Home Office
BUILDING A SAFE, JUST AND TOLERANT SOCIETY

OCTOBER 2005

IRAN

Home Office Science and Research Group

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION SERVICE

Country of Origin Information Reports (COI Reports) are produced by the Science & Research Group of the Home Office to provide caseworkers and others involved in processing asylum applications with accurate, balanced and up-to-date information about conditions in asylum seekers' countries of origin.

They contain general background information about the issues most commonly raised in asylum/human rights claims made in the UK.

The reports are compiled from material produced by a wide range of recognised external information sources. They are not intended to be a detailed or comprehensive survey, nor do they contain Home Office opinion or policy.

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 1 July 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

Contents

		Paragraphs
1.	SCOPE OF DOCUMENT	1.01
	Advisory Panel on Country Information	1.11
2.	GEOGRAPHY	2.01
3.	ECONOMY	3.01
	Sanctions	3.11
4.	HISTORY	4.01
	Pre 1979	4.02
	1979 to 1999	4.04
	2000 to date	4.12
	Student unrest	4.19
	Parliamentary Elections February 2004	4.26
	Presidential Elections June 2005	4.30
5.	STATE STRUCTURES	5.01
	The Constitution	**5.01**
	Citizenship and nationality	5.02
	Political system	**5.05**
	Political parties	**5.08**
	Judiciary	5.13
	Juveniles in the justice system	5.33
	Court documentation	5.39
	Legal rights and detention	**5.41**
	Death penalty	5.48
	Stoning	5.52
	Internal security	**5.54**
	Composition of the security forces and their division of labour	5.60
	Prisons and prison conditions	**5.61**
	Military service	**5.69**
	Medical services	**5.72**
	Drugs	5.73
	Drug addiction	5.74
	Psychiatric treatment	5.77
	HIV/AIDS	5.80
	People with disabilities	5.84
	Educational system	**5.85**
6.	HUMAN RIGHTS	6.01
6. A	HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES	6.01
	General	6.01
	Freedom of speech and the media	**6.15**
	Press law	6.30
	Internet and satellite	6.43
	Freedom of religion	**6.54**
	Legal framework	6.62
	Sunni Muslims	6.64
	Christians	6.66
	Apostasy/conversions	6.69
	Jews	6.74
	Zoroastrians	6.77
	Sabeans (Mandeans)	6.79
	Baha'is	6.80
	Ahl-e Haq (Yaresan)	6.95
	Freedom of assembly and association	**6.96**

Employment rights **6.105**
People trafficking **6.109**
Freedom of movement **6.110**
Refugees in Iran **6.121**
6. B HUMAN RIGHTS SPECIFIC GROUPS **6.129**
Ethnic minority groups **6.129**
Kurds 6.130
Arabs 6.137
Baluchis 6.147
Azeris 6.151
Women **6.155**
Honour killings 6.166
The Hijab 6.175
Marriage 6.178
Mehriyeh 6.180
Divorce 6.182
Abortion 6.189
Children **6.192**
Child care arrangements 6.195
Homosexuals/transsexuals **6.199**
Political dissent **6.212**
Mojahedin-e Khalq MEK/MKO or PMOI (Peoples Mojahedin of Iran) 6.218
Rastakhiz Party and Monarchists 6.224
Savak 6.227
Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) 6.228
Komala 6.233
6. C HUMAN RIGHTS OTHER ISSUES **6.235**
Adultery **6.235**
Illegal drugs situation **6.242**
Exiles/dissidents outside Iran **6.249**

ANNEXES

Annex A – Chronology of events
Annex B – Political organisations
Annex C – Prominent people
Annex D – List of source material

Return to Contents

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

1. Scope of document

1.01 This Country of Origin Information Report (COI Report) has been produced by Research Development and Statistics (RDS), Home Office, for use by officials involved in the asylum/human rights determination process. The Report provides general background information about the issues most commonly raised in asylum/human rights claims made in the United Kingdom. It includes information available up to 31 August 2005.

1.02 The Report is compiled wholly from material produced by a wide range of recognised external information sources and does not contain any Home Office opinion or policy. All information in the Report is attributed, throughout the text, to the original source material, which is made available to those working in the asylum/human rights determination process.

1.03 The Report aims to provide a brief summary of the source material identified, focusing on the main issues raised in asylum and human rights applications. It is not intended to be a detailed or comprehensive survey. For a more detailed account, the relevant source documents should be examined directly.

1.04 The structure and format of the COI Report reflects the way it is used by Home Office caseworkers and appeals presenting officers, who require quick electronic access to information on specific issues and use the contents page to go directly to the subject required. Key issues are usually covered in some depth within a dedicated section, but may also be referred to briefly in several other sections. Some repetition is therefore inherent in the structure of the Report.

1.05 The information included in this COI Report is limited to that which can be identified from source documents. While every effort is made to cover all relevant aspects of a particular topic, it is not always possible to obtain the information concerned. For this reason, it is important to note that information included in the Reports should not be taken to imply anything beyond what is actually stated. For example, if it is stated that a particular law has been passed, this should not be taken to imply that it has been effectively implemented unless stated.

1.06 As noted above, the Report is a collation of material produced by a number of reliable information sources. In compiling the Report, no attempt has been made to resolve discrepancies between information provided in different source documents. For example, different source documents often contain different versions of names and spellings of individuals, places and political parties etc. COI Reports do not aim to bring consistency of spelling, but to reflect faithfully the spellings used in the original source documents. Similarly, figures given in different source documents sometimes vary and these are simply quoted as per the original text. The term 'sic' has been used in this document only to denote incorrect spellings or typographical errors in quoted text; its use is not intended to imply any comment on the content of the material.

1.07 The Report is based substantially upon source documents issued during the previous two years. However, some older source documents may have been included because they contain relevant information not available in more recent

1 Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

documents. All sources contain information considered relevant at the time this Report was issued.

1.08 This COI Report and the accompanying source material are public documents. All COI Reports are published on the RDS section of the Home Office website and the great majority of the source material for the Report is readily available in the public domain. Where the source documents identified in the Report are available in electronic form, the relevant web link has been included, together with the date that the link was accessed. Copies of less accessible source documents, such as those provided by government offices or subscription services, are available from the Home Office upon request.

1.09 COI Reports are published every six months on the top 20 asylum producing countries and on those countries for which there is deemed to be a specific operational need. Inevitably, information contained in COI Reports is sometimes overtaken by events that occur between publication dates. Home Office officials are informed of any significant changes in country conditions by means of Country of Origin Information Bulletins, which are also published on the RDS website. They also have constant access to an information request service for specific enquiries.

1.10 In producing this COI Report, the Home Office has sought to provide an accurate, balanced summary of the available source material. Any comments regarding this Report or suggestions for additional source material are very welcome and should be submitted to the Home Office as below.

Country of Origin Information Service
Home Office
Apollo House
36 Wellesley Road
Croydon
CR9 3RR
United Kingdom

Email: *cois@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk*
Website: *http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country_reports .html*

ADVISORY PANEL ON COUNTRY INFORMATION

1.11 The independent Advisory Panel on Country Information was established under the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 to make recommendations to the Home Secretary about the content of the Home Office's country of origin information material. The Advisory Panel welcomes all feedback on the Home Office's COI Reports and other country of origin information material. Information about the Panel's work can be found on its website at *www.apci.org.uk*.

1.12 It is not the function of the Advisory Panel to endorse any Home Office material or procedures. In the course of its work, the Advisory Panel directly reviews the content of selected individual Home Office COI Reports, but neither the fact that such a review has been undertaken, nor any comments made, should be taken to imply endorsement of the material. Some of the material examined by the Panel relates to countries designated or proposed for designation for the Non-Suspensive Appeals (NSA) list. In such cases, the Panel's work should not be

taken to imply any endorsement of the decision or proposal to designate a particular country for NSA, nor of the NSA process itself.

Advisory Panel on Country Information
PO Box 1539
Croydon
CR9 3WR
United Kingdom

Email: *apci@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk*
Website: *www.apci.org.uk*

Return to Contents

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

2. Geography

2.01 According to the Europa Regional Survey of the World 2005 the Jomhoori e Islami e Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran, Persia until 1935) lies in western Asia, and is bounded on the north by the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, by Turkey and Iraq to the west, by the Persian (Arabian) Gulf and the Gulf of Oman to the south, and by Pakistan and Afghanistan to the east. **[1a] (p375)** It has an area of 1.6 million square km. (636,294 sq.mi.) **[4j] (p1)** The climate is one of extremes. It is a land of desert and mountain and is in the main semi-arid with; by contrast, a sub tropical climate in the north and northwest along parts of the Caspian coast. **[1a] (p375)** This is a result of the considerable rainfall that falls in these areas. The Caspian coast has a hot and humid climate and this region is by far the most densely populated. **[1a] (p375)** The capital city is Tehran, with an estimated population of 12 to 15 million. **[26d]** The towns of Mashad, Esfahan, Tabriz and Shiraz each have populations of 1 to 2 million; **[1a] (p439)** the total population of Iran is an estimated 69 million (2005 estimate). **[4j] (p1)**

2.02 According to the US State Department's Background Note on Iran (2005) the principal language is Farsi Persian and Persian dialects spoken by about fifty-eight per cent of the population. Twenty-six per cent of the population are Azeri Turkic-speaking, Kurdish nine per cent, Luri two per cent, Balochi one per cent, Arabic one per cent, Turkish one per cent and others two per cent. **[4j] (p1)** The national flag comprises three unequal horizontal stripes of green, white and red, with the emblem of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the stylised word Allah centrally positioned in red and the inscription "God is Great" on the red and green stripes. **[1b] (p2153)**

For further information on geography, refer to Europa Yearbook, source [1a] [1b]

Return to Contents

3. Economy

3.01 In March 1989, Khomeini approved President Rafsanjani's first Five Year Plan for economic development. **[4j] (p4)** According to the Economist Country Briefing 2003, since then Iran's five-year economic plans have emphasised a gradual move towards a market-orientated economy and the development of the private sector. The third five-year plan, which came into force in March 2000, commits the Government to an ambitious programme of liberalisation, diversification and privatisation and the creation of 3.8m new jobs by 2005. The resolution of Iran's external debt problems have eased the policymaking environment, and facilitated the unification of the exchange rate at the start of 2002, but significant political obstacles to rapid reform remain. **[24a]** However, a lack of consensus on the privatisation drive has resulted in delay. **[5ad]** On 16 August 2004 the Iranian legislature suspended for one year aspects of the Fourth Five Year Plan that deals with privatisation. **[42d]**

3.02 Figures quoted in the US State Department country report for 2004, released in February 2005, stated that "The official unemployment rate was approximately 11 percent, although other estimates were higher. Estimated inflation was 15 per cent with economic growth at 6.5 percent during the year." **[4p] (p1)** The CIA Fact Book for 2005, published in August 2005 gives the unemployment rate as 11.2 per cent. **[44]** According to an economist quoted in a BBC News report of 29 May 2003, "The brain drain is a problem for the country because we are losing highly educated people and these people... could be our entrepreneurs who create jobs for the next generation." **[21bv]** According to an article in the *Tehran Times* on 12 July 2004, Iran suffers from a considerable brain-drain. It is estimated that up to 200,000 Iranians migrate to other country per annum. **[71a]**

3.03 According to the USSD report 2004:

"Large parastatal charitable foundations ("bonyads"), with strong connections to the clerical regime controlled as much as a third of the country's economy and exercised considerable influence. The Government heavily subsidized basic foodstuffs and energy costs. Government mismanagement and corruption negatively affected economic performance." **[4p] (p1)**

and according to an article in the Asia Times dated 28 May 2004:

"Prior to taking on a higher political profile, the Revolutionary Guard established itself as an economic force in the country, launching a vast array of financial and economic enterprises. In large part, the businesses were seen as needed to finance Revolutionary Guard security programs. At the same time, the ventures were intended to build the Guard's independence." **[46b]**

3.04 According to a BBC report of 6 February 2002, the Iranian Minister of Industry and Mines is on record as saying that, (in his opinion), membership of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) is inevitable **[21w]** and that a key factor in Iran's economic prospects is whether it will be able to gain full re-admittance to the international trading community. **[21w]** Membership will depend in large part upon the outcome of the political contest in Tehran and the success of Iran's policy of détente towards the outside world. **[1a] (p416) [5ax]**

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

3.05 According to a Reuter's report of 28 May 2002, the Secretary General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development said that UNCTAD supports Tehran's will to join the WTO but the United States administration was opposed to Iran gaining membership. It was expected that non-members would suffer grave economic losses in future years as a result of the majority of the international community following the same trade policies. **[5ac]**

3.06 It was reported by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFERL) on 28 June 2005 that:

"The United States recently dropped its objections to Iran's accession negotiations with the World Trade Organization (WTO), and a nine-year-old membership application was approved by WTO members on 26 May. Iran's ambassador in Geneva, Mohammad Reza Alborzi, may now attend WTO meetings, representing Iran pursuant to observer status that could last for years before full membership is granted." **[42e] (p1)**

3.07 In a press release of June 23, 2004, the IMF said:

"The mission noted that in 2003-04 real GDP growth was high and broad based, unemployment declined, gross international reserves increased to the equivalent of more than six months of imports of goods and services, but the external current surplus narrowed compared to the previous year. Inflation remained at about 15 percent. The prospects for 2004-05 also look favorable, aided by higher oil revenue and the continued strong momentum of private sector investment. Growth is expected to remain at about six and one half percent, with most sectors showing relatively strong performance." **[45b]**

3.08 In its annual review of the Iranian economy, published on 27 September 2004, the IMF reported that:

"During the first four years of the Third Five-Year Development Plan (TFYDP) (2000/01–2003/04), real GDP grew by 5.6 percent on average, the external current account was in surplus, external debt was reduced to a very low level, international reserves increased, and the unemployment rate declined. This performance has taken place against the background of increased openness of the economy to international trade and investment and economic reforms, but also sustained high oil prices and expansionary fiscal and monetary policies." **[45c] (p1)**

and continued:

"Notwithstanding these achievements, the Iranian economy faces the challenge of maintaining high growth and employment creation in a stable macroeconomic environment. The expansionary fiscal and monetary policies of recent years have maintained inflation at double-digit rates and led to a substantial reduction in the external current account surplus at a time when oil prices were high. Moreover, there is a pressing need to step up implementation of structural reforms to enhance economic efficiency and foster private sector development and growth. These include financial sector reform, privatization, further trade liberalization, and improvement of the business climate. Real GDP grew by 6.7 percent in 2003/04 (fiscal year ending on March 20), with strong contribution from both the oil and non-oil sectors. The unemployment rate declined to 11.2 percent from 14.1 percent in 2000/01." **[45c] (p1)**

3.09 According to the World Bank, as of July 2005, it had financed 48 operations in the country for a total original commitment of US$3,413 million. **[36a]**

3.10 According to Europa 2005:

"…the intense international focus on Iran's nuclear programme and US suspicion of Iran's alleged role in sponsoring terrorism have combined to induce several problems, notably when plans to develop the Azadegan oilfield stalled following US pressure on the Japanese consortium to withdraw from the project."

Further:

"The renewed political ascendancy of the 'conservatives' has yet to make an impact on Iran's economic fortunes, but the Fourth Five Year Development Plan, which was being debated at the time of the elections placed great emphasis on two areas of reform – privatisation and foreign investment – which were unlikely to appeal to the 'conservative' mindset distrustful of foreign involvement in Iran and private entrepeneurs." **[1a] (p439)**

Return to Contents

SANCTIONS

3.11 According to the US Economic Information Administration in March 2005:

"In March 2004, President Bush extended sanctions originally imposed in 1995 by President Clinton for another year, citing the "unusual and extraordinary threat" to U.S. national security posed by Iran. The 1995 executive orders prohibit U.S. companies and their foreign subsidiaries from conducting business with Iran, while banning any "contract for the financing of the development of petroleum resources located in Iran." In addition, the U.S. Iran-Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA) of 1996 (renewed for 5 more years in July 2001) imposes mandatory and discretionary sanctions on non-U.S. companies investing more than $20 million annually in the Iranian oil and natural gas sectors." **[82] (p2)**

On 10 March 2005, according to The White House Office of the Press Secretary, sanctions were extended for another year. **[83]**

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

4. History

4.01 Iran was one of the first countries to be occupied by the early Islamic armies that erupted from Arabia in the seventh century. Iran [formerly Persia] had been one of the greatest empires of the ancient world and despite frequently being overrun by other powers, always maintained its own cultural and political identity. Within the Islamic world it retained its own language and adherence to the Shi'ite interpretation of Islam. **[1a] (p363) [4 j] (p2)**

PRE 1979

4.02 Modern Iranian history can be said to have begun in 1907 when a constitution was introduced which limited the royal absolutism exercised by past ruling dynasties. In 1921 Reza Khan, an army officer, seized control of the government, ruling as Reza Shah Palavi from 1925 onwards. **[4j] (p2)** In 1941 he was forced to abdicate and his son became Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, ruling until 1979. **[4j] (p2)**

4.03 During late 1977 and 1978 public opposition to the regime increased dramatically, partly in response to the worsening economic situation, resulting from a slowdown in the pace of growth and particularly as a result of the repressive nature of the Shah's rule. **[4j] (p3)** By late 1978 anti-government demonstrations and strikes were widespread, staged both by left wing and liberal opponents of the Shah, and Islamic activists. "By the time of the Shah´s departure opposition from the left and the more 'liberal' National Front had been overshadowed by the success of the opposition movement surrounding the exiled fundamentalist leader Ayatollah Khomeini." **[1a] (p367)**

1979 TO 1999

4.04 The Shah was forced to leave Iran in January 1979, and Khomeini arrived in Tehran on 1 February 1979. A 15-member Revolutionary Council was formed to govern the country, in co-operation with a provisional government, and on 1 April 1979 Iran was declared as an Islamic republic. Supreme authority was vested in the Veli-ye Faqih (literarily rule by an "Islamic legal expert"), a religious leader, initially Khomeini. (The Supreme Leader is appointed by the Assembly of Experts, a body of Shi'ite clerics, themselves elected by the electorate.) In October 1981, Hojatoleslam Ali Khamenei was voted President and Mir Hussein Moussavi was appointed Prime Minister. **[1a] (p368)**

4.05 In September 1980 Iraq invaded Iran. Iranian forces displayed strong resistance and the war developed into a long conflict of attrition until a cease-fire came into effect in August 1988. Peace negotiations became deadlocked in disputes regarding the sovereignty of the Shatt al-Arab Arab (Persian – Arvand rud) waterway, the exchange of prisoners of war, and the withdrawal of armed forces to within international boundaries. The process received a boost when Saddam Hussein, President of Iraq sought formal peace with Iran in the 1990s in the run up to the Gulf War. **[1a] (p374)**

4.06 Ayatollah Khomeini died on 3 June 1989 and was replaced as Vali-ye by President Ali Khamenei who was quickly elevated to the clerical rank of Ayatollah in order to satisfy the constitutional demands of the position. Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani easily won the presidential election in July 1989; his only

opponent was widely regarded as a 'token' candidate. At the same time, voters in a referendum supported proposed amendments to the Constitution, the most important of which was the abolition of the post of Prime Minister, and a consequent increase in power for the President. **[1a] (p373)**

In 1993 the UNCHR adopted a resolution condemning continuing human rights violations in Iran and further extended the Special Rapporteur's mandate. The Special Rapporteur's mandate has in fact been in place and subject to renewal, periodically since the early 1980s. (The first and only time that a resolution failed to be adopted was in 2002.) On Islamic Republic Day, 1 April, an amnesty was decreed; the prison terms of 1,682 individuals convicted in public, military and Islamic Revolutionary courts were reduced. **[2a]**

4.07 According to the US Library of Congress Federal Research Division (LOC/FRD) report of September 2004:

"During the presidency of Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (1989–97), reformers controlled a majority of seats in parliament until 1992 and supported Rafsanjani's policies for economic reform and the normalization of relations with neighboring countries. The conservatives won a majority of seats in both the 1992 and 1996 parliamentary elections and subsequently used their position in the legislature to weaken or stop outright many reforms proposed by the Rafsanjani government and later by the administration of Rafsanjani's successor, Mohammad Khatami, who was elected in 1997 and re-elected in 2001 to a four-year term." **[79a] (p3)**

President Rafsanjani stood down in 1997, in conformity with the Constitution that provides for the Presidency to be held by an individual for two consecutive terms only. **[1a] (p378)** In March 1997 he was appointed Chairman of a committee, the Expediency Council, which arbitrates between the Majlis and the Council of Guardians, the upper house of the legislative process, for a five-year term and thus maintaining his continuing influential role in political life. **[1a] (p378)**

4.08 In August 1997, President Seyed Mohammad Khatami, regarded as a "liberal" and supported by the Servants of Iran's Construction amongst others, was inaugurated; following a landslide victory in elections held on May 23, the 2nd of Khordad in the Iranian calendar. **[1a] (p378)** During the campaign, a lively debate on political, economic and social issues occurred. There was considerable government intervention and censorship, with candidates disqualified and the intimidation of opposition campaigners by the encouragement of vigilante groups. Ayatollah Khamenei, in a break with precedent, backed one candidate, Majlis Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri. Nonetheless, Khatami's election victory, with nearly 70 per cent of the vote, was not disputed and the regime apparently did not engage in election fraud. Khatami's election appeared to demonstrate a strong desire among his supporters, primarily women, youth and the middle class, for greater social and cultural freedom and increased economic opportunity. **[4b] (p2)** There were signs that Khatami, with popular support, intended to move Iran towards greater openness and cultural rapprochement with the West. Khatami stated his intention to loosen constraints on freedom of expression, denounced terrorism and expressed regret for hostage taking at the US Embassy in Tehran. **[7]** Ayatollah Khamenei, meanwhile, continued to denounce the West's military and cultural ambitions, particularly those of the USA and Israel. The divergent messages between the two men were

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

interpreted by Western commentators as indicative of the conflict between Iran's "moderate" and "conservative" factions. **[1a] (p384)**

4.09 The result of the Presidential election appeared to revive long-standing rivalries among members of the senior clergy in Iran, with Ayatollah Montazeri openly opposing Ayatollah Khamenei's authority and demanding that Khatami be permitted to govern without interference. Violent demonstrations in Qom and Tehran followed, until Khamenei urged an end to the protests; he nonetheless demanded that Montazeri be tried for treason and that all others who questioned his authority be prosecuted in accordance with the law. Montazeri's supporters protested in subsequent months that Montazeri was under house arrest. Khamenei expressed unprecedented vociferous criticism of Montazeri in May 1998. **[1a] (p378)** Montazeri was finally freed from house arrest on January 30 2003 amid concern over his deteriorating health. **[21au]**

4.10 President Khatami's attempts to introduce reform continued to meet resistance. The issue of press censorship increasingly became a focus of rivalry between conservatives and reformists. **[1a] (p380)** These tensions erupted into violence. On 8 July 1999, around 500 moderate students rallied outside Tehran University dormitory complex, to protest peacefully at the closure of the newspaper *Salam* and calling for the expansion of press freedoms. The rally ended in clashes with hard-line vigilantes of the Ansar-e Hezbollah group. Police, who reportedly stood by during the clashes, raided the dormitories with excessive force. There were reports that students were thrown from windows. Student leaders were arrested in the early hours of the following day. The authorities later stated that one student had been killed, but students claimed that there had been eight deaths **[1a] (p380) [5p] [5r]** The demonstrations and sit-ins continued for six days and spread to other major cities. On 11 July, at least 10,000 students took part in a street protest in Tehran, and were attacked by Ansar-e Hezbollah members armed with clubs. Police in the city centre fired tear gas and shots into the air to disperse the crowd. 1,400 to 1,500 students were detained in the wake of the student protests. **[4g] (p6) [18a]** The protests were followed by a rally, in support of the Islamic republic, officially organised with the help of Basij.

4.11 The Supreme Council for National Security, led by Khatami, announced that two senior police officials had been dismissed and that the chief of police had been reprimanded. Following an appearance before a closed session of the Majlis in August 1999, it was reported that the chief of police had informed the legislature that almost 100 police officers had been arrested for their role in the campus raid. At the end of August it was announced that Tehran's head of police had been dismissed. In mid-September it was reported that four alleged leaders of the July riots had been sentenced to death; 45 defendants had been sentenced to terms of imprisonment and fined, and a further 20 had been acquitted. **[1b] (p2105)**

Return to Contents

2000 TO DATE

4.12 According to the LOC/FRD report of September 2004:

"Reformers won a majority of seats in the 2000 parliamentary elections and then enacted several notable pieces of legislation, such as a law for the election

of local councils in cities, towns, and villages. Having lost control of the parliament, conservatives tried to use their influence in the judiciary and bureaucracy to impede reforms they perceived as threatening their economic and/or political positions." **[79a] (p3)**

4.13 In August 2000, two leading reform intellectuals, Mohsen Kadivar and Abdul Karim Soroush were prevented by semi-official club and knife-wielding vigilantes from addressing a student convention in Khorramabad. Subsequent clashes between students and vigilantes resulted in the death of a police officer and injuries. The authorities arrested 150 people. **[4h]**

4.14 In November 2000, investigative journalist Akbar Ganji went on trial for statements he allegedly made during an April conference in Berlin on Iranian politics. He was arrested in April upon his return to Iran and held over the next six months with long periods in solitary confinement. Ganji told the court that he was beaten and tortured in prison. Ganji previously had written articles implicating former President Rafsanjani in a series of murders of dissidents and intellectuals apparently carried out by security forces. **[4h]**

4.15 Iran strongly condemned the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, led by a statement by Khamenei on 17 September, **[21p] [21q]** and reiterated during the visit of the UK Foreign Secretary on 25 September. **[21r]** Iran however, condemned the bombing of Afghanistan by the United States on 8 October 2001.

4.16 Early in 2002 relations deteriorated rapidly with the USA when the President, in his State of the Union address, referred to Iran as forming, together with Iraq and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, an "axis of evil", explicitly accusing Iran of aggressively pursuing the development of weapons of mass destruction and of "exporting terror." **[1b] (p2109)** The statement was denounced, in the strongest terms, by both "moderates" and "conservatives" in the Iranian leadership. **[1b] (p2109)**

4.17 In September 2002, the UK named its new ambassador to Iran, after the Iranians refused to accept the UK's previous nomination. **[1b] (p2110) [21y]** The newly nominated ambassador was expected to go to Tehran before the end of 2002 and take up his post in January 2003. **[21y]** In fact took up his post on 1 December 2002. **[21ai]**

4.18 In September 2002, President Khatami presented new bills to parliament designed to override obstacles to his reform agenda. One new bill sought to increase the president's power to issue warnings when state institutions exceeded their constitutional functions. President Khatami had issued numerous such warnings over the years to protest against the arbitrary closures of newspapers or the jailing of his supporters, but his warnings had been ignored. The bill was accompanied by another designed to curb the powers of the Guardians Council to veto electoral candidates. By the end of the year, the bills had passed through Parliament easily, but their endorsement by the Guardians Council was unlikely, **[8h] (p1)** and on 1 April 2003 the electoral bill was sent back to the Majlis for further amendment. **[21ax]** By 9 June 2003 the twin bills had been referred to the Guardian Council and had been rejected yet again. **[46]** President Khatami stated that he would not be referring the bills to the Expediency Council, the next part of the political process but recognised as being circuitous in this case, and expressed the hope that the dispute between

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

the Majlis and the Guardian Council be resolved before the next Majlis elections (due in 2004). **[21bo]**

Return to Contents

STUDENT UNREST

4.19 According to a Documentation, Information and Research Branch, Immigration and Refugee Board, Canada (DIRB) report of July 2000, it had been reported that some persons, including non-students were, at that time, still in danger of arrest because of their involvement in the student demonstrations of July 1999 and that police used published photographs and film to identify participants in these demonstrations. It was further stated that it was possible that persons involved with the July 1999 demonstrations could still be arrested however, it was also stated that, if they were arrested, they would likely be charged with something else, such as a drug offence, rather than on the grounds of their involvement in the July 1999 demonstrations. **[2v]**

4.20 A Documentation, Information and Research Branch, Immigration and Refugee Board, Canada (DIRB) report of August 2001 stated that:

"On 12 December 2000, according to a report by the Iranian Student's News Agency (ISNA), carried by the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), five people, including two students, held in connection with the events of July 1999 in Tabriz, were released (IRNA 14 December 2000). The article stated that this was the last group of students held in connection with the events of July 1999 in Tabriz and that they were given amnesty by the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Seyyed Ali Khamene'i." **[2w]**

This has been contradicted, however, in a written intervention from the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) to the 61st Session of UNCHR on 11 February 2005 where is stated that:

"Several tens of students are still in prison in connection with the protests of 1999; this is notably the case of Ahmad Batebi, Manoutchehr Mohammadi, Mehrdad Lohrasbi, Akbar Mohammadi, Farzad Hamidi, and Peyman Piran. Heshmattolah Tabarzadi, responsible of a students' association, in jail since more than one year, was condemned to 14 years in prison in January 2005. Bina Darab-Zand, another student, was condemned in October 2004 to three years and a half in prison. After they protested against their conditions of detention, a number of them were transferred to the Karaj prison, 40 km from Tehran." **[56] (p1)**

4.21 According to the June 2004 Human Rights Watch Report , "Like the Dead in Their Coffins":

"The current pressure for democratic reform in Iran changed dramatically after the student protests at Tehran University in 1999, protests that marked the beginning of the contemporary student movement. The protests began over the closure of the well known newspaper *Salam*. Black-clad thugs attacked the students, beating many and killing at least one student. President Khatami called for an investigation and trial of those responsible, but no convictions were ever returned. Every year on the anniversary of the 1999 event, students have gathered at Tehran University and other major campuses throughout the

country. The date has been a flashpoint for violence and tension, and as recently as July 2003 the authorities have tried to keep large crowds from gathering at the university campus in Tehran." **[8j] (p32)**

4.22 Thousands of Iranians took to the streets on 10/11 June 2003 and again on the following ten nights. Ostensibly they were protesting against draft proposals to privatise universities in Iran. They were joined by local residents and the demonstration reportedly escalated and became increasingly politicised, with slogans being chanted against political leaders. Militant supporters of religious leaders opposed to social reform began to attack the demonstrators and police rapidly intervened to end the clashes. As the demonstrations grew over the following nights, Tehran's Special Forces (Nirou-ye Vijeh) were deployed to disperse demonstrators. There were reports, however, that the Special Forces permitted some militants to attack peaceful demonstrators and that in certain instances excessive force may have been used to break up the demonstrations. Some demonstrators were reportedly attacked by unknown individuals on motorcycles wielding iron bars. **[9w]**

4.23 The demonstrations were part of countrywide unrest which began on 11 June 2003 and lasted for ten days. Hundreds of people were reportedly arrested and according to a statement made by the head of the Tehran Justice Department, Abbas Ali Alizadeh on 24 June "the judiciary is intent on dealing firmly with the main perpetrators." **[9w]** A total of around 4,000 people were reportedly arrested, up to 2,000 of whom were still held in mid-July. At least 65 were charged, but the charges were not been made public. **[9x]**

4.24 Few students were reported among those arrested during the clashes which indicated that the dissent was by no means confined to the campuses where the trouble began. Many of those taking part in the protests, which later took the form of horn-sounding in traffic jams, were ordinary people, often families, who wanted to register their dismay that so little of the change they have been voting for since 1997 has been brought about. **[21bi]**

4.25 About 4,000 people were arrested all over the country before and after the protests. Although many of those have since been released, there are still scores of students behind bars. **[21bj]** Some of these have been in prison since they were arrested as a result of similar disturbances in 1999, 2000 and 2001. For the moment however, it appears that the various students' organisations can go about their business unperturbed. There has been a certain depoliticisation of the student population. Students are losing interest because the political situation is not changing, and the centre of gravity of their activities has shifted towards cultural and social initiatives. **[43] (p17)**

Return to Contents

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS – FEBRUARY 2004

4.26 Iranians went to the polls on 20 February 2004 to elect a new parliament. Like previous elections, the battle was expected to be an ideological one between the elected reformists and the largely unelected hardliners who dominate the important institutions of the state. The reformists who form a majority in the parliament are led by President Mohammad Khatami; the hardliners control the judiciary, armed forces and constitutional oversight bodies such as the Council

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

of Guardians. The hardliners, or conservatives, are led by Ayatollah Khamenei, who is the ultimate decision-maker and Supreme Leader. **[21cf]**

4.27 As part of the process leading up to the election, Iran's Guardian Council rejected hundreds of reformist candidates in the parliamentary elections and by doing so provoked a political crisis. The move was generally seen as part of the power struggle in Iran between the conservatives who want to maintain a strict Islamic approach and reformers, backed by the elected government, who want greater liberalisation. While reformers controlled the parliament (Majlis) before the elections, under Iran's constitution a series of appointed supervisory bodies have the ultimate say on questions of legislation and also have sanction on electoral nominations. These bodies are in the hands of the conservatives and the conservatives felt that this was a good moment to try to prevent further domination of the parliament by reformers after the elections. **[21cg]**

4.28 Iran's religious conservatives swept to victory in the parliamentary poll, **[24c]** making sweeping gains in the first round of the general election. They won 156 of the assembly's 290 seats with nearly 60 to be decided in a second round of voting (in May 2004). **[21ch]** According to an International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) report of July 2004:

"The Conservatives won the legislative election on 20 February, victory which was confirmed at the second ballot which took place on 8 May 2004. The Conservatives now have 195 seats on 290 in the Parliament (Majlis). Reformists, who held 190 seats in the outgoing assembly, won around 40. The new parliament is effective since 27 May 2004." **[56c] (p5)**

According to the USSD report 2004:

"In screening for the February Seventh Majlis elections, the Guardian Council ruled approximately 2,500 of the over 8,000 prospective candidates ineligible to run, including 85 sitting reformist deputies; this was one factor leading to conservatives winning a majority of seats." **[4p] (p1)**

Having served the maximum two terms in office, the reformist President Khatami stepped down in August 2005 and was replaced by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the religious conservative former Mayor of Tehran. He has since nominated a relatively inexperienced Cabinet, dominated by hard-liners with backgrounds in intelligence and the Revolutionary Guards. **See Annex C.**

4.29 According to the Center for Contemporary Conflict (CCC) in an article of June 2004:

"The parliamentary election held on February 20, 2004 in Iran was a key turning point in that country's political evolution. The election marked the conclusive end of the campaign for political and social reform initiated by Mohammad Khatami after he was elected president in a landslide vote in May 1997. However, while it is clear that Khatami's efforts have failed, it is not clear what will come next. Although Khatami's Conservative opponents decisively won the election, they have little popular support and it remains uncertain whether they can govern effectively. Moreover, the radical wing of Khatami's Reformist movement remains intact and could present a strong challenge to the Conservatives in the future. Therefore, while the February election essentially marked the end of the Khatami era, Iran's future remains very uncertain." **[72a]**

And according to the LOC/FRD report of September 2004:

"Conservatives regained control of the parliament in the February 2004 elections. There has been relative consensus between the two factions on issues of foreign policy, even in the post-1992 period when internal politics have been increasingly contentious." **[79a] (p3)**

Return to Contents

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS – JUNE 2005

4.30 According to the CCC in a report, dated August 2005:

"Close observers of Iran for several years had anticipated that the June 2005 election would produce major change. The pro-democracy reform movement that emerged with the May 1997 election of President Mohammad Khatami stalled after several years, weakened by continual attacks from its conservative opponents. Although the reformists managed to achieve landslide victories in the 1999 municipal council elections, the 2000 parliamentary election, and the 2001 presidential election (when Khatami was re-elected), they were unable to use their control over these institutions to achieve significant change, either in domestic political conditions or in the economic and socio-cultural conditions that more directly affect common Iranians. As a result, the Iranian public became increasingly disillusioned with Khatami and his reformist allies. This was reflected in the 2003 municipal council elections and the 2004 parliamentary election, when reformist candidates were decisively defeated, amid sharply lower turnout. With Khatami unable to run for a third term, many observers believed that the reformists would suffer another defeat and turnout again would be low in the June 2005 election." **[72b] (p1)**

4.31 According to an Update Briefing from the International Crisis Group, dated 4 August 2005, "Over 1,000 people applied to run but the unelected Guardian Council approved only eight. Every female candidate was disqualified." It continued:

"Of the eight presidential candidates authorised to run by the twelve-member Guardian Council, Mahmoud Ahmadi-Nejad appeared among the least competitive until practically the end. Until a week prior to the election, he had barely surfaced in opinion polls and was denying rumours of imminent withdrawal. In the last week, most surveys predicted a three-man race between a centrist (former president Hashemi Rafsanjani), a conservative (former national police chief Mohammed Bagher Ghalibaf), and a reformist (former Minister of Higher Education Mostafa Moin)." **[84a] (p2)**

4.32 According to the CCC in a report dated August 2005:

"Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a hardline conservative Islamist, scored a stunning victory in the second round of Iran's June 2005 presidential election. Many observers have described Ahmadinejad's victory as a key turning point for Iran, predicting that it will produce a new era of radical, puritanical rule at home and greater militancy in Iran's foreign policy. However, Iran's new president will face important political obstacles that will limit his ability to act, so it is not clear

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

whether, and to what extent, he will be able to carry out such drastic changes. **[72b] (p1)**

4.33 In its Country Report 2005, published in September 2005, the Economist Intelligence Unit stated that:

"The victory of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the presidential election in June marked the culmination of a campaign by conservatives – which began after the election of the reformist president, Mohammed Khatami, in 1997 – to reassert their dominance over domestic political affairs. There are fears, both locally and abroad, that Mr Ahmadinejad will rein in political, social and economic freedoms in line with an austere interpretation of the ideals of the Islamic Revolution. Some steps in this direction are likely, but the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, is aware of the dangers of shutting political opponents out entirely – notably that they may form an alliance against the dominant movement – and will probably seek to prevent this occurring." **[24d] (p1)**

For further information on history, refer to Europa Yearbook, source [1a] [1b]

Return to Contents

5. State structures

THE CONSTITUTION

5.01 According to Europa 2004 Iran's Constitution was adopted in 1979, and was amended in 1989 to provide for the abolition of the post of Prime Minister and consequent increase in power of the Presidency. It states that the form of government of Iran is that of an Islamic Republic and that the spirituality and ethics of Islam are to be the basis for political, social and economic relations. Persians, Turks, Arabs, Balochis, Turkomans and others will enjoy completely equal rights. **[1a] (p429)**

CITIZENSHIP AND NATIONALITY

5.02 According to the US Defense Security Service in their 2001 report on citizenship criteria, citizenship is based upon the Iranian Civil Code which stipulates that in general, birth within the territory of Iran does not automatically confer citizenship. Some instances where birth does confer citizenship is when a child is born to unknown parents; children born to non-citizens, one of whom was born within Iran; or a child born of a father of foreign nationality, if immediately after reaching the age of 18 the young person continues to live within Iran for at least one year. **[32]** A child born to an Iranian father regardless of the country of birth is Iranian by descent. **[32]**

5.03 As reported by the BBC Monitoring Service in December 2002 Iran's laws allow a male national to acquire Iranian citizenship for his wife and children, while women are not entitled to the same privilege. In December 2002 it was announced that the Majlis were to debate a bill to grant Iranian citizenship to foreign spouses of Iranian women with a view to removing this discrimination. The bill sought to solve the problem of Iranian women who had married foreigners, particularly Afghan nationals. **[21aw]** In January 2003 according to Payvand News, The Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Commission unanimously rejected the bill when the commission's rapporteur, Hamid-Reza Hajji-Babaei, was reported as saying that the sole article of the bill authorised the cabinet to issue permanent residence permits to Afghan nationals married to Iranian women whose marriages were solemnized within the period 21 March 1979 to 20 March 2002 and that "Under the bill, costs that may be incurred by the Interior Ministry in Afghan naturalization proceedings are to be paid by the applicants. However, given the results of expert studies into the issue, the commission thinks the costs and likely consequences of the plan would not be favorable to the country." **[53a]**

5.04 According to the US Defense Security Service in their 2001 report on citizenship criteria, Iranian citizenship may be acquired upon fulfilment of the following conditions: the person must have reached the full age of 18, have resided in Iran for five years, whether continuously or intermittently, not be a military service escapee and not have been convicted of a major or non-political crime in any country. **[32] [68a]** The wives and minor children under 18 of naturalised citizens are also considered Iranian citizens. **[32]** Dual citizenship is not recognised. **[32]** The FCO stated in October 2005 that "Iran does not recognise dual nationality. This severely limits our ability to offer consular assistance to dual nationals."

