takes credit for your work." "You overhear a male colleague joking that your 'sales are flat' in reference to your chest size." Those are scenarios posed by a card game made by three Amazon coworkers, called Persist, that gets players to think about the challenges women face in a lighthearted way.

Players draw cards with charades, trivia, or calls for sharing a story—from hiding a pregnancy at work to a time they've ended a friendship—to spur discussion between men and women. "I believe in its ability to make the awkward and taboo accessible," says MaryBeth Pecha, 32, who created the game along with Kathryn Ekloff, 30, and Amber Hanson, 31. The women raised \$12,610 on Kickstarter to fund Persist and started selling it last year. Next,

they may also make an office edition to prompt dialogue among coworkers. "By having something approachable and fun, people might be more open to these discussions in a workplace," Hanson says. "It's a great conversation starter, but it's also a possible medium for change." —*Claire Trageser*