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

Return to Contents

POLITICAL SYSTEM

5.05 According to the USSD report 2004:

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is a constitutional, theocratic republic in which Shi'a Muslim clergy dominate the key power structures. Article Four of the Constitution states that "All laws and regulations...shall be based on Islamic principles." Government legitimacy is based on the twin pillars of popular sovereignty (Article Six) and the rule of the Supreme Jurisconsulate (Article Five). The unelected Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Ali Khamene'i, dominates a tricameral division of power among legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Khamene'i directly controls the armed forces and exercises indirect control over the internal security forces, the judiciary, and other key institutions. The executive branch is headed by the President [Ahmadinejad] **[4p] (p1)** "There is no separation of state and religion, and clerical influence pervades the Government, especially in appointed, rather than elected, positions." **[4p] (p15)**

The USSD Background Note of August 2004 states that suffrage is universal at 15. **[4j] (p1)** According to Europa 2004, provision is made for the representation of Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians. **[1a] (p429)** The USSD report 2004 goes on to state that:

"The legislative branch featured a popularly elected 290-seat Islamic Consultative Assembly, Majlis, which develops and passes legislation, and an unelected 12-member Council of Guardians, which reviews all legislation, passed by the Majlis for adherence to Islamic and constitutional principles and also has the duty of screening Majlis candidates for eligibility. Conservative candidates won a majority of seats in the February Seventh Majlis election that was widely perceived as neither free nor fair, due to the Council of Guardians' exclusion of thousands of qualified candidates. The 34-member Expediency Council is empowered to resolve legislative impasses between the Council of Guardians and the Majlis. The Constitution provides that "the judiciary is an independent power"; however, the judicial branch is widely perceived as both corrupt and heavily biased towards conservative elements within the society and against reformist forces." **[4p] (p1)**

In March 2003, a BBC News report stated that President Khatami walked out of a meeting of top Iranian policy makers, the Expediency Council, in protest at their decision to more than double the funding for the Guardian's Council. **[21aj]** The move by the council, in bypassing the Majlis, was seen by the hardliners as an attack on President Khatami's reform agenda. **[21ak]** In July 2004 the ultra-conservative head of the Guardians Council was given another six years in charge. **[42c]**

5.06 On 24 September 2002 it was reported by BBC News that in September 2002 Iran's frustrated reformist President Mohammed Khatami presented a new bill to parliament aimed at enhancing his powers. It was the second of two proposals which reformists hoped would clear the way for the enactment of changes which have been largely blocked by the entrenched hardline minority holding positions of power. **[21ae]** By 10 November 2002 the Iranian Parliament had ratified the outlines of the electoral reform bill which would put an end to the

arbitrary vetting of political candidates by the Guardian Council **[21al]** and also approved the draft of a bill which would give the President the right to suspend rulings by the conservative judiciary which he considers to be violations of the constitution. **[21am]** By the end of 2003, this legislation remained un-enacted, delayed as a result of Guardian Council deliberations. **[21al] [21ax]** In March 2004, following on from the defeat of the reformers in the February 2004 parliamentary elections, President Khatami officially withdrew both bills. **[62a]**

5.07 On 3 March 2003 it was reported in a BBC News report that on 28 February 2003 Iran held only its second ever municipal council elections. They resulted in the worst electoral defeat in six years for Khatami and his reformist allies. These results were considered to be caused by voter apathy and low turn-out at the polls caused by disenchantment with the slow progress of political reform. **[21an]** Local elections are planned for 2007.

Return to Contents

POLITICAL PARTIES

5.08 According to Europa 2004, the Islamic Republican Party (IRP) was founded in 1978 to bring about the Islamic Revolution under Ayatollah Khomeini. After the Revolution the IRP became the ruling party in what was effectively a one-party state. In June 1987 Ayatollah Khomeini officially disbanded the IRP at the request of party leaders, who said that it had achieved its purpose and might only "provide an excuse for discord and factionalism" if it were not dissolved. **[1a] (p371)** A list of political organisations is at Annex B.

5.09 According to the LOC/FRD report of September 2004:

"Official political activity is permitted only to groups that accept the principle of political guidance known as velayat-e faqih. Political parties were legalized in 1998, and at least 25 were present in the Sixth Majlis (2000-2004). Eighteen of these parties joined in a broad coalition called the Dovum-e Khordad Front. These were all reformist parties that supported the political and economic proposals of President Khatami; internal differences over many specific economic policies hampered the Front's effectiveness, however. The Conservatives have been more united in recent years, although there are three major parties, of which Builders of Islamic Iran emerged as a political force by winning a majority of Majlis seats in the 2004 elections." **[79a] (p14)**

5.10 According to a report on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, dated 28 December 1998, issued by the United Nations: Economic and Social Council Commission on Human Rights, of the unregistered parties within Iran, some, such as the "Iran Nation Party" had been tolerated. **[10m] (p11)** However, in November 1998 the leader of that party, Dariush Forouhar, and his wife Parvaneh Forouhar, were murdered by unknown assailants. Three senior members of INP were arrested at the outbreak of the street riots in July 1999, accused of provoking riots and using anti-Islamic slogans. **[5s]** Nine activists were reportedly killed in the decade to 1998. **[10m] (p11)**

5.11 According to the USSD report 2004:

"The 1998 murders of prominent political activists Darioush and Parvaneh Forouhar, writers Mohammad Mokhtari and Mohammad Pouyandeh, and the

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

disappearance of political activist Pirouz Davani continued to cause controversy about what is perceived to be the Government's cover-up of involvement by high-level officials. Prominent investigative journalist Akbar Ganji, who was arrested in 2000 and sentenced to 6 years in prison for his reporting on the case, remained in prison. In 2001, the Special Representative for Iran of the Commission on Human Rights (UNSR) also reported claims that there were more than 80 killings or disappearances over a 10-year period as part of a wider campaign to silence dissent. Members of religious minority groups, including the Baha'is, evangelical Christians, and Sunni clerics were killed in recent years, allegedly by government agents or directly at the hands of authorities." **[4p] (p2)**

5.12 In 2002, the lawyer representing some of the victims, Naser Zarafshan, was also sentenced to five years in prison and 70 lashes. He was charged with leaking confidential information pertaining to the trial. **[4n] (p5)** It was reported in the USSD report 2004 that:

"According to the NGO PenCanada, in September, a group of prisoners in collusion with prison authorities reportedly attempted to kill Zarafshan. Opposition websites reported that Zarafshan participated in a July hunger strike to protest mistreatment of prisoners' families by government officials. Reportedly, since September 2003, prison authorities have given Zarafshan only one leave of 48 hours." **[4p] (p6)**

According to an Amnesty International Report of 15 February 2005:

"Both the prison authorities and Nasser Zarafshan's doctor are in support of him receiving treatment, and have granted him 24 hour leave from the prison. However, Said Mortazavi, the Tehran Prosecutor, is refusing to give his permission in contravention of Article 291 of the Iranian Criminal Procedure Code." **[9ak]**

In a report dated 16 June 2005, the wife of Nasser Zarafshan, lawyer for murdered intellectuals and journalists, told Reporters Without Borders that she was very concerned about her husband's health. The prison doctor has said his blood pressure is very low and he has reportedly lost 10 kilos since starting a hunger strike on 7 June. **[38k]**

Return to Contents

JUDICIARY

5.13 According to USSD Reports on Human Rights, the court system is not independent and is subject to government and religious influence. **[4k] (p6)** The judicial system has been designed to conform, where possible, to an Islamic canon based on the Koran, Sunna, and other Islamic sources. Article 157 provides that the head of the judiciary shall be a cleric chosen by the Supreme Leader. Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi resigned as the head of the judiciary in August 1999, and was replaced by Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahrudi. The head of the Supreme Court and Prosecutor General also must be clerics. **[4j] (p3) [4k] (p6)** There are several different court systems. The two most active are the traditional courts, which adjudicate civil and criminal offences, and the Islamic Revolutionary Courts, established in 1979 to try political offences, narcotics crimes, "crimes against God", economic crimes such as hoarding and

overpricing and official corruption. A special clerical court examines alleged transgressions within the clerical establishment and a military court investigates crimes committed in connection with military or security duties by members of the army, police and Revolutionary guards. **[4k] (p6)** Defendants in theory, have the right to a public trial, may choose their own lawyer, and have the right of appeal **[4g] (p7)**. Trials are adjudicated by panels of judges, advised by the Government to base their decisions on Islamic law. **[4f] (p5)**

According to the USSD report 2004:

"Trials are supposed to be open to the public; however, frequently they are held in closed sessions without access to a lawyer; the right to appeal often is not honored." **[4p] (p5)**

The Revolutionary Courts may consider cases that are normally in the jurisdiction of the civil and criminal courts, and may also overturn their decisions. **[4a] (p5)**

5.14 The Danish fact-finding mission (FFM) report entitled 'Regarding certain crimes and punishments in Iran: Report from the fact-finding mission to Tehran and Ankara', 22 January to 29 January 2005 reported on various crimes and the process utilised by the judiciary in consideration, examination and decision making. In particular areas such as the following were examined: the Iranian legal system, infidelity and other sexual relationships between people who are not married to each other, illegal relationships, homosexuality, consumption of alcohol, converting from Islam to another religion, contravention of clothing regulations, demonstrations and other activities in country of residence (on the spot) against the Iranian regime and the return of members of Mojahedin e-Khalq (MKO) to Iran. **[86a]**

5.15 According to the Danish FFM report 2005:

"Mohammad Javad Shariat Bagheri, director-general of the Iranian legal system's international department informed us that the legal system, including the Minister of Justice, is independent of the government. The legal system is directly governed by Khamenei, the 'chief executive'. Since 1999 the legal system's senior executive has been Mahmoud Hashemi Sharudi who has implemented a number of reforms. For example, an actual prosecution service was re-established in 2002 with the result that a number of public prosecutors have been appointed. According to the source, there are the following courts in Iran:

"The different courts:

I Public courts:
  a criminal courts and
  b civil courts
2 Revolutionary courts
3 Ecclesiastical court
4 Military court
5 The Court of Administrative Justice
6 Appeal Courts
7 The Supreme Court.

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

"The source gave an account of the division of the areas of practice in the Iranian courts and informed us that the public courts amongst other things deal with cases regarding infidelity, homosexuality, consumption of alcohol, conversion and the infringement of the clothing regulations.

"The revolutionary courts deal with cases relating to national security, terrorism, false statements about Khomeini and the chief executive, espionage and drug trafficking. According to the source 99% of the cases dealt with by revolutionary courts related to drug offences.

"The ecclesiastical court deals with cases where Islamic priests and other religious figures have infringed the law.

"The military court deals with cases involving military personnel, including members of the revolutionary guard such as Basij who have infringed laws that are in force.

"The Appeal Courts and the Supreme Court function as appeals bodies.

"Each source emphasised that all sentences passed in the first instance can be referred to an Appeal Court. This also applied to sentences passed in absentia. All cases of significance, including cases where the death sentence or other types of corporal punishment have been pronounced can furthermore be appealed against at the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court must always be consulted in cases where someone has been sentenced to death irrespective of whether or not an appeal has been lodged. Under certain circumstances, the Supreme Court's decision can be referred to the senior executive of the legal system for appeal.

"There are courts in every major city for hearing cases in the first instance. There are Appeal Courts in every provincial capital and finally the Supreme Court is held in Teheran.

"The first instance courts are presided over by one judge. In the Appeal Courts the bench is presided over by 3 judges. The number of judges in the Supreme Court varies according to the nature of the case." **[86a] (p6)**

5.16 UNHCR reported in their "Comments on the April 2005 country report" of August 2005 that:

"According to UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions (27 June 2003), Iranian judiciary is largely arbitrary in processing cases (UN Commission on Human Rights, 27 June 2003, e.g. Para. 22). UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions stated that "In its interviews both with political prisoners and ordinary law prisoners, the Working Group has noted that, in many cases, the length of the sentences handed down is disproportionate to the seriousness of the offence. There are also manifest disparities from one court to another." (UN Commission on Human Rights, 27 June 2003, Para. 58).

"In the report of their visit to Iran in February 2003, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention noted that "the legal framework for detention, as applied in the Islamic Republic of Iran, has significant shortcomings with regard to international principles and norms" since its sources were alien to the norms of due process, including "the principle of separation of authority for prosecution

and judgement, the authority of res judicata, the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex, religion or nationality, the prohibition of the use of certain sanctions which today are comparable to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment." (UN Commission on Human Rights, 27 June 2003, Para. 15).

"In relation to due process norms, the UN Working Group also points to the role of "accepted principles of morality or public order" (Constitution, Art. 165) in Iranian law (UN Commission on Human Rights, 27 June 2003, Para. 19).

"UN Working Group in Arbitrary Detention observed that the Iranian judiciary may take their decisions in many cases orally, without written notification (UN Commission on Human Rights, 27 June 2003, Para. 60)." **[3h] (p1)**

5.17 According to the Danish FFM report 2005:

"Mohammad Javad Shariat Bagheri, director-general of the Iranian legal system's international department informed us that all judges in the different courts may come from two different types of educational background. The usual educational background is a professional qualification in law from a university. Around 90% of judges have studied law at university level. About 10% of the judges have studied theology at a seminary. Regardless of their educational background, all candidates wishing to become judges have to complete a one-year course followed by an exam before being allowed to practise. This course should give the candidates the necessary skills to perform their judicial functions in a satisfactory manner." **[86a] (p7)**

5.18 According to the USSD report 2004:

"Trials in the Revolutionary Courts, in which crimes against national security and other principal offenses are heard, were notorious for their disregard of international standards of fairness. Revolutionary Court judges acted as both prosecutor and judge in the same case, and judges were chosen in part based on their ideological commitment to the system. Pre-trial detention often was prolonged and defendants lacked access to attorneys. Indictments often lacked clarity and included undefined offenses such as "anti-revolutionary behavior," "moral corruption," and "siding with global arrogance." Defendants did not have the right to confront their accusers. Secret or summary trials of 5 minutes duration occurred. Others were show trials that were intended merely to highlight a coerced public confession." **[4p] (p6)**

5.19 According to the USSD report 2003:

"The legitimacy of the Special Clerical Court (SCC) system continued to be a subject of debate. The clerical courts, which investigate offenses and crimes committed by clerics, and which are overseen directly by the Supreme Leader, were not provided for in the Constitution, and operated outside the domain of the judiciary. In particular, critics alleged that the clerical courts were used to prosecute clerics for expressing controversial ideas and for participating in activities outside the sphere of religion, such as journalism. The recommendations of the U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention included a call to abolish both the Special Clerical Courts and the Revolutionary Courts, which were described as "responsible for many of the cases of arbitrary detention for crimes of opinion." **[4n] (p7)**

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

Return to Contents

5.20 According to Europa 2004, in August 1982, the Supreme Court, which has 16 branches, revoked all laws dating from the previous regime which did not conform to Islam. **[1a] (p433)** It has limited authority to review cases. **[4f] (p5)** In October 1982 all courts set up prior to the Islamic Revolution were abolished. In June 1987 Ayatollah Khomeini ordered the creation of clerical courts to try members of the clergy opposed to government policy. A system of retribution (qisas) was established, placing the emphasis on speedy justice. Islamic codes of correction were introduced in 1983, including the dismembering of a hand for theft, flogging for fornication and violations of the strict code of dress for women, and stoning for adultery. **[1a] (p433)**

5.21 According to an AI report of 1996, since May 1994, judges had been responsible for prosecution in public and revolutionary courts. **[9a]** However, as reported in Payvand News in April 2003, the judiciary adopted a key reform, appointing a high profile judge Saeed Mortazavi as the prosecutor general of public and revolutionary courts in Tehran in order to fend off criticism that the judge also acted as prosecutor in trials. **[53c]** The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) is reported as stating that "The re-establishment of the function of Prosecutor in February 2003 in the judicial system was a positive step. However, the choice of Mr Mortazavi as the Attorney-General of Tehran clearly undermines this progress. Mr Mortazavi has been involved in the repression of intellectuals, journalists and peaceful demonstrators in June 2003. In addition, his responsibility in Mrs Kazemi's death has been clearly established by the Article 90 Commission." **[10z] (p2) [para6.27]** however, in the USSD report 2004 it is:

"...noted that this reform had thus far had been applied unevenly, with the judge still having major investigative responsibilities in many jurisdictions." **[4p] (p6)**

Amnesty International has reported regularly that trial hearings are often heard in camera and that political detainees have been denied access to legal counsel during judicial proceedings, despite official assurances to the contrary. **[9a] [4b] (p5) [9b]** Political trials which take place within prisons are sometimes conducted secretly. Where trials and summary proceedings of political prisoners deny the detainee access to legal counsel, they breach Iran's Constitution and also Article 14D of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a signatory. **[9c] (p41) [9a] [4b] (p5)** Amnesty International cites detainees in Iran having described the use of ill treatment and torture to obtain forced confessions. **[9c] (p32)**

Return to Contents

5.22 According to the USSD report 2002:

"In November 2002 reformist professor Hashem Aghajari was sentenced to death at a closed trial for the crime of blaspheming against Islam in a speech he gave in Hamedan in June. In addition to the death sentence, he was sentenced to 74 lashes, exile to a remote desert location, eight years in jail, and a ban on teaching for ten years. His attorney appealed the verdict. The death sentence was widely denounced across the political spectrum. President Khatami and hundreds of Majlis members questioned the verdict, noting that the death sentence should not be applied. As a result of protests caused by the case,

Supreme Leader Khamenei instructed the Hamedan court to re-examine the case." **[4m] (p7)**

A BBC News report of 14 July 2003 reported that in June of 2003 the appeal court sentenced Aghajari to four years in jail. Mr Aghajari filed an appeal against the new sentence stating that the verdict produced by the retrial was illegal because it was held behind closed doors. **[21bk]** Payvand News reported on 1 August 2004 that at his second retrial in early July 2004 he was given a five-year term. He was released on bail on 31 July 2004 pending a further appeal of this five-year sentence. **[53d]** On 10 March 2005, Tehran's Appeals Court sentenced him to 23 and a half months in prison (already served) for insulting religious sanctities and acquitted him of all other charges. **[23c]**

See also 6.24 and student demonstrations.

5.23 The USSD report 2004 states that:

"The Constitution prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention; however, these practices remained common. In practice, there is no legal time limit for incommunicado detention nor any judicial means to determine the legality of detention. In the period immediately following detention or arrest, many detainees were held incommunicado and denied access to lawyers and family members. Suspects may be held for questioning in jails or in local Revolutionary Guard offices. There also are numerous detention centers not under the control of the NPO, reportedly run by "plainclothes" officers of various security and intelligence agencies, elements of the judiciary, and state-sponsored vigilante groups." **[4p] (p4)**

5.24 According to the USSD report 2004:

"Several agencies share responsibility for law enforcement and maintenance of order, including the Ministry of Intelligence and Security, the Law Enforcement Forces under the Ministry of Interior, and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, a military force established after the revolution. A paramilitary volunteer force known as the Basiji, and various gangs of men known as the Ansar-e Hezbollah (Helpers of the Party of God), or "plain clothes," aligned with extreme conservative members of the leadership, acted as vigilantes. Civilian authorities did not fully maintain effective control of the security forces, and there were instances in which elements of the security forces acted independently of government authority. The regular and the paramilitary security forces both committed numerous, serious human rights abuses." **[4p] (p1)**

See also 5.61 for Composition of the security forces and their division of labour.

5.25 According to the UNHCR Country of Origin Information Seminar, 2001, Berlin Final Report, the law indicates a range of applicable punishments for types of offences. For example, two to ten years imprisonment for a person found to have formed a political organisation deemed to be destroying the security of the country, although the definition of what destroys the national security is not made clear. Similarly, punishments of imprisonment, lashes or fines can be imposed for insults against Iranian leaders or government representatives, but effectively serve to limit freedom of speech as the law does not define the term "insult." **[3c] (p78)**

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

5.26 According to the UN Economic and Social Council Commission, in a report dated 11 February 1997, four types of proof exist within the Iranian legal system. The application of confession, testimony, and oath and "the knowledge of the judge" remain unclear to those outside the Iranian judiciary. There is a marked concern that confessions are often gained by coercion and that the "testimony of righteous men" excludes women and members of religious minorities. **[10g] (p8)**

See also para 6.161 regarding a woman's testimony being worth half that of a man's.

5.27 According to the UN, in 1998, the Iranian authorities have said that many of the executions conducted in Iran relate to drug trafficking offences, but no corroborative statistics or information on the protection of human rights policies in dealing with such offenders is available. Numbers of stonings and deaths as a consequence are unclear, though most take place in the larger cities such as Tehran, Hamedan, Isfahan and Kermanshah. All are endorsed by the Supreme Court **[10b] (p5)**, including stoning of women found guilty of sexual relations outside marriage. **[10h] (p12)**

See also para 5.53 on the moratorium on stoning.

Return to Contents

5.28 The UN reported in 1998 that amputation has been used as a punishment; although the practice has been widely regarded as contravening Article 7 of the ICCPR [it also contravenes the provision of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948]. In September 1997, three Iranians had hands or fingers amputated for theft and forgery offences. **[10b] (p5)** During 2002, Amnesty International recorded nine amputations, although the true figure may be significantly higher. Of the recorded amputations, one was a cross amputation. Punishment by amputation is imposed often in connection with theft. **[9u]** Amputations were supposedly subject to a moratorium as of 2003. However, sentences of amputation have been issued and in several cases carried out. **[69a]** The USSD report 2004 stated that Amnesty International reported at least nine cases of amputation since 2002. **[4p] (p3)**

5.29 According to the Human Rights Watch World Report 1998, arbitrary arrest and detention had been and remained a feature within Iranian society. In 1997 large numbers of people arrested for suspected espionage or other political activity remained in detention without charge or trial, said to have been denied access to a lawyer of their choice or any other legal counsel. **[8b] (p2)** According to the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, during 2003 arbitrary arrests and detentions continued. Hundreds remain in detention, often without charge or trial and without access to an attorney or contact with their families. In June 2003 up to 4,000 people were arrested, and most later released, after pro-reform protests erupted in several cities. **[69a]**

5.30 The United Nations Special Representative stated in his report of 16 January 2002 that the long awaited bill on the reform of the judiciary had finally reached the Majlis. At the time of preparation of this report, he had not seen a detailed description of the bill. However, according to press reports, it stipulated that exceptional tribunals like the revolutionary courts would be able to deal only

with cases explicitly referred to them by law. Officials and military personnel would be tried only by Tehran's criminal courts. If this worked out to be the case in practice, it would be a major improvement. **[10p] (p7)** On 3 September 2003, parliament passed legislation to form a special commission to monitor performance of the judiciary. **[21bl]**

5.31 According to the USSD report 2004:

"On February 28, Judiciary Head Ayatollah Shahroudi issued a directive protecting the rights of the accused and, among other points, instructing police, judicial officials, and security agents to refrain from physical abuse when interrogating suspects. On May 2, the Majlis passed a law based on this 15-point directive in the form of the Bill on Legitimate Liberties and Civil Rights, which the Council of Guardians approved shortly thereafter. However, there is much anecdotal evidence that this law was ignored routinely in practice." **[4p] (p3)**

The USSD report 2004 also reported that in August 2004, credible international and local NGOs reported the case of a prisoner in the province of Khuzistan who had to have his hands amputated because prison officials had left him hanging by the wrists and then forgot about him. **[4p] (p3)**

5.32 According to the AI Report 2005:

"In November, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution condemning the human rights situation in Iran. It drew attention to Iran's "failure to comply with international standards in the administration of justice, the absence of due process of law, the refusal to provide fair and public hearings and right to counsel..." and forms of systematic discrimination. It urged the authorities to appoint an independent and impartial prosecutor in Tehran and to fulfil Iran's international commitments. A proposed visit by the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances was postponed at the government's request." **[9d] (p2)**

Return to Contents

JUVENILES IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

5.33 According to the UN Report, "Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, E/CN.4/2002/42, dated 16 January 2002:

"There continue to be positive developments in the area of juvenile justice. The Special Representative is informed that a committee was established in February 2001 to draft a new juvenile justice legislation. Over the past two years, all juvenile judges have been given training on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and on the relevant international instruments on juvenile justice. Social workers from the National Prisons Organization have participated in such courses. There are now examples of alternative sentences being issued by juvenile judges in some provinces."

And continued:

"The Special Representative would note that there reportedly remain on the books two invidious provisions concerning children and the criminal law. One

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

sets the age of penal responsibility at the age of puberty, 9 [lunar] years for girls and 15 [lunar] years for boys, which means that young people can face adult punishments. The second is that an adult who kills a minor is subject to the death penalty unless the accused is the father or grandfather of the victim, in which case the accused is subject only to the payment of diyah. The Special Representative trusts that the promised new Juvenile Justice Act will amend both of these provisions." **[10p] (p21)**

N.B. solar years are longer than lunar years so the UK equivalent of these ages would be less than these ages of criminal responsibility.

5.34 The UN Report, "Committee on the Rights of the Child: Thirty-eighth session. Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 44 of the Convention. Concluding Observations: The Islamic Republic of Iran." dated 31 March 2005 recorded that:

"The Committee notes the various legislative measures undertaken by the State party and referred to in its response to the list of issues (CRC/C/RESP/71) and welcomes in particular the information provided by the delegation that the Bill on the Establishment of Juvenile Courts has been approved by the Council of Ministers and has been submitted to the Majlis, a bill which, inter alia, abolishes the death penalty for crimes committed by persons under 18. The Committee also notes that this Bill has yet to be approved by the Council of Guardians before it becomes law." **[10f] (p2)**

and:

"The Committee reiterates its serious concern at article 220 of the Penal Code, which provides that fathers who kill their child, or their son's child, are only required to pay one third of the blood money to the mother, and are subjected to a discretionary punishment, in the event that the mother makes a formal complaint." **[10f] (p5)**

5.35 The same report went on to say:

"The Committee deeply regrets that, under existing laws, persons below the age of 18 who have committed a crime can be subjected to corporal punishment and sentenced to various types of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, such as amputation, flogging or stoning, which are systematically imposed by judicial authorities and which the Committee considers to be totally incompatible with article 37(a) and other provisions of the Convention." **[10f] (p8)**

and further:

"The Committee continues to be concerned about legislation that provides for corporal punishment within the family. While welcoming the new Law on the Protection of Children and Adolescents (2003), which includes the prohibition of all forms of molestation and abuse of children and the obligation to report cases of child abuse, the exceptions stated therein continue to legally allow various forms of violence against children. More particularly, several articles of the Civil and Penal Code have been excluded, including article 1179 of the Civil Law and article 59 of the Penal Code, which gives parents the right to physically discipline their children within non-defined "normal limits." In the Committee's

view, such exceptions contribute to the abuse of children inside and outside the family and contravene the principles and provisions of the Convention, in particular article 19. The Committee also notes with concern, that certain forms of sexual abuse of children or grandchildren are not explicitly prohibited." **[10f] (p9)**

5.36 The UN Report concluded by saying:

"The Committee welcomes the efforts of the State party to improve the laws with regard to persons below 18 in conflict with the law, in particular the Bill on the Establishment of Juvenile Courts mentioned in paragraph 8 above. However, it deplores the information referred to in paragraph 29 above that, despite the statement of the delegation made during the consideration of the second periodic report that, in view of that Bill, executions, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of persons for having committed crimes before the age of 18 have been suspended, such executions and ill-treatment have continued since the consideration by the Committee of the State party's initial report. The Committee remains concerned at the existing poor quality of the rules and practices in the juvenile justice system, reflected, inter alia, in the lack of statistical data, the limited use of specialized juvenile courts and judges, the low age of criminal responsibility, the lack of adequate alternatives to custodial sentences, and the imposition of torture and other cruel or inhuman punishment and in particular of the death penalty." **[10f] (p15)**

Return to Contents

5.37 On 27 July 2005, Human Rights Watch reported that:

"Two youths, aged eighteen and nineteen, were put to death on July 19 after they were found guilty of sexually assaulting a thirteen-year-old boy some fourteen months earlier. One of the youths was seventeen at the time of the offense. Before the two youths were put to death, each also received 228 lashes for theft, disturbing public order, and consuming alcohol.

"Iran is thought to have executed at least four other juvenile offenders in 2004, and at least thirty juvenile offenders are on the country's death row. Human Rights Watch has confirmed the names and ages at the time of offense of five juvenile offenders under sentence of death in Iran: Milad Bakhtiari, 17 years old; Hussein Haghi, 16 years old; Hussein Taranj, 17 years old; Farshad Saeedi, 17 years old; Saeed Khorrami, 16 years old." **[8m]**

While it was declared by the authorities that the first executions mentioned relate to charges of rape, this has been disputed and it is claimed that the real cause related to the individuals being homosexual.

See paragraph 6.207 et seq.

5.38 In the Human Rights Annual Report 2005, issued by the United Kingdom, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in July 2005, it was stated that:

"One outstanding area of concern is the punishment of children. We have received an increasing number of reports of juvenile offenders being sentenced to death or lashing. In several instances, these barbarous punishments have apparently been carried out. A 16-year-old girl, Atefeh Rajabi, was reportedly

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

hanged in public in August 2004 for "acts incompatible with chastity." Foreign Secretary Jack Straw and other ministers have expressed our strong concern. These punishments violate Iran's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In January 2005, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child also made clear its concern; we urge Iran to comply with the Committee's recommendations." **[26j] (p58)**

Return to Contents

COURT DOCUMENTATION

5.39 Both a Danish fact-finding mission report of September 2000 and a Belgian mission report of 2002 noted that in the case of court summonses an attempt was always made to deliver a summons to appear before a court to the addressee in person. If the person concerned was not there, however, the summons might be delivered to a family member. If there was nobody present who could accept the summons, it was taken back to the court, where the judge decided whether an attempt should be made to arrest the person concerned. Such a decision depended on the nature of the case. However, a person might not be arrested without a written order from a judge. **[41a] (p22) [43] (p17)**

5.40 The Danish report went on to record that Public Courts have the power to issue arrest warrants in all types of cases unless the case in question falls under the jurisdiction of the Revolutionary Court. The report noted that the process was as follows: arrest warrant is sent by the Public Court to the relevant police station, which is responsible for arresting the person concerned. The arrest warrant is shown to the person under arrest but not served. It is subsequently returned to the issuing court. Forms used for issuing arrest warrants are printed at a special government printing house. The form is completed by hand and contains the following information about the person under arrest:

- First name and surname
- Address
- Occupation
- Father's name
- ID-card number

Once it has been completed, the form is stamped and signed by the court. Only one arrestee can be covered by the form. The reason for the issuing of the arrest warrant is not normally stated. **[41a] (p23)**

Return to Contents

LEGAL RIGHTS AND DETENTION

5.41 Amnesty International states in its report, "Iran: A legal system that fails to protect freedom of expression and association, 2001" that:

"The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran contains many important safeguards of rights and freedoms that are guaranteed in the international instruments to which Iran is a state party including those relating to freedom of expression and fair trial. These seek to ensure that all individuals enjoy the same rights under law and the human dignity that follows from this." **[9j] (p1)**

It goes on to say that "Freedom of expression and association is curtailed by legal restrictions and by flaws in the administration of justice." These restrictions, which go beyond both the Iranian Constitution and the international human rights treaties to which Iran is a state party, have resulted in unfair trials and the imprisonment of prisoners of conscience. **[9j] (p2)**

5.42 Restrictive, contradictory and vaguely worded provisions contained in the Penal Code, the Theologians' Law – (a body of law that deals with offences committed by clerics) – and the Public and Revolutionary Courts' Procedural Law, undermine the right to freedom of expression. For example, the Penal Code prohibits a range of activities, including some connected with journalism or public discourse, which do not amount to recognisably criminal offences. **[9j] (p2)**

5.43 According to the USSD report 2004, little reliable information was available regarding the number of disappearances during the year. In the period immediately following arrest, many detainees are held incommunicado and denied access to lawyers and family members. **[4p] (p2)**

5.44 On 19 July 2002, it was reported in a written statement by France Liberté, a Non-Governmental Organisation in special consultative status to the UN Commission on Human Rights, that Iranian cities have been the scene of an unprecedented spate of savage punishments including amputation of fingers and legs as well as floggings that have been carried out in public. **[10s]**

5.45 According to Reuters, in March 2002 the reformist parliament approved the outline of a bill banning the use of torture to gain information from detainees. Before becoming law, the bill would go through a second reading and be approved by the Guardian Council. **[5aa]** On the 9 June 2002 the Guardian Council rejected and returned the bill for more "clarification." **[8g]** The bill was stuck in the legislative process due to the inability of all parties to agree on a suitable definition of torture. **[21av]** According to a HRW press release on 7 June 2004:

"The Iranian government has intensified its campaign of torture, arbitrary arrests, and detentions against political critics, Human Rights Watch said in a report released today. Iran's outgoing reformist parliament in May passed legislation to prohibit torture, but without effective implementation, the law remains an empty gesture." **[8j] (p1)**

5.46 According to a FIDH report of July 2004:

"In April 2004, the Head of the Judiciary, Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi, issued instructions for the judiciary, the police and the security forces asking them to respect the law: "During arrests or questioning, blindfolding, restraining, pestering and insulting of detainees must be avoided. ... Agents carrying out interrogation should not hide their faces, nor stand behind the accused backs, nor take them to secret locations ... All forms of torture aiming to obtain confessions is banned, and confessions obtained in this way have no legal or religious value...."The directive added that arrests must be the exception, carried out within a legal timeframe and "where possible, families must be informed." In May 2004, the Council of Guardians approved a bill banning torture. The legislation strengthens rights enshrined in Iranian law and the Constitution, by giving the force of law to the abovementioned directives. It

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

should be noted, however, that the bill does not cover corporal punishments, although they are covered by the UN Convention against torture. In addition, there is no indication on how this new legislation will be respected in practice." **[56c] (p11)**

5.47 On 16 March 2003, some 107 MPs called for Iran's accession to the Convention against Torture. **[21av]** On 12 August 2003, the Guardian Council rejected the motion on joining the convention on banning torture, arguing that it contradicted the constitution and would increase public expenditure. **[21bm]** After an amended version was resubmitted the Guardian Council again referred it back to parliament on 9 September 2003, requesting that yet more changes be made. **[21bn]** In December 2003 it was reported by the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs that Iran had agreed to sign up to the Convention against Torture. **[69a]** According to a report in the Guardian newspaper on 29 April 2004, on 28 April 2004 the head of the Iranian judiciary issued an order banning the use of torture and other abuses: an unprecedented acknowledgement of the regime's record of repression. **[16e]**

Return to Contents

DEATH PENALTY

5.48 According to the UNHCR/ACCORD: 7th European Country of Origin Information Seminar Berlin, 11-12 June 2001 – Final Report:

"By law the death penalty can be carried out for offences such as espionage, murder, armed robbery, abduction, rape, adultery or incest, sexual intercourse between a non-Muslim man and a Muslim woman, homosexual intercourse, drug smuggling, the use of arms to spread fear or alarm among the people or deprive them of their freedom or security, or the spreading of corruption on earth (mofsed)." **[3c] (p83)**

According to AI, in 2001 there was an instance in which a thirteen-year-old boy Azizullah Shenwari was sentenced to death for drug trafficking although this was later commuted to life imprisonment and is currently under appeal. **[9k]** On 28 September 2003, it was announced that the Judiciary had drafted a bill, to be presented to Majlis, raising the minimum age for capital punishment from 15 to18 and excluding children under 12 from all punishment and excluding under 18s from being able to receive jail terms or lashes. **[18b]** However, according to an AI report on 23 August 2004:

"The execution of a girl who was believed to be 16 years old, Ateqeh Rajabi, in Neka in the northern Iranian province of Mazandaran, on 15 August, for "acts incompatible with chastity" (amal-e manafe-ye 'ofat). Ateqeh Rajabi was reportedly publicly hanged on a street in the city centre of Neka. Amnesty International was alarmed that this execution was carried out despite reports that Ateqeh Rajabi was not believed to be mentally competent, and that she reportedly did not have access to a lawyer at any stage." **[9ah]**

The bill to raise the minimum age for execution to 18 was reportedly under consideration by parliament in December 2003. However, the bill is not believed to have been ratified by the Guardian Council, Iran's highest legislative body. [9ah] In January 2005 AI stated that:

"Iran is already a party to international conventions that prohibit child executions, and for the last three years Iranian authorities have been considering legislation that would prohibit the use of the death penalty for offences committed by persons under the age of 18. It is time for Iran to make good on its international promises and stop child executions." **[9ai]**

5.49 The number of executions recorded by Amnesty International in Iran from January until June 2001 was 44, **[3c]** and is recorded as having reached 139 by year's end, although the true figure may be much higher. **[9n]** According to a written statement submitted by France Liberté, an NGO, to the UN Commission on Human Rights, the number of announced executions since the beginning of 2002 – in six months – amounted to 200, indicating a 50 per cent rise compared with the same period in 2001. **[10s]** By February 2003 Amnesty International had recorded a total of at least 111 executions in Iran **[9r]** and by 28 May 2003, when the Annual Report for 2003 was published, they reported that at least 113 people, including six women, had been executed, many in public. At least two people were reportedly executed by stoning and at least one execution was broadcast on television. **[9z]** In late 2002 the head of the Supreme Administrative court announced a moratorium on the practice of stoning. **[21ay]** As in previous years, there was a surge in public executions and floggings between July and September. At least 84 people were flogged. The true numbers of executions and floggings may have been considerably higher. Political organisations, for example, reported that 450 people were executed in 2002. **[9z] (p3)** Amnesty International, in their death sentences and executions statistics for 2003, give a figure of at least 108 executions, **[9ad]** and for 2004 at least 159. **[9aj]**

5.50 According to the USSD report 2004:

"Exiles and human rights monitors alleged that many of those supposedly executed for criminal offenses in the past, such as narcotics trafficking, actually were political dissidents. Supporters of outlawed political groups, or in the case of the Mujahedin-e Khalq, a terrorist organization, were believed to constitute a number of those executed each year." **[4p] (p2)**

The Iranian authorities do not permit visits to imprisoned dissidents by human rights monitors. **[4f] (p4)**

5.51 It was reported by BBC Monitoring on 22 June 2004 that:

"Minister of Justice Esma'il Shushtari said on Tuesday [22 June] that the ministry will forward a bill on political crimes to Majlis once again five years after the first bill to that effect. .... He told reporters that the justice ministry will study the bill already rejected by the Guardian Council once again and offer it to the parliament to become a law. Political activists and those accused of press charges are complaining that court hearing for them should be held in presence of a jury as stipulated by the constitution. But, the Judiciary says that it does not recognize political crime, because there is not a law to this effect and the constitutional provision should turn into an executive law by the parliament. The sixth parliament formulated a law to require the Judiciary to observe the need for presence of a jury in the court hearings for those accused of political crime, but, the Guardian Council rejected it saying that it goes contrary to interpretation of the constitution." **[21cn]**

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

Return to Contents

STONING

5.52 UNHCR reported in their "Comments on the April 2005 country report" of August 2005 that:

"While the Iranian judiciary has issued a moratorium on stoning sentences in 2002, there were contradicting opinions among high rank clericals. On December 26, 2002, the head of the Supreme Administrative Court Qorban Ali Dorri-Najafabadi said the practice has been stopped for a while (Iranian newspaper Hayat-e Now, December 29, 2002). It was also reported by a Majlis member that the head of Judiciary Ayatollah Mahmud Hashemi-Shahrudi had sent a directive to judges instructing them to stop issuing death verdicts by stoning (Iranian newspaper Tehran Times, December 28, 2002). However, this has not been officially documented. **[3h] (p1)** On December 29, 2002, Ayatollah Gholamreza Rezvani, a jurisconsult member of the Guardian Council said: "There is no replacement for stoning as a sanction because the ruling of Islam does not depend on the tastes of the society. Stoning is a sanction for ethical problems such as adultery, and there is no other sanction for having intercourse with a married person. No other punishment could be suggested as a replacement for stoning" (Tehran Times, December 28, 2002) **[3h] (p2)**

"According to Italian news agency ANSA on 18 May 2005, a 25-year-old Iranian woman was sentenced to stoning for having extramarital sex with a young man whom she later killed with the help of her husband (ANSA, Woman Sentenced to Stoning for Adultery, 18 May 2005)." **[3h] (p2)**

"According to Iranian newspaper Etemaad, Iran's Supreme Court has reportedly upheld the verdicts and has confirmed that the woman only identified by her first name Massoumeh will be stoned to death and her husband (sic) (Iran Focus, Woman sentenced to stoning, man to execution, 5 Feb 2005)." **[3h] (p2)**

"On 28 January 2005, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child called on Iran to abolish the death penalty as well as amputation, flogging and stoning for people who committed crimes as minors (Reuters, UN urges Iran to halt execution of young offenders, 28 Jan 2005)." **[3h] (p2)**

"According to Reuters report on 18 December 2004, an Iranian official said he was waiting for orders on whether to stone or hang a woman convicted of adultery, the latest in a chain of death sentences passed against women for "fornication" (Reuters, Iranian adulteress faces noose or stoning, 18 December 2004)." **[3h] (p2)**

5.53 According to the AI Report 2005:

"At least 159 people were executed in 2004, including at least one minor. Scores of others, including at least 10 people who were under 18 at the time the crime was committed were sentenced to death. It was not known how many of these sentences had been upheld by the Supreme Court. The true figures were believed to be considerably higher. The death penalty continued to be handed down for charges such as "enmity against God" or "morality crimes" that did not reflect internationally recognizable criminal charges. On 15 August, Atefeh Rajabi, reportedly aged 16, was hanged. She was sentenced after a grossly

unfair trial during which she was publicly insulted and doubts regarding her mental state appeared to be ignored." **[9d] (p4)**

Return to Contents

INTERNAL SECURITY

5.54 The constitution says that reputation, life, property and dwellings are protected from trespass except as "provided by law." This is used to enable security forces to enter homes and offices, monitor telephone conversations and open mail without court authorisation. **[4f] (p6)**

5.55 According to the USSD report 2004:

"Several agencies share responsibility for law enforcement and maintenance of order, including the Ministry of Intelligence and Security, the Law Enforcement Forces under the Ministry of Interior, and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, a military force established after the revolution. A paramilitary volunteer force known as the Basiji, and various gangs of men known as the Ansar-e Hezbollah (Helpers of the Party of God), or "plain clothes," aligned with extreme conservative members of the leadership, acted as vigilantes. Civilian authorities did not fully maintain effective control of the security forces, and there were instances in which elements of the security forces acted independently of government authority. The regular and the paramilitary security forces both committed numerous, serious human rights abuses." **[4p] (p1)**

5.56 According to GlobalSecurity.org:

"The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) or Pasdaran was formed following the Islamic Revolution of 1979 in an effort to consolidate several paramilitary forces into a single force loyal to the new regime and to function as a counter to the influence and power of the regular military. Although the IRGC operates independently of the regular armed forces, it is often considered to be a military force in its own right due to its important role in Iranian defense. The IRGC consists of ground, naval, and aviation troops which parallel the structure of the regular military. From the beginning of the new Islamic regime, the Pasdaran (Pasdaran-e Enghelab-e Islami, or Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, or Revolutionary Guards) functioned as a corps of the faithful. Its role in national security evolved from securing the regime and eliminating opposition forces to becoming a branch of the military establishment." **[80a]**

5.57 The Mobilization of the Dispossessed, or Sepah-e Basiji, is a paramilitary force some 300,000 strong. The Basiji were created to help the military campaign against Iraq in the years 1980-1988. Members are reportedly recruited from farms, factories, schools and government offices, i.e. from all parts of the population. Their tasks include monitoring the daily lives of the citizens and combating social corruption including ensuring that the clothing and behaviour of women conforms to strict Islamic rules. Structurally, the Basiji are part of the IRGC, and comprise those conscripts with a more zealous religious agenda. It is not clear, however, if they are separated into special units or battalions solely on this basis. Concerning connections with the Pasdaran, it is quite plausible that a Pasdaran could approach a Basij and give him orders. Still, this would rather have to be seen along the lines of this person being a senior military

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

officer, someone who is notionally superior to a conscript or low-ranking officer. **[3c] (p65)**

5.58 According to the Country of Origin Information Seminar Final Report, Berlin June 2001, the Ashura Brigades were reportedly created in 1993 after anti-government riots erupted in various Iranian cities. In 1998 they consisted of 17,000 Islamic militia men and women, and were composed of elements of the Revolutionary Guards and the Basiji volunteer militia. **[3b]**

5.59 According to the Documentation, Information and Research Branch, Immigration and Refugee Board, Canada (DIRB) in a report dated 1997 and an UNHCR report dated 1998, the Hezbollahi "partisans of God" consist of religious zealots who consider themselves as preservers of the Revolution. They have been active in harassing government critics and intellectuals; have firebombed bookstores and disrupted meetings. They are said to gather at the invitation of the state-affiliated media and generally act without meaningful police restraint or fear of persecution. **[2c] (p12)[3a] (p12)**

Return to Contents

COMPOSITION OF THE SECURITY FORCES AND THEIR DIVISION OF LABOUR

5.60 According to the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, (DCAF) in a paper dated August 2004:

"The Islamic Republic has at its disposal an entire array of military forces and revolutionary security forces besides a number of parastatal organizations, called bonyad (foundations). Among the most important defence and security forces are the regular army (artesh), the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (or IRGC), and the "Mobilization Army", or Basij militia and the Law Enforcement Forces, (LEF). Technically, the revolutionary reconstruction organization, the "Ministry of Construction Jihad", is also part of the security forces, because in emergencies it is also in a position to apply coercive means to implement Islamic order in rural areas. Besides these officially recognized forces in Iran we also find various gangs of men known as the "Helpers of God" (ansar-e hezbollah), who act as vigilantes aligned with extreme conservative members of the power-elite. These vigilant groups attack and intimidate critics and dissidents and usually go unpunished because of the bias of the judiciary dominated by conservatives. In general every single organisation pursues a primary mission. But in several fields the limits of competences and the overlapping of tasks give rise to mutual competition and sometimes even a lack of unity of command. During and after the Iran-Iraq war, division of labour emerged between the most important components of the defence and security sector. This division of labour which has never actually formulated as the system's official policy can be described as follows: The regular army retains its primary responsibility for the defence of Iran's borders. In contrast to this, the IRGC keeps its major role as the defender of the system and its representatives against internal enemies while it continues simultaneously to have an albeit secondary mission of assisting the army to fend off external threats. In addition, the IRGC has some other responsibilities too. One of them is safeguarding internal security in the border areas, especially by waging the war against illegal drugs (in conjunction with the Law Enforcement Forces) coming from Afghanistan and Pakistan. Another one is the deployment of relief forces for natural disasters like floods and earthquakes. Still another task is the active

assistance of supporters of Tehran's Islamic revolution abroad which sometimes goes hand in hand with the proactive fight against exiled militant opponents of the regime. Regarding the Basij, its major responsibility is to uphold security in major urban areas." **[85a] (p6)**

Return to Contents

PRISONS AND PRISON CONDITIONS

5.61 According to the USSD report 2004:

"Prison conditions in the country were poor. Many prisoners are held in solitary confinement or denied adequate food or medical care in order to force confessions. After its February 2003 visit, the U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions reported that "for the first time since its establishment, [the Working Group] has been confronted with a strategy of widespread use of solitary confinement for its own sake and not for traditional disciplinary purposes." The Working Group described Sector 209 of Evin Prison as a "prison within a prison," designed for the "systematic, large-scale use of absolute solitary confinement, frequently for long periods." **[4p] (p4)**

Prison guards reportedly intimidate family members of detainees and torture detainees in the presence of family members. **[4k] (p5)**

5.62 According to a January 2002 report by the UN Commission on Human Rights, the press reported a statement by the head of the National Prisons Organisation stating that there were about 160,000 inmates of whom about two-thirds were in prison for drug-related offences, that most of the inmates were aged between 22 and 38, and that 5,000 were women. Moreover, the prison population had increased by over 40 per cent in the previous year, and the prisons were now housing more than 100,000 inmates beyond their capacity. Some commentators have questioned whether the figure of 160,000 includes the inmates of the detention centres run by many of the security agencies which were supposed to have been integrated with the National Prisons Organisation; this has not yet been affected. **[10p] (p8)** The USSD report 2004 reports that:

"The 2001 report by the UNSR noted a significant increase in the prison population and reports of overcrowding and unrest. In July, the UK-based International Center for Prison Studies reported that 133,658 prisoners occupied facilities constructed to hold a maximum of 65,000 persons. In November, the Iran Prison Organization reported a prison population of 134,103." **[4p] (p4)**

5.63 According to the USSD report 2001, the dominant feature of Iranian prisons is their overcrowding and this seems to have had the inevitable results of prison disturbances on the one hand and breakouts on the other. It also noted that HIV/AIDS and other diseases were spreading rapidly throughout the prison population. **[4k] (p5)** A Centre for Harm Reduction Report (CHR) of January 2002 said that, in 2000, drug users constituted more than half of the prison population and the number of inmates incarcerated for drug-related crimes was 80,415. **[34]** By September 2002 it was being reported that up to two-thirds of Iranian prisoners were in jail on drug-related offences. **[5ar]** Eighty per cent of prison authorities acknowledged that drug use took place inside prisons although not at a great rate. **[34]**

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

5.64 According to a UN Report of 2002, one of the main plans to deal with these problems seems to be the establishment of a parallel system of camps for drug-related offences, to be located in remote parts of the country. The Director of the Prisons Organisation reports that eight such camps are now in existence. **[10p] (p8)** Human Rights Watch (2002) and Freedom House (2003) also reported on the proliferation of unofficial, illegal detention centres, such as the so-called Prison 59 in Tehran, administered by the Intelligence Ministry and the Revolutionary Guards, **[47a]** which also gave cause for concern. **[8f] (p3)**

5.65 The first UN human rights monitors to visit the country for seven years said on 26 February 2003 that Iranians suffer large-scale arbitrary detentions and some prisons operate outside the control of the judicial system. Although the head of the five-member team examining arbitrary detentions said the authorities had cooperated fully with its requests, he raised concerns about unaccountable prisons, detainees being held without access to legal defence, violations of freedom of expression and other abuses. **[16d]**

5.66 According to the HRW in the June 2004 report, "Like the Dead in their Coffins":

"The number of illegal detention centers not under the direct control of the National Prisons Office is unknown. They are not officially registered as prisons, do not record the names of their prisoners, and information about their budgets, administration, and management is not known even by relevant government authorities. There are reportedly many in and around Tehran, and they appear to be growing in number." **[8j] (p14)**

5.67 Some moves have been announced in response to concerns over prison conditions. In December 2003, President Khatami announced a government probe into prison conditions **[63a]** following on from announcements relating to the use of solitary confinement and the proposed closure of some of the older prisons. **[61b]** In February 2004, a Swiss Commission on Human Rights visited and held talks with officials in charge of administration of the prisons, the judiciary and Foreign Ministry. They also visited and inspected some prisons and rehabilitation centres. **[52d]**

5.68 According to the AI Report 2005:

"In July, the Society for Defence of the Rights of Prisoners was granted permission to operate. The organization aimed to inform prisoners and their families of their rights and to provide material support to detainees, through training and education. However, members of the Society's Board faced politically motivated criminal charges. For example, Emaddedin Baqi was sentenced to one year's imprisonment by an appeals court in October on charges of spreading anti-state propaganda. Earlier in the month his passport had been confiscated as he prepared to leave the country to address a number of human rights conferences in North America." **[9d] (p3)**

On 24 July 2005 the BBC reported that in a report drafted over several months the Iranian judiciary had said that human rights abuses have been taking place in the country's jails such as prison guards who had ignored a legal order banning the use of torture by blindfolding and beating detainees. It also criticised police for arresting people without sufficient evidence. **[21]**

Return to Contents

MILITARY SERVICE

5.69 According to the USSD report 2002:

> "Article 144 of the Constitution states that "the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran must be an Islamic army," which is "committed to an Islamic ideology," and must "recruit into its service individuals who have faith in the objectives of the Islamic Revolution and are devoted to the cause of achieving its goals." However, members of religious minority communities sometimes served in the military." **[4m] (p13)**

In August 2002, the Regular Armed Forces numbered about 520,000, **[1b] (p2111)** including conscripts: army 325,000, Revolutionary Guard Corps Pasdaran Inquilab some 125,000, navy 18,000, and airforce around 52,000. There are some 350,000 reserves. **[1b] (p2111)** It is believed there are a few hundred thousand men in active service. **[3c]** The military is entrusted by the constitution with the task of protecting the independence, territorial integrity and system of government of the Islamic Republic. **[3a] (p10)** Paramilitary forces comprise an estimated 300,000 volunteers of the Basij and some 40,000 under the command of the Ministry of the Interior. **[1b] (p2111)** Iranian men become eligible for conscription for a 21-month period of compulsory military service in the year they reach 19 although the voluntary recruitment age is 16. **[30]** Permanent military exemptions may be government-granted, or medically certified. There are a number of conditions for exemption, relating to age, disability, education and date of departure from Iran. The disabled, sole family guardians and support, and only sons, are exempted without cost. Men who left Iran after 1990 may purchase exemption for $1,000-3,000. Those with PhDs or BAs who left Iran before March 1990 may pay up to $16,600. **[25]** Men who are continuing graduate studies abroad who pay their own expenses will be granted a full exemption. Those who qualify are able to return to Iran periodically throughout their studies. Men born after 1958 that have degrees in fields deemed essential by the state, such as medicine, pharmacy, and dentistry, are not eligible for exemption. **[2c] (p23)** In a new regulation passed by the Majlis in February 2004 young men who have successfully undergone military training in the Basij or other military centres will also be able to purchase exemption. **[22b]**

5.70 According to the DIRB, the penalty for draft avoidance in peacetime is an extra six months to two years' service, and in wartime up to ten years' extra service or punishment at the discretion of the convicting judge. **[2c] (p24)** During 2001 it was reported in the Country of Origin Information Seminar, Final Report , Berlin June 2001 that a bill was submitted to the Majles and supported by the Army, suggesting that every year it would be possible to exempt 100,000 potential draftees provided that a sum of ten million Rials (USD 5,700) was paid. The bill was passed by the Majles and approved by the Council of Guardians but vetoed by the Leader. At present there are new regulations with respect to temporarily postponing military service for those who wish to further their education abroad. A sum of 30 million Rials (USD 17,100) needs to be deposited by the applicant to the Military Service Department. If the applicant does not return, the sum will be forfeited. In case of return the sum will be reimbursed but military service will still need to be completed. **[3c]** Time still to be served and prison sentences imposed for desertion may now be bought off. **[19a] (p21)**

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

5.71 War Resisters International 1998 reports that the right to conscientious objection is not legally recognised and there are no provisions for substitute service. **[25]** Iran appears as a co-signatory to a letter dated 24 April 2002 addressed to the UN Commission on Human Rights concerning the question of conscientious objection. It states that Iran does not recognise the universal applicability of conscientious objection to military service. **[10q]**

MEDICAL SERVICES

5.72 According to information from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) dated January 2002, there are two types of hospitals in Iran, private and governmental. To receive treatment in the governmental hospitals, one must belong to the social security scheme whereby the employer pays the subscriptions for the employee, which would then entitles them to subsidised medical treatment and medication. In Tehran and other larger cities such as Shiraz and Isfahan there are many well-reputed hospitals. These are staffed by physicians and specialists, most of whom are very experienced and internationally trained. There is an extensive range of specialist care found in Tehran, both in the private and governmental sector. For complex medical conditions where treatment is not available locally, the patients can apply to the Supreme Medical Council for financial assistance towards payment of medical expenses overseas. The Supreme Medical Council consists of a group of specialist doctors who assess and examine each case to determine whether such assistance in funding should be allocated. **[26a]**

DRUGS

5.73 According to the World Health Organisation, in 2002 most medications were available locally under various generic and company labels. **[28b]** Generic inhibitors for HIV/AIDS are also produced. **[21bb]** According to the FCO, those medicines not available, which are approved by the US Food and Drug Administration, can be ordered through the Red Crescent Society by presenting a doctor's prescription. The prices for medications bought in Iran are much cheaper than the UK prescription and dispensing charges. There has also been considerable development in the pharmaceutical industry in Iran during the last decade. The essential raw material for the majority of medicines is imported from overseas and then the medicine produced and packaged locally. This is again subsidised by the Government. There is also a black market for certain types of foreign medications and the cost of such medications is quite high in comparison to those readily available at pharmacies. **[26a]**

DRUG ADDICTION

5.74 According to the Centre for Harm Reduction Report 2002, drug addiction is considered a crime but the authorities are ready to consider drug use as a medical problem. Drug users who are undergoing treatment are not meant to be persecuted, nor are the specialists offering treatment. The costs of diagnoses, treatment, medicines and rehabilitation are to be paid by the addicts according to the approved tariffs but the Government will finance the costs for those unable to pay. It is up to the judge to distinguish whether the person is an addict or a trafficker, for example, a positive test for opium showed the person was an addict while possession was interpreted as being a trafficker. **[34]**

See also paragraph 6.212 for further information on the illegal drugs situation.

5.75 According to the CHR Report 2002, the State Welfare Organisation, affiliated to the Ministry of Health, is in charge of treatment and rehabilitation of drug users. Until recently there were 12 treatment and rehabilitation centres in the country with one centre for women. The centres were described as having the infrastructure of an overcrowded prison. These centres have now been closed and the new approach is the introduction of outpatient treatment centres. **[34]** In 2000, the number of out-patient centres in provincial capitals was 100 compared to 65 centres in 1999 and 40 in 1998. It was anticipated that the treatment centres would offer services to over 100,000 volunteer addicts per annum. **[5at] [34]** In recent years a number of treatment facilities have been established by the private sector and are openly advertised in the press. The qualifications of the people running these clinics, and the outcomes of their activities, still remain largely untested. **[34]**

5.76 According to the Beckley Foundation in a report dated July 2005:

"A tough anti-drugs campaign was launched in Iran following the revolution that established the Islamic Republic in 1979. Individuals caught in possession of drugs received fines, imprisonment and corporal punishment. The death penalty was prescribed for serious drug offences. Despite these measures, drug use and drug trafficking have continued to increase, and Iran has become the principal transit country for drugs from Afghanistan. In 2002, Iran accounted for a quarter of world opiate seizures. At this time, it was officially estimated that there were between 200,000 and 300,000 drug injectors in the country, and this is widely regarded as an underestimate. The costs of Iran's drug problem include: high levels of dependency and addiction; strains on the capacity of the criminal justice system; increases in drug related deaths; and high rates of HIV/AIDS infection among injecting drug users. There is growing recognition in Iran of the limits of enforcement, and the importance of the medical and social dimensions of drug misuse. This has resulted in improvements in drug treatment and expansion of harm reduction services." **[87a] (p1)**

Return to Contents

PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT

5.77 According to a report in the Psychiatric Times in January 2002, in Iran, a village based primary care system serves over 60 regions of the country, with village centres linked to surrounding hospitals and medical schools. The national health programme supports training in mental health care. The Government has also established four regional centres for the prevention of mental disorders. **[27]**

5.78 According to the WHO in 2001:

"With a view to expanding mental health services in 2001 and beyond, Iran's national mental health programme was being revised, a new mental health act was in preparation, and efforts were being made to increase inpatient and outpatient mental health facilities and counselling services." **[28a]**

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

5.79 On 5 October 1998, it was reported on the BBC News that a private member's bill to make the administrative and technical affairs of the medical institutions in Iran consistent with the principles of holy Shari'ah was approved in 1998. The bill applied to all state and private medically related institutions set up with the permission of the Ministry of Health. **[5g]**

Return to Contents

HIV/AIDS

5.80 According to the CHR Report 2002, the first AIDS case was identified in 1986. The cumulative total to late 1997 was 1,297 cases of HIV infection and 192 cases of AIDS. The Iranian National Committee on AIDS had reported a cumulative total of 1,953 HIV/AIDS cases by April 2000. As of July 2001 there were 2,458 reported HIV infections and 357 AIDS cases. However, in 1999 it was estimated 25,000 people in Iran were HIV positive while in the same year the Ministry of Health estimated there were 60,000 people infected with HIV or AIDS. **[34]** In August 2002 it was announced that, based on the latest available figures, over 3,912 people were HIV afflicted and that 3,680 had contracted AIDS, **[5au]** later adjusted upwards to 4,200 in November 2002. **[21ba]** These figures had increased by November 2003 to 5,870 people with AIDS of which 53 had full-blown AIDS and 694 people had died. **[21ck]**

5.81 According to the CHR Report 2002, it appears there are scant HIV prevention programmes in place among drug users or drug injectors in Iran and what is available is unlikely to be specific and/or explicit about the ways to avoid becoming HIV infected. It has been reported that there are no printed materials on HIV/AIDS for drug users and that they are a hidden population and difficult to gain access to. Efforts to distribute needles and syringes to imprisoned drug users has met with strong objections **[34]** although efforts are now being made to try and contain the problem within the prison community by segregating addicts. **[21az]** In recent times, however, harm reduction pilot programmes have been introduced by the Ministry of Health in the three provinces most affected by injecting drug use – Kermanshah, Shiraz and Tehran. **[34]**

5.82 Although a National Aids Policy (NAP) does exist, and HIV infections are highest among intravenous drug users (IDUs), the coordination of activities between the NAP and the National Drug Control Headquarters is generally lacking. Brochures have been prepared for schools and families on the issues of HIV/AIDS but none has specifically been produced for drug users. The main focus of the policy appears to be to control the nation's blood supply and the prevention of HIV transmission through medical injections. Specific mention and/or activities aimed at drug users have been omitted. **[34]** On the 23 August 2002 the Government approved an anti-AIDS/HIV Virus Directive to create a nationwide committee, which would include the head of the Iran Red Crescent Society, to combat the AIDS virus. The figures for 2002 issued by the Health Ministry gave the total number of those HIV positive as 23,000-25,000 and the number of deaths as a result of AIDS-related illness as 674 with 50 still receiving treatment. **[21st]** However the UNAIDS Global HIV/AIDS Report 2004 estimated the number of HIV cases at 31,000 and deaths at 800. **[10e]**

5.83 According to the USSD report 2004:

"According to late 2003 estimates by a prominent local physician, there are approximately 25,000 to 30,000 HIV positive citizens; a 2001 estimate suggested an adult prevalence rate of less than 0.1 percent. There is a free anonymous testing clinic in Tehran. The Government supported the creation of an HIV awareness film to show in schools and has not interfered with private HIV-related NGOs. Nevertheless, persons infected with HIV were discriminated against in schools and workplaces." **[4p] (p19)**

Return to Contents

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

5.84 According to USSD report 2004:

"In May, the Majlis passed a Comprehensive Law on the Rights of the Disabled; however, subsequent media reports indicate that there has been no implementing regulation. There was no current information available regarding whether the Government has legislated or otherwise mandated accessibility for persons with disabilities, or whether discrimination against persons with disabilities is prohibited; nor is there any information available on which government agencies are responsible for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities." **[4p] (p18)**

However, the Cable News Network reported in 1996 on the harsh conditions in an institution for children with learning difficulties who had been abandoned by their parents. Film clips showed children tied or chained to their beds, in filthy conditions, and without appropriate care. It is not known to what extent this represents the typical treatment of the disabled **[4h]** although one group, those who were disabled during the Iraq-Iran war, have access to treatment provided by the State Social Welfare Organisation or some Foundations (Bonyads) where their medical charges are totally or partially paid. See also paragraph 3.03 for further information.

Return to Contents

EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

5.85 According to Europa 2003 and Europa 2004, primary education, beginning at age six and lasting five years, is compulsory for all children and is provided free of charge although this has not been fully implemented in rural areas. **[1b] (p2112)** Secondary education may last for a further seven years, divided into two cycles; one of three, and another of four years. **[1a] (p440)** **See also paragraph 6.192 et seq.**

5.86 According to Europa 2005, in 1996 primary enrolment in schools included 90 per cent of children aged between 6 and 11 years – 91 per cent of boys, 88 per cent of girls. In 1996 the total enrolment at primary and secondary schools combined amounted to 86 per cent of the school-age population – 90 per cent boys, 83 per cent girls. **[1a] (p440)** In 2001 the illiteracy rate within the population over the age of 15 years was 83.8 per cent for males and 70.2 per cent for females. **[1a] (p445)**

5.87 Expenditure on education by the Government represented 16.8 per cent of total spending in 2002/2003. **[1a] (p456)**

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

5.88 According to Europa 2003, there were 37 universities, including 16 in Tehran. There were 809,567 students enrolled at Iran's public colleges and universities in 2002/2003, in addition to the 864,190 students enrolled at the Islamic Azad University. **[1b] (p2164)** The USSD report 2003 states that:

"The Government restricted academic freedom. Government informers were common on university campuses. Admission to universities was politicized; all applicants had to pass "character tests" in which officials screened out applicants critical of the Government's ideology. To obtain tenure, professors had to refrain from criticism of the authorities." **[4n] (p8)**

Return to Contents

6. Human rights

6.A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

GENERAL

6.01 The Secretary-General to the United Nations, Kofi Annan, defined human rights obligations when he spoke at the University of Tehran on 10 December 1997. He said that:

"Human rights are what make us human. They are the principles by which we create the sacred home for human dignity... Human rights are the expression of those traditions of tolerance in all cultures that are the basis of peace and progress. Human rights, properly understood and justly interpreted, are foreign to no culture and native to all nations." **[10b] (p2)**

6.02 According to AI, Iran is a signatory to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and five other international instruments. **[9j] (p1)** It is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child but has a reservation to provisions or articles of the Convention that are incompatible with Islamic laws. Some parties consider this blanket reservation to be incompatible with the spirit of the treaty. **[3i]** It is not a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women or the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. **[10c]** On 12 August 2003 Iran's senior legislative body, the Guardian Council (Shoura-ye Negahban) refused to ratify parliament's proposal of 23 July 2003 to accede to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. **[21br] [9y]** Neither is it a signatory to the optional Protocols to the ICCPR including that aimed to abolish the death penalty. **[9c] (p41)** Amnesty International continues to raise Iran's continued use of the death penalty as a major concern. **[9h][9i]**

6.03 In 1996 the Government established a human rights committee in the Majlis and a human rights commission in the judiciary, but observers believe that they lack independence. Also, in 1996 the government allowed the first visit in five years of the UN Human Rights Commission Special Rapporteur. The UN Special Rapporteur and Human Rights Watch reported that the government was generally co-operative during their visits. However, the government continues to deny the universality of human rights and attempts to discredit critics. The UN Special Rapporteur for Religious Freedom and the UN Special Rapporteur for the Freedom of Expression also travelled to Iran in 1996. **[4a] (p6)** In July 2002 Iran's permanent representative to the United Nations in Geneva issued an open invitation to the representatives of the UN Human Rights Commission to visit Iran **[5az]** and the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention visited between 15 and 27 February 2003. **[10t]** The UNSR's mandate ended during April 2002 with the defeat of the resolution at the Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR). **[4m] (p2)** His mandate had allowed him to report on the human rights situation there, in support of those striving for progress in human rights. However, the Iranian authorities had prevented him from visiting since 1996. **[26h]** Although the resolution narrowly failed, it led to the Iranians making a

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

number of positive gestures. One of these was inviting the EU to engage in a dialogue on human rights. The first round of dialogue took place in mid-December 2002, followed by a second in mid-March 2003. **[26i]** Since 2002 the EU and Iran have maintained a human rights dialogue. The most recent meeting was in June 2004. An evaluation by the EU Presidency in October 2004 found that there had been little overall progress in human rights since the start of the dialogue and recommended ways that the dialogue process could become more effective. The EU is encouraging Iran to renew its commitment to the dialogue and to agree improvements to the process. **[26j]** In July 2003 the first-ever visit to Iran by the UN Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression and Opinion was postponed at the Iranian Government's request. The reason given by officials was that there were difficulties in arranging the representatives' schedule. The visit would have come at a moment when human rights were under strong pressure in Iran, with numerous recent arrests of liberal journalists and student leaders. **[21sr]** The visit eventually took place from 4 November to 10 November 2003.

See 6.16 below. **[10y]**

6.04 The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention which visited The Islamic Republic of Iran from 15 to 27 February 2003 visited a number of prisons, detention centres and police stations in Tehran, Shiraz and Esfahan and met government, legislative and judicial leaders, representatives of non-governmental organisations and families of prisoners. **[10x] (p2)**

6.05 The Working Group examined particularly the situation regarding detention pending trial and visiting rights, and reform of the public prosecution service and criminal procedure:

"In its recommendations the Working Group gives priority to the progressive transfer of authority from the revolutionary tribunals and clerical courts to the ordinary courts to reduce the proliferation of judicial decision-making bodies, review of the practice of solitary confinement, the progressive freeing of prisoners of conscience, guarantees of due process and reform of imprisonment for debt. The Working Group concludes with the hope that the current obstacles to the reforms needed will be removed with a view to strengthening the rule of law." **[10x] (p2)**

6.06 According to the USSD report 2003:

"The Constitution prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention; however, these practices remained common. There is reportedly no legal time limit for incommunicado detention, nor any judicial means to determine the legality of detention. In the period immediately following arrest, many detainees were held incommunicado and denied access to lawyers and family members. Suspects may be held for questioning in jails or in local Revolutionary Guard offices. The security forces often did not inform family members of a prisoner's welfare and location. Authorities often denied visits by family members and legal counsel. In addition, families of executed prisoners did not always receive notification of the prisoners' deaths. Those who did receive such information reportedly were forced on occasion to pay the Government to retrieve the body of their relative." **[4n] (p4)**

The report continued:

"Continuing serious abuses included: summary executions; disappearances; torture and other degrading treatment, reportedly including severe punishments such as beheading and flogging; poor prison conditions; arbitrary arrest and detention; lack of habeas corpus or access to counsel and prolonged and incommunicado detention. Citizens often did not receive due process or fair trials. The Government infringed on citizens' privacy rights, and restricted freedom of speech, press, assembly, association and religion." **[4n] (p4)**

According to HRW in 1999, an example of alleged human rights abuses is that of the ill-treatment of a magazine editor released in May 1998, said to have included mock-execution. **[8d]** According to the Situation in Iran Report, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, December 1988, following a prison inspection by President Khatami in 1997, the new Director-General for prisons, Morteza Bakhtiari, told the UN Special Representative that the prison system was going to be reorganised, including the elimination of illegal detention centres. **[19a] (p10)** The USSD report 2004 states however that:

"There also are numerous detention centers not under the control of the NPO, reportedly run by "plainclothes" officers of various security and intelligence agencies, elements of the judiciary, and state-sponsored vigilante groups." **[4p] (p4)**

6.07 By 1998 progress was being made, particularly in the area of freedom of expression, **[10m] (p4)** but it faced considerable opposition. **[10m] (p1)** This included factional struggle and occasional violent tactics from hardline elements opposed to change, **[4f] (p7)** within the security forces such as the Revolutionary Guards Corps as well as outside. **[8d]** A trend toward greater freedom of expression and thought was reversed late in the year through arbitrary arrests, the closure of reform-oriented publications, and the murders of several dissident writers. **[10m] (p4)** In a BBC News report of May 2003 it was reported that in May 2003 authorities banned the publication of an open letter to Khamene – signed by 127 members of the pro-reform parliament – which warned that time was running out for a peaceful transition. **[21su]** In the context of strengthening civil society, the previous government provided some financial and organisational support for the creation of NGOs. **[19a]**

6.08 The US State Department Report of 2004 states that:

"The Government continued to restrict the work of local human rights groups. The Government denies the universality of human rights and has stated that human rights issues should be viewed in the context of a country's "culture and beliefs." **[4p] (p16)**

However, it goes on to report that:

"International human rights NGOs such as HRW and AI were not permitted to establish offices in or conduct regular investigative visits to the country. In June, AI officials visited the country as part of the European Union's (EU's) Human Rights Dialogue, joining academics and NGOs to discuss the country's implementation of international human rights standards. However, authorities barred HRW and AI representatives from attending the EU's late 2002 human rights talks in Tehran, despite the EU's invitation. An October 2003 EU-Iran human rights dialogue was held in Brussels to facilitate the participation of NGO

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

representatives. The Government also opened a human rights dialogue with Australia in 2002 and with Switzerland in October 2003, however, without tangible progress." **[4p] (p16)**

6.09 According to AI throughout 2001:

"Scores of political prisoners, including prisoners of conscience, were arrested and others continued to be held in prolonged detention without trial or following unfair trials. Some had no access to lawyers or family. In a continuing clamp-down on freedom of expression and association, led by the judiciary, scores of students, journalists and intellectuals were detained. At least 139 people, including one minor, were executed and 285 flogged, many in public." **[9q] (p1)**

6.10 According to the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, the human rights situation in Iran remained stable, but poor in 2003. Major areas of concern included arbitrary arrests and detentions (also reflected in the UN Report discussed at 6.4. above) and freedom of opinion and expression (this aspect is further discussed at 6.16. below). Concerns over Iran's human rights record led Canada to introduce a UN General Assembly resolution in November 2003. The resolution was adopted in both Third Committee and the General Assembly. **[59]** According to the US State Department's Country Report on Human Rights Practices – 2003 (released on 25 February 2004) conditions within Iran worsened particularly in terms of arbitrary use of the law to incarcerate citizens and restrict adequate access to legal recourse. **[4n] (p1)**

6.11 The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression was invited and visited Iran from 4 November 2003 to 10 November 2003. During his visit:

"The Special Rapporteur notes the willingness for reform among civil society, members of Parliament and at the highest levels of the Government, and that in most of his discussions, an improved framework for the protection of human rights, and in particular of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, was identified as an essential initial step towards reform. In this respect, he acknowledges that the Government and the Majlis are very active at the legislative level, endeavouring to improve the existing legal framework, in particular in relation to a better protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms."

"However, the Special Rapporteur (also noted and commented in his January 2004 report) that a major impediment to reform consists of various institutional locks on governmental, parliamentary and judicial processes resulting from the control exercised thereon by unelected institutions and bodies that are not accountable to the people. In the view of the Special Rapporteur, these institutions and bodies hamper reforms at the legislative level and in the functioning of the institutions." **[10y] (p2)**

6.12 According to the Human Rights Watch World Report 2005:

"Respect for basic human rights in Iran, especially freedom of expression and opinion, deteriorated in 2004. Torture and ill-treatment in detention, including indefinite solitary confinement, are used routinely to punish dissidents. The judiciary, which is accountable to Supreme Leader Ali Khamene'i rather than the elected president, Mohammad Khatami, has been at the center of many

serious human rights violations. Abuses are carried out by what Iranians call "parallel institutions": plainclothes intelligence agents, paramilitary groups that violently attack peaceful protests, and illegal and secret prisons and interrogation centers run by intelligence services." **[8k] (p1)**

6.13 According to the Amnesty International Annual Report 2005 covering the period January 2004 to December 2004:

"A new parliamentary session started in May, following controversial and flawed parliamentary elections in February which were marked by mass disqualification of sitting deputies. The elections resulted in a comprehensive victory for groups opposed to social and political reform. Some of the statements from the new parliamentarians included attacks on women said to be "improperly attired." Incoming women parliamentarians rejected previous policies aimed at gender equality.

The emerging political trend in parliament gave impetus to members of the semi-official Hezbollah, which occasionally attacked gatherings of people they believed supported opposition political movements. It also encouraged the judiciary and its security force to limit public dissent, resulting in arbitrary arrests and the detention of prisoners in secret centres. In the latter half of the year in particular, practices employed by the judiciary – including arbitrary arrest, denial of legal representation and detention in solitary confinement – were responsible for most of the human rights violations reported in the country." **[9d] (p1)**

6.14 According to the Human Rights Annual Report 2005 issued by the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FC0) in July 2005:

"There has been no significant progress in Iran since our last Annual Report; human rights have deteriorated further in many areas. We remain concerned about the limits imposed on freedom of expression and assembly, the lack of freedom of religion and the extensive use of the death penalty." **[26j] (p58)**

The report goes on to state that:

"NGOs have come under pressure. The authorities have intimidated and arrested activists and human rights defenders, including some when they returned from conferences overseas. Several people engaged in human rights work have been banned from travelling outside Iran, despite not having been convicted of a crime, as have lawyers, journalists and reformist politicians. The authorities have used the courts to harass reformers. In January 2005 Shirin Ebadi, a lawyer who in 2003 became the first Iranian and first Muslim woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize, was ordered to answer questions before a revolutionary court or face arrest. A judiciary spokesman later admitted that there were no grounds for summoning her." **[26j] (p58)**

Return to Contents

FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND THE MEDIA

6.15 According to the USSD, the constitution provides for the freedom of the press, except when published ideas are "contrary to Islamic principles or are detrimental to public rights." In practice the Government does restrict freedom of speech and the press. **[4f] (p7)** The Government exerts control over the media

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

by methods such as controlling television and radio broadcasting networks and access to newsprint. It owns all broadcasting facilities. **[4f] (p7)** However, after his inauguration former President Khatami stated his intention to loosen constraints on freedom of expression. **[4b] (p6)** Addressing journalists prior to the end of his time in office in 2005, President Khatami said many cases of irrational and unjustified attitudes towards freedom of the press have been observed in the past eight years. **[22d]** Some signs of this were observed in 1997 and early 1998. In October 1997 a year-long ban on the Iranian-Armenian monthly publication 'Araz' and the two and one half year ban on the 'Jahan-e Eslam' newspaper were lifted. **[4b] (p6)** However, it remains the case that the basic requirements for freedom of the press remain absent and its independence remained under threat from hard-line members of the regime, particularly the judiciary who viewed the use of the press to openly debate questions of reform as a threat. **[4n] (p6)**

6.16 It was reported in the AI report of 2002 that:

"In March and April of 2001, the Revolutionary Court ordered the arrest of at least 60 academics, journalists and intellectuals associated with the Milli Mazhabi national-religious trend, notably the Nehzat-e Azadi, Iran Freedom Movement. Some were released within days and many others between May and October 2001. In November 2001, at least 26 detainees were publicly accused by the judiciary of "acts against national security" and "seeking to overthrow the state by illegal means", vaguely worded charges which could attract long prison sentences. In November 2001, trial proceedings against at least 12 members of the Nehzat-e Azadi were initiated with the reading of a 500-page indictment. The trials had not started by the end of 2001, but at least six other detainees – including Dr Habibollah Payman and Dr Reza Raiss-Toussi – remained in detention without charge at the end of the year. The trial of Alireza Alijani and Ezzatollah Sahabi (see below) was scheduled to start in January 2002." **[9q] (p1)**

6.17 According to the HRW World Report 2003, in July 2002 the Friday prayer leader of Isfahan, Taheri, resigned. Friday prayer leaders are appointed by the Senior Leader of the Islamic Republic, and are the senior religious authorities in their districts:

"He accused Iran's clerical leaders of directing and encouraging "a bunch of club wielders" and of marrying the ill-tempered, ugly hag of violence to religion." He observed that the centers of power were "unchecked and unbridled ...neither reproached by the executors of justice nor reproved by the law." This criticism of lack of accountability, corruption and lawlessness, coming from someone of impeccable religious credentials at the heart of the establishment, struck a deep chord. The conservative establishment sought to limit the damage by ordering official news outlets to restrict their coverage of the Ayatollah's statement, an order that was only partially successful." **[8h] (p1)**

In July 2003, a BBC News report said that in another incident, Iran's supreme leader Ali Khamenei had to deny rumours that his office was guilty of receiving illegitimate payments linked to the motor trade. **[21bw]**

6.18 Reuters reported on 27 July 2002 that on that day Iran's Revolutionary Court sentenced more than 30 liberal dissidents to up to ten years in jail. The court

also ruled to dissolve the Freedom Movement **[5ay]** and by early 2003 HRW reported that it was evident that a press crackdown had intensified. **[8i]**

6.19 According to the USSD report 2002:

"In October (2002) the judicial authorities closed down the National Institute for Research Studies and Opinion Polls, which found in a poll commissioned by the Parliament that approximately three quarters of the population supported dialogue with the U.S., and close to half approved of U.S. policy towards their country." **[4m] (p10)**

Those involved with the poll were charged: **[21as]**

"All were charged with a combination of spying for the U.S., illegal contacts with foreign embassies, working with anti-regime groups, and carrying out research on the order of the foreign polling organization; although government intelligence officials had publicly stated that the accused were not spies." **[4m] (p10)**

It was reported by the BBC on 2 February 2002 that the Iranian press had, on 2 February 2003, reported that two of the pollsters had been sentenced to seven and eight years respectively. **[21at]**

6.20 In November 2002, students nationwide protested at the death sentence imposed on Hashem Aghajari. A liberal journalist and academic, Hashem Aghajari, had been sentenced to death for apostasy – the renunciation of his belief. He was arrested in August 2002 after a speech in which he called for reform within the Islamic clerical establishment. **[21aq]** Protests subsided when senior clerical leaders threatened the students:

"On November 22, Ayatollah Khamenei issued an ultimatum stating that students should "return to their homes" or "the people will intervene" against them, a thinly veiled threat to unleash the same paramilitary forces that the authorities had used in July 1999 to crush student protests." **[8h] (p5)**

(See [2u] for chronology)

According to a BBC News report on 26 November 2002, student leaders in Tehran were arrested following the demonstrations against the death sentence for apostasy and at least six student activists were detained by plainclothes police on the orders of a Revolutionary Court. **[21ap]**

6.21 According to BBC News reports in February 2003, the death sentence for apostasy was quashed and the case was sent back to be retried by the same court that ordered his execution. **[21aq]** In March 2003 more than 120 Iranian MPs signed an open letter demanding an end to the expulsion and suspension of students involved in November's demonstrations. **[21ar]**

6.22 According to an AI Press Release of 1 August 2003:

"On 23 June 2003 Canadian-Iranian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi, 54, was arrested for taking photographs outside Evin prison, in an area where photography is prohibited. According to a government enquiry, Zahra Kazemi died as a result of a blow to her skull, while under guard at the Baghiyetollah (or

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

Baghiyeta'zam) Hospital in Tehran on 12 July 2003. The report recommended that the case be examined by a "special independent investigator" from the judiciary and that public information should be "swift." On 29 July judicial officials confirmed that five individuals had been arrested in connection with the case, of which three are said to be from Tehran's judiciary and two from the Ministry of Intelligence." **[9aa]**

On 30 July 2003 a government spokesperson stated that Zahra Kazemi was murdered. Three of the suspects were subsequently released and two were charged with murder. However, the charges were dropped by the Tehran prosecutions office and further investigations were ordered according to a CNN report on 23 September 2003. **[48a]** As a result an agent of the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) was charged with murder **[70a]** but later acquitted. **[4p] (p16)** According to an article from CBC/Radio-Canada on 25 July 2005, an Iranian court rejected an appeal to investigate Kazemi's death, saying it had no jurisdiction to reopen the case of a death already ruled unintentional. **[89a]**

6.23 In October 2003, it was reported in BBC News report that:

"The long-awaited report by the parliament's Article 90 Commission, which deals with press freedoms, was read out in the chamber despite objections from right-wingers. It recited a litany of what it portrayed as irregularities and abuses by the Tehran prosecutor, Judge Saeed Mortazavi. It accused him of tampering with evidence, suborning witnesses and subverting the course of the investigation in many other ways. It said he had also refused to appear before the commission itself, which was a violation of the constitution. It concluded by referring its own report to the special disciplinary court for judges, calling for an investigation into what it called the violations by the Tehran prosecutor and by other judges who it said had acted illegally in the case." **[21bz]**

However, it was reported in the USSD report 2004 that:

"... when the Seventh Majlis formed its new Article 90 Commission, the commission announced that it was dropping all cases pending from the Sixth Majlis. During the year, the commission took no effective action." **[4p] (p16)**

6.24 According to the Iran Press Freedom Report 2003:

"Although Iran has 48 non-governmental newspapers which is quite an accomplishment for the Middle East Region, and some of these newspapers are often very critical, the existence of them is not enough to fully keep up with the press freedom ideals. And independent journalists often have to pay a high price for being critical." **[54] (p3)**

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, the regime continued to exercise control over the media by censorship, particularly in the area of the internet via the Supreme Cultural and Revolutionary Council **[29b]** and by suspending publications deemed unlawful as for example the dailies Yas e NO and Sharq on 18 February 2004, just before the February 2004 parliamentary elections. **[29c]**

6.25 According to the RSF Iran Annual Report for 2004:

"Iran remains in a dramatic and paradoxical press freedom situation. It is the biggest prison for journalists in the Middle East, with harsh censorship but also a prolific and vigorous written press that is clearly helping the growth of civil society. This press mirrors the split between the regime's reformists and hardliners, who are part of a unique regime headed by the hard-line Supreme Guide of the Republic, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and a reformist president, Mohammad Khatami, who does not have much power. The hard-line press, inspired by Islamic revolution and backing Khamenei, coexists with the reformist newspapers, which emerged in 1997 after President Khatami was elected. There is no opposition media in the traditional sense but genuine debate goes on between the two sides. All written material is closely monitored, especially by the Supreme National Security Council (chaired by Khatami but controlled by the hardliners) which each week sends all newspapers a list of banned subjects, such as (in 2003) the 1999 student demonstrations, resumption of talks with the United States, the murder of photojournalist Zahra Kazemi and anything about nuclear weapons agreements. But reporting what Iranian politicians say about these topics is sometimes possible. However, any discussion of them is strictly forbidden. Many papers, including hard-line ones, have been suspended by the Council." **[38i]**

6.26 According to the AI 2005 report:

"Freedoms of expression and association came under attack throughout the year as a result of flagrant flaws in the administration of justice, coupled with a deeply politicized judiciary. Journalists faced politically motivated and arbitrary arrest, prolonged detention, unfair trials and imprisonment. The laws used to arrest and imprison journalists, relating to defamation, national security and disturbing public opinion, were vaguely worded and at variance with international standards. 2004 saw an increase in the harassment or intimidation of the relatives of detainees or people under investigation.

"A report published in January by the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression concluded that there was a "climate of fear induced by the systematic repression of people expressing critical views against the authorized political and religious doctrine...' **[9d] (p2)**

6.27 The AI Report 2005 stated that:

"In October and November, scores of journalists, particularly Internet journalists, were arbitrarily detained in connection with their work and especially following publication of an appeal by around 350 signatories, calling for political reform. Those detained were expected to face trial in the following months. They included Javad Gholam Tamayomi, Shahram Rafihzadeh Rouzbeh and Mir Ebrahimi. In December many of those arrested reportedly confessed while in detention, but later told a government body that these confessions were extracted under duress.

"Taqi Rahmani, Alireza Alijani and Hoda Saber, intellectuals and writers associated with the National Religious Alliance (Melli Mazhabi), remained arbitrarily detained without any prospect of release. For over a year, the court where they had lodged their appeal had refused to issue a verdict. This effectively prevented the families from taking any form of follow-up action. Despite an announcement in November that they would be released and the

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

payment of substantial bail, the prison authorities prevented them from being released and they remained in detention at the end of the year." **[9d] (p2)**

6.28 According to Reporters without Borders in its 2005 annual report, dated 3 May 2005:

"Press freedom shrank daily during 2004 in Iran, one the world's 10 countries most repressive of the media. Countless threats hang over journalists and they are beaten when thrown in jail. The country has for years been the Middle East's biggest prison for journalists." **[38j] (p1)**

6.29 According to the Human Rights Annual Report 2005 issued by the United Kingdom, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in July 2005:

"Iran has not respected freedom of expression. The government is increasing its censorship of all the main media and particularly the internet. It has blocked many websites and weblogs that provide news or comment critical of the regime and has closed down a number of reformist newspapers. The authorities have arrested and imprisoned journalists, internet technicians and webloggers. They sentenced Arash Sigarchi to 14 years in prison for alleged espionage and insults to the country's leaders. Shortly before his arrest he had been in contact with the BBC Persian Service and other western media. Mr Sigarchi has been released on bail while his appeal is heard. Other journalists remain in prison." **[26j] (p58)**

Return to Contents

PRESS LAW

6.30 According to the USSD report 2001:

"Oversight of the press is carried out in accordance with a press law that was enacted in 1995. The law established the Press Supervisory Board, which is composed of the Minister of Islamic Culture and Guidance, a Supreme Court judge, a Member of Parliament, and a university professor who is appointed by the Minister of Islamic Culture and Guidance. The Board is responsible for issuing press licenses and for examining complaints..." **[4k] (p9)**

and:

6.31 "The 1995 Press Law prohibits the publishing of a broad and ill-defined category of subjects, including material "insulting Islam and its sanctities" or "promoting subjects that might damage the foundation of the Islamic Republic." Generally prohibited topics include fault-finding comment regarding the personality and achievements of the late Leader of the Revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini; direct criticism of the Supreme Leader... questioning the tenets of certain Islamic legal principles... and advocating rights or autonomy for ethnic minorities." **[4k] (p9)**

6.32 According to a Reuter's report of 8 July 1999, in July 1999 Majlis deputies voted in principle for a major overhaul of Iran's press law:

"Proposed changes in the law include compelling journalists to reveal their sources, barring journalists and editors linked to certain opposition groups from

engaging in any form of press activity, and increasing conservative influence over the media." **[5o]**

and according to the USSD report 1999:

"In August 1999 another amendment apparently directed at the independent press was proposed, which would define a new class of "political offences," including the "exchange of information with foreign embassies, diplomatic representatives, media, and political parties, that may be determined to put national interests in jeopardy." **[4g] (p11)**

6.33 According to the USSD report 2001:

"In March 2000, immediately after the success of reformers to capture a majority of seats in Parliament in the February 2000 parliamentary elections, the outgoing Parliament passed amendments to the Press Law that gave the Press Court increased procedural and jurisdictional power."... The new Parliament, which was seated in May 2000, introduced a bill in August 2000 to reverse the restrictive amendments. However, Supreme Leader Khamenei intervened with a letter to the Speaker demanding that the bill be dropped from consideration... Despite some strongly worded objections from members, the bill was withdrawn." **[4k] (p9)**

6.34 Offending writers are often subject to trial, with fines, suspension from journalistic activities, lashings, and imprisonment being common punishments, if found guilty of offences ranging from propaganda against the State to insulting the leadership of the Islamic Republic. **[4b] (p6)**

6.35 According to the USSD report 2004:

"Organs of the Government, such as the judiciary or the National Security Council, often issued written orders to newspapers instructing them to avoid covering controversial topics, or directing them as to how to cover these topics." **[4p] (p8)**

6.36 It was reported in the UNHCR Background Briefing Paper of 1998 that when the pro-Khatami newspaper "Jameah" was banned by the courts in June 1998 for publishing controversial remarks made by a senior military official as well as immoral and insulting material, **[3a] (p28)** the editor was convicted of libel. He was also banned from practising for one year by the special press court. **[17a]** The paper was immediately permitted to re-open under a new name "Tous", which publicly questioned the authority of Ayatollah Khamenei and was banned by the Justice Department a week later. The ban was revoked by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and a licence issued to re-open under the third name "Aftab-e Emrouz", or "Today's Sun" in August 1998. **[3a] (p29)**

6.37 According to a UN Report on Iran dated 28 December 1998, Article 168 of the Iranian constitution states that enquiry into press offences will be undertaken in open court before a jury. **[10m] (p4)**

6.38 According to a BBC News Report of 11 October 2003, following an amendment to the law on the establishment of public and revolutionary courts, it was decided that the final verdict of the Press Court would be issued by three judges

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

after they had asked the jury to express a view. The first session of the new format was held on 20 October 2003. **[21ca]**

6.39 According to the CPJ 2001, the repression continued throughout 2001. At least 20 newspapers and other publications were suspended by the courts on an array of vague charges such as 'publishing lies' and 'defamation.' **[29a] (p1)** According to AI 2002:

"Publications were suspended for indeterminate periods by the judicial authorities, including the Special Court for the Clergy, and journalists were detained or sentenced to prison terms. Only two of the more than 50 publications closed in previous years were permitted to reopen." **[9q] (p2)**

By the end of 2001, at least five journalists were in jail on charges related to their journalistic work, while dozens more had been summoned to court, were appealing pending prison sentences, or had been fined and barred from practising their profession. **[29a] (p1)** On the 11 August 2002, it was reported by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance that 85 publications had been banned since March 1998. **[5aw]** However, by 7 August 2002 more than five Iranian news-based web sites had been opened, two of them in place of recently banned daily newspapers. **[5ax]** By August 2003, however the plight of Iran's journalists was described as worsening, with further arrests, police summonses and threats. **[38c]** According to Reporters Without Borders, by June 2004 11 journalists were currently in prison. **[38e]**

6.40 A report from Amnesty International, issued in May 2004, highlights the case of Siamak Pourzand:

"Siamak Pourzand (aged 74), Head of Majmue-ye Farhangi-ye Honari-ye Tehran (The Tehran Artistic and Cultural Centre) and an occasional newspaper correspondent, is a prisoner of conscience. He is serving an 11 year sentence imposed after a grossly unfair and politically motivated trial in connection with oral statements he allegedly made about Iran's political leaders; Amnesty International fears that the activities of his wife, Mehrangiz Kar, a human rights defender currently outside Iran, may have exacerbated the treatment of Siamak Pourzand. He has urgent medical requirements for which he recently started to receive specialist care. It remains to be seen whether this will be adequate." **[9ae]**

As of December 2004, the USSD report 2004 reported that:

"Siamak Pourzand was on leave from prison for medical treatment, his condition a direct result of physical, emotional, and mental abuse during 21/2 years of imprisonment (over 12 months of which was in solitary confinement). Despite critical health problems, the Government did not allow him to leave the country for treatment." **[4p] (p3)**

6.41 In a report on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, submitted by the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights, dated 28 December 1998, it was stated that "With regard to film and theatre, the Deputy Minister said there had been significant improvement. Ambiguities and personal taste had been removed from the clearance process which was now routine, a situation that the Special Representative confirmed with an Iranian

film director. The problem now was the lack of theatre and film venues." **[10m] (p5)**

6.42 According to the DIRB, owning and operating a print shop or reprographics centre is controlled by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance regulations governing the printing industry, namely under Article 4. **[2g]**

Return to Contents

INTERNET AND SATELLITE

6.43 According to the CPJ 2001:

"Television and radio remained in the hands of the conservative establishment and largely reflected its views. Satellite dishes remained popular, despite a 1995 ban on their use, allowing Iranians access to international programming. In late October, however, authorities confiscated some 1,000 dishes and arrested several owners. The dish crackdown was an apparent state response to provocative broadcasts by satellite channels affiliated with secular Iranian opposition groups based in the United States. Satellite broadcasts of Iranian soccer matches were introduced by commentators who condemned the Islamic regime and called on Iranian citizens to hold street demonstrations. They also broadcast footage showing soccer fans vandalizing property after the matches. The authorities later threatened to confiscate thousands more dishes." **[29a] (p3)**

6.44 According to a BBC Report in May 2002, it was reported by the authorities in Tehran Province that, amongst other things, they had confiscated 11,191 satellite dishes **[21ab]** and by December 2002 a bill to reform the law banning the use of satellite-receiving equipment was given its second reading at the Majlis. **[21bc]** In June 2003 it was reported by Albawaba.com News that Iran's judiciary had set new strict rules governing Internet content and banning the publication of material deemed to be against the Islamic regime. **[39b]**

6.45 According to the USSD report 2003, the government undertook jamming of foreign satellite transmissions during the year by using powerful jamming signals. **[4n] (p8)** In November 2003 a fresh wave of satellite dish confiscations took place as the result of a Revolutionary Court mandate. **[4n] (p6)**

6.46 According to the Internet Under Surveillance Report 2004, released on 9 July 2004 by Reporters Without Borders (RSF):

"The Iranian regime censors thousands of websites it considers "non-Islamic" and harasses and imprisons online journalists. Internet filtering was increased in the run-up to the February 2004 parliamentary elections, at which the hardliners strengthened their grip on the country. But despite this, the Internet is flourishing, with fierce debate and weblogs ("blogs") sprouting up all the time. The Internet has grown faster in Iran than any other Middle Eastern country since 2000 and has become an important medium, providing fairly independent news and an arena for vigorous political discussion for more than three million users. Websites, like the press, reflect the split between reformists and hardliners in the regime, which has a hard-line Supreme Guide of the Islamic Revolution (Ayatollah Ali Khamenei) as head of state and a reformist president (Mohammad Khatami) whose power is quite limited. Though the authorities crack down hard on freedom of expression, civil society remains active and

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

keen to debate the country's affairs. But the 20 February 2004 parliamentary elections, which gave all power to the hardliners, may reduce Internet users' freedom to discuss social issues." **[38f]**

6.47 According to a report on Internet Content Filtering in Iran, published by the OpenNet Initiative on 13 August 2004:

"Access to the Internet in Iran is presently subject to official censorship, although the precise scope and scale of the filtering is unclear. For many years, Iranian authorities allowed unencumbered access to the Internet, offering a departure from its own practices towards traditional media, such as newspapers, television, and radio, which are subject to government control. In early 2003, however, news and other reports indicated that Internet censorship would be introduced in Iran, with some reports indicating up to 15,000 websites to be filtered. Shortly afterwards, Iranian users of the Internet began reporting blocked websites, including non-pornographic and increasingly popular blogging sites. It was also reported that access to Google's cache function was filtered in late 2003, although that appeared to be a temporary measure. Recent news coverage indicated a tightening of content controls had occurred leading up to the February 2004 parliamentary elections. One report claimed that 100 billion websites had been censored by Iran in the past year. Typically reports such as these lack precision, referring instead to general trends and rounded-off numbers. Two recent reports have offered more specific details about what websites in Iran are filtered. One prominent Iranian activist site, "stop.censoring.us" reports that Iranian authorities issue official "blacklists" distributed to ISP operators, who are then responsible for putting in place the content filters. According to the report, the blacklists of banned sites are updated regularly, stored on CDs, and then distributed to each of the ISPs, some of whom do not always comply. Although the lists are said to include only pornographic sites, a recent blacklist acquired by stop.censoring.us and posted to their website is unique in that it contains a list of political, dissident, religious, and blogging sites. The second report is authored by the advocacy group Reporters without Borders (RSF). In their annual Internet Report, "The Internet Under Surveillance, 2004," the section on Iran contains a list of censored websites." **[74a]**

6.48 According to a report from RSF, dated 3 August 2004:

"The authorities recently took a tougher line with online publications and we saw censorship being stepped up since the legislative elections in February," the organisation said. "Now they seem to be going a step further by directly targeting cyber-dissidents and by preparing a bill that would give a legal basis for cracking down." It was further stated that "It would create a legislative framework that would severely restrict free expression online." **[38g]** On 28 August 2004 it was further reported by RSF that three websites had been blocked and three cybercafés shut down by the Iranian authorities. **[38h]**

6.49 According to a report from BBC News of 1 September 2004 the three Iranian reformist websites re-emerged at different internet addresses:

"Their temporary disappearance had been blamed on the hard-line conservative establishment in Iran trying to prevent the expression of any political opinion opposed to theirs. With the broadcast media in the hands of the state and controlled by hardliners, and most of the reformist and independent press

harried into submission by bans and closures, the internet had become a vital source of communication for Iran's reformists. It, too, has been targeted, with websites forced to close and independent bloggers silenced." **[21co]**

6.50 According to the USSD report 2004:

"The Government censored and banned access to Internet sites, many of them with political content, such as the Amir Kabir University news website. During the year, the Government launched a crackdown on sites based in the country, to include "weblogs." Reportedly during the year, the Government blocked hundreds of Internet sites. According to HRW, since September, more than 20 Internet journalists and civil society activists have been arrested and held in a secret detention center in Tehran. By year's end, most were released on bail. On December 10, in a public letter to President Mohammed Khatami, the father of one of those detained, Ali Mazrui, who is also president of the Association of Iranian Journalists and a former Majlis member, implicated the judiciary in the torture and secret detention of these individuals. On December 11, the chief prosecutor of Tehran, Judge Saeed Mortazavi, filed charges against Mazrui for libel. On December 14, four of these "weblog" detainees were presented at a televised "press conference" arranged by Judge Mortazavi and denied that they had been subjected to solitary confinement, torture, or ill-treatment during their earlier detention. However, widespread and credible reports indicated that threats and coercions were used to induce their statements and, while in secret detention, threats, torture, and physical abuse were employed to obtain false confessions and letters of repentance from many of those detained." **[4p] (p9)**

6.51 In February 2005, it was reported in the USSD 2004 report that:

"Authorities entered homes to remove television satellite dishes, or to disrupt private gatherings in which unmarried men and women socialized or where alcohol, mixed dancing, or other forbidden activities were offered or took place. There were also widespread reports that the homes and offices of reformist journalists were entered, searched, or ransacked by government agents in an attempt to intimidate. The government campaign against satellite dishes continued, although enforcement appeared to be arbitrary and sporadic, varying widely with the political climate and the individuals involved. Press reports from late 2003 noted that security authorities restarted periodic efforts to remove satellite dishes from Tehran homes, and in 1 day confiscated 450 dishes in a single neighborhood. Early in the year, western media reported that Islamist militia confiscated approximately 40,000 satellite dishes from 4 factories secretly manufacturing satellite equipment in eastern Tehran; however, the vast majority of satellite dishes in individual homes continued to operate." **[4p] (p7)**

6.52 The USSD report 2004 went on to report that:

"The Government directly controlled and maintained a monopoly over all television and radio broadcasting facilities; programming reflected the Government's political and socio-religious ideology. Because newspapers and other print media had a limited circulation outside large cities, radio and television served as the principal news source for many citizens. Satellite dishes that received foreign television broadcasts were forbidden; however, many citizens, particularly the wealthy, owned them. In December 2002, the Majlis passed a bill legalizing private ownership of satellite receiving equipment. However, the Council of Guardians rejected the legislation in January 2003 on

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

constitutional and religious grounds. The Government reportedly acted to block foreign satellite transmissions during the year using powerful jamming signals." **[4p] (p11)**

6.53 According to the press release relating to the report on Internet Content Filtering in Iran published by the OpenNet Initiative on 21 June 2005:

"Drawing from technical interrogation, extensive legal and political analysis, and interviews with Iranians, ONI's analysis finds that Iran's Internet filtering system is one of the world's most substantial censorship regimes. Iran has adopted this extensive filtering regime at a time of extraordinary growth in Internet usage among its citizens, as well as a tremendous increase in the number of its citizens who write online in Farsi. ONI's research shows that Iran is among several countries in the Middle East that focuses its censorship efforts on expression through local language, like Farsi. Iran is also one of a growing number of countries, particularly in the Middle East region, that rely upon commercial software developed by for-profit United States companies to carry out its filtering regime." **[74b]**

Return to Contents

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

6.54 According to the UNHCR Background Briefing Paper of 1995, religious freedom is set out in the 1979 Constitution of Iran. Jafari Shi'ite Islam is the official religion of Iran and accords full respect and recognition for other Islamic schools, including the Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki, Hanbali, and Zaydi. Shi'a Muslims make up 89 per cent of the population, Sunni Muslims amount to ten per cent and non-Muslims such as Zoroastrians, Christians, and Jews make up the remaining one per cent. **[3b]**

6.55 According to the FIDH Report on Discrimination against religious minorities in Iran 2003:

"Article 13 of the Constitution gives a special status to three religious minorities named "recognized religious minorities": "Zoroastrian, Jewish, and Christian Iranians are the only recognized religious minorities, who, within the limits of the law, are free to perform their religious rites and ceremonies, and to act according to their own canon in matters of personal affairs and religious education."

"Despite the existence of a specific status in the Constitution, these three recognized religious minorities face severe discrimination. First of all, they are being discriminated against by a number of legal provisions, which discriminate per se against all non-Muslims."

"Secondly, since Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians are only free to perform their religion "within the limits of the law", the authorities have imposed in practice important limits to their right to exercise their religion, a right that is being continuously restricted and interfered with. Conversion from Islam to one of the three recognized religions (apostasy) may still be punishable by death. The government has been particularly vigilant in recent years in curbing proselytising activities by evangelical Christians, whose services are conducted in Persian. Moreover, all three minorities complain of discrimination in the field

of employment, report clear limitations imposed upon their upward mobility and complain of being treated like "second-class citizens." **[56b] (p6)**

According to the Danish Fact-Finding Report, Article 14 calls for the respect of the human rights of non-Muslims as long as they refrain from engaging in conspiracy or activities against Islam or the Islamic Republic of Iran. Article 15 protects the use of tribal and regional languages in the press, mass media and in schools. Article 64 provides for Majlis representation of the Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians to reserved Majlis seats. **[41a] (p25)** Further information on specific places of worship can be found at **[1a]** and **[43]**.

6.56 Contrary to Article 19, which says that all people of Iran enjoy equal rights whatever their ethnic group or tribe, discrimination against religious minorities by the Government exists. **[4f] (p9)** Members of religious minorities other than the Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians are not elected to representative bodies. Senior government or military positions are also denied members of religious minorities. Although Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians are permitted to maintain schools, they experience disruptive interference of their administration by the Government. All public school students, including non-Muslims, must study Islam. **[4l] (p2)** University and public sector employment applicants are screened for adherence to Islam. **[4c]**

6.57 Religious minorities suffer discrimination in the legal system, receiving lower awards than Muslims in injury and death lawsuits, and incurring heavier punishments. **[4l] (p3)** However, the Majlis debated a Bill to equalise blood money for Muslims and non-Muslims and it was reported on 1 September 2002 that a Christian family received the same "blood money" as that of a Muslim in a murder case. **[5aq]** The bill was ultimately passed, according to a Payvand News report, by the Guardian Council in December 2003. **[53b]** According to a report issued by the Federation Internationale des ligues des droits de l'Homme (Fidh):

"In November 2002, the Parliament adopted a bill equalizing the "blood money" compensation for male victims members of recognized religious minorities with that of Muslim men. This bill was received as a significant advance by human rights activists worldwide. However, to take effect, any bill must first be approved by the Guardian Council. In this case, the Council has already rejected the bill twice, in January 2003 and April 2003, citing certain discrepancies with the Constitution and the Sharia of Islam." **[56b]**

According to USSD International Religious Freedom Report 2002:

"Muslim men are free to marry non-Muslim women but marriages between Muslim women and non-Muslim men are not recognised." **[4l] (p3)**

6.58 The Government is highly suspicious of any proselytising of Muslims by non-Muslims and intimidation is rife **[41b] (p38)**, in particular against Baha'is and evangelical Christians. **[3c] [4l] (p3)**

6.59 The Government does not ensure the right of citizens to change or renounce their religious faith. Apostasy, specifically conversion from Islam, can be punishable by death. **[3c] [4l] (p3)** The Government frequently charged members of religious minorities with crimes such as "confronting the regime" and

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

apostasy, and conducted trials in these cases in the same manner as threats to national security. **[4m] (p7) [41b] (p38)**

6.60 According to the United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) survey 2002 religious minorities, whose numbers have dwindled, remain particularly vulnerable. In August 2001, the UN Human Rights Commission's special representative on Iran reported that the number of individuals belonging to ethnic and religious minorities emigrating from Iran was estimated to be in the tens of thousands annually. **[35a] (p5)**

6.61 According to the Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom dated 2 May 2005 which covered the period from May 2004-April 2005:

"The government of Iran engages in systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom, including prolonged detention, torture, and execution of persons based primarily or entirely upon the religion of the accused. Over the past year, the Iranian government's poor religious freedom record has deteriorated, particularly for Muslims who oppose the regime's interpretation of Islam, Baha'is, and Christians, all of whom have faced intensified harassment, detention, arrests, and imprisonment. Just last month, a Christian man faced a second trial before an Islamic court on charges of apostasy, which carries a death sentence in Iran. For the first time in many years, the Iranian government has confiscated or destroyed Baha'i community property, including holy sites." **[88a] (p29)**

Return to Contents

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

6.62 The COI Seminar Report 2001 states that laws relating to religion have been used repeatedly to limit freedom of expression. These include, in particular, Article 513 of the Penal Code and Articles 6 and 26 of the Press Code. **[3c]** Under Article 513, offences considered to amount to "insult" to religion can be punished by death or imprisonment of [between] one to five years. Similarly, Articles 6 and 26 of the Press Code proscribe "writings containing apostasy and matters against Islamic standards "mavazin-e eslami" and 'the true religion of Islam'..., but state that such cases will be heard in a criminal court. **[3c]**

6.63 Both the Penal Code and Press Code do not specifically define what activities constitute insult to religion and have been used to punish people for the expression of their opinion. **[3c]** Non-Muslim owners of grocery shops are required to indicate their religious affiliation on the fronts of their shops. **[4l] (p2)**

Return to Contents

SUNNI MUSLIMS

6.64 Sunnis are in theory the largest religious minority in Iran, but are not recognised as a minority as they are part of the same Islamic family as the majority, the Shi'a Muslims. **[3b]** Sunni Muslims are largely drawn from the Kurdish, Arab, Turkoman, Baluchi and other ethnic minorities. **[3a] (p34)** They live mainly in the southern provinces of Sistan/Baluchistan. The area is economically poor, with limited developmental prospects. Of the occasional clashes between the Sunnis

and the Shi'as in areas of mixed population, most have been in west Azerbaijan and in Sistan/Baluchistan. **[10m] (p7)** According to the USSD report 2001:

"Sunnis also have accused the state broadcasting company of airing programming insulting to Sunnis. Numerous Sunni clerics have been killed in recent years, some allegedly by government agents." **[4k] (p13)**

6.65 According to the USSD report 2004:

"In April, Sunni Majlis representatives sent a letter to Supreme Leader Khamenei, decrying the lack of Sunni presence in the executive and judiciary branch of government, especially in higher-ranking positions in embassies, universities, and other institutions. They called on Khamenei to halt anti-Sunni propaganda in the mass media, books, publications, and the state-run media; they also requested adherence to the constitutional articles ensuring equal treatment of all ethnic groups." **[4p] (p13)**

Return to Contents

CHRISTIANS

6.66 According to the USSD Religious Freedom Report 2003, there were approximately 300,000 Christians in the country, according to UN figures, the majority of whom are ethnic Armenians and Assyro-Chaldeans. Armenians have lived in Iran for centuries, mainly in Tehran. The Government appears to be tolerant of groups such as Armenian Christians because they conduct their services in Armenian and thus do not proselytise. **[2s]** There also are Protestant denominations, including evangelical churches. The UN Special Representative (UNSR) reported that Christians are emigrating at an estimated rate of 15,000 to 20,000 per year. **[4o] (p1)** It is difficult, however, to obtain a reliable estimate as there is the added complication of mixing ethnicity with religious affiliation. **[10p] (p17)** They are concentrated mainly in urban areas, and are legally permitted to practise their religion and instruct their children, but may not proselytise Muslims. **[3a] (p32)** The authorities have become particularly vigilant in recent years in curbing what is perceived as increasing proselytising activities by evangelical Christians, whose services are conducted in Persian. **[4m] (p15)** Further information on specific places of worship can be found at **[1a]** and **[43]**.

6.67 According to the USSD report 2003 "In 2001, the Special Representative for Iran of the Commission on Human Rights (UNSR) also reported claims that there were more than 80 killings or disappearances over a 10-year period as part of a wider campaign to silence dissent. Members of religious minority groups, including the Baha'is, evangelical Christians, and Sunni clerics were killed in recent years, allegedly by government agents or directly at the hands of authorities." **[4n] (p2)**

6.68 According to a UN Report of 16 January 2002, mistreatment of evangelical Christians continued during the period covered by this report. Christian groups have reported instances of government harassment of churchgoers in Tehran, in particular against worshippers at the Assembly of God congregation in the capital. Instances of harassment cited included conspicuous monitoring outside Christian premises by Revolutionary Guards to discourage Muslims or converts from entering church premises and demands for presentation of identity papers. **[10p] (p18)**

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

Return to Contents

APOSTASY/CONVERSIONS

6.69 As stated in paragraph 6.66, proselytising Christian churches, especially Evangelicals, are likely to be regarded more suspiciously by the Iranian authorities. **[3b]** According to the UNHCR in a Background Paper on Iranian refugees dated 2001:

"Apostasy, especially conversion from Islam to another religion, is not acceptable in Islamic law. An innate-apostate (one whose parents were Muslims and who embraced Islam but later left Islam), if a man, is to be executed. If a woman, she is to be imprisoned for life, but will be released if she repents. A national apostate (a person converting from another faith to Islam, and then reconverting back to the other faith) is to be encouraged to repent and, upon refusal to repent, is to be executed. The most prominent cases of apostasy appear to occur from Islam to Christianity. Proselytizing apostates (converts who have begun preaching Christianity) are likely to face execution." **[3g] (p22)**

6.70 Apostate converts who have begun preaching Christianity can be sentenced to execution. According to the Danish fact-finding mission to Iran Report, 2002:

"In that connection, a Western embassy said that there had been no reports of persons being executed on the grounds of conversion from Islam since 1994. In the source's opinion, although a convert may still be sentenced to a term of imprisonment if the authorities hear about his conversion, it is very rare nowadays for a criminal case to be brought against a convert. The source stressed that converts often remain Muslim for official purposes." **[41a] (p26)**

6.71 According to the Danish FFM Report:

"The source thought that converts who are known to the Iranian authorities are summoned to an interview at the Ministry of Information in order to be reprimanded. They are then allowed to go after being warned not to talk about what has taken place at the Ministry. If a criminal case is brought against them, they will be accused of something other than conversion. Many individuals try to convert with a view to emigrating, considering that the opportunities for obtaining asylum in the West are thereby greater. The Christian churches send letters of recommendation to converts and other persons belonging to the church on request. The source stressed that such letters are issued only to persons known to the church. The letters of recommendation may be authenticated by the individual churches. In that connection, the source considered that 80 to 90% of the letters of recommendation presented in the West by the Armenian Church are false. **[41a] (p27)**

6.72 According to the Dutch Report – Situation in Iran, 2000:

"In practice, Muslim converts to Christianity may face obstacles such as not being admitted to university or not being issued a passport. Even Muslim converts, however, in reality appear able to practice their new faith up to a point. On the other hand, those who actively display their new faith in public, in

particular by proselytising, can expect to face severe repression, even if their conversion goes back decade's. **[41b] (p38)**

According to a HRW representative quoted in an US Citizenship and Immigration Service information response of 14 November 2002:

"He emphasized that there is a great deal of state-sponsored persecution in Iran on various grounds, but not, as a rule, against recognized religious minorities based on their membership in a religious minority. Christians, including Armenian Christians, are not as a rule persecuted for the fact that they are Christian, unless they are proselytizing to Muslims. (The Armenian Christian community is generally a "closed" one that does not proselytize to other faiths). Christians generally are able to, for instance, attend church, carry a Bible, and hold religious gatherings or celebrations in their homes." **[81a] (p2)**

6.73 Following the elections of February 2004 there have been reports of some increase in discriminatory activity by the authorities in respect particularly of evangelical church Pastors and leaders. The USSD report 2004 stated that:

"In May and June, several Christians in the northern part of the country reportedly were arrested, and in September, officials raided the Protestant Assemblies of God Church, imprisoning its minister, Hamid Pourmand. Since his arrest, Pourmand has been imprisoned at an undisclosed location, and, under local law, he can be executed for "apostasy against Islam." And

"In May, there were reports of the arrest of evangelical Christians in the northern part of the country, including a Christian pastor and his family in Mazandaran Province. The pastor's family and two other church leaders who had been arrested earlier were reportedly released on May 30. Although the pastor reportedly was a convert from the Baha'i Faith, a number of those arrested in raids on house churches were converts from Islam. The pastor and another Christian leader reportedly were released from custody in early July." **[4p] (p13)**

On 8 March 2005 it was reported in an Iran Focus News article that:

"A military court in Iran has sentenced Christian pastor Hamid Pourmand to jail for three years and has ordered his immediate transfer to a group prison cell in Tehran's notorious Evin Prison – a move denounced by international Christian human rights groups." **[76a]**

On 28 May 2005, a court in Bushehr acquitted Hamid Pourmand on further charges of apostasy and proselytizing, declaring that under Sharia (Islamic law), there are no charges against you." During the hearing, the judge reportedly told him, "I don't know who you are, but apparently the rest of the world does. You must be an important person, because many people from government have called me, saying to cancel your case." **[9an]**

Return to Contents

JEWS

6.74 Jews are a constitutionally recognised minority of 20,000-40,000, **[2c] (p19) [3a] (p33)** although this estimate varies, with one representative in the Majlis.

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

Before 1979 the Jewish population of Iran was estimated at 100,000, most living in Tehran. After the revolution they were eased out of government positions as well as from some private sector employment. As a result they are engaged for the most part in small businesses and commercial pursuits. **[4d] (p17)** They are permitted to obtain passports and travel including to Israel, but they are normally denied multiple entry visas and permission for entire families to travel abroad together. **[2c] (p19) [4d] (p17)**

6.75 According to the USSD Religious Freedom Report 2002:

"Education of Jewish children has become more difficult in recent years. The Government reportedly allows the teaching of Hebrew, recognizing that it is necessary for Jewish religious practice. However, it strongly discourages teachers from distributing Hebrew texts to students, in practice making it difficult to teach the language. Moreover, the Government has required that several Jewish schools remain open on Saturdays, the Jewish Sabbath, in conformity with the schedule of other schools in the school system. Because working or attending school on the Sabbath violates Jewish religious law, this requirement has made it difficult for observant Jews to both attend school and adhere to important tenets of their religion." **[4l] (p4)**

6.76 According to the USSD report 2003 "In principle, with some exception, there appears to be little restriction or interference with the religious practice of Judaism." **[4K] (p16)**

Return to Contents

ZOROASTRIANS

6.77 According to the UNHCR Background Paper 1998, the Zoroastrian (the pre-Islamic religion of Iran) population of several thousand includes South Asian Zoroastrians Parsis and is concentrated in the southern cities of Yazd and Kerman. **[3a] (p34) [3b]** The Government figures reported by the United Nations in 1996 place the size of the Zoroastrian community at approximately 35,000 adherents although some recent (2003) figures are as low as 11,000. **[64a]** Zoroastrian groups cite a larger figure of approximately 60,000, according to the same UN report. Zoroastrianism was the official religion of the pre-Islamic Sassanid Empire and thus played a central role in the country's history. **[4l] (p1)** Traditionally, Zoroastrians do not accept converts **[26c] [64a]** and favour marriage between blood relations; they do not proselytise. **[64a]** However, most of the anti-conversion sentiment in the Zoroastrian world comes from the Indian Parsis where the traditionalist view of the religion is most securely embedded. Iranian Zoroastrians are much more likely to accept converts, marriages to non-Zoroastrians (who are then welcomed into the community) and people of mixed ancestry. The problems with conversion in Iran are as with any case of the conversion of someone away from Islam. It is considered an offence against the Islamic Republic and may be seriously penalised. Therefore, conversions in Iran, if undertaken are likely to be done very quietly. **[65]** They are free to practise and teach their religion and have one representative in the Majlis. **[3b]**

6.78 According to the USSD Religious Freedom Report 2004:

"There were no reports of government harassment of the Zoroastrian community during the period covered by the report however, the community

remains unable to convene a Spiritual Assembly to manage its religious affairs for fear of official retaliation, and there were reports of discrimination in employment and education. In June Zoroastrians were able to make, apparently without government interference, their annual pilgrimage to one of the holiest sites in their faith, the temple of Chak-Chak (near the city of Yazd). **[4o] (p6)**

While it was reported in an article from Payvand Iran News on 4 January 2005, that "Zoroastrians perform their religious rituals in total freedom", **[53g]** it was also reported in a Reuters article that:

"Iranian authorities beat up and tear gassed exuberant young revellers as they breathed new life into a pre-Islamic fire festival with a night of dancing, flirting and fireworks." **[5bc]**

Return to Contents

SABEANS (MANDEANS)

6.79 According to UNHCR reports of 1995 and 1998, the Iranian Mandeans are included among the recognised religious minorities and live mainly in Khuzistan, near the Iraqi border. They work mainly in agriculture and with precious metals, are a low-profile group and are small in number. **[3b]** The small community faces discrimination similar to the country's other pre-Islamic religious minorities. Mandeans enjoyed official support as a distinct religion prior to the revolution, but their legal status as a religion since then has been the subject of debate in the Majlis and never clarified. **[4l] (p4)**

Return to Contents

BAHA'IS

6.80 According to the official Baha'i World website in 2002 and the 1985 Minorities Rights Group (MRG) publication, 'The Bahai's of Iran', the Baha'i faith was founded in the mid-19th century in southern Iran as an offshoot of Shi'a Islam. It has since developed into a separate religious faith. Baha'is believe in a God who is completely transcendent and unknowable, and that divine manifestations occur throughout the ages, in the form of prophets or messengers, "Divine Educators", including Adam, Moses, Jesus, Zoroaster, Buddha and Mohammad. They believe that the founder of their faith, Baha'ullah, was a divine manifestation, who will be followed by other manifestations as mankind develops, but that this will not happen for at least 1,000 years. Thus Baha'i doctrine accepts all prophetic religions as being true, but claim that theirs is the most suitable to the present age. They do not accept the Islamic belief that Mohammad is the 'seal' of prophets. Unlike Islamic practice, according to which the child of a Muslim is deemed automatically to be a Muslim, the Baha'is believe that each individual is responsible from the age of 15 for his/her own faith. **[11a][13]**

6.81 According to the official Baha'i World website in 2002 and the 1985 Minorities Rights Group publication, 'The Bahai's of Iran', there is no priesthood in the Baha'i faith, but there is an administrative hierarchy of elected local and national Spiritual Assemblies, with considerable authority. The highest organ of administration is the Universal House of Justice in Haifa. Other institutions include the appointed bodies known as the Hands of the Cause of God and the

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

Continental Board of Counsellors, both concerned with spreading the faith and protecting the Baha'i community. **[11a][13]**

6.82 According to the UNHCR and also a statement to the UN by the Baha'i International Community of 1998, the Baha'i community in Iran is said to number 300,000-350,000. It is the largest religious minority in the country and traditionally has suffered discrimination. **[3b] [3c] [10l] (p1)** Ayatollah Mohammed Yazdi, who resigned as head of the judiciary in August 2000, stated in 1996 that the Baha'i faith was an espionage organisation. According to the USSD report 2002 trials against Baha'is have reflected this view. **[4m] (p8)** Their religion is not acknowledged as a separate faith by Iranian Muslims, but is regarded as a heretical sect. Anti-Baha'i sentiment is rooted in the theological disapproval of the religious establishment; the perception that they co-operated with the Shah regime and opposed the revolution; **[11a] [13]** and the belief that they are agents of espionage activities, **[3b]** Zionism and imperialism. The Baha'i World Centre is in Haifa, Israel, and before 1979 many Baha'is made remittances and pilgrimages to Israel. Baha'i links with an area which is now in Israel lies in Baha'ullah's death in exile in what was at that time Ottoman Palestine. Participation in party politics is not permitted among Baha'is and anyone breaking this rule is liable to expulsion. **[11a][13]** There is no evidence of Baha'is being involved in partisan politics, in Iran or elsewhere. **[10l] (p2) [11a] [13]**

6.83 According to various reports from UNHCR and the USSD, not being one of the protected religious minorities in Iran, Baha'is experience discrimination including extrajudicial executions **[3b]**, arbitrary detention, dismissals from employment and confiscation of properties. **[4k] (p14)** Many have reportedly been denied retirement pensions and work permits, unemployment benefits, business and commercial licences. Some Baha'is dismissed from public sector jobs were required to return the salaries and pensions received while they were working, **[4k] (p21)** and Baha'i farmers can be denied access to farm co-operatives, which deprives them of their only access to credits, seeds and fertilisers. Although Baha'is do have access to the courts and have used them on occasion to attempt to reverse specific decisions, almost invariably the court rules against them. Baha'is are refused entry to universities. **[3b] [13]** A FIDH report of 2002 illustrates that the application form has four boxes for different religions, none of which is Baha'i. **[56b] (Appendix 1 and 2) [78a]**

6.84 According to the USSD report 2002, property rights of Baha'is are generally disregarded and both private and business properties may be confiscated. Blood money for Iranians killed is not enforceable where the victim is a Baha'i. A bill was passed by the Majlis early (2003) which equalized the "blood money" paid to the families of crime victims. **[4m] (p14)** Payvand News reported on 29 December 2003 that on 27 December 2003 the bill was approved by the Expediency Council. **[53b]** but since Baha'is were not a recognised religious minority, the change in the law does not apply to them. **[4m] (p14)** In 1996 the Head of the Judiciary stated that Baha'ism was an espionage organisation **[4f] (p6)** and Baha'is have since been strictly forbidden to seek probate. **[10l] (p5)**

6.85 Freedom of movement out of the country can be difficult for Baha'is. **[2c] (p20)** They are generally denied identity cards and passports. **[3b]** According to a written statement to the UN by the Baha'i International Community of 1998, the freedom of Baha'is to travel outside or inside Iran is often impeded by Iranian authorities or even denied. Although 1997/98 witnessed an increase in the number of Iranian Baha'is given passports, this did not represent a change in

policy on the part of the Iranian Government. **[10l] (p5)** Registration of Bahai's is a police function. **[4l] (p2)**

6.86 It was stated in the USSD report 2001:

"However, it has become somewhat easier for Baha'is to obtain passports in order to travel abroad. In addition some Iranian embassies abroad do not require applicants to state a religious affiliation. In such cases, Baha'is more likely are able to renew passports." **[4k] (p15)**

6.87 According to the FCO Human Rights Annual Report 2003, no Baha'i was on death row. **[26i]** The latest FCO Human Rights Annual Report 2005 has no mention of any Baha'is being on death row. **[26j]**

6.88 According to the USSD report 2001:

"Over the past 2 years, the Government has taken some positive steps in recognizing the rights of Baha'is, as well as other religious minorities. In November 1999, President Khatami publicly stated that no one in the country should be persecuted because of his or her religious beliefs. He added that he would defend the civil rights of all citizens, regardless of their beliefs or religion... Subsequently the Expediency Council approved the "Right of Citizenship" bill, affirming the social and political rights of all citizens and their equality before the law. In February 2000, following approval of the bill, the head of the judiciary issued a circular letter to all registry offices throughout the country, which permits any couple to be registered as husband and wife without being required to state their religious affiliation. This measure effectively permits the registration of Baha'i marriages in the country. Previously Baha'i marriages were not recognized by the Government, leaving Baha'i women open to charges of prostitution. Consequently children of Baha'i marriages were not recognized as legitimate and therefore were denied inheritance rights." **[4k] (p15)**

However according to a written statement submitted by the Baha'i International Community to the UN Commission on Human Rights on 12 March 2003 ".... the relevant law has not been changed; neither Bahá'í marriage nor Bahá'í divorce is legally recognized in Iran." **[10aa] (p3)**

6.89 According to the USSD report 2002:

"In September 2001, the Ministry of Justice issued a report that reiterated that government policy continued to aim at the eventual elimination of the Baha'is as a community. It stated in part that Baha'is would only be permitted to enroll in schools if they did not identify themselves as Baha'is, and that Baha'is preferably should be enrolled in schools that have a strong and imposing religious ideology." **[4l] (p4)** The report also stated that all those identified as Baha'is must be expelled from universities, either in the admission process or during the course of their studies whenever their identity as Baha'is becomes known." **[4m] (p14)**

The USSD report 2004 reported that:

"In July, for the first time, Baha'i applicants were permitted to take part in the nationwide exam for entrance into state-run colleges. However, the word "Islam" was pre-printed in a slot listing a prospective student's religious

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

affiliation. This action precluded Baha'i matriculation, since as a matter of faith, Baha'is do not deny their faith." **[4p] (p13)**

6.90 Members of the Baha'i community continued to be denied the right to participate in religious gatherings and faced official discrimination in education, employment, travel, and housing. According to the UN Human Rights Commission's Special Representative on Iran, seven Baha'is remained in jail in Iran during the year 2002 **[35a] (p5)** and according to the USSD report 2004:

"According to Baha'i sources outside the country, since 2002, 23 Baha'is from 18 different localities were arbitrarily arrested and detained for a short time because of their Baha'i faith. None of these persons was in prison at the end of the period covered by this report." **[4p] (p13)**

6.91 According to the USSD report 2002:

"In what appeared to be a hopeful development, in 2002 the Government offered the Tehran community a piece of land for use as a cemetery. However, the land was in the desert, with no access to water, making it impossible to perform Baha'i mourning rituals. In addition the Government stipulated that no markers be put on individual graves and that no mortuary facilities be built on the site, making it impossible to perform a proper burial." **[4l] (p3)**

6.92 According to the USSD report 2003:

"Adherents of the Baha'i faith continued to face arbitrary arrest and detention. According to Baha'i sources, four Baha'is remained in prison for practicing their faith at year's end, one facing a life sentence, two facing sentences of 15 years, and the fourth a 4-year sentence. A small number of Baha'is were and have been in detention at any given time. Sources claimed that such arrests were carried out to "terrorize" the community and to disrupt the lives of its members. Others were arrested, charged, and then quickly released. However, the charges against them often were not dropped, generating continued apprehension."

6.93 According to a FIDH report of July 2004:

"Bahá'ís in many different localities in Iran are still subjected to arbitrary arrest, short-term detention, and persistent harassment, intimidation and discrimination. All attempts to obtain redress are systematically denied as officials continue to confiscate Bahá'í homes, deny them their rightfully earned pensions and inheritance, block their access to employment or impede their private business activities. The authorities also interfere with classes given to Bahá'í youth in private houses and persist in banning the sacred institutions that perform, in the Bahá'í Faith, most of the functions reserved to clergy in other religions." **[56c] (p16)**

6.94 A statement issued by the Baha'i International Community on 14 April 2005 stated that:

"The Baha'i International Community today expressed its dismay and disappointment at the failure of the UN Commission on Human Rights to even consider a resolution on human rights in Iran, given the worsening situation in that country and in particular the persecution of the Baha'is.

"In view of the sharp increase of human rights violations against the Baha'i community of Iran, it is nothing less than shocking that the Commission on Human Rights has for the third year in a row failed to renew international monitoring of the situation," said Bani Dugal, principal representative of the Baha'i International Community to the United Nations.

"Over the past year, two important Baha'i holy places have been destroyed, Baha'i students have been denied access to higher education, and, most recently, Baha'is in Yazd and Tehran have been swept up in a new wave of assaults, harassment and detentions." **[11b]**

Return to Contents

AHL-E HAQ (YARESAN)

6.95 UNHCR reported in their "Comments on the Iran Country Report of April 2005" in August 2005 that:

"Please find below a quotation from UN Commission on Human Rights, Report on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, prepared by the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights, Mr. Maurice Danby Copithorne, pursuant to Commission resolution 2001/17, 16 January 2002:

82 In the south of the area inhabited by the Kurds, there is a little known community called variously the Yaresan or "Al Haq." According to one scholarly writer, the Yaresan are Kurds who practice an apparent form of Zoroastrianism or Yezidism (the only uniquely Kurdish religion), but are labelled Muslems because they adopted several superficial features, including veneration of Ali, the fourth Caliph.

83 The Special Representative has received representations from members of this community concerning local discrimination, both official and social, apparently based on their religion.

84 The Special Representative has received only limited first-hand evidence of the treatment of this community. However, its existence seems to be widely accepted and its treatment to be consistent with the evidence he has received from other non-Shi'ah communities. The Special Representative urges the Government to recognize the existence of the Yaresan, to prevent discriminatory practices against them and to include their representatives in the National Religious Minorities Commission." **[3h] (p2)**

Return to Contents

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

6.96 According to the USSD report 2003:

"The Constitution permits assemblies and marches "provided they do not violate the principles of Islam;" however, in practice the Government restricted freedom of assembly and closely monitored gatherings to prevent anti-government protest. Such gatherings included public entertainment and lectures, student

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

gatherings, labor protests, funeral processions, and Friday prayer gatherings." **[4n] (p8)**

6.97 According to a 2001 report from the DIRB, there were reports of low-grade conflict surrounding the events staged in July 2000 by students to mark the anniversary of the 1999 student demonstrations. Contemporary reports conflict, but reformist events were countered by conservative student events, and confrontation between the two groups occurred. The riot police were usually on hand, sometimes dispersing demonstrators at the onset of violence, and in other instances standing by as the factions struggled and then broke away, intervening afterwards and arresting stragglers. Several sources have discussed activities of collusion between the police and vigilante groups. **[2i]**

6.98 According to the USSD report 2001, in August 2000, two leading reform intellectuals were prevented by semi-official vigilantes armed with clubs and knives from addressing a student convention in Khorramabad. Subsequent clashes between students and vigilantes resulted in the death of a police officer and injuries. The authorities arrested 150. **[4k] (p11)**

6.99 It was reported in the Financial Times on 24 October 2001 that in October 2001 riots and demonstrations broke out throughout the country after the national soccer team lost a match it had been heavily favoured to win. Many Iranians are convinced their team had been told to lose against Bahrain, because the government was afraid that the street celebrations and rioting that had followed previous victories were endangering stability. **[66a]** According to the USSD report 2001, the main participants in the unrest were young persons, who appeared to use the situation to show their general displeasure with the restrictive lifestyle imposed on them by the regime. The Government arrested hundreds. **[4k] (p11)** There were anecdotal reports that some demonstrators were killed; however, the Government denied this. **[4k] (p11)**

6.100 According to a July 2002 news report, in that month several thousand people took to the streets of the Iranian capital, Tehran, to mark the anniversary of violent street protests in 1999. The protesters defied a government ban on any gathering to commemorate the riots, which were sparked by a police raid on a student dormitory. There were sporadic clashes and some demonstrators were arrested or beaten, but no serious injuries were reported. **[21ad]**

6.101 An AI report of 26 June 2003 reported that there were major disturbances in June 2003 when thousands of Iranians took to the streets on 10/11 June 2003 and again on the following ten nights. Ostensibly they were protesting against draft proposals to privatise universities in Iran. They were joined by local residents and the demonstration reportedly escalated and became increasingly politicised, with slogans being chanted against political leaders. **[9w]** **See 4.19 for further details.**

6.102 According to the HRW in the June 2004 report, "Like the Dead in their Coffins":

"The "student movement" is a disparate group, without a coherent leadership or organizational structure. Some argue for reform within the current structure of the government, and others say that more drastic steps must be taken to create a democratic system. There have been several splits within student political groups, and fissures are likely to continue. The largest known student group, Daftar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat (the Office for the Consolidation of Unity), is the

central office of various university-based anjoman-e islami [Islamic Societies]. Other groups of students affiliate themselves with particular intellectual leaders." **[8j] (p32)**

6.103 Various BBC News reports of November/December 2003 recorded that students continued to hold meetings and rallies for a variety of reasons, the authorities maintaining control by insisting that all such meetings should be held inside university compounds. **[21cc]** In October 2003 students at Shahid Beheshti Medical College went on hunger strike protesting at the quality of their food; **[21cb]** and in December 2003, despite intimidation from vigilante groups, students commemorated the anniversary of the killing of a number of students in 1953. **[21cd]** All of these events were heavily policed by the authorities.

6.104 According to the USSD report 2004:

"In the period prior to the February Majlis elections, Ansar-e Hezbollah and other government-supported vigilantes repeatedly attacked political gatherings of reformist candidates and vandalized their offices. In January, approximately 200 members of the Ansar-e Hezbollah vigilante group attacked a political meeting of disqualified prospective parliamentary candidates and their supporters in Hamedan. The vigilantes entered the meeting hall, heckled the speakers, and rushed the speakers' platform. No legal action was taken against the vigilantes." **[4p] (p11)**

Return to Contents

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

6.105 According to the USSD report 2003:

"The Labor Code empowers the Supreme Labor Council to establish annual minimum wage levels for each industrial sector and region; however, no information was available regarding mechanisms used to set wages. It was not known if the minimum wages were adjusted annually or enforced. The Labor Code stipulates that the minimum wage should be sufficient to meet the living expenses of a family and should take inflation into account. However, under poor economic conditions, many middle-class citizens must work at two or three jobs to support their families. The Labor Code establishes a maximum 6-day, 48-hour workweek, with 1 weekly rest day, normally Fridays, and at least 12 days of paid annual leave and several paid public holidays. According to the Labor Code, a Supreme Safety Council, chaired by the Labor Minister or his representative, is responsible for promoting workplace safety and health. Labor organizations outside the country have alleged that hazardous work environments were common in the country and have resulted in thousands of worker deaths per year. It was not known how well the Ministry's inspectors enforced regulations. It was not known whether workers could remove themselves from hazardous situations without risking the loss of employment." **[4n] (p13)**

According to the USSD report 2004, during 2004 estimated inflation was 15 percent with economic growth at approximately 6.5 percent during the year. **[4p] (p1)**

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

6.106 According to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), Annual Report 2004 published 06 January 2004:

"Iran's 1990 Labour Code states that workers in any unit can establish an Islamic labour council, a guild society, or appoint a workers' representative. However, the code gives a central place to Islamic societies and associations. It says that "in order to propagate and disseminate Islamic culture and to defend the achievements of the Islamic revolution ... the workers of production, industrial, agricultural, service and guild units may establish Islamic societies and associations." The rules for the functioning of the Islamic labour councils, their constitutions and elections, are drawn up by the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and the Islamic Information Organisation. The Council of Ministers then has to approve these rules. The councils now represent workers in tripartite meetings. These labour councils are overseen by the sole authorised national organisation, known as the Workers' House." **[90a]**

and continued:

"An amendment to the Labour Code in 2003 allows workers to form and join so-called "trade unions", without prior permission, provided that registration regulations are observed. The Ministry of Labour must register these unions within 30 days, provided that the unions' constitutions are in order. Again, the Ministry of Labour determines their rights and responsibilities. The law does not give workers the right to strike, but they can down tools so long as they remain at the workplace, or operate a go-slow. A 1993 law prohibits public sector strikes." **[90a]**

6.107 According to the USSD report 2004, the law prohibits public sector strikes and the Government did not tolerate any strike deemed to be at odds with its economic and labour policies; however, strikes occurred. There are no mechanisms to protect workers' rights in the public sector, such as mediation or arbitration. In addition to strikes, there were also work stoppages and protests by oil, textile, electrical manufacturing, and metal workers, as well as by the unemployed. There were strikes, such as that by copper factory workers and other labour stoppages in protest of issues such as non-payment of salaries. In May, textile workers in Behshar staged a hunger strike to protest against non-payment of overdue wages. Teachers staged demonstrations and sit-ins in several cities during the year for improved working conditions and wage benefits. **[4p] (p19)**

6.108 According to the USSD report 2004:

"The law prohibits forced and bonded labor by children; however, there appears to be a serious problem with child labor. The Labor Law prohibits employment of minors less than 15 years of age and places restrictions on the employment of minors under age 18; however, laws pertaining to child labor were not enforced adequately. The law permits children to work in agriculture, domestic service, and some small businesses. The law prohibits the employment of women and minors in hard labor or night work. Information regarding the extent to which these regulations were enforced was not available." **[4p] (p20)**

Return to Contents

PEOPLE TRAFFICKING

6.109 According to the USSD report 2004:

> "In August, the Government enacted the Law on Combating Human Trafficking, defining and setting punishments for trafficking in persons. However, there were widespread reports that persons were trafficked to, through, and from the country during the year. It was difficult to measure the extent of the Government's efforts to curb human trafficking, but national and international press reporting indicated that the Government has taken action against bandits involved in abducting women and children and pursued agreements with neighboring states to curb human trafficking. The Government also reportedly has arrested, convicted, and executed numerous human trafficking offenders. During the year, police reportedly arrested numerous members of prostitution rings and closed brothels." **[4p] (p18)**

Return to Contents

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

6.110 According to the DIRB in a 1997 report accessed in September 2003, Iranians enjoy freedom of movement within Iran. **[2c] (p20)**

> "Citizens may travel to any part of the country, although there have been occasional restrictions on travel to Kurdish areas during times of heavy fighting." **[4f] (p11)**

However, leaving Iran may be difficult for certain Iranians, particularly women, Baha'is, Jews in some cases, certain government opponents, those thought to be members of the radical opposition groups **[2c] (p20)** and draft-age males. **[4f] (p11)**

6.111 A Danish report of a fact-finding mission to Iran in September 2000 recorded that:

> "The delegation met Mohammad Ali Mirkhani, Head of the Passport and Visa Department of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The conditions for issuing Iranian passports were also discussed with the Iranian police force's passport division (Law Enforcement Forces – LEF) at its head office in Tehran. According to Mohammad Ali Mirkhani, the Iranian police force (LEF) is the authority responsible for issuing passports. According to the LEF, the department has 9 passport issuing offices in Tehran and a further 49 offices in other cities in Iran. According to Mr. Mirkhani, any Iranian citizen above the age of 18 is entitled to an Iranian passport, but possession of such a passport does not mean that the holder is permitted to leave Iran. If it is established at the time a passport is issued that the passport applicant has matters to settle with the Iranian authorities, the person concerned will be informed accordingly. At the same time, the applicant will be requested to contact the relevant authority in order to solve the problem. Only once this has been done can the applicant be issued with a passport.
>
> "An application form has to be completed when applying for a passport. The details provided on the form must be identical to those which appear on the applicant's Iranian identity card, which must be presented in conjunction with the application. In addition, Iranian men must present a military logbook

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

certifying that they have completed military service. Any Iranian citizen applying for a passport must come in person to the LEF, both to submit the application form and to collect the passport when it is ready. A passport can be issued within 48 hours of the application form being submitted. Iranian passports are valid for five years. They can be extended for a further five years. There are no periods of validity other than five years." **[41a] (p6)**

According to the USSD report of 1998, Government employees may need a letter of permission or to post a bond to travel abroad. Citizens who were educated at public expense and whose skills are in short supply are required to post bonds to obtain exit permits. **[4f] (p11)**

6.112 A report from the DIRB, dated 1997, states that women must have written, notarised permission from their father, husband or legal guardian, except in certain circumstances e.g. widows. No one under 18 is issued a passport, except under special circumstances where the minor is travelling without a parent or guardian. **[2c] (p20)**

6.113 UNHCR stated in their "Comments on the Iran Country Report of April 2005" of August 2005 that:

"There are no specific provisions relating to the exit of a mother with minor children from the country without the consent of the father or paternal grandfather. According to the Law on Passports, authorization in writing of the guardian is required for issuance of a passport for a minor or inclusion of a minor's name in a relative's passport. According to an ACCORD report, "if a woman has managed to obtain travel documents for her minor children, she has probably resorted to an illegal act based on which she can be sentenced upon return. For example she may have forged her husband's authorization and submitted it to the Passport Bureau and could therefore be sentenced to imprisonment from two months to up to two years" (ACCORD, June 2001, p104)." **[3h] (p5)**

6.114 According to the UNHCR Country of Origin Information Seminar, Final Report, Berlin June 2001:

"Exit formalities have considerably relaxed since the initial years after the revolution. While previously it was very difficult to obtain a passport, in recent years it has become much easier. However, departure procedures are still such that it would be highly improbable that anyone with a forged passport in which name and number do not tally would be able to leave the country. Security officials at the airport possess lists of suspected or wanted persons and it is not unusual that passengers wishing to leave are prevented from leaving and told to refer to the security department. In general, the security checks at Tehran airport are still very strict and it is doubtful that anyone with a security record and convictions in Iran for political offences would be able to leave the country legally by air. Yet, although the degree is hard to assess, corruption certainly exists and in individual cases people may be able to bribe their way out of the airport." **[3c] (p107)** "However, leaving the country across the border to Pakistan, but also to Turkey and Azerbaijan, is fairly easy and happens all the time." **[3c] (p107)** Counterfeit passports are, reportedly, uncommon in Iran. **[2c] (p21)**

6.115 According to the DIRB, people seeking to leave Iran illegally do so most commonly overland through Turkey, Pakistan or Azerbaijan. **[2c] (p21) [3c]** The

penalties for violating or attempting to violate exit regulations, such as leaving on an illegal or falsified document, range from one month to three years' imprisonment and/or a fine. **[2c] (p24)** The actual penalty is dependent on the individual circumstances. **[26e]**

6.116 According to the USSD report 2003:

"Citizens returning from abroad sometimes were subjected to searches and extensive questioning by government authorities for evidence of anti-government activities abroad. Recorded and printed material, personal correspondence, and photographs were subject to confiscation." **[4n] (p10)**

According to the COI Seminar Berlin Report 2001, on the basis of the information Amnesty International receives, usually a person who gets back will be asked why s/he was abroad. If the answer is along the lines of "I just tried to find a job", they will most likely be allowed to go home to their families. Generally speaking, it does depend on what kind of documentation exists on the returnee and what the actual practice of the country is in which the concerned individual applied for asylum. **[3c]**

6.117 According to the COI Seminar Berlin Report 2001, upon return, in recent years the practice has become more liberal with regard to possession and confiscation of items purchased abroad, such as CDs from Dubai and other Western products. It mostly depends on what the authorities are looking for. If they assume that a person has returned from a country like the USA, this person certainly will be questioned and undergo stringent checks, but will normally not be detained for a longer period of time. **[3c]**

6.118 It was reported by the BBC Monitoring Service on 5 August 1998 that since 9 August 1998, British Mediterranean had resumed direct flights to Tehran and stated the intention to station its flight crew there. **[6b]** As a result of the Immigration Transit Visa Amendment No.3 Order 1998, Iranian nationals need to obtain a visa to travel to, or through, the United Kingdom. **[20b]**

6.119 It was reported by the BBC Monitoring Service on 2 September 2002 that in September 2002 the deputy foreign minister announced that Iranians who have obtained the citizenship of foreign countries with Iran's prior agreement can, once again, become Iranian citizens and further that the question of illegal exit had been resolved. **[21bg]**

6.120 According to the FCO, in the case of returned asylum seekers it has been reported by observers that they had seen no evidence that failed claimants, persons who had illegally exited Iran, or deportees faced any significant problem upon return to Iran (although cases that gain a high profile may face difficulties). **[26f]** According to the DIRB in a July 1999 report:

"Several times in the recent past, senior government officials have declared that all Iranians living abroad are welcome to return home without fear of reprisal. ... and the Foreign Ministry's Consular Department has confirmed that applying for asylum abroad is not an offence in Iran." **[2t]**

In contrast to this opinion, it was also stated that in the same source that:

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

"The only exception to this, he stated, might be persons who are extremely critical and/or advocate the overthrow of the government through the use of force; he named the Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization as an example. The representative stated that family members of these persons could face difficulties leaving the country, but added that the son of Massoud Rajavi, the leader of the Mujahedin, lives in Iran and goes to university there. And also ....that relatives of high profile refugee claimants outside Iran could face some difficulties." **[2t]**

Return to Contents

REFUGEES IN IRAN

6.121 According to the USSD report 2004:

"The law provides for granting asylum or refugee status in accordance with the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Protocol. The Government has established a system for providing protection to refugees. There were no reports of the forced return of persons to a country where they feared persecution; however, there were reports that the Government deported refugees deemed "illegal" entrants into the country. In times of economic uncertainty, the Government increased pressure on refugees to return to their home countries. The Government generally cooperated with the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations in assisting refugees and refugee seekers." **[4p] (p14)**

6.122 According to the United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants World Refugee Survey 2004 (USCRI 2004), the country hosts a large refugee population, mostly Afghans who fled during the Soviet occupation. The UNHCR estimates that there are approximately 1.1 million Afghan refugees in the country, though the Government puts estimates as high as 1.6 million. **[35b]**

6.123 According to the USSD report 2004, the UNHCR estimated at the end of 2003 that there were approximately 200,000 Iraqi refugees, the majority of whom were Iraqi Kurds, but also included Shi'a Arabs. **[4p] (p14)** It was reported by the UN on 5 July 2004 that a new border crossing had been opened in the north at Haj Omran. This is intended to be used to allow Kurdish refugees easier access to their homes in Northern Iraq. **[75b]** Many of these Iraqi refugees originally were expelled by Iraq at the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war because of their suspected Iranian origin. In numerous instances, both the Iraqi and Iranian Governments dispute their citizenship. Other Iraqi refugees arrived following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. **[4p] (p14)** During 2003, the Government took substantial steps to prepare for the possibility of new Iraqi refugees, but significant outflows never appeared. In November 2003, UNHCR initiated a pilot repatriation of refugees from the country and had repatriated a few hundred to Iraq by early December 2003. According to press reports, refugee officials speculated that up to three-quarters of the 200,000 refugees in the country may have crossed back into Iraq without formal assistance since April 2003. **[4n] (p10)**

6.124 According to a RFE/RL News Service Report in March 2004, the Iranian Interior Ministry announced on the 30 March 2004 that the repatriation of Iraqi refugees had begun after the ousting of Saddam Hussein. It was claimed that 70,000 had returned voluntarily leaving 125,000 still resident within Iran. **[42b]** The UNHCR News Stories website reported on 9 February 2004 that the largest refugee

camp, Ashrafi, which had originally held 12,000 Iraqi refugees, had closed in February 2004 as a result. **[3e]**

6.125 According to Europa 2003, in early 2002 the Iranian authorities and UNHCR were co-operating in establishing registration centres for refugees wishing to return to Afghanistan; exit points were to be constructed at three points along the Iran-Afghanistan border in preparation for the commencement of voluntary repatriations. **[1b] (p2110)** The programme of voluntary returns under UNHCR auspices commenced in April 2002. It is claimed that some 500,000 refugees had returned to Afghanistan from Iran by the end of January 2003 and it was expected that the remainder would have been repatriated by 2004. **[1b] (p2110)** The UN Reliefweb website reported on 10 March 2004 that hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees returned to Afghanistan during the year. Since the fall of the Taliban it is estimated by the Iranian Government that 706,000 Afghans have "voluntarily returned." **[49b]** The UNHCR expressed concern that the Government was pressing them to leave, a contention the Government denied. **[4m] (p17)**

6.126 According to a Reliefweb report of 10 March 2004, in a tough new move the Iranian Government announced that from 20 March 2005 Afghans will no longer be considered as refugees and that they would face heightened restrictions. These will include denial of access, unless a residency permit is held, to employment and to many of the social services infrastructure such as education and rental and banking facilities. This is seen as a move to accelerate repatriation. **[49b]** In a BBC News report of 21 January 2005 it was reported that:

"There have been reports of round-ups or of people being denied to (sic) public services, or even being arrested, for having no documents. The High Commissioner, who has just returned from a visit to the region, said there were indications that some Afghan refugees as well as illegal Afghan migrants, were being pushed out of Iran." **[21cq]**

6.127 According to the USCRI (2005):

"Iran acknowledged deporting some 140,000 Afghans, including some with documented prima facie refugee status, under a tripartite agreement with Afghanistan and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Authorities revoked several refugees' residence permits, subjecting them to possible arrest and deportation. In January 2005, UNHCR threatened to suspend aid with Commissioner Ruud Lubbers stating "we are not going to be instrumental in forced repatriation."

But Iran honoured UNHCR's advisory for Iraqi refugees, which specified that conditions in Iraq were not conducive to mass returns. **[35c]**

6.128 According to the USCRI (2005):

"Although Afghans and Iraqis with prima facie status made up most of Iran's refugee population, the government also reported hosting some 30,000 refugees of various nationalities (including Tajiks, Bosnians, Azeris, Eritreans, Somalis, Bangladeshis, and Pakistanis), but did not allow UNHCR or nongovernmental organizations to meet with them." **[35C]**

Return to Contents

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

6.B HUMAN RIGHTS – SPECIFIC GROUPS

ETHNIC MINORITY GROUPS

6.129 According to the ACCORD, "7th European Country of Origin Information Seminar Berlin, 11-12 June 2001: Final Report – Iran":

> "There are many ethnic minorities in Iran such as Arabs, Bakhtiaris, Armenians, Baluchis, Azeris, Kurds, Lor, Qashghais, Turkomans and others. Art. 15 of the Constitution of Iran mentions Farsi as the official language of Iran, but adds that the "use of local and ethnic languages in the press and for the mass media and the teaching of their literature shall be allowed besides the Farsi language." Art. 19 of the Constitution mentions that the people of Iran belonging to whatever ethnic or tribal group shall enjoy equal rights." **[3c] (p99)**

and the HRW World Report 2005 states that:

> "Iran's ethnic and religious minorities remain subject to discrimination and, in some cases, persecution. The Baha'i community continues to be denied permission to worship or engage in communal affairs in a public manner. In a rare public protest, eighteen Sunni parliamentarians wrote to the authorities in July 2003 to criticize the treatment of the Sunni Muslim community and the refusal to allow construction of a mosque in Tehran that would serve that community. The Baluchi minority, who are mostly Sunni and live in the border province of Sistan and Baluchistan, continue to suffer from lack of representation in local government and have experienced a heavy military presence in the region. In December 2003, tensions between the local population and the Revolutionary Guards led to large demonstrations in Saravan, in Baluchistan province. In the ensuing clashes between demonstrators and the police at least five people were killed." **[8k] (p3)**

Return to Contents

KURDS

6.130 According to a 1995 UNHCR report the Kurds are believed to number about six million (still an accepted estimate of population in 2004) and live in the north-west of the country, principally in the province of Kurdistan, along the borders with Iraq and Turkey. The Islamic regime deals harshly with rebellious Kurdish leaders seeking autonomy – notably those of the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) and the Marxist Komaleh – and their militant supporters. **[3b]** Iranian troops are permanently stationed in Kurdish areas and also monitor the activities of members of the Iraqi Kurdish Democratic Party in the areas. **[3b]** Both UNHCR and the USSD in a 1997 report stated however, that ethnic Kurds can be found in all walks of life in Iran both in the private and public economic sectors as well as in Iran's military and civilian establishments. **[3a] (p30) [4d] (p22)**

6.131 According to the Minorities at Risk Project 2001, most Kurds are Sunni Muslims but there is a minority of Shi'ia Muslim Kurds in Iran, primarily in the province of Kermanshah. While the Kurds in Iran traditionally had a nomadic component to their society, most have been settled due to government policy. The Kurds speak several dialects of the Kurdish language and are divided into many

tribes. **[33]** The status of the Kurds in Iran remains basically unchanged since 1989. **[33]**

6.132 According to a UN report of May 2003, in late 2000, a Kurdish Member of Parliament publicly alleged the existence of a campaign of repression and serial killings against the Kurdish community in Iran and in the following year, in October 2001, all six members of the Iranian Parliament from Kurdistan province collectively resigned. Their joint letter to the Interior Minister claimed that the legitimate rights of the Kurds, especially the Sunni amongst them, were being denied. Whilst there are a number of Kurdish MPs they are not able to form a pro-Kurdish party and they hold their seats as independent candidates. **[10u] (p8)** According to the USSD report 2003 "In recent years, greater Kurdish cultural expression has been allowed and Kurdish publications and broadcasting have expanded. However, there was still no public school education in the Kurdish language." **[4n] (p13)**

6.133 According to news reports from BBC Monitoring during October 2003, there had been sporadic civil disruption within the Kurdish area of Iran. On 17 October 2003, a demonstration was held in the town of Sardasht when security forces opened fire killing one and injuring at least two others. The demonstration was originally held in protest at the killing, by the security forces, apparently by accident, of three citizens on the road between Sardasht and Piran. **[21ce]** It was also reported by the Kurdish press in March 2004 that larger demonstrations were triggered by events within the Kurdish area of Iraq when as a result of the signing of the Iraqi constitution it transpired that Iraqi Kurdistan had gained considerable status within the Iraqi federal plan. The demonstrations followed as a result of Iranian Kurds showing solidarity and support with the Iraqi Kurds. The security forces reacted vigorously to the demonstrators. **[55]**

6.134 It was reported in the New York Times on 14 November 2004 that:

"Iranian Kurds have not sought full independence since the 1979 Islamic revolution, which was followed by a period of fighting with the government, but they have demanded greater autonomy, democracy and freedom. They refer to their historical and cultural ties with Persian Iranians and say their Iranian identity is as important as their Kurdish identity. The Kurdish language is close to Farsi, the main language spoken in Iran, and Kurds say they were the founders of the civilization where Iran is today. They took part in the political process along with other Iranians, and voted overwhelmingly for President Mohammad Khatami, a reformist, in 1997 in the hope of achieving more democracy. Reformist Kurdish members of Parliament, who were elected after the brief period of political openness after Mr. Khatami's election, formed a Kurdish bloc in Parliament and managed to win a fivefold increase in the budget for their part of the country. One member spoke in the Kurdish language for the first time in Parliament, and the language will be taught for the first time at universities in Kurdish areas this year. However, the Iranian Kurds feel marginalized again, after Kurdish candidates, along with other reformists, were removed by a hard-line watchdog council before the last parliamentary elections. With many reformers prevented from running and voters angry that the pro-reform Parliament was able to achieve so little, hard-liners recaptured Parliament again this year." **[77b]**

6.135 In July 2005, civil unrest broke out in the province of Kordestan. In a report from RFERL, dated 22 July 2005, it was reported that:

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

"Unrest among Kurds living in western Iran, which has been continuing for several weeks, has prompted a government investigation that began on 20 July. This comes on the heels of low levels of Kurdish participation in the June presidential election, which may be indicative of their sense of exclusion from the country's politics. The Kurds are not promoting separatism, and the central government may find that meeting their demands will be more effective than arrests and violence in settling the unrest.

The most recent incident occurred when Kurds living in Mahabad, West Azerbaijan Province, clashed with police after a local activist was reported killed by state security agents, Radio Farda reported on 12 July, quoting local journalist Masud Kurdpur. Kurdpur told Radio Farda that "security agents" killed activist Seyyed Kamal Seyyed Qader (known as Shavaneh and identified elsewhere as Seyyed Kamal Astam), whose death provoked clashes on 11 July between police and Mahabad residents.

Kurdpur told Radio Farda that Qader was arrested for unspecified political activities and the violent police response to the subsequent protest shows that the Iranian government is hardening its attitude to protests. "Unfortunately, now that the elections are over and [President Hojatoleslam Mohammad] Khatami's government is coming to an end, this is a new type of approach that has led to deaths," Kurdpur said. "Most gatherings so far were tolerated." **[42g]**

and according to Amnesty International in a statement dated 5 August 2005:

"The unrest began in the town of Mahabad, in early July, following the shooting of Shivan Qaderi, a Kurdish opposition activist, also known as Sayed Kamal Astam, or Astom, and two other Kurdish men, by Iranian forces in the town of Mahabad on 9 July, in circumstances where they may not have posed an immediate threat. The security forces then reportedly tied Shivan Qaderi's body to a Toyata jeep and dragged him in the streets. The local Iranian authorities are reported to have confirmed that a person of this name, "who was on the run and wanted by the judiciary", was indeed shot and killed by security forces at this time, allegedly while trying to evade arrest.

During the days following Shivan Qaderi's death, several thousand Mahabad residents, mainly youths, took to the streets to protest the killings. Since then, demonstrations have erupted in the mainly Kurdish neighbouring towns of Sanandaj, Mahabad, Sardasht, Piranshahr, Oshnavieh, Baneh, Sinne, Bokan and Saqiz. The Iranian state-owned media has reported and confirmed the unrest of the past 3 weeks, but have described the situation as due to "hooligan and criminal elements." **[9al]**

6.136 According to a Human Rights Watch report of 11 August 2005:

"On August 2, the government shut down Ashti newspaper and the weekly Asu in Kurdistan. Authorities detained Roya Toloui, a leading women's rights activist, at her home in Sanandaj for "disturbing the peace" and "acting against national security."

On the same day, security forces detained other prominent journalists and human rights defenders at their homes and offices including Azad Zamani, a member of the Association for the Defense of Children's Rights; Mohammad

Sadeq Kabudvand, journalist and co-founder of Kurdistan Human Rights Organization; Jalal Qavami, editor of the journal Payam-e Mardom; and Mahmoud Salehi, the spokesman for the Organizational Committee to Establish Trade Unions.

Human Rights Watch called on the Iranian government to immediately and unconditionally release detained journalists, human rights defenders and activists." **[8n]**

Return to Contents

ARABS

6.137 According to the Minorities at Risk Project 2001, the Arabs in Iran probably date back to the Arab conquest during the 7th and 8th centuries which brought Islam to Iran. The main factor that differentiates them from Iran's Persian-speaking majority is that they speak one of several dialects of Arabic. **[33]** UNHCR stated in 1998 that at least two million Arabs, mainly Shi'a Muslims, live in Iran, chiefly in Khuzestan and in the south. The Sunni Arabs tend to live on the Gulf coastline. **[3a] (p30)** About 40 per cent live in urban areas and the majority of these urban Arabs are unskilled workers. Some urban Arabs and most rural Arabs are tribally organised. These tribal loyalties can have a major impact not only on a societal level but also on political considerations. The rural Arabs of Khuzestan are mostly farmers and fishermen and many of those that live along the Persian Gulf coastal plains are pastoral nomads. These areas contain most of Iran's oil reserves. **[33]** Many are employed in the agriculture and oil industries. **[3a] (p30)**

6.138 According to the Minorities at Risk Project 2001, both the urban and rural Arabs of Khuzestan are intermingled with the Persians, Turks and Lurs who also live in the province and often intermarry with them. Despite this, Iranian Arabs are regarded by themselves and by Iran's other ethnic groups as separate and distinct from non-Arabs. **[33]**

6.139 UNHCR stated in 1998 and, according to the Minorities at Risk Project 2001, the Government of Iraq, both before and after Iran's 1979 revolution, accused Iran of discrimination against its Arab population. Despite this, the Arab population of Khuzestan sided with Iran during the Iran-Iraq war. **[3a] (p30) [33]** Outside of Khuzestan there is little ethnic solidarity among Iran's Arabs. The division between Shi'ia and Sunni Muslims also hampers ethnic solidarity. **[33]**

6.140 According to the Minorities at Risk Project 2001, the Arab Political Cultural Organization (APCO) was formed in 1979. It requested some concessions in April 1979 and was given the green light to form a provincial council with limited autonomy. Unrest occurred afterwards due to the presence of Revolutionary Guards, especially in the Khuzestani city of Khorramshahr. The unrest continued and escalated when the Arabs started bombing oil refineries and pipelines on "Black Wednesday", June 14, 1979. On April 30, 1980, they seized the Iranian embassy in London in order to free 91 Arabs imprisoned in Iran. **[33]**

6.141 According to the Minorities at Risk Project 2001, attempts to gain autonomy gave way to support for Iran during the Iran-Iraq war. **[33]**

6.142 According to the Berlin COI Information Seminar Report 2001:

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

"Like every other group, (in terms of levels of discrimination), Arabs do not openly express their ethnic identity." **[3c] (p101)**

According to a Reuters Report of February 2000 however, during the February 2000 elections police fired at crowds of demonstrators protesting against alleged ballot rigging in two towns in south-western Iran, Shush and Shadegan, killing eight and wounding scores more, **[5bb]** and according to the Berlin COI Information Seminar Report 2001:

"In terms of levels of discrimination there is some evidence of riots in Abadan that have been connected to the fact that Khuzestan as a province has been neglected by the central Government." **[3c] (p101)**

According to the CEDOCA Mission Report of 2002, the riots in Abadan began on 5 July 2000 with a peaceful demonstration outside the office of the Governor of Abadan, Mr Nazemi, close to Bassij Square, which was formerly Taiib Square. Between 7,000 and 8,000 demonstrators (residents of Abadan) protested from 8 am against the poor quality of the drinking water. The fact that the drinking water contained too much salt was a problem which was known to everyone. The first three hours of the demonstration went by peacefully. Riots then broke out on and around Bassij Square, and the tone of the demonstration became political rather than social. A total of around 300 people were arrested and it was rumoured that a few people were killed. **[43] (p13)**

6.143 According to the Berlin COI Information Seminar Report 2001, there had been death sentences, although those convicted had been involved in violent acts such as the bombing of offices and liaisons, etc. **[3c]** According to AI reports of March and June 2002, in January 2002 five Arab activists were hanged in Ahvaz for arms smuggling. According to the Ahwazian Arab People's Democratic and Popular Front, an organisation based in Europe, during 2002 another five men were condemned to death in Ahvaz, apparently for opposing the Government's policy of land seizures in the region **[9n]** and on 10 June 2002, according to Amnesty International, a 16 year-old, a member of Iran's Arab minority, was reportedly detained without charge at Tehran's Mehrabad airport. Detained with other individuals, not specifically Arab, he was held in connection with passport and visa violations, though the arrest may have been politically motivated. **[9o]** Amnesty International had expressed concern in terms of possible torture and illegal detention. **[9o]**

6.144 According to the USSD report 2004:

"Foreign representatives of the Ahwazi Arabs of Khuzistan, whose numbers could range as high as 4 million or more, claimed that their community in the southwest of the country suffered from discrimination, including the right to study and speak Arabic. In July 2003, authorities reportedly closed two bilingual Arabic/Farsi newspapers and imprisoned scores of political activists. They asserted that the Government ignored their appeals to de-mine the vast stretches of Khuzistan, mined during the Iran-Iraq War. They further stated that many Arabs, both Shi'a and Sunni, have been imprisoned and tortured for criticizing government policies. According to Ahwazi sources, a political activist with the Islamic Wafagh Party, Kazem Mojaddam, was sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment in November 2003 after his initial arrest in June 2003 on charges of secession and endangering internal security." **[4p] (p19)**

6.145 According to a report from RFERL, dated 17 August 2005:

> "Large-scale riots in Ahvaz in mid-April followed rumors of a government plan to forcibly replace local Arabs with Persians from other parts of the country. The government acknowledged making numerous arrests, and dissident websites alleged that there was wide-scale bloodshed.
>
> Tehran's reaction to the unrest has been to blame it on foreigners, particularly the British. Accusations of British interference in the southwestern part of the country have historical roots, but they might also be connected with Iranian hard-liners' isolationist tendencies. As a recent UN study notes, however, Tehran's policies contribute to the problems in the southwest." **[42h]**

6.146 According to Amnesty International in a statement dated 20 April 2005:

> "The unrest reportedly began on 15 April in the Shalang Abad (also known as Da'ira) area of central Ahvaz, where around 1000 demonstrators had reportedly assembled to protest at the contents of a letter, reports of which began to circulate on 9 April, allegedly written in 1999 by an advisor in the office of President Khatami. The letter, whose authenticity has been strongly denied by the author and other governmental sources, sets out policies for the reduction of the Arab population of the province of Khuzestan, including their transfer to other regions of Iran; the transfer of non-Arabs, including Persians and Turkic-speaking Azeris to the province; the elimination of Arab place names along with their replacement by Persian names.
>
> "According to a report in the 17 April 2005 edition of the government-run Persian-language newspaper Iran, 137 people had been arrested to date in connection with the unrest and at least eight injured. Other reports indicate that up to 250 people may have been arrested.
>
> "Amnesty International has received unconfirmed information that at least 31 persons have been killed in the disturbances. Ahvazi sources claim that up to 500 people have been injured. There are also reports that the city of Ahvaz has been sealed by the security forces. There have also been reports of excessive use of force, unlawful killing and possibly of extra-judicial executions of protesters following circulation of reports that up to seven police or security officials had been killed by demonstrators and that the security forces are now operating a 'shoot-to-kill' policy." **[9am]**

Return to Contents

BALUCHIS

6.147 According to an UNHCR Background Paper of 1998, the Baluchis are Sunni Muslims, numbering between one and two million. **[3a] (p30)** and according to the Berlin COI Information Seminar Report 2001, Iranian Baluchis are not targeted as a group and not persecuted unless they are involved in some general opposition-related activities. They are mainly concentrated in Sistan and Baluchistan province at the border with Pakistan and Afghanistan. **[3c] (p100)** There are large areas in these provinces that are not under the control of the Iranian authorities. In addition, the jails are overcrowded with Afghans and Baluchis who have been lured into the lucrative drug trade. **[3c] (p100)**

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

6.148 According to the Minorities at Risk Project 2001, the situation of the Baluchis since 1989 seems to have remained unchanged, both economically and politically. They still inhabit some of the poorest regions in Iran and still are denied autonomy by the Iranian government. **[33]** The Baluchi grievances have related to discrimination against them in the economic, educational, cultural and political fields. A number of Baluchi Sunni leaders have been killed, and it has been suggested that the circumstances could be taken to suggest the involvement of the authorities in their deaths. **[10u] (p9)**

6.149 According to the Human Rights Watch Report, "Iran, Religious and Ethnic Minorities, Discrimination in Law and Practice" dated 1 September 1997:

"There are a number of incidents in which violence appear to have been politically motivated and in which the Iranian government appears complicit in the killing of Baluchi religious and political leaders. Haji Mohammed Ziaie, a prominent Sunni figure who had been critical of the government's policies toward the Sunni minority, particularly in Baluchestan, was killed under suspicious circumstances in July 1994. [...] As many as sixty Sunni religious leaders, mainly from the Baluchi community, are reported to be in prison for their support of demands for parity for Sunni Islam in Iran and for an end to repression in Baluchestan. These Sunni religious leaders had founded the Islamic Society Association in Zahedan, the major city in Sistan va-Baluchestan province, to promote the rights and interests of Sunni Muslims. One of the prisoners, Molavi Abdulrahman Alahverdi, a religious leader in the Baluchi town of Saravan, was detained in late February, apparently for his activities in support of the rights of Sunni Baluchis." **[8e] (p8)**

"Molavi Ahmad Sayyad was a leader of the Baluchi Sunni community. On his return from religious studies in Saudi Arabia in 1990, he was imprisoned for five years on suspicion of having engaged in anti-government activities. At the end of January 1996 Sayyad was taken into detention by the authorities on returning from a visit to the United Arab Emirates. According to a report in the London Arabic daily Al-Sharq al-Awsat, his body was discovered outside the city of Bandar Abbas on February 2, 1996, bearing signs of torture. Again no official inquiry into the cause of death was carried out, but since Molavi Sayyad was last seen alive in the custody of the authorities, suspicion falls heavily on the government as his killer. The government's hand is also suspected in the unexplained killing of another Sunni Baluchi cleric, Abdol-Aziz Kazemi Vajd, whose body was found in suspicious circumstances outside the city of Zahedan on November 5, 1996." **[8e] (p9)**

"Some leading figures in the Sunni Baluchi opposition movement have fled the country to avoid imprisonment and carry out their opposition activities from abroad. These opposition figures abroad have also been the target of fatal attacks in which the Iranian government is suspected of involvement. For example, on March 4, 1996, Molavi Abdul Malek, the son of the most prominent Sunni cleric in Iran, Molavi Abdul Aziz, was gunned down outside his house in Karachi, Pakistan. According to Sunni activists, he had been under constant surveillance by Iranian agents active in Karachi because of his activities on behalf of the Baluchi community." **[8e] (p9)**

6.150 There are occasional outbreaks of violence such as the reported clashes of 4 December 2003 between demonstrators and police in Saravan, a result of the

death of a motorcyclist shot by the police for refusing to stop. It was claimed that up to five people died as a result of the clashes. **[21ci]**

Return to Contents

AZERIS

6.151 According to the Minorities at Risk Project 2001:

> "As has been the case since the mid-1980s, the Azeris have not had to deal with much repression or discrimination. The Iranian government prefers to emphasize the cultural similarities between the Persian speaking majority of Iran and the Azeris. The only repression or discrimination that occurred since the revolution has been immediately after the revolution in order to repress the stirring Azeri nationalism and demands for autonomy.
>
> Thus, it is clear that as long as the Azeris are content to be part of the Iranian state, they will be treated more or less the same as the Persian speaking majority. However, the declaration of independence by the bordering state of Azerbaijan and its struggle with the Armenians is likely to arouse feelings of nationalism and demands for autonomy or even secession among Iranian Azeris. The only group political activity between 1990 and 1999 by Iranian Azeris was in support of their brothers across the border." **[33]**

The Azerbaijanis, also known as the Azeris, are the largest minority in Iran, comprising between one-quarter and one-third of Iran's population. Estimates vary because the Iranian census does not count Azeris specifically. They are Shi'ia Muslims and in most respects similar to the rest of the Iranian population. **[33]** Many prominent Iranian Shi'ia clerics have been and are Azeris. The one factor that differentiates them from the rest of the Iranian population is that their native language is Azeri Turkish. They live in the north-western provinces of East and West Azerbaijan as well as in Tehran and scattered communities in between these provinces and Tehran. **[33]**

6.152 According to the Minorities at Risk Project 2001, for a brief period after the revolution, the Azeri-language press flourished. Also, with Soviet encouragement and support, Azeri nationalism and the desire for autonomy began to resurge. However, the Iranian Government considered this nationalism to be the result of Soviet interference in Iranian affairs and began to repress this resurgent nationalism in the early 1980s. After 1981, there were few reports of disturbances and by 1984, only one of the many Azeri-language publications remained. The Azeris, particularly since the late 1980s, have participated in the Iranian government at a national level as much as any other group, including ethnic Iranians, up to the highest levels of government. **[33]** However, the USSD report 2004 reported that in June, security forces reportedly arrested more than 100 ethnic Azeris for "spreading secessionist propaganda" during a holiday gathering of thousands of Azeri-Iranians in East Azerbaijan Province. **[4p] (p12)**

6.153 According to the Minorities at Risk Project 2001, the Azeris have no illegal or legal political parties or organisations. **[33]** Nevertheless, there have been complaints about discrimination against Azeris by the Iranian regime, particularly against Turkic speaking Azeris. One commentator writes of the dominance of a policy of 'Persian chauvinism' leading to the removal of the

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

Azeri language from official use in all areas such as schools, courts, government structures and the army as well as the prohibition of some forms of Azeri cultural expression **[10u] (p7)** According to the USSD report 2004:

"Azeri groups also claimed that there were a number of Azeri political prisoners jailed for advocating cultural and language rights for Iranian Azerbaijanis. The Government has charged several of them with "revolting against the Islamic state." **[4p] (p18)**

6.154 UNHCR commented in their "Comments on the Iran Country Report of April 2005" of August 2005 that:

"The statement "the Azeris have no illegal or legal political parties or organizations" (para. 6.138) may be misleading. A major illegal Azeri organisation active in Iran is the National Revival Movement of Southern Azerbaijan (GAMOH in Turkish abbreviation), and a smaller one is the National Council of Azerbaijan. Many cultural organisations also form a venue for Azeri organisation. Azeris are also politically active, seeking minority rights and recognition as a minority under a federal arrangement. (GAMOH seeks independence.) For instance: According to Armenian Arminfo News Agency on 28 April 2004, nearly one thousand students of private Azadi University in Tabriz held a protest action. Sources in Baku office of National Revival Movement of Southern Azerbaijan said that students condemned violence of Iranian security forces against Azeris in Tehran on 24 April (2004). Students reportedly demanded the release of Azeris arrested on April 24. Police reportedly interfered into the action and detained several students.

"According to Azerbaijani Turan Information Agency, National Movement of Southern [Iranian] Azerbaijan (NMSA) said one of leaders of NMSA, Yurush Mekhralibeyli, was arrested in Tabriz. Another leader Gulamrza Amani was also reportedly arrested several days ago. Although he was released on July 8, government reportedly hinders leaving activists from Tabriz city [in connection with annual Kala Babek rally by Azeri activists].

"Iranian Baztab news site reported on July 11 (2004): Police detained an unspecified number of "separatist elements" in the northwestern East Azarbaijan Province. The incident came as Iranians had gathered in a reputed castle in the province for a traditional ceremony. "Opportunist separatist elements brandished Azeri flags and chanted separatist slogans." They reportedly clashed with the officials, in which two officers were wounded". **[3h] (p3)**

Return to Contents

WOMEN

6.155 According to the Berlin COI Information Seminar Report 2001, Iranian women were very much involved in the 1979 Revolution. Women were told to take to the streets and participate in the overthrow of the Shah and in the establishment of an Islamic State. While initially women in the Revolution were heralded as heroic militants, gradually the clerical elite have come to describe the ideal woman as an obedient wife and mother. **[3c]**

6.156 According to a UNHCR Report of 1995, both the Constitution and international conventions adopted by Iran grant men and women equal rights. This conforms to Islamic criteria. Further, Article 21 of the Constitution stipulates that the government shall guarantee women's rights in all respects and create a favourable atmosphere for restoring their material and spiritual rights. **[3b]**

6.157 According to the USSD report 1999, this is not to say that women do not face social and legal discrimination. **[4f] (p13)** The USSD report 2001 reports that the view of women in a primarily familial context and motherhood role continues to be encouraged. Women may work or study, **[4k] (p19)** although, according to the DIRB paper on Women in the Islamic Republic 1994, some areas of study are closed to women, female students are segregated from male teachers, and social constraints inhibit their opportunities. **[2d]** This said, the literacy level was more than 80 per cent among Iranian women in 1998 **[14a]** and may now be above 90 per cent. In a recent statement made by the adviser to the President on Women's Affairs, it was reported that the percentage of 6 to14 year-old girls attending school had increased from 94 per cent to 97 per cent and that the percentage of girls accepted at universities had increased to 64 per cent. **[5aj]** The choice of a woman's occupation depends on her husband, who may prevent her working if he deems it contrary to the family's interest, although he must prove this to the Special Civil Tribunal. **[2d] [3c]** Women workers are subject to difficulties in the work place particularly as a result of entrenched cultural attitudes. **[21bq]**

6.158 According to the USSD report 2004:

"The Government enforced gender segregation in most public spaces, and prohibited women from mixing openly with unmarried men or men not related to them. Women must ride in a reserved section on public buses **[4p] (p18)** although the first woman bus driver has just taken to the roads, **[21be]** and enter public buildings, universities, and airports through separate entrances. Women were prohibited from attending male sporting events, although this restriction did not appear to be enforced universally. While the enforcement of conservative Islamic dress codes varied, what women wore in public was not entirely a matter of personal choice. The authorities sometimes harassed women if their dress or behavior was considered inappropriate, and women may be sentenced to flogging or imprisonment for such violations). The law prohibits the publication of pictures of uncovered women in the print media, including pictures of foreign women. There are penalties for failure to observe Islamic dress codes at work." **[4p] (p18)**

In August 2002, the authorities banned women, as well as youths under 25, from smoking the middle-eastern water pipe, or Narguileh, in Tehran's restaurants and cafés, as part of a bid to maintain "social discipline." **[5ap]** It was announced in early January 2003 that a Tehran football club – Paykan-had started to allow women into its stadium to watch games. **[17e]**

6.159 In a news report from Albawaba.com, dated January 30 2003, it was said that many of these restrictions were being eroded. **[39a]**

6.160 It was announced on 29 August 2002 that soon, in Zanjan province, female police officers will carry out patrol duties and soon similar units will become active in other provinces. **[5ai]** It is anticipated that by early 2003 there will be at least 400 qualified policewomen joining male colleagues on the streets of

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

Tehran. **[21bd]** Iran's first female police officers graduated on 4 October 2003. **[21by]**

6.161 According to Europa 2004, in the political field, women have been appointed to two positions of some responsibility by President Khatami, with Masumeh Ebtekar appointed as the first female vice president for environmental protection, thereby giving a woman Cabinet rank for the first time since the founding of the Islamic Republic, **[1a] (p378)** and Azam Nouri as Deputy Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, both in 1997. He has also appointed a woman to serve as Presidential Advisor in the Foreign Ministry's Department for Women and Social Affairs. One of the district mayors of Tehran is also female. However, women held only 13 of the 290 Majlis seats during the year 2002. **[4h] [26i]** On 27 May 2002, it was reported that the Government was planning to employ women in the Foreign Ministry as secretaries and chargé d'affaires. **[5ak]** Iran's new parliament (May 2004) had twelve female legislators. **[4p] (p15)** According to a report from Iran Focus News of 07 August 2005:

"Women will not be included in the cabinet of Iran's new hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a leading ultra-conservative figure said on Sunday. Hamid-Reza Taraghi, a central committee member of the Motalefeh Party, told a state-run news agency, "The circumstances for women to be ministers in the cabinet do not exist, but probably they can become deputies." **[76b]**

6.162 According to UN and USSD reports from 1995, 1998 and 1999, women have been appointed to four positions of family court judge by President Khatami. **[3b]** Their authority is limited principally to family law cases. **[4f] (p12)]** Following the first female prosecutor appointment in 1996, 20 women were reported to be training as investigative judges. **[3b]** Women have also been appointed to senior diplomatic positions overseas. **[10m] (p6)**

6.163 According to the Berlin COI Information Seminar Report 2001, there are a number of women's organizations, semi-official as well as non-governmental, that have been created since the Revolution and in particular in the last few years such as the Cultural and Social Council for Women, the Women's Affairs Commission, Women's Affairs Bureau, Women's Sports Department, International Office for Women, Bureau for Promotion of Rural Women's activities, Rural Women's Cooperative, Women's Solidarity Societies, etc. **[3c] (p102)**

6.164 According to the Berlin COI Information Seminar Report 2001, women suffer discrimination in the legal code, **[3c] (p102)** particularly in family and property matters. This is the area that affects women most badly. It is difficult for many women, particularly those living outside large cities, to obtain legal redress. According to an UN Report of 1998, under the legal system, women are denied equal rights of testimony and inheritance. **[10j] (p3)** According to a BBC News report of 29 May 2002 however, a bill was passed by the Majlis on 22 May 2002 which gave divorced mothers the same custody rights over boys as girls. **[5al]** Payvand News reported that on 8 February 2003 the Expediency Council sided with the Parliament after the bill was twice quashed by the supervisory Guardians Council on the grounds that it went against the Islamic Sharia law and agreed to grant divorced Iranian mothers the right to the custody of their children up to the age of seven. **[53f]** The law was finally amended by the Government in November 2003. **[4p] (p17)** A woman's testimony is worth less

than that of a man's, making it difficult for a woman to prove a case against a male defendant. **[9c] (p9)**

6.165 According to the USSD report 1998, violence against women in the family is recognised, with "blood money" – Diyah, although the award to a woman will be only half of that made to a man. In addition, families of female victims of violent crimes are reported to have to pay for an assailant's court costs. **[4f] (p6)** The "blood money" paid to the family of a female crime victim is half the sum paid for a man, and will remain so even if the new law passed by the Majlis equalising "blood money" for Muslims and non-Muslims is accepted by the Guardian Council. On 27 December 2003 the bill was approved by the Expediency Council. **[53b]** According to the USSD report 2002, any change would only pertain to men. **[4m] (p20)** According to the USSD report 2004, although spousal abuse and violence against women occurred, statistics were not available. Abuse in the family was considered a private matter and was seldom discussed publicly **[4p] (p17)** although surveys (e.g. Tehran University surveys) indicate levels of domestic violence are very high, women have almost no legal redress, and there is a fair amount of social tolerance of domestic violence. Iran welcomed UN contributions to the drafting of a convention on the elimination of forced labour and trafficking in women for sexual and other exploitation. **[10n] (p4)**

Return to Contents

HONOUR KILLINGS

6.166 UNHCR commented in their "Comments on the Iran Country Report of April 2005" of August 2005 that:

> "Honour crimes" are known to be occurring in Iran. It happens among Arab, Kurdish and Azeri minorities more than Farsi ethnicity. According to an AFP report, at least 40 women were killed by their families on the grounds of "honour crimes" only in Khuzestan over the period March to May 2003 (AFP, Over 40 women murdered in "honour killings" in two months in Iran, 27 October 2003). There are no reports of suggesting availability of state protection to woman risking "honour killings" (sic). **[3h] (p4)**

6.167 According to a UN Report of 1998, a prominent Iranian scholar, Ayatollah Bojnourdi, spoke out in favour of the revision of laws, which discriminate between men and women. In 1998 the judiciary's Bureau of Women's Affairs further said that legislation meant to reduce hardship for women in divorce and property cases had not yet been properly implemented. **[10b]** In addition to the position of women regarding evidence of witness, inheritance, retribution and judgement in civil and penal codes, the continued arranged marriages of young girls by fathers and grandfathers was noted. **[10b]** On 10 May 2004, it was reported in a BBC News report that Iran's outgoing reformist parliament had approved a bill which would grant women equal inheritance rights to men. **[21cp]** However, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in a news report dated 22 June 2004 "...the reformists have little chance of passing the bill." **[75a]**

6.168 According to a UN Report of 28 December 1998, women are given segregated medical treatment following the "Medical Religious Standard Conformity Act", other than where emergency wards are used. They also travel in segregated

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

railway carriages unless travelling with a male companion; have access to separate parks within some cities; and can use separate facilities in a newly opened passport office. While the Iranian authorities have claimed such steps are for the safety and convenience of women, they do not represent gender equality according to international standards. **[10m] (p6)**

6.169 According to a UN Report of 28 January 1998, in December 1997 President Khatami called for a re-evaluation of religious attitudes towards women, to "purge practices that are considered religious but are not." **[10b]** HRW 1999 reported that conservatives responded by trying to ban activism for women's rights. **[8d] (p1)** According to the USSD 1999, in June 1998, legal scholar Hojatoleslam Sayyid Mohsen Saidzadeh was convicted by the Special Clerical Court for his outspoken criticism of the treatment of women under the law. He was released from prison early in 1999. However, the Government banned him from performing any clerical duties for five years and prohibited him from publishing. **[4g] (p9)**

6.170 According to a report on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, submitted by the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights in December 1998, it was stated that:

"In one sense, gradual change has been under way for some time. For example, the illiteracy rate among women is said to have dropped from 22 to 9 per cent over the period since 1979. Indeed, according to a foreign press account, Population Action International in Washington reported recently that Iran was one of the 10 countries to have made the most progress in narrowing educational inequality between the sexes; 30 per cent of doctors are said to be women. The recruitment of women to work in the police force was recently approved, admittedly to work chiefly in women-related functions. A female journalists' association has been established. Women are beginning to be appointed to senior diplomatic positions overseas. The first female university chancellor has been appointed, albeit of a women's university. More appointments of women were made to the judicial service but none still to the position of presiding judge. Some of these developments are significant; some are symbolic." **[10m] (p6)** and also:

"For his part the Deputy Speaker of the Majlis is reported in the press to have stated that there was a long way to go before women could enjoy their full rights. He acknowledged that there were laws to be amended in this regard." **[10m] (p6)**

6.171 According to the Berlin COI Information Seminar Report 2001, the question of passport issuance still requires the husband's permission:

"With regard to passports, the requirements are usually checked when a person wanting to leave applies for a passport. If the criteria, one of them being the husband's permission, are not fulfilled the passport will not be issued. Once you are at the airport you should not have a problem. There does not seem to exist a special written permission by the husband for a woman to leave the country." **[3c] (p102)**

6.172 On 10 March 2004, the United Nations Development Programme announced that it was to set up a Women's Information Centre in Iran to promote the conditions of women in the country. **[3f]**

6.173 UNHCR reported in their "Comments on the Iran Country Report of April 2005" of August 2005 that the:

"UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Yakin Erturk, urged Tehran to adopt a national action plan to promote and protect human rights which would emphasise the elimination of violence against women. Although they had seen some advances, Iranian women still face violence in and outside the home and are blocked from defending their rights by discriminatory laws and an unfair justice system, Erturk said. "Discriminatory laws and malfunction in the administration of justice result in impunity for perpetrators and perpetuate discrimination and violence against women," she said. Erturk issued her criticism in a preliminary report for the world body's Human Rights Commission – which holds its annual six-week session in Geneva in March and April – following a government-approved visit to the country." **[3h] (p3)**

"She said she was "troubled by the widespread practice of arrest for political opinion, including of female human rights defenders, and for 'moral offences'," and by the failure of the judicial system to enforce safeguards ensuring fair trials. Erturk had also seen an emerging civil society with active female lawyers, journalists and academics "engaged in working to promote human rights and prevent violence against women." But she said: "In the family, women face psychological, sexual and physical violence" which existing laws did little to protect against, while divorce and custody of children were difficult for abused wives to obtain. In the wider community, victims of rape face numerous obstacles in accessing justice, she said. Women risk punishment for adultery if they fail to prove rape, and can face death for killing a rapist in self-defense (Reuters, U.N. expert criticises Iran on women's rights, executions, 8 February 2005)." **[3h] (p4)**

6.174 According to the Human Rights Annual Report 2005, issued by the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FC0) in July 2005:

"Women in Iran have certain rights and freedoms that they lack elsewhere in the region: they have the right to vote and work and they make up over half of the university intake. But discrimination is pervasive. A woman's testimony in court is worth half that of a man. Married women need their husband's permission to get a passport and travel overseas. Domestic violence is a serious problem. Women's participation in the labour market is low. Over the last year, the authorities have enforced the dress code more strictly: more women are stopped for ''bad hejab" (inappropriate clothing) and for wearing too much make-up." **[26j] (p60)**

Return to Contents

THE HIJAB

6.175 According to the Berlin COI Information Seminar Report 2001, the Hijab modest dress code became mandatory in 1980 and is required to be worn in all public places regardless of a woman's religion or citizenship. **[3c]** The UNHCR reports that women's hair must be fully covered and their faces free of make-up. Contravention of the dress code is punishable by either a verbal reprimand, **[3a] (p36) [3b]** a fine, 74 strokes of the lash **[3a] (p36) [3b]** or a prison term of up to three months. **[8b] (p3)**

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

6.176 Reports in the press have stated that the public attempts at loosening the Hijab are driven predominantly by those aged under 25 years, who make up 60 per cent of the population. **[14a]** There is some evidence that this rigidity, particularly in Tehran is loosening. **[40a]** While the battle between Khatami and the hardline conservatives over relaxing the Islamic restrictions continued **[14a]** after winning parliamentary elections in February 2004, hardliners warned they would not tolerate what they described as social corruption and in July 2004 Iran's morality police made several raids in Tehran in an apparent crackdown on women who flout the strict Islamic dress code. **[21cl]**

6.177 According to a BBC News report of 17 June 2002, the web is providing a way for women in Iran to talk freely about taboo subjects such as sex and boyfriends. **[21z]** as a result of the increase in the number of weblogs (a form of chat or discussion site) or online journals. **[21z]** **See also paragraph 6.52.**

Return to Contents

MARRIAGE

6.178 According to the DIRB (1994) and the USSD report 1998, current law in Iran sanctions two types of marriage: permanent marriage and temporary marriage called sigheh or mut'a. Temporary marriage is limited by a period of time, normally specified in the marriage contract, which may vary from one hour to 99 years. The husband may terminate the marriage at any time. Men are allowed up to four permanent wives and an unlimited number of concubines or temporary wives. **[2d] [4f] (p14)** Muslim men are free to marry non-Muslim women, but marriage between Muslim women and non-Muslim men is not recognised. **[4f] (p14)**

6.179 According to the USSD report 2004:

"Although the law permits it, marriage at the minimum age of 9 was rare. In mid-2002, authorities approved a law that requires court approval for the marriage of girls below the age of 13 and boys younger than 15. Although a male can marry at age 15 and above without parental consent, the 1991 Civil Law states that a virgin female, even over 18 years of age, needs the consent of her father or grandfather to wed, unless she is willing to go to court to get a ruling allowing her to marry without this consent. The country's Islamic law permits a man to have up to four wives. The law also allowed for the practice of temporary marriages based on a Shi'a custom in which a woman or a girl may become the wife of a married or single Muslim male after a simple and brief religious ceremony. The temporary marriage may last any length of time. According to Shi'a Islamic law, men may have as many temporary wives as they wish. Such wives are not granted rights associated with traditional marriage." **[4p] (p17)**

Return to Contents

MEHRIYEH

6.180 According to the article, "A Wedding, Tehrani Style" by: B. Bagheri:

"One of the most important details to be agreed upon is to set a "mehriyeh".

This is the amount of monetary compensation that the future husband will have to pay his wife in the unfortunate case of a divorce. Mehriyeh has proven to be a fairly effective insurance policy for the women in a society where there are limited options after a divorce. The process of setting the mehriyeh amount is sometimes the subject of much controversy and business-like negotiations, occasionally causing one side (or both) to call the whole thing off! For many aristocratic and modern Iranian families, a high mehriyeh is a status symbol, while many religious and orthodox families, as well as the intellectual types, express their confidence and faith in the future strength of the new marriage by setting the mehriyeh to be a very small token amount or simply a copy of the holy book of Ghoraan (The Moslem holy book of Qoran) and a couple of pieces of Iranian crystal sugar rocks! The sugar is to symbolise the sweetness and joy that is intended and sought from the marriage." **[51]**

6.181 It was reported in the Times on 17 May 1998, that following the 1979 Revolution in Iran, Islamic leaders told the populace to procreate and produce an army of 20 million. The population subsequently grew by up to four per cent per annum. However, the clerics now support the notion of contraception with teachings from the Koran, and the population growth rate has halved. **[15a]**

Return to Contents

DIVORCE

6.182 According to the DIRB Report, "Women in the Islamic Republic of Iran" (June 1994) divorce applies to permanent marriage only. A husband wishing to divorce is required to obtain court permission to register the divorce if his wife does not agree to it, but registration can only be delayed by the court, not prevented. A husband is not required to cite a reason for divorcing his wife. The conditions under which a woman may divorce depend on the year that she married, and the legislation that was in effect at the time of her marriage. **[2d]** On 28 September 2002 it was reported in a Reuters news report that the Guardian Council had returned to the Majlis for further consideration, a bill which would allow women greater rights to divorce their husbands, for example on grounds of drug addiction, insanity, impotence or inability to financially provide for his family. **[5am]** In December 2002 a BBC News report said that the Guardian Council approved this bill **[21bf]** which gives women the right to ask for divorce on 12 specific grounds e.g. addiction, imprisonment and emotional difficulties – although this does not constitute full equal rights. Divorced women, particularly in rural areas, may find themselves socially isolated and may face financial difficulty. **[19a] (p19)**

6.183 UNHCR expanded on the legal provisions relating to the legal distinctions between cancellation of marriage and divorce in permanent marriages in their "Comments on the Iran Country Report of April 2005" of August 2005 as follows:

"The Civil Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran makes a distinction between the cancellation of marriage and divorce concerning the dissolution of a permanent marriage (Article 1120). A permanent marriage may be cancelled by either one of the couple if the other one is proved to be "mad" (Article 1121). A woman is entitled to cancel a marriage on the basis of the following "defects" in a man: castration, impotency (provided that marriage is not consummated), and

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

amputation of the male sexual organ to the extent his "marital duty" cannot be performed (Article 1122).

"A man is entitled to cancel a marriage on the basis of the following defects: protrusion of the womb, black leprosy, leprosy, connection of vaginal and anal passages, being crippled and being blind in both eyes (Article 1123). However, such defects, except in cases specified below, should exist at the time of marriage and the other party should be ignorant of them to be able to revoke such "defects" as a ground for canceling the marriage. If one of the parties is cognizant of the "defects" in the other party before the celebration of the marriage, he or she loses his or her right to cancel marriage on the basis of such "defects" (Article 1124-1126). A woman is entitled to cancel her marriage on the grounds of "madness" or impotency even if such conditions occur in her husband after the marriage (Article 1126). Cancellation of a marriage does not necessarily follow the procedures stipulated for a divorce (Article 1132)." **[3h] (p4)**

"A specific regulation is made for the cases where the husband contracts a venereal disease after conducting the marriage, in which case the wife is entitled to refuse sexual intercourse with him while maintaining her right to maintenance costs (nafaqa) (Article 1127).

"According to the Iranian Civil Code, divorcing his wife is an exclusive right of the husband: "A man can divorce his wife whenever he wishes to do so" (Article 1133).

"If the husband refuses to pay, or is unable to pay, the costs of maintenance of his wife, and if it is not possible to enforce payment of such costs by court order, the wife can seek a divorce. In such a case, the judge will compel the husband to divorce her (Article 1129).

"A wife can also seek divorce "when it is proved to the Court that the continuation of the marriage causes difficult and undesirable conditions." In such cases, the judge can compel the husband to divorce his wife. If this proves difficult, the judge may divorce the couple by court order (Article 1131)." **[3h] (p5)**

6.184 According to the USSD report 2004:

"A widely used model marriage contract limits privileges accorded to men by custom and traditional interpretations of Islamic law recognize a divorced woman's right to a share in the property that couples acquire during their marriage and to increased alimony. Women who remarry are forced to give the child's father custody of children from earlier marriages." **[4p] (p17)**

6.185 In the event of divorce, the father traditionally has legal custody of his children **[2d]**, unless a woman can show her spouse to be an unfit father and applies under legislation passed in November 1998 to obtain custody. **[4f] (p14) [10b]** According to Reuters, on 22 May 2002 a bill was passed by the Majlis which gave divorced mothers the same custody rights over boys as girls **[5al]** and Payvand News reported that on 8 February 2003 the arbitrative Expediency Council agreed to grant divorced Iranian mothers the right to the custody of their children up to the age of seven. The Expediency Council sided with the parliament after the bill was twice quashed by the supervisory Guardians Council on the grounds that it went against the Islamic Sharia law. Divorced

mothers have already the custody right to their daughters up to the age of seven and the new law incorporates the same right to their sons. **[53f]**

Women who remarry are forced to give up custody of children from earlier marriages to their father. **[4f] (p14)**

6.186 UNHCR expanded on the legal provisions relating to custody of children in their "Comments on the Iran Country Report of April 2005" of August 2005 as follows:

"According to Iranian Civil Code, custody of children belongs to the father. In the case of the dissolution of marriage or the death of the father, "the mother shall have a preferential right to the custody of her child in the first two years of the child's life, after which the father shall have the custody unless the child is a girl in which case she will remain under the mother's custody until she reaches the age of 7" (Article 1169).

An amendment to the legislation in November 2003 increased mothers' custody rights, including granting the mothers to keep the custody of their sons until the age of 7 (IRNA, Iranian mothers win better child custody rights, 29 November 2003). The mother looses custody over her children when she becomes "insane" or when she marries another man (Article 1170).

While the mother may loose custody of her children if she cannot prove she is financially able to support her children (Asylum Aid, Refugee Women and Domestic Violence: Country Studies – Iran, March 2002, p24-25). According to a report by Asylum Aid on domestic violence in Iran:

"The possibility of a woman keeping her children with her therefore depends on not only on her financial position, but also on her husband's agreement to forgo his right to custody. In a case of domestic violence, this kind of voluntary concession is likely to be hard to obtain (Asylum Aid, March 2002, p25)." **[3h] (p5)**

The report goes on to highlight the distinction between custody and guardianship:

"Iranian Civil Code makes a distinction between custody and guardianship. Even when custody of children is with the mother, "natural" guardianship remains with the father (or paternal grandfather). Therefore, mothers cannot travel outside of Iran without the permission of the father of the child even if the child is in custody of the mother (ACCORD, Iran Country Report: 7th European Country of Origin Information Seminar, June 2001)." **[3h] (p5)**

6.187 According to a DIRB report of July 1998, the position of a divorced woman and further relationships after divorce can be fraught, with accusations of "immoral behaviour" and possible "adultery" brought to the Ershad. **[2m]**

6.188 According to a July 2002 report the phenomenon of husband killing, punishable by death, is on the rise in the male-dominated society some point to abuse or philandering as factors. **[5ao]**

Return to Contents

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

ABORTION

6.189 According to a DIRB report of February 2001, the position of whether it is legal to perform abortions is unclear in law, and many doctors are reluctant to proceed. This is irrespective of a fatwa by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei that abortion may be undertaken in cases of medical necessity, such as when thalassemia has been detected. Illegal abortion clinics have been prosecuted in recent years. **[2e]**

6.190 According to a report from the Feminist Majority Foundation on 22 July 2004:

> "Iran's parliament on Tuesday (20 July 2004) approved a draft of a bill to legalize abortion in the first four months of pregnancy. According to the bill, an abortion can be performed only when the woman's life is in danger and/or when the fetus is malformed. According to Iran's Payvand News, a woman will also need the consent of both parents to receive an abortion. Another parliamentary vote is still required on the draft of the bill before it is made into law. In addition, Iran's conservative Guardian Council also has to approve the bill, as it does all legislation, before it can be made law. Abortion has been illegal on most grounds in Iran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution." **[73a]**

6.191 According to a report in Iran Focus News dated 09 May 2005:

> "Iran's Guardians Council, a hardline body that screens all legislation, has rejected a highly contentious law that allowed abortions in limited cases, the student news agency ISNA reported on Monday "It is against sharia (Islamic law) to abort children who would inflict a financial burden on the parents after birth due to mental or physical handicap," ISNA said, quoting parliamentary sources. Iran's conservative-dominated parliament decided last month [12 April 2005] – in the face of opposition from religious right-to-life MPs – that abortions be allowed within four months of gestation if the foetus was mentally or physically handicapped and would inflict a financial burden on the family. At present, women in Iran can only get official approval for an abortion if their life is proven to be at risk because of a pregnancy, leading to a booming but dangerous backstreet business. According to local press reports, at least 80,000 illegal abortions are carried out in Iran each year but some believe the actual figure could be far higher. The legislation will now be referred back to parliament for amendments and if it is still opposed by the Guardians Council, Iran's top arbitration body the Expediency Council will make a final ruling." **[76c]**

Return to Contents

CHILDREN

6.192 According to Europa 2004, education is officially compulsory for five years, between 6 and ten years of age, but this entitlement has not been fully implemented in rural areas. Secondary education from the age of 11 lasts for up to seven years, in blocks of three and four years. Sixteen of the 37 universities are in Tehran. **[1a] (p440)** All education is taught in Farsi/Persian with only the occasional and minimal use of minority languages. **[10p] (p16)** **See also paragraph 5.85 et seq.**

6.193 According to the USSD report 2000, the law prohibits employment of minors less than 15 years of age and places special restrictions on the employment of

minors under the age of 18. The law permits children to work in agriculture, domestic service and some small businesses, but minors may not normally be employed in night work or hard labour. **[4h] [75c]** Most children have access to some form of health care. **[4b] (p12)** Health care generally is regarded as affordable and comprehensive with competent physicians. **[4p] (p18)** There is no known pattern of child abuse. **[4f] (p14)**

6.194 At a meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on Children on 10 May 2002, Dr Kamal Kharrazi, former Minister for Foreign Affairs, stated that the Iranian Parliament had been active in the promulgation of necessary legislation with the view to improving conditions for children and youth throughout the country. A new bill had been initiated in Parliament, which focused on child growth, protection and development. The aim of the bill is to tackle major causes of social and family problems that children may be subjected to. **[31]** According to the USSD report 2004:

"In December 2003, the Government enacted the Law on Protection of Children and Youths. This law prohibited abuse or harassment of children or youth in any manner and outlawed buying, selling, exploiting, or employing children to engage in illegal acts such as smuggling." **[4p] (p18)**

It is also noteworthy to mention that the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention of 1999 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor has recently been adopted by the Parliament and Iran has therefore become a party thereto. **[31]**

CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS

6.195 Iran's initial report (CRC/C/41/Add.5, July 1998) was considered by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child at its May/June 2000 session. The report prepared by the government contained information on subjects such as: material assistance and support programmes for poor parents; state protection and assistance for children deprived of their family environment and adoption. **[10v]** It went on to state that it "should be noted that separation from parents against the will of children rarely takes place in the Islamic Republic of Iran due to cultural and religious attachments. Children have a special attachment to their parents and this attachment is not severed under normal circumstances, except in rare cases such as those involving abuse of the child by parents (for example), narcotics trafficking, immoral activities, or neglect by parents of their children. In such cases parentless children are placed in the institutions managed by the Welfare Organisation, NGOs and charitable bodies. The Judiciary of the Islamic Republic of Iran plans to establish institutions for the care of parentless children." **[10v]**

6.196 According to Islamic principles, if a child for whatever reason cannot remain with his or her parents, he or she is given to one of the relatives, and in (a) case (where) there is no paternal relative, there are private places where children can be placed:

a Nursery. This is a place where parentless children from infancy to five years of age are placed and cared for on a 24-hour basis. In the 10 nurseries operating in provincial centres there are more than 465 infants and children;

b Day and Night Protection Services Complex. This is a place within the Urban Protection Services Complexes where children above the age of five are

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

cared for, on the basis of separation by gender and 24-hour service, until the time they reach the legal age of maturity and are qualified to be released. The ceiling for the number of children that can be accepted in these units is nine. There are 38 such units nationwide which protect about 500 children;

c Independent Day and Night Centre. This is an independent institution for children from 12 years to legal age that operates under the direct supervision of the Welfare Organisation for the purpose of providing for the physical, emotional and social needs of children. The ceiling for the number of children in these 24-hour units is 30. The total number of such independent units nationwide is 19 and they cover 561 children." **[10v]**

6.197 Some families in Iran volunteer to raise and care for three to five children under the protection of the Welfare Organisation like other members of their own family. This method of foster parenting is mostly for girls up to 13 years of age who are without parents and relatives. About ten to 14 children without guardians accepted by the Welfare Organisation are placed with a committed family and can acquire their personality development within a family environment. By 1998, five houses for 51 girls had been established. **[10v]**

6.198 In its response of 2 June 2000 to the Iranian Government's report the Committee noted that whilst the State party's report (CRC/C/41/Add.5) was prepared according to the Committee's guidelines for reporting, the Committee regretted that the report was essentially legalistic and did not provide a self-critical evaluation of the prevailing situation of the exercise of children's rights in the country. Moreover, the Committee noted that "the rights of the child were seen through a paternalistic lens; the child was not seen as an active subject of human rights. There were significant gaps in information relating to general measures of implementation, general principles, particularly non-discrimination and the best interests of the child, civil rights and freedoms and special protection measures." **[10w] (p1)**

Return to Contents

HOMOSEXUALS/TRANSSEXUALS

6.199 According to the Berlin COI Information Seminar Report 2001, although homosexuality is never spoken about and thus a hidden issue, in practice it is not difficult to encounter homosexuals in Iran. There are special parks in Tehran, known as homosexual meeting places. There are also a large number of transvestites walking around in north Tehran. Furthermore, sex changes are permitted in Iran and operations are openly carried out. **[77a]** In contrast to almost everywhere else in the Muslim world, sex change operations are legal in Iran for anyone who can afford the minimum £2,000 cost and satisfy interviewers that they meet necessary psychological criteria. As a result, women who endured agonising childhood and adolescent experiences as boys, and – albeit in fewer numbers – young men who reached sexual maturity as girls, are easy to find in Tehran. Iran has even become a magnet for patients from eastern European and Arab countries seeking to change their genders. **[16f] (p1)** A different sexual orientation may, however, create problems. Still, homosexuality is practised every day, and as long as this happens behind closed doors within your own four walls, and as long as people do not intend to proselytise 'transvestism' or homosexuality, they will most likely remain unharmed. **[3c] (p104)**

6.200 According to the DIRB, technically, homosexual behaviour is sharply condemned by Islam, and the Islamic Sharia law adopted by Iran. Sodomy is punishable by death if both parties are considered to be adults of sound mind and free will. **[2b]** It must be proven by either four confessions from the accused, the testimony of four righteous men who witnessed the act **[2b] [15b]** or through the knowledge of a Sharia judge "derived through customary methods." **[2c] (p15)** Articles 125-126 outline the circumstances under which an individual, by repenting, may have the prescribed punishment quashed or have clemency recommended by the judge. **[12b]**

6.201 According to the Berlin COI Information Seminar Report 2001:

"From a legal point of view it is important to take a look at Iranian law particularly the Islamic Punishment Act, which carries the following provisions for homosexual acts:

Art. 110: The prescribed punishment for homosexual relations in case of intercourse is execution and the mode of the execution is at the discretion of the religious judge.
Art. 111: Homosexual intercourse leads to execution provided that both the active and passive party are of age, sane and consenting.
Art. 112: Where a person of age commits homosexual intercourse with an adolescent, the active party shall be executed and the passive party, if he has not been reluctant, shall receive a flogging of up to 74 lashes.
Art. 113: Where an adolescent commits homosexual intercourse with another adolescent, they shall receive a flogging of up to 74 strokes of the whip unless one of them has been reluctant.
Art. 114 to 126 establish how to prove homosexual intercourse.
Art. 127 to 134 relate to lesbian sexual relations. Punishment for sexual intercourse among lesbians is 100 lashes. If the offence is then repeated 3 times the punishment is execution." **[3c] (p105)**

6.202 The burden of proof is quite high and it would be difficult to prove homosexual liaisons or intercourse. According to some reports in local papers there have been instances of execution of homosexuals. It is not confirmed whether the homosexual act alone led to execution or whether the person was accused on other charges too. **[3c] (p105)**

6.203 According to a Reuter's report of 18 July 2002, there were reports that a man accused of sodomising and then murdering his nephew was to be thrown over a cliff in a sack. This was given widespread publicity by the Iranian opposition in the UK and was taken up by other wires, but we have heard no reports that the sentence was ever carried out. **[5ba]**

6.204 According to the Berlin COI Information Seminar Report 2001:

"However, jurisprudence, burden of proof notwithstanding, certainly has used accusations of homosexuality. Furthermore, it does happen that homosexuality is mentioned as one of the accusations amongst other offences held against the defendant. For instance, accusations of homosexuality have been used in unfair trials, such as the case of a Sunni leader in Shiraz in 1996/97, who was clearly prosecuted for politically reasons. There have also been other political cases, although not in the recent past." **[3c] (p105)**

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

6.205 According to the Ta'azirat of November 1983 (valid to June 1996), sentences of imprisonment for between one and ten years and up to 74 lashes are possible for homosexual activities. The death penalty may also be incurred if the act is deemed to be an "Act against God and corruption on earth." Since June 1996 the revised Ta'azirat omits direct threat of lashes or the death penalty. The penalties of lashing and of death are, however, still judicial options, even though they are not mentioned within the revised Ta'azirat. Reports suggest that since 1996 they have rarely been used. **[19a] (p18)** Reports of use of the death penalty in cases where the only offence is sodomy/execution are extremely difficult to substantiate, and are held to be an unlikely sentence. More usually lashing is the punishment. **[2j]**

6.206 However, strict though the legal position is, expert opinion consulted by the Canadian IRB in 1998 stated that:

"Theoretically, homosexual behaviour is sharply condemned by Islam, but in practice it is present, and has been in the past, for the most part tolerantly treated and frequently occurring in countries where Islam predominates... In practice it is only public transgression of Islamic morals that is condemned and therefore Islamic law stresses the role of eye-witnesses to an offence." **[2j]**

6.207 The same source stated that the police are not empowered nor do they actively pursue homosexual activity of any kind that is performed behind the "veil of decency" of closed doors. **[2j]**

6.208 Sources indicate that there are held to be many differing levels of homosexual activity within Iranian society. In rural areas, even "lavat" – sexual activity can be considered socially to be compensatory sexual behaviour for heterosexual sexual intercourse, and the practitioners held not to be homosexuals. **[2j]** The key offensive practice is sodomy, or more particularly to be sodomised, as an unnatural inversion of God's creation, and some experts hold that "homosexuals" are understood in Iran to be willing passive partners. **[2j]**

6.209 According to a DIRB Report of 1999, lesbian cases rarely come before the courts, as the case usually fails the test of proof of four righteous witnesses. Sources hold that lesbian behaviour in public is impossible to distinguish from accepted social contact between women in Iran. **[2o]** The source concludes:

"Of female same-sex behaviour musahaqa almost nothing is known. Islamic law considers it sex outside marriage and therefore as adultery, with all the consequences already described. Yet because no penetration takes place, punishment is theoretically limited to one hundred lashes. In practice lesbian behaviour is regarded as relatively unimportant, because it usually takes place discreetly." **[2o]**

Other DIRB sources expand that lesbianism defined as genital contact between women is punishable by 100 lashes each and by death on the fourth offence. **[2c] (p15)**

6.210 In an article from RFE/RL dated 1 September 2005, the question of an anti-homosexual campaign was reported:

"According to Islamic law, homosexuality is a capital crime. The execution of two Iranian males in July and current allegations that two more Iranian men are on death row because they are gay has led to allegations of an anti-homosexual campaign in Iran. But homosexuality is just part of the laundry list of charges leveled against people caught up in the Iranian justice system, and in a country with such a reprehensible human rights record, the actual charges rarely have a connection with reality"... Several recent cases have garnered a great deal of attention in this regard, but they appear to be overshadowed by concern over the execution of minors. The freshest allegations are that a homosexual was executed in the city of Arak in mid-August, and that two more men there are awaiting execution on similar charges..."

The article continued:

"In July 2005, two males – one of them reportedly a minor – were hanged after being found guilty of raping a 13-year-old boy. However, exile sources claimed that the execution of the two, Mahmud Asgari and Ayaz Marhoni, related to their engagement in homosexual activities. Human Rights Watch, in a 27 July letter to judiciary chief Ayatollah Mahmud Hashemi-Shahrudi, expressed concern with the execution of juvenile offenders, but did not refer to any other aspect of the case." **[42f] (p1)**

6.211 The RFRL article stated that:

"Official Iranian sources occasionally express hostility to homosexual practices. A state radio commentary on 7 March 2005 criticized gay marriages in Western countries. Ayatollah Ebrahim Amini said in his Friday-prayer sermon in Qom that gay and lesbian marriages reflect a weakness of Western culture, state television reported on 13 July 2002. Ayatollah Ali Meshkini in his Friday-prayer sermon in Qom criticized the German Green Party for being pro-homosexual, state television reported on 29 April 2000.

"It is clear that officially and in practice, there is discrimination against homosexuals in Iran. However, systematic repression of homosexuals does not seem to be an issue. The most recent cases of capital punishment for homosexuality are connected with rapes, but the official terminology, Iran's system of retribution as a form of Islamic punishment (qesas), and the country's terrible human-rights record make it very difficult to determine the true nature of a so-called crime." **[42f] (p2)**

Return to Contents

POLITICAL DISSENT

6.212 According to the USSD report 2004:

"The Constitution provides for the establishment of political parties, professional associations, Islamic religious groups, and organizations for recognized religious minorities, provided that such groups do not violate the principles of "freedom, sovereignty, and national unity," or question Islam as the basis of the Islamic Republic; however, the Government limited freedom of association, in practice." **[4p] (p12)**

6.213 According to the USSD Profile of country conditions 2004:

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

"The Islamic Republican Party (IRP) was Iran's dominant political party until its dissolution in 1987; Iran now has a variety of parties and groups engaged in political activities, some oriented along ideological lines; others more akin to professional groupings engaging in political activities. The Iranian Government is opposed by a few armed political groups, including the Mojahedin-e-Khalq (People's Mojahedin of Iran), the People's Fedayeen, and the Kurdish Democratic Party." **[4j] (p4)**

A list of political organisations, including those operating abroad, is at Annex B. Part C of the annex lists "registered" parties.

6.214 According to the Ta'izarat and USSD reports, there have been reports that many of those executed for alleged criminal offences, primarily narcotics charges, were actually political dissidents. Furthermore, a law passed in November 1995 criminalised dissent and applied sentences of imprisonment, or in extreme cases the death penalty, to offences such as "attempts against the security of the State", including imprisonment terms of between three to ten years for assassination attempts against the Leader of the Islamic Republic or the chiefs of the three branches of state power or supreme religious authorities Marja'e Taqlid. Insults against high-ranking Iranian officials, against the memory of Imam Khomeini, and against the Leader of the Islamic Republic, carry the threat of execution if they fall under the "Sab-Onnabi" blasphemy category, or sentences to an imprisonment term of between six months and five years. **[4a] [12a]**

6.215 According to a 1998 report from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the situation in Iran, activities of opposition groups such as Tudeh, Iran Paad, Komala, and Fedayeen had not been evident in Iran in recent years. **[19a] (p17)** However, since then it has been reported that over 1,000 members of such dissident groups were executed in 1988/1989, including 38 named members of Tudeh **[2f]** and the situation for the Kurds appears to have deteriorated recently. However, according to a March 2003 Amnesty International report, a number of Kurds, including members of Komala, has been executed in recent months. **[9v]**

6.216 According to an AI Report of September 2001, Abbas Amir Entezam is Iran's longest-serving prisoner of conscience. He was sentenced to life imprisonment in December 1980 after an unfair trial lasting only minutes. In 1998 he was charged with defamation, though the prison authorities would not release him to attend the trial, despite the judge's reportedly specific request. The charges were later dropped and even though his bail was reportedly paid, he was never released. In February 1999, a retrial was set to review these charges. The International Commission of Jurors' request to send an observer to the trial was reportedly denied. The case was then referred back to the revolutionary court, which has not set a date for a third trial. Over the last year and as recently as three months ago, judicial officials reportedly told Abbas Amir Entezam that if he were to sign a confession with statements stating that he spied for the United States, and if he asked for a pardon, that it would be given. In reply, Abbas Amir Entezam is reported to have replied that he had spent 22 years in prison following an unfair trial and that all he wanted was a fair and open retrial. **[9ab]**

6.217 In September 2001 he was released for one month's "obligatory leave" on medical grounds, reportedly at the request of his doctor. **[9l]** According to the USSD report 2004:

"In April 2003, Former Deputy Prime Minister and longtime political dissident, Abbas Amir-Entezam was re-imprisoned, after his release in 2002 for medical reasons. Amir-Entezam was reportedly incarcerated for calling for a referendum on whether the country should remain under clerical rule during a speech at Tehran University. He was reportedly a frequent victim of torture in prison resulting in numerous medical problems. He reported having been taken on numerous occasions before a firing squad (see Section 1.e.). During the year, he was released on medical leave until late November, due to the Government's inability to treat his medical conditions in prison. As of December, he was receiving medical treatment at his home while recovering from back surgery, and his medical leave was extended until early January 2005" **[4p] (p3)**

Return to Contents

MOJAHEDIN-E KHALQ MEK/MKO OR PMOI (PEOPLE'S MOJAHEDIN OF IRAN)

6.218 According to the DIRB and the USSD, the Mojahedin organisation is one of the most active militant opposition groupings with a worldwide network of members and supporters. Its ideology, based on Islam, emphasises the necessity of social change and incorporates many Marxist ideas. It advocates a two-pronged strategy of armed struggle and the use of propaganda to achieve its political objectives. During the 1970s, the MeK was at the forefront of opposition to the Shah. During the early phase of the Islamic revolution it was an uneasy ally with the clergy, was responsible for several assassinations and supported the take-over of the US Embassy and the holding of American hostages. However, the clergy's drive to consolidate power led to a final break in 1981 and the MeK conducted numerous attacks on official Iranian targets. In 1986, the French Government closed down its headquarters in Paris and the MeK shifted its main base to Iraq where it was sheltered by Saddam's regime. It also maintained subsidiary branches in Europe and North America. In 1987, MeK's leader Massoud Rajavi announced the formation of the National Liberation Army, which conducted raids into Iran during the Iran-Iraq war. The MeK have been responsible for acts of sabotage, violent attacks that victimise civilians, and violence against Iranian government targets in the West. **[2a] [4c]** The MeK/PMOI is a proscribed organisation under the UK Terrorism Act 2000. The National Council of Resistance Iran (NCRI) is the MeK's self-labelled "political wing." Due to the close links between the two organisations, British officials and Ministers avoid contact with the NCRI. **See Annex B.**

6.219 Popular support for the MeK has declined in Iran, and Iraq's support of it has fluctuated with the level of hostility between the two regimes. The Iranian regime's treatment of the MeK opposition has been extremely severe, with reports of large numbers of executions and torture although there have not been any recent reports. Known or suspected members of MeK have faced either execution or long prison terms if caught in Iran. **[4c]** According to the Situation in Iran report, December, 1988 from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the organisation claimed responsibility for two attacks in June 1998, including one on a revolutionary court where three people died as a result. In August 1998 the MeK took responsibility for an attack on the former head of Evin Prison. **[19a] (p17)**

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

6.220 According to the Amnesty International Report for 2002, there were unconfirmed reports that the MeK, ill-treated its own members at its base in Iraq. The reports were denied by the organisation but it failed to provide substantive information to allay AI's concerns. **[9q]** and a Human Rights Watch Report, "No Exit: Human Rights Abuses Inside the Mojahedin Khalq Camps" of May 2005 reported that:

"The former MKO members reported abuses ranging from detention and persecution of ordinary members wishing to leave the organization, to lengthy solitary confinements, severe beatings, and torture of dissident members. The MKO held political dissidents in its internal prisons during the 1990s and later turned over many of them to Iraqi authorities, who held them in Abu Ghraib. In one case, Mohammad Hussein Sobhani was held in solitary confinement for eight-and-a-half years inside the MKO camps, from September 1992 to January 2001.

The witnesses reported two cases of deaths under interrogation." **[8l] (p2)**

6.221 According to the Project Ploughshares Armed Conflicts Report 2003, during 2003 there were no reported deaths due to fighting between Iranian government fighters and armed rebels for the second consecutive year. **[60a] (p1)** The US-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003 resulted in the disarming of the MeK rebels based in that country. The lingering conflict between the MeK and the Iranian government was deeply affected by the US-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003. In April 2003, the MeK surrendered to US forces following a bombing campaign targeting Camp Ashraf, their base in Iraq. **[60a] (p4)** The Tehran Times reported on 25 November 2003 that, after the MKO disarmament, the Iranian government expressed interest in assisting the repatriation of rebel fighters and announced that they were proposing to issue an amnesty. **[52b]** In December 2003 it was reported in the Christian Science Monitor (CSM) that the amnesty offer from President Mohamed Khatami – coupled with relatively soft treatment of recently captured MeK operatives and the expulsion deadline – was sparking new hope. In Geneva in December 2003, Mr. Khatami said Iran was ready to accept former MeK fighters who "are in Iraq and regret" past acts. "We will welcome them and judge them according to the law," he said. **[67a]** The government made clear that the proposed amnesty would not be extended to the leadership. **[60a] (p4)** It was reported by the CSM in December 2003, that the views of a dozen former militants interviewed for a December 2003 article often for several hours each, half of them still imprisoned by Iran's Revolutionary Court was that the MeK is no longer deemed a critical threat by the Iranian regime. **[67a]** According to Project Ploughshares, in December 2003, the Iraqi Governing Council indicated it would expel members of the MeK from Iraq possibly to Iran, **[60a] (p4)** with the intention to have carried this out by 2005. **[52c]** However, in spite of this offer, the vast majority of MeK members remained in their camps in Iraq, supervised by US/UK coalition forces. **[60a] (p4)** Since early 2005, there have been reports that around 300 rank-and-file former residents of Camp Ashraf have returned to Iran voluntarily under a scheme involving the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). **[22c]**

6.222 According to the Child Soldiers Global Report 2004 "The MeK reportedly recruited members from the USA, Europe and Iraqi prisoner of war camps and jails. Children were said to be among MeK members in Ashraf camp, including

17-year-old Majid Amini who 'was recruited to join the MeK in Tehran with promises of completing two school grades in one year and gaining a place in college', according to his parents. There were reports that the MeK recruited children from Sweden." **[30]**

6.223 According to the Danish FFM of January 2005:

"UNHCR in Teheran pointed out that 58 members of the Iranian opposition organisation MKO had returned to Iran on their own volition. The return journey had been organised by ICRC. UNHCR had no information as to whether those that returned had been pursued."

UNHCR in Ankara said that low profile members of Mujaheddin Khalq had returned to Iran. There was no information as to whether the people in question were to be pursued, or even prosecuted.

The Organisation for Defending Victims of Violence international department told everyone that many members of the Mujaheddin Khalq had returned to Iran without encountering problems with the authorities.

IOM in Teheran confirmed that members of Mujaheddin Khalq had returned to Iran first and foremost from Iraq. The source was not aware that those that had returned had been exposed to reprisals. IOM had monitored the return of a number of Iranian asylum seekers who had been refused entry to the UK. According to the source none of them were pursued." **[86a] (p15)**

Return to Contents

RASTAKHIZ PARTY AND MONARCHISTS

6.224 According to the USSD Country Profile of 1996, the Rastakhiz Party was established by the Shah in 1975 to run a one-party state and membership was viewed as a civic duty. All officials of the government, even those at the middle and lower levels of the bureaucracy were almost automatically made members of the party because of their government employment status. Iranians, particularly those in the professions or in business, regardless of their political views, usually joined to enhance their professional or business prospects. The Islamic regime has not in the past, nor does it now, act against Iranians simply because they or their relatives were members of the Rastakhiz Party. **[4c]**

6.225 According to a DIRB report of June 2001, a purported Monarchist organisation entitled Javid Iran was investigated by the Canadian IRB in June 2001. The organisation was alleged to have been active in Shiraz between March and October 2000. No information about this organisation could be found by the IRB and an expert source doubted its existence. **[2h]**

6.226 According to the USSD Country Profile of 1997, there is no evidence of any pattern of action by the regime today against Iranians simply because at one time they were middle-level or low-ranking functionaries of the Shah's bureaucracy. **[4d] (p11)**

Return to Contents

SAVAK

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

6.227 According to the USSD Country Profile of 1996, the Islamic regime was especially harsh against very high officials of SAVAK, the Shah's security organisation, following the fall of the Shah. During the first months of the Revolution, high level SAVAK officials were either executed or given very long prison sentences. Many SAVAK employees particularly those known or suspected of having an active role in repressing Muslim clergymen and secular opponents of the Shah – were punished severely. However, a number of highly trained SAVAK employees have become part of the new security apparatus set up to replace SAVAK. In general, most low-level SAVAK functionaries who found themselves detained for a short time during the initial stages of the Revolution were simply dismissed. **[4c]**

Return to Contents

KURDISH DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF IRAN (KDPI)

6.228 According to the Minorities at Risk Project 2001, there are two major Kurdish parties in Iran as well as many smaller ones, including Kurdish branches of other Iranian political parties. **[33]** The KDPI was originally formed as an illegal organisation after World War II during the Shah's reign, to seek cultural and local autonomy. It has maintained a constant policy of demanding democracy for Iran and autonomy for the Kurds. It has not demanded a separate state, perhaps because of the close historical and cultural ties between Iran and its Kurds. Most of its support comes from the urban middle class, intellectuals, merchants and government employees. Since 1981, it has formally been part of the Iranian National Resistance Council – a coalition of Iranian opposition groups based in Paris – and has militarily opposed the Iranian Government. **[33]**

6.229 The regime deals harshly with its leaders and their militant supporters. There are reports of extra-judicial killings and questionable detentions of Kurdish militant activists. **[4c]** According to AI, in November 1998 Karim Tuzhali a former member of the KDPI was sentenced to death following his forcible return to Iran from Turkey, and, again according to AI, was reportedly executed on 24 January 2002 at Mahabad prison. Karim Tuzhali was a former asylum seeker and recognised as a refugee by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). **[9ag]** According to the USSD report 2003 it was alleged by the KDPI that the Government executed party member Jalil Zewal in December 2003, after nine years in prison during which he was reportedly subjected to torture. KDPI member Ramin Sharifi was also executed in December 2003 after his arrest in July 2003. KDPI reports also said that hardline vigilante groups had killed at least seven other Kurdish civilians during 2003. **[4n] (p2)** UNHCR in their "Comments on the Iran Country Report of April 2005" of August 2005 have reported that:

"The punishments given to the members of these parties have mainly remained concentrated on imprisonment terms (based on the Islamic Punishment Code's Articles 499-502). However, there have been a number of executions mainly reported by sources of the opposition." **[3h] (p7)**

6.230 According to an Economist report dated 21 December 2001, the KDPI had been driven into neighbouring Iraq. Iran's support for Jalal Talabani, the leader of the PUK which runs the chunk of the Iraqi enclave contiguous with Iran, has helped to prevent the KDPI from launching cross border attacks. **[24b]**

6.231 In the Child Soldiers Global Report 2004 it is stated:

"A study of Iranian Kurdish refugees in Sweden revealed that "a minority of the Iranian Kurds [interviewed] had entered the guerrilla movement before the age of 15." The study indicated that there was no compulsion to join the peshmerga (Kurdish fighters), although "there was great pressure at school" to do so." **[30]**

6.232 UNHCR in their "Comments on the Iran Country Report of April 2005" of August 2005 have reported that:

"According to information provided by refugees and KDPI websites, which cannot be verified by UNHCR, the KDPI has been organising its domestic activities from the PUK controlled region in Iraq since early 90's. The party has been struggling for an autonomous government of Kurdistan within the Iranian territories. However, despite having an armed guerilla presence of about 2,000 peshmargha near Qoy Sanjak, the party has decided to decrease such activities since mid 90's and continue instructing its domestic supporters through peshmargha who continue their missions to three "zones" called as "Navends." The peshmargha have been reaching the supporters and providing them with the propaganda materials (publications and leaflets) prepared in Iraq. These materials are distributed by the supporters active mainly in the Western Azerbaijan towns of Mahabad, Oroumieh and Sardasht. The supporters also continue slogan writings particularly on special party occasions and anniversaries. They have not been attacking Iranian military targets as they would do until 90's. The PUK has brought many limitations to the party's activities inside Iraq. Therefore, despite being strengthned following the re-unification with the KDP–RL, its splitter faction, the party has only been able to continue limited propaganda organisations. The KDPI's target groups are still those who have strong national and religious (Sunni Moslem) identity and those who believe that the Shiite dominated Iranian state has been continuing to deprive the Sunni Kurdish regions of development, education and employment." **[3h] (p6)**

Return to Contents

KOMALA

6.233 According to the Minorities at Risk Project 2001, the Revolutionary Organisation of the Toilers of Kurdistan Komala is the other major Kurdish party. While there are claims that it has existed as an underground organisation since 1969, it first appeared publicly in 1983 as the Kurdish branch of the Communist Party of Iran. While it has often violently disagreed with the KDPI, the Komala has supported the KDPI's stance for democracy and autonomy. **[33]** It was reported by AI in 2003 that it appeared that there had been a noticeable use of death sentences and executions by the authorities against Komala recently, an apparent attempt to intimidate the inhabitants of Khordestan. **[9ac]** According to the USSD report 2003, two political activists associated with the outlawed Komala party, Sassan al-Kanaan and Mohammad Golabi, were executed in February and March 2003. **[4n] (p2)**

6.234 UNHCR in their "Comments on the Iran Country Report of April 2005" of August 2005 have reported that:

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

"According to information provided by refugees and Komala website, which cannot be verified by UNHCR, Komala, as a Marxist-Leninist Kurdish group continues, its struggle within a similar framework as of the KDPI's. However, Komala's target groups are mainly those whom despite being Kurds do not have religious and exceeded nationalist perspectives and are also against the still existing feudalist structure, which promotes the KDPI sympathy among the Iranian Kurds. But, contradictory to its ideology the Komala accepts itself as a Kurdish party which has actively prioritized the rights of the Iranian Kurdish population. The Komala has given more importance to the concept of confidentiality for organising its cells. Komala and the KDPI had been involved in armed conflicts in the early 80's. But they launched their contacts for better relations with each other in the early 90's. The most recent development within the Komala is a recent split, which took place in August 2000, following their last congress. A group led by Abdollah Mohtadi, the ex-CPI Secretary left the party. They formed the smaller Revolutionary Toilers' Komala of Kurdistan. They seek minority rights under a federative state. The said group had its one only congress in August 2001. The Komala had its Tenth Congress in July 2002." **[3h] (p6)**

Return to Contents

6.C HUMAN RIGHTS – OTHER ISSUES

ADULTERY

6.235 According to a DIRB report of 1995, under the Islamic Penal Code adopted by the Majlis in November 1995, those found guilty of adultery (the "Burden of Proof", this either by confession or the testimony of four just men or three just men and two just women, is outlined in more detail at **[50]**), are subject to execution by stoning. If a husband discovers his wife in an adulterous act he may kill her and her partner without legal consequence; a wife who discovers her husband with another woman does not have the same right. **[2b]** There have been several reports of execution for adultery in recent years. **[2b] [15b]** According to a BBC News report of 27 December 2002, it was announced that there would be a moratorium on stoning as a punishment for adultery, **[21ay]** opening the way for women lawmakers to propose a bill banning stoning. **[37a]** However, according to the USSD report 2004, the law has not been rescinded. **[4p] (p3)**

6.236 One 1997 IRB report has qualified understanding of the law regarding adultery, stating that the standard of proof and punishment concerning adultery reflects the contradictory practices and decisions of the Iranian Islamic courts. In essence, rural small town courts are more likely to inflict harsher sentences and perverse judgements than courts in Tehran. Reporting in 1997, the source stated that there were no cases of stoning in Tehran. Stoning for adultery is held not to be a widespread phenomenon. **[2k]** However, in July 2001, Amnesty international received a reported case of a stoning to death of a woman for adultery. The sentence was undertaken in Evin prison, Tehran. **[9h]**

6.237 According to a RFE/RFL report of 4 July 2001, three cases in 2001 put execution by stoning back in the centre of the human rights debate over Iran. Late in 2000, a woman named Maryam Ayoubi was sentenced to death by stoning for adultery and murdering her husband in collaboration with her lover. Then, in May 2001, a woman was stoned to death in Tehran's Evin prison. She

had been convicted of acting in pornographic films and having sexual relationships outside marriage. Amnesty International states that in recent years Iran has imposed stoning sentences only sporadically. Before 2001, the last stonings were reported in 1997. "Amnesty International has recorded sentences for adultery and murder that have resulted in stoning. However, according to the information that Amnesty International has, there has not been a stoning carried out [for several years] until this year. The one before this was in 1997." **[42a]** According to an Agence France Presse report of 11 November 2003, no executions by stoning had been reported by the Iranian press for over a year, although Amnesty International reported at least two cases of stoning being carried out or where the sentence of stoning had been given during 2002 and in November 2003 four men found guilty of a series of kidnappings and rapes were sentenced to execution by stoning. **[61a]**

6.238 According to a DIRB report of 18 February 1997, temporary marriage, Sigheh in Farsi, is often used as a means of smoothing problems over; a woman's first temporary marriage requires her father's written permission. **[2k]**

6.239 As reported in a number of press reports at the time, the sentencing to death by stoning in January 1998 of a German businessman for having been found guilty of intercourse with a Muslim woman was classed as punishment for adultery because he was not Muslim. **[16a]** The accused countered the charges by claiming his conversion to Islam. **[14b]** A Mehrabad Court of Appeal upheld the death sentence in October 1998. By February 1999 the case had been returned to the Tehran justice department for further review. **[5j] [5k]** He was eventually acquitted for lack of evidence but fined 20 million Rials and allowed to leave Iran in January 2000. **[21h]**

6.240 According to a DIRB report of 30 March 1999, the punishment for unmarried adulterers is not death, but flogging. **[2n]**

6.241 According to a DIRB report of 8 May 1998, the penalties for attempting to entice a married person into committing adultery could range from lashing to death depending on the judge's discretion. The married person who is the unwilling object of such attention is not immune from legal consequences (normally lashing) and from social ostracism. **[2l]**

Return to Contents

ILLEGAL DRUGS SITUATION

6.242 According to Revisiting 'The Hidden Epidemic' A Situation Assessment of Drug Use in Asia in the Context of HIV/AIDS – January 2002:

"Iran, which borders the largest opium producing country in world, Afghanistan, has become a major bridge linking the drug production zone to the lucrative consumer markets of the Persian Gulf, Turkey, Russia and Europe." **[34] (p100)**

and:

"Currently the major trafficking routes into Iran can be found in the provinces of Khorassan, Sistan and Baluchestan, areas with harsh climatic conditions and rugged mountainous terrain. In these areas there are numerous border skirmishes with drug smugglers and in 2000 a total of 1,532 armed

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

confrontations occurred. In the last two decades more than 3,000 law enforcement officials have been killed and 10,000 disabled. In 2000, 142 law enforcement personnel and 904 drug traffickers have been killed in armed clashes." **[34] (p101)**

6.243 Drug use is on the rise in Iran and the country is increasingly vulnerable. Drugs are commonly bought from street dealers and ethnographic studies show that deserted buildings, gardens or parks in the suburban areas of cities are common sites for using drugs. Opium tends to be used in the privacy of people's homes and hashish is commonly used at parties, rolled as a cigarette and smoked. **[34] (p101)** The Government of Iran estimates the number of drug addicts at over 1.2 million with an additional 600,000 drug users. **[34] (p103)** According to a Reuters report of 20 September 2002, by September 2002 this figure had been further reported officially as three per cent of the population of nearly 70 million people. **[5as]**

6.244 According to Revisiting 'The Hidden Epidemic' A Situation Assessment of Drug Use in Asia in the Context of HIV/AIDS – January 2002:

"The Anti-Narcotics Law of 1988 covers all aspects of drug control including cultivation, production, consumption, sales and distribution. In 1997 this law was amended in order to be more responsive to the internal drug problem. The age of criminal responsibility is 16 years. The possession and smuggling of opium and cannabis of up to 50 grams can result in a fine of 4 million Rials and up to 50 lashes. The penalties become harsher according to the amount that is found on the person. The death penalty may be commuted to life imprisonment and 74 lashes if the quantity does not exceed 20 kg and the perpetrator did not succeed in smuggling/distributing/selling. The execution of drug offenders is usually limited to drug lords, organised drug criminals and armed drug traffickers. Anyone who deals in, puts on sale or carries heroin or morphine is sentenced to various punishments, for example for more than five centigrams to one gram the fine is two to six million Rials in cash plus 30 to 70 lashes." **[34] (p104)**

6.245 It is up to the judge to distinguish whether the person is an addict or a trafficker; a positive test for opium shows the person is an addict while possession is interpreted as being a trafficker. **[34] (p104)**

6.246 According to the report on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, submitted by the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights on 28 December 1998, the issue (narcotics control) continued to be a major problem for the Government. The Director of the State Prison Organisation was quoted in the Iranian press as stating that 60 per cent of the 160,000 prisoners in the State system were there for drug-related offences. Most of the women in the system were there for drug offences. The Iranian press also carried stories indicating that significant seizures of narcotics continue to occur. An Iranian daily reported that the number of youthful addicts doubled last year. The punishment for drug trafficking was reportedly increased more than tenfold. The judiciary has had a free hand to deal with drugs traffickers, supported by new legislation. **[3a] (p24)** However, human rights monitors have alleged that many of those executed for criminal offences such as narcotics charges were political dissidents. **[3b]**

6.247 According to a report in Keesings Record of World Events, the United States, in December 1998, removed Iran from its list of countries perceived to contribute to the international trade in illegal drugs in the USA. However, the US continues to regard Iran as a transit point for opiates heading for Europe. **[17c]**

6.248 According to a UN Report of 16 January 2002, the Government of Iran is now openly recognising the extent of the social problem generated by drugs in the country. Official estimates are that two million persons out of a population of 65 million are now addicts. The extent of smuggling has reportedly made soft drugs as accessible as cigarettes, especially in border cities. The efforts of the Iranian authorities to stop this traffic have been internationally recognised, but Iran is paying a high price in terms of human life and budgetary resources in this struggle. **[10p] (p21)**

Return to Contents

EXILES/DISSIDENTS OUTSIDE IRAN

6.249 According to the UNHCR 1998 Background Paper on Refugees and Asylum Seekers from Iran, executions of exiled dissidents have taken place outside Iran in 1997. In separate cases in Turkey, Germany and Switzerland assassins were found guilty of having carried out executions of Iranians abroad on the orders of the Iranian authorities, including the Ministry of Intelligence and Security. **[3a] (p15)** According to the USSD report 1999, the Istanbul Court of Appeal upheld in 1998 the conviction of an Iranian national for complicity in the 1996 murder of Zahra Rajabi and Ali Moradi, who were both associated with the National Council of Resistance (NCR), an exile group that has claimed responsibility for several terrorist attacks within Iran. The UN Special Representative reported in 1998 that Italian security authorities continued their investigation into the 1993 killing in Rome of Mohammad Hossein Naghdi, the NCR's representative in Italy. **[4g] (p4)** Reuters reported on 29 July 1999 that in July 1999, Germany said it had arrested an Iranian in Berlin on suspicion of spying on exiled dissidents. Iran denied that the man had links to its government. **[5t]**

6.250 According to the USCRI 2002, the ascendancy of political moderates in parliamentary elections in February 2000 sparked a backlash by hardliners that continued into 2001, resulting in a crackdown on freedom of expression and other human rights abuses, particularly directed against members of the reformist media, women, and minorities. The backlash continued to dissuade many Iranian expatriates from returning and convinced many Iranians to leave. **[35a] (p4)**

6.251 According to the UNHCR 1998 Background Paper on Refugees and Asylum Seekers from Iran, the 15 Khordad Foundation, a revolutionary charity linked with the conservative clerical leadership in Iran, has continued to offer Muslims and non-Muslims alike a reward to murder British novelist Salman Rushdie. **[3a] (p29)** News reports of February 1998 reported that the now 15-year old threat of assassination to Rushdie followed the issue of a fatwa, or religious edict, in 1989 by Ayatollah Khomeini to punish blasphemy of Islam in "The Satanic Verses." **[14c] [15c] [21cj]** The wording of the Fatwa also included the phrase ...." and all those involved in its publication who are aware of its content are sentenced to death." **[21cj]** According to a Times newspaper report of 25 February 1998, on 24 September 1998 Robin Cook, the United Kingdom

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

Foreign Secretary, obtained assurances from Kamal Kharazzi, Iranian Foreign Minister, that the Government of Iran had no intention to threaten or endanger the life of Rushdie. Neither would it encourage or assist others to do so. The Iranian assurances were seen as a major breakthrough and both countries upgraded their diplomatic links to ambassadorial level as a consequence. **[15c]**

6.252 This is not to say that the £1.2 million bounty, raised to £1.5.million in 1997 **[16c]** and again to about £1.9 million in February 2002, **[17d]** offered on Rushdie, by the 15 Khordad Foundation can be realistically expected to be revoked. Both the UK Action Committee for Islamic Affairs **[15c]** and the leader of the Muslim Parliament for Great Britain **[14d] [16b]** insist that the fatwa is irrevocable and stands, which is in line with the 1997 statement by the Chief Prosecutor in Iran. **[16c]** On 14 February 2004 the Foundation issued a statement saying that the Fatwa was still valid. **[21cj]** At the same time an Iranian extremist Islamic group calling itself the General Staff for the Glorification of Martyrs of the Islamic World has offered a 100,000 dollar reward for the killing of British novelist Salman Rushdie. **[21cj]** On 18 January 2005 the fatwa against the author Salman Rushdie was reaffirmed by Iran's spiritual leader in a message to Muslim pilgrims, although this was seen more as a case of religious rhetoric than a statement of Government policy. **[15h]**

6.253 According to a UNHCR news story of 13 May 2003, the UNHCR estimates 23,000 Iranian refugees are in Iraq. Some belong to armed groups hostile to the Iranian Government but many want to return home **[3d]** According to a Reliefweb report on 22 May 2003, more than 4,500 registered last year for the voluntary repatriation scheme. Most of the refugees have lived in Iraq for more than two decades, since the start of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war which uprooted them from their homes. Iraq and Iran launched a voluntary repatriation scheme last year, but it was thrown into disarray by the US-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003. **[49a]**

Return to Contents

Annex A: Chronology of events

This chronology is not designed to be a precise or comprehensive record of all events that may have occurred but rather is intended to provide a general framework which can inform further investigation as considered necessary.

1925 Reza Khan seized power in Persia by military coup. Subsequently elected Shah.

1935 Persia renamed Iran.

1941 British and Soviet forces occupied Iran; Shah forced to abdicate in favour of his son.

1946 Following end of war, occupying forces left.

1963 Shah launched 'White Revolution'. Reforms opposed by landlords and conservative clergy.

1964 Ayatollah Khomeini deported to Iraq for opposition activities.

1965 Prime Minister Mansur assassinated, reportedly by a follower of Khomeini.

1977-1978 Anti-government strikes and demonstrations.

1979 **January:** Shah forced to leave country.
February: Khomeini returned and took power.
April: Iran declared an Islamic republic. Supreme authority given to Walih Faqih appointed by clergy, initially Khomeini.
November: Students seized hostages in US Embassy in Tehran.

1980 **February:** Bani-Sadr elected President.
September: Iraq invaded Iran. Strongly resisted by Iran; outbreak of hostilities.

1981 **January:** US hostages released.
June: Fighting between MEK supporting Bani-Sadr and Revolutionary Guard Corps led to Bani-Sadr's dismissal and his departure at the end of July 1991, after several weeks of hiding, for France.
July: Muhammad Ali Rajaei voted President. Muhammad Javad Bahonar became Prime Minister.
August: President and Prime Minister killed in bomb attack; MEK blamed.
October: Hojatoleslam Ali Khamenei elected President; Mir Hussein Moussavi appointed Prime Minister.

1979-1985 Fierce repression of anti-government elements.

1987 Islamic Republican Party dissolved.
20 July: UN Security Council adopted Resolution 598.

1988 Cease-fire declared in Iran/Iraq war.

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

1989 3 June: Death of Ayatollah Khomeini. Replaced by Ayatollah Khamenei formerly President Khamenei.
July: Rafsanjani became President. Post of Prime Minister abolished.

1993 Rafsanjani re-elected with reduced margin.

1994 **February:** Rafsanjani survived assassination by BKO.

1997 **May:** Rafsanjani stood down. Seyed Mohammad Khatami won Presidential election by landslide.
June: Closure of the Iranian Embassy in Kabul, followed by a trade embargo with Afghanistan initiated by Iran.
August: Khatami inaugurated.
October: Khatami appointed former Prime Minister Moussavi as his senior advisor.
American vessels were present in the Persian Gulf to calm tension between Iran and Iraq over the September bombings in southern Iraq.
December: The Conference of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference was held in Tehran.

1998 **March:** The Iranian gas and oil industry was opened up to foreign investors for the first time.
June: The impeachment of the Interior Minister by the Majlis was followed by his immediate re-appointment by Khatami in a newly created Vice-President Cabinet post.
July: The former mayor of Tehran, Gholamhossein Karbaschi, was found guilty on charges of corruption and embezzlement. He was sentenced to five years, imprisonment and other punishments.
The Solidarity Party of Islamic Iran was recognised and registered as a new political party.
An amnesty was issued for 1,041 prisoners sentenced by the revolutionary and public courts.
August: Iranians were permitted to visit Shi'a Muslim shrines in Iraq for the first time in 18 years.
British Airways resumed direct flights to Tehran.
Iranians, including diplomats, were captured by the Taleban in northern Afghanistan.
September: The Government of Iran gave the United Kingdom assurances that it had no intention, nor would it take any action to threaten the life of Salman Rushdie or those associated with his work, nor would it encourage or assist others to do so. They also disassociated themselves from the bounty offered to carry out the fatwa and stated that they did not support it.
October: The deaths of Iranians captured in August by the Taleban led to Iranian troops amassing at the border with Afghanistan. Exchange of mortar and artillery fire resulted.

1999 **February:** State and local elections held for the first time since the revolution.
July: A student demonstration for press reform resulted in a police raid on Tehran University dormitory complex. Six days of street riots followed the worst since the revolution.

2000 **February:** Khatami and his liberal/reformist supporters win 170 of 290 seats in the Majlis. Conservatives lose control of Parliament for the first time since the revolution.
April: New Press Law adopted. Sixteen reformist newspapers banned.
August: Fatwa religious decree issued allowing women to lead religious congregations of female worshippers.

2001 **June:** Khatami re-elected for a second term after winning just under 77 per cent of the vote.
August: Khatami sworn in.

2002 **January:** US President describes Iraq, Iran and North Korea as an "axis of evil" in his State of the Union address. This is a reference to the proliferation of long-range missiles said to be under development and a perceived threat considered to be as dangerous to the US as terrorism. This statement causes offence across the Iranian political spectrum.
February: Iran rejects the proposed new UK ambassador to Tehran.
September: Russian technicians begin construction of Iran's first nuclear reactor at Bushehr, despite strong objections from the United States.
Iran accepts Britain's nomination for a new ambassador, ending a diplomatic spat over the previous candidate's rejection.
UK Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, is in Iran at the end of a Middle East tour for talks that are expected to focus on the Iraq crisis.
December: Richard Dalton, the new UK ambassador took up his post on 1 December 2002.
Iran and Iraq considers resuming trade.

2003 **February:** A military aircraft crashes in the south-east of the country, killing all 302 people on board. It is Iran's worst air disaster.
March: Local elections in Iran appear to have swung in favour of conservative candidates, in a blow to reformist President Khatami.
Iran's Revolutionary Guards renew the death sentence on British author Salman Rushdie, passed 14 years ago by the late Ayatollah Khomeini.
Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi says his country is not taking sides in the war in Iraq.
June: Thousands attend student led protests in Tehran against the clerical establishment.
August: Diplomatic crisis with UK over arrest of former Iranian ambassador to Argentina, sought by Buenos Aires on warrant alleging complicity in 1994 Jewish centre bombing.
September: UN nuclear watchdog gives Tehran weeks to prove that it is not pursuing atomic weapons programme.
October: Shirin Ebadi becomes Iran's first Nobel Peace Prize winner. The lawyer and human rights campaigner became Iran's first female judge in 1975 but was forced to resign after 1979 revolution.
November: Iran says it is suspending its uranium enrichment programme and will allow tougher UN inspections of its nuclear facilities.
IAEA report says Iran has admitted producing high-grade plutonium for peaceful purposes, but concludes there is no evidence of a nuclear weapons programme.
December: 40,000 people are killed in an earthquake in south-east Iran; the city of Bam is devastated.

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

2004 **February:** Conservatives gain control of parliament in controversial elections. Thousands of reformist candidates were disqualified by the hardline Council of Guardians ahead of the polls.
June: Iran is rebuked by the IAEA for failing to fully cooperate with an inquiry into its nuclear activities.
Three British naval craft and their crews are impounded after allegedly straying into Iranian waters. The eight servicemen are released four days later.
November: Iran agrees to suspend most of its uranium enrichment as part of a deal with the EU.

2005 **February:** Amid tension with Washington over its nuclear programme, Iran forms a common "front" with Syria, another state which is under pressure from the US.
More than 400 people are killed in an earthquake in the southern province of Kerman.
June: Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Tehran's ultra-conservative mayor, wins a run-off vote in presidential elections, defeating cleric and former president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.
August: Tehran says it has resumed the conversion of uranium and insists the programme is for peaceful purposes.

Return to Contents

Annex B: Political organisations

The following comprises a list of parties and movements listed by Iranian name with English translation.

a) Political parties:

- Affiliate of Nehzat-e Azadi (Liberation Movement of Iran)
- Ansar-e-Hizbollah (Helpers of the Party of God)
- Fedayin-e Khalq (Warriors of the People)
- Hezb Democrat Kordestan Iran (Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan)
- Hezb-e Hambastegi-ye Iran-e Islami (Islamic Iran Solidarity Party)
- Hezb-e Kargozaran-e Sazandegi (Servants of Construction Party)
- Hezb-e Komunist Iran (Communist Party of Iran)
- Hezb-e-sabz Hayeh Iran (Green Party of Iran)
- Hezbollah (Army of God)
- Jebbeh-ye Masharekat-e Iran-e Islami (Islamic Iran Participation Front)
- Komala-ye Shureshgari-ye Zahmat Keshan-e Kordestan-e Iran (Revolutionary Organisation of the Toilers of Iran)
- Majma-e Niruha-ye Khat-e Imam (Assembly of the Followers of the Imam's Line)
- Mudjahedin-e Khalq (Holy Warriors of the People)
- National Council of Resistance
- Nehzat-e Azadi (Liberation Movement of Iran)
- Do-e Khordad (Second Khordad Front)
- Rahe Azadi (Democratic People's Party of Iran)
- Rahe Kargar (Organisation of Revolutionary Workers of Iran)
- Sarbedaran (Union of Communists of Iran)
- Tudeh Party of Iran (Party of the Masses)
- Worker-Communist Party of Iran

Monarchist groups:

- Babak Khorramdin Organisation (BKO)
- Constitutionalist Movement of Iran-Front Line (CMI)
- Derafsh-e Kaviani (Organisation of Kaviani Banner)
- Iran Paad
- Movement of National Resistance (MNR)
- Negahbanane Irane Djawid (NID) (Guardians of Eternal Iran)
- Shahin
- Shora-e Saltanat-talaban-e Iran dar Kanada (Iranian Monarchist Council of Canada) (IMCC)
- Sultanat Taliban

b) Political organisations

The following comprises a list of organisations with a short description of their political leanings.

Ansar-e-Hizbollah (Helpers of the Party of God)
Formed 1995, seeks to gain access to the political process for religious militants, and includes vigilante activities. Has aligned with some members of the clergy. A public physical assault on two reformist government ministers in September 1998 was

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

attributed to this group. Members were instrumental in the clashes with students in July 1999.

Ahwazian Arab People's Democratic Popular Front (various forms)
An Arabic group which is dedicated to the autonomy/independence of the mainly Arabic province of Khuzistan in south-western Iran.

Association for the Defence of Freedom and the Sovereignty of the Iranian Nation (ADFSIN)
Affiliate of Nehzat-e Azadi.

Babak Khorramdin Organisation
Monarchist, strongly anti-clerical. Has claimed responsibility for armed attacks within Iran, including an attempt to kill President Rafsanjani in February 1993.

Baluch National Movement
Seeks greater provincial autonomy.

Fedayin-e Khalq (Warriors of the People)
Urban Marxist guerrillas. Spokesman Farrakh Negahdar. In June 1980, the Fedayin split into at least two factions, namely Fedayin-e Khalq Aksariat (Majority, Moscow oriented and affiliated to the Tudeh Party) and Fedayin-e Khalq Aghalliat (Minority, independent from the former Soviet Union).

Fraksion-e Hezbollah
Formed 1996 by deputies in the Majlis who had contested the 1996 legislative elections as a loose coalition known as the Society of Combatant Clergy. Leader Ali Akbar Hossaini.

Hezb-e Komunist Iran (Communist Party)
Formed 1979 on grounds that Tudeh Party was Moscow-controlled. Secretary General = Azaryun.

Iran Nation Party
An unregistered party previously tolerated by the Iranian authorities. Was led by Dariush Forouhar until he and his wife Parvaneh were murdered by unknown assailants on 22 November 1998. Current leader Bahram Namazi arrested with two other activists in July 1999.

Iran Paad
A self-proclaimed monarchist support organisation within the United Kingdom and other countries outside Iran. It is based in London and claims to have thousands of members. The group conducts meetings and has held some anti-Iranian regime demonstrations, mainly in London.

Islamic Iran Participation Front
One of a number of new political parties established in 1998. A reformist political group of cultural and political figures. Founded on search for freedom of thought, logical dialogue and rule of law in social behaviour.

Islamic Republican Party (IRP)
Formed 1978 to bring about Islamic revolution under Khomeini. Disbanded 1985.

Komala, or Komaleh, or Revolutionary Organisation of the Toilers of Iran

Established 1969, merged with Union of Communist Fighters in 1983 to form Communist Party of Iran. Two members of Komala reportedly executed 1992.

Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI)
Largest Kurdish opposition group, the KDPI Congress in July 2004 changed the parties' demands and replaced their previous aim of 'democracy for Iran and autonomy for Kurdistan' with the aim of 'federalism for Iran and national rights for Kurds.' Based in Iraq. At present, the party is led by its Secretary-General, Moustapha Hedjri. Former Secretary General Sadiq Sharifkandeh assassinated Berlin 1992.

KDPI Revolutionary Leadership/Command (KDPI RL)
Split from KDPI in late 1980s. Engaged in military operations. Reunited in January 1997.

Majma-e Hezbollah
Formed 1996 by deputies in the Majlis who supported Rafsanjani and who had contested the 1996 legislative elections as a loose coalition known as the Servants of Iran's Construction. Leader Abdollah Nouri.

Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK)
Otherwise People's Mojahedin of Iran. Islamist/Marxist guerrilla group formed 1965. Member of National Council of Resistance. Leaders = Masud Rajavi and Maryam Rajavi, based in Iraq since 1986 with offices in Paris.

Movement of National Resistance
Monarchist, led by late Shapur Bakhtiar, forced into exile in Revolution 1978-1979. Paris-based. No longer very active.

Nehzat-Azadi (Liberation Movement of Iran/Iran Freedom Movement)
Nehzat-e Azadi (the Iran Freedom Movement). Nehzat-e Azadi descends from the movement that, in 1951, brought to power the democratic nationalist government of Mohammad Mossadegh, which was overthrown two years later by the Shah in a CIA-backed coup d'état. In 1979, the group was at the forefront of the Islamic revolution; tolerated by the Islamic regime, although it was declared "illegal" in 1991, after applying for registration in 1989. Supports constitutional rule by political parties within an Islamic framework; does not agree with a role for clerics in government. Led by Mehdi Bazargan and Secretary General Dr Ibrahim Yazdi. Ten members of the Freedom Movement were arrested in April 2001 in the campaigns leading up to the June elections. The Freedom Movement was banned in March 2001 and officially dissolved in July 2002.

National Council of Resistance
Formed in Paris by former president Bani Sadr and Masud Rajavi in 1981, following failed uprising. Initially a broad coalition, including MEK, KDPI, National Democratic Front, Hoviyat Group offshoot of the minority Fedayin and several small leftist groups. Bani-Sadr left 1984. Now under control of MEK.

National Liberation Army of Iran
Armed militant wing of MEK. Established in Iraq 1985. In July 1988 briefly held Iranian towns of Kerand and Islamabad Gharb. Driven back into Iraq by Iranian troops within days. At least 2,500 political prisoners executed in Iran as a result, not all linked to MEK. No other major military encounters with Iranian army.

Organisation of Kaviyani Banner/Kaviyani Flag or Derafsh Kaviani

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

Changed name in 1992 to Organisation for Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties for Iran. Emerged from defunct Iranian Salvation Front. Led by Manoucher Gandji, a former minister under the Shah. Main operation consists of broadcasts from radio station "Voice of Kaviyani Banner of Iran." Claims network of resistance cells and distributes audio and videotapes within Iran. Not involved in the armed struggle.

Peykar
Minor communist opposition group.

Rah-e Kargar Worker's Road
Minor communist opposition group.

Rastakhiz Party
Formed 1975 to run one-party state under Shah. Inoperative since 1979 revolution.

Sarbedaran
Minor communist opposition group.

Solidarity Party of Islamic Iran
A new political party officially recognised on 7 July 1998. It was set up by a group of Majlis deputies and executive officials. The party was registered in accordance with the provisions of the Interior Ministry's Article 10 pertaining to political parties. The Interior Ministry has approved the party manifesto and details of its founders. Secretary General Ebrahim Asgharzadeh.

Tudeh Party
Communist. Formed 1941, banned 1949, came into open 1979, and banned 1983. First Secretary Central committee Ali Khavari.

United Baluch Organisation
Seeks greater provincial autonomy.

Jebhe Ettehad E Melli Mihani Iran (United Front of Iranian Nationalists)
A European based political organisation (established December 1997) which is believed to be the result of the National Front Party and the National Unity Party joining forces after the revolution. It appears to be Nationalist in outlook broadly supporting democracy, gender equality, secularism and the defence of Iran's borders. It purports to have an active presence within Iran, but to date it has proved extremely difficult to obtain any corroborative evidence. It has a UK office and supports a website which claims membership both within Iran and in some other countries. It produces a magazine called Bamdad.

c) List of Legally Registered Parties as at July 2000.
[Latest available. Not definitive]

All opposition groups in Iran have hitherto been proscribed. Since President Khatami's election in May 1997, several political parties have been licensed. Until the Solidarity Party of Islamic Iran was registered in 1998, none of the groups was registered under the Political Parties Act 1981. So far 110 parties and political groups have received licence from the Parties Article 10 Commission. The following is the list of 95 of them of which details are held. The date is the date of the licence; the names are the members of the founding boards.

1 **Jam'iyat-e Zanan-e Jomhuri-e Elam-e Iran IR of Iran Women Society,** 02/07/1989;
Sahara Mostafavi, Marziyeh Hadidchi Dabbagh, Robabeh Rafiei-Taari Fayyazbakhsh, Fatemeh Iranmanesh, Sediqeh Moqaddasi, Qodsiyeh Firoozan, Sheila Jelodarzadeh and Fatemeh Tabatabaei.

2 **Majma-e Rowhaniyoun-e Mobarez Militant Clerics League,** 02/07/1989;
Mahdi Karrubi, Seyed Aliakbar Mohtashami, Seyed Mohamadali Abtahi, Abdolvahed Mussavi-Lari, Majid Ansari, Assadollah Bayat, Seyed Mohammad Khatami, Rasul Montajabnia, Sadeq Khalkhali-Givi, Seyed Mahmoud Doaei, Seyed Mohamadreza Tavassoli.

3 **Jam'iyat-e Fadaian-e Eslam Islam Devotees Society,** 02/07/1989;
Mohamadmehdi Abdekhodaei, Mohamadali Lavassani, Seyed Mohammad Mirdamad-Esfahani, Mohamadreza Niknam-Amini, Seyed Javad Vahedi-Bodla, Seyed Hassan Mortazavi, Asghari Omri, Ali Bahar-Hamedani, Mohamadmehdi Farju.

4 **Kanoon-e Honarmandan va Nevissandegan-e Mosalman Muslim Artists and Writers Center,** 02/07/1989;
Morteza Heidari, Farzin Negaarestan, Seyed Mohamadbaqer Fadavi, Adham Zarqaam, Beitollah Saturation, Seyed Air Mansouri, Abulqassem Kaakhi, Alireza Noroozi-talab.

5 **Jame-e Rowhaniat-e Mobarez-e Tabriz Tabriz Militant Clergy Association,** 18/08/1989;
Seyed Hossein Mussavi-Tabrizi, Mohammad Imaani-Yaamchi, Mohammad Karimi, Seyed Razi Balaaghi, Qodrat Shojaie, Najaf Aqazadeh-Astarkaan, Esshaq Forootan, Mohammad Rohanizadeh, Ezzat Lahooti.

6 **Hezb-e Hedayat-e Elam Islamic Guidance Party,** 19/01/1990 [collapsed in 1996];
Aliakbar Khoshru, Seyed Hossein Abtahi, Ebrahim Heidari, Alireza Allahdaadi, Dariyoush Zargari, Ebrahim Shams, Mohamadrza Taalebian.

7 **Kanoon-e Faregholtahsilan-e Shebhi Qarrehi Hend Center for Graduates From Indian Subcontinent,** 19/02/1990;
Manouchehr Mottaki, Seyed Mehdi Nabizadeh, Abbasali Taslimi, Javad Salimi, Mehdi Mohtashami, Seyed Ahmad MirJafar-Tafti, Anosheh Gilaninejad, Massoud Mohamadzamani, Mohammad Assadi-Taari.

8 **Jam'iyat-e Mo'talefehi Elam Islamic Coalition Society,** 11/12/1990:
Habibollah Asgarowladi, Assadollah Badamchian, Seyed Asghar Rokhsefat.

9 **Kanoon-e Elam-e Mohandessin Engineers Islamic Center,** 11/12/1990;
Gholamreza Abdollahi, Majid Habibian, Mokhtar Matinrazm, Aliasghar Khashehchi, Mostafa Noori-Latif, Mohamadhassan Najafi-Qodsi, Mohamadhassan Tavallaie, Ahmad Roshanfekr-Raad.

10 **Kanoon-e Wali-e Asr Wali-Asr Center,** 26/02/1991;
Ramazan Jannati-Razavi, Hassan Amiri-Qariyehali, Mohammad Sohrabi, Hassan Rashidi-Taashkuie, Mohamadali Khorassani, Aliakbar Amiri, Mohamadali Hakimi, Gholamreza Khorassani.

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

11 **Anjoman-e Elam-e Mo'allemaan-e Iran Islamic Association of Iranian Teachers,** 09/04/l991;
Morteza Katiraie, Asghar Noroozi, Movahednia, Abbas Douzdouzani, Goharolsharieh Dastgheib.

12 **Jame-e Elam-e Mohandessin Islamic Association of Engineers,** 28/05/1991;
Hassan Ghafoorifard, Mohamadreza Bahonar, Seyed Mohsen Behfar, Seyed Morteza Nabavi, Seyed Mojtaba Shohreh-hashemi, Gholamhossein Amiri.

13 **Anjoman-e Mohandesaan-e Iran Association of Iranian Engineers,** 01/10/1991;
Rahmatollah Khossravi, Mohamadreza Behzadian, Alimohamad Ahmadi, Seyed Hassan al-Hosseini, Karim Malekasa, Ahmad Kabiri, Mohsen Nariman, Mohammad Qomi.

14 **Saazeman-e Mojahedin-e Enqelab-e Elam-e Iran Islamic Revolution Mojahedin Organisation,** 01/10/1991;
Mohammad Salaamati, Behzad Nabavi, Hossein Sadeqi.

15 **Anjoman-e Elam-e Modarressin-e Daneshgaha Islamic Association of University Tutors,** 10/11/1991;
Najafqoli Habibi, Alireza Saffarian, Mahmoud Saremi, Davood Soleymani, Qorban Behzadinejad, Mirfazlollah Mussavi.

16 **Jame-e Zeinab S, Zeinab S.A. Association,** 10/11/1991;
Maryam Zaferani-Behroozi, Manizheh Noubakht, Nafiseh Fayyazbakhsh, Parvin Salimi, Shamsi Moetazedi, Azam Nooshehgol, Nahidazam Ram-panahi, Massoumeh Rezaie-Nazari.

17 **Khanehi Kargar Labor House,** 04/01/1992;
Alireza Mahjoob, Hossein Kamali, Ali Rabi'i, Reza Mohamad Wali, Mohammad Daneshvar, Esrafil Ebadati, Mahmoud Assadi.

18 **Markaz-e Elam-e Daneshgahian Islamic Center for University Academicians,** 21/04/1992;
Reza Dehqani-Farzaam, Minoo Raastmanesh, Mohamadreza Shirzad, Asghar Zokaie, Majid Qaemian, Bahman Noori, Nasser Derakhshan, Ali Hosseinpour.

19 **Anjoman-e Elam-e Mohandessan-e Zaminshenassi va Ma'dan-e Iran Islamic Association of Iranian Geologists and Mining Engineers,** 26/05/1992;
Hossein Mozafarinejad, Mohamadbaqer Farhadian, Ebrahim Raastaad, Mohamadhossein Ekhtiarabadi, Nematollah Rashidnejad, Mohamadtaqi Karehi, Mohamadjavad Vaezipour.

20 **Jame-e Elam-e Bakhtiyariha Bakhtiyaris Islamic Association,** 26/05/1992;
Assadollah Kian-ersi, Omidvaar Rezaie, Qassem Soleymani, Ali Yussefpour, Qoli Sheikhi, Ali Qanbari, Zabih Karimi, Mohamadreza Mirqaeb.

21 **Anjoman-e Faregholtahsilan-e Uroupa, Amrica va Oqyanoussiyeh Association of Graduates From Europe, America and the Pacific,** 04/08/1992;

Mehrdad Fooladinejad, Seyed Hossein Fassihi-Langarudi, Ali Khoshbaaten, Ebrahim Nematipour, Ali Asghari, Hamid Mehdiqoli, Hossein Raqamizadeh, Seyed Amireddin Sadrnejad.

22 **Jame-e Elam-e Farhangian Educators' Islamic Association,** 22/08/1992;
Ezzatollah Dehqani, Mansoureh Farahmandzad, Maryam Zaferani-Behrooz, Manizheh Noubakht, Seyed Abulqassem Raoofian, Ali Farahmandzad, Assadollah Badamchian, Mohammad Elahian.

23 **Jame-e Zanan-e Enqelab-e Elam Women Association of Islamic Revolution,** 24/11/1992;
Azam Alaei-Taleqani, Badrolmolouk Emampour, Parvindokht Yazdanian.

24 **Anjoman-e Elam-e Mohandessin-e Khorassan Islamic Association of Khorassan Engineers,** 24/11/1992;
Aliasghar Azami, Hassan Alijani-Moqaddam, Abbas Amiripour, Ahmad Sheikh-salim, Seyed Mohsen Banihashemi-Chaharom, Ahmad Yarahmadi-Khorassani, Seyed Hashem Banihashemi, Seyed Khalil Mehdizadegan.

25 **Anjoman-e Elam-e Pezeshkan Islamic Association of Physicians,** 20/01/1993;
Aliakbar Velayati, Abbas Sheibani, Dr. Shahrzad, Vahid Dastjerdi, Shahabeddin Sadr.

26 **Anjoman-e Elam-e Jame-e Pezeshki-e Iran Islamic Association of Iranian Medical Community,** 09/04/1993;
Mohammad Farhadi, Ahmadali Noorbaala-Tafti, Hassan Hosseini-Toodeshki, Seyed Mohammad Sadr, Mohamadreza Raahchamani, Omidvaar Rezaie-Mirqaed, Seyed Hossein Fattahi, Mohamadreza Vaez-Mahdavi.

27 **Kanoon-e Elam-e Daneshgahian-e Khorassan Islamic Center of University Academicians of Khorassan,** 01/10/1993;
Mehdi Hassanzadeh, Mohamadali Gandomi, Mehdi Parsa, Hassan Razmi, Seyed Mojtaba Sadat Na'lchian, Mohamad-sadeq Javadihesar, Wali Niknaam-Shaahrak.

28 **Anjoman-e Elam-e Farhangian-e Khorassan Islamic Association of Khorassan Educators,** 01/10/1993;
Ahmad Yarahmadi, Nasrollah Mojtahedpour, Javad Aryanmanesh, Seyed Mohsen bani Hashemi, Seyed Ali Fayyazbakhsh, Gholamhossein Afzali, Gholamnabi Golestani, Aliasghar Khalilzadeh, Azizollah Tavakkoli.

29 **Jame-e Anjomanha-ye Islami-e Asnaaf va Bazaar Association of Islamic Associations of Guilds and Traders,** 31/10/1993:
Said Amani, Ahmad Karimi-Esfahani, Mashallah Javaherian, Mahmoud Faqihi-Rezaie, Morteza Kashani-Zarrin, Massoud Zandiyeh, Mohamadhossein Abdolkhaleqi, Ali Rahmani.

30 **Anjoman-e Elam Faregholtahsilan-e America va Canada Islamic Association of Graduates From America and Canada,** 23/11/1993;
Reza Shiva, Farrokh Parsizadeh, Davood Bahrami-Siavoshani, Hamid Nasrollahizadeh, Nasser Soltani, Mansour Khodadadi.

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

31 **Jame-e Islami-e Daneshgahian-e Iran Islamic Association of Iranian Academics,** 30/11/1993;
Ali Abbaspour, Seyed Mostafa Mirsalim, Abbas Sheibani, Reza Maknoon, Karim Zaare.

32 **Jame-e Elam-e Karmandan Islamic Association of Employees,** 06/06/1994;
Mohamad-sadeq Fayyaz, Nasrollah Mirzaie-Nasir, Hassan Kazempour-Dehkordi, Mostafa Biglar, Ahmadreza Bayat, Seyed Kamal Sajjadi, Mohammad Bokharaie, Rahim Alizadeh-Baarooq.

33 **Ettehadiyehi Elam-e Daneshjooyan va Faregholtahsilan-e Daneshgaha va Mo'assesaat-e Amoozesh-e 'Ali Islamic Union of Students and Graduates From Universities and Colleges of Advanced Education,** 09/12/1994;
Heshmatollah Tabarzadi, Mohamadhassan Alipour, Reza Sarafraaz, Mohamadhossein Zarei, Mohammad Salamati [not to be mistaken with Mr Mohammad Salamati of the Islamic Revolution Mojahedin Organisation], Seyed Javad Emami.

34 **Jame-e Islami-e Kargaran Islamic Association of Workers,** 11/08/1995;
Alireza Saber-Kouchaksaraie, Mostafa Biglar, Abdullah Hamidi, Mohammad Eqbal, Massoud Berahman, Majid Afshari.

35 **Jame-e Anjomanha-ye Elam-e Assnaaf-e Khorassan Society of Islamic Associations of Khorassan Traders,** 15/06/1996;
Ali Shamqadri, Mohamadali Ghaffarian, Massoud Akhavizadeh, Seyed Ali Shoostari, Nasser Moqaddam, Mohamad-ebrahim Vahedian-Azimi, Mohamadhossein Niazmand.

36 **Jame-e Elam-e Dandaanpezeshkan Islamic Association of Dentists,** 12/06/1996;
Nasrollah Eshqyar, Abbas Monzavi, Mohamad-sadeq Ahmadakhondi, Ahmadhossein Nekoofar, Kazem Ashofteh-Yazdi.

37 **Jam'iyat-e Elam-e Vokalaa-ye Daadgostari Islamic Bar Association,** 04/07/1997;
Nabiollah Ahamadloo, Gholamreza Amini, Said Khorshidi, Abazar Mohebbi.

38 **Jame-e Elam-e Daampezeshkan Islamic Association of Veterinarians,** 27/06/1997;
Alireza Sadiqi, Mohamadali Akhavizadegan, Mohamadkazem Kuhi, Mohamadali Rad.

39 **Anjoman-e Rooznamehnegaaran-e Mosalman Association of Muslim Journalists,** 02/08/1997;
Hossein Shariatmadari, Hossein Entezami, Seyed Mohammad Safizadeh, Seyed Jalal Fayyazi, Abbas Salimi-Namin, Seyed Morteza Nabavi, Mehdi Shojaie, Alireza Mokhtarpour, Mehdi Nasiri.

40 **Jam'iyat-e Defaa' az Arzeshha-ye Enqelab-e Elam Association for Defense of Values of the Islamic Revolution,** 14/10/1997;
Mohammad Mohammadi-Nik, Seyed Ali Ghayouri-Najafabadi, Seyed Aliakbar Abotorabi, Ali Raazini, Ruhollah Hosseinian, Mohamad-sadeq Arabnia, Ahmad Pournejati, Mohammad Shariatmadari, Mohsen Soltani-Shirazi.

41 **Anjoman-e Elam-e Kargaran-e Khorassan Islamic Association of Khorassan Labourers,** 31/01/1998;
Ahmad Tavakkoli-Afshaar, Mahmoud Mohamadi-Thani, Hassan Sadeqi Fatthabaad, Hassan Saidizadeh, Gholamhossein Torkzadeh, Gholamabbas Hamidi, Mohammad Nejati.

42 **Kanoon-e Faregholtahsilan-e Azarbaijan-e Gharbi Center for Graduates From West Azerbaijan,** 10/03/1998;
Ali Kamyar, Alireza Siavashpour, Qassem Moridi, Amir Eslamitabaar, Mohsen Baqerzadeh.

43 **Anjoman-e Elam-e Faregholtahsilan-e Daneshkadehi Fanni-e Daneshgahi Tehran Islamic Association of Engineering Faculty Graduates of the Tehran University,** 13/03/1998;
Ali Asghari, Reza Faraji-dana, Seyed Mehdi Fakhraie, Habibollah Bitaraf, Abdolmajid Shahidi.

44 **Anjonman-e Elam-e Faregholtahsilan-e Daneshkadehi Oloom-e Qazaie va Khadamaat-e Edaari Islamic Association of Graduates of Law and Administrative Services,** 13/03/1998;
Abdolhashem Yaqoobi, Mohamadhassan Pirzadeh, Abbasali Zaare', Safollah Faghanpour-Azizi, Mohamadhassan Mirzabeigi, Mansour Dastgoshadeh, Aliakbar Mollataba-Elahi.

45 **Jame-e Elam-e Nassehin-e Qom Qom Islamic Society of Counsellors,** 13/04/1998;
Hossein Irani, Mohamadali Shar'i, Asghar Abdollahi, Reza Ashtiani-Araqi, Mohammad Khalaj, Aliahmad Mianji, Jafar Emami.

46 **Anjoman-e Elam-e Faregholtahsilan-e Daneshgah-e Tarbiat-e Mo'allem Islamic Association of Graduates From the Teachers Training University,** 30/05/1998;
Yussef Nikimaleki, Yaqoob Siminrooy, Abbas Mirgalooie-Bayat, Kobra Alipour, Mostafa Monssef, Hossein Salehi.

47 **Anjoman-e Elam-e Faregholtahsilan-e Filipin Islamic Association of Graduates From the Philippines,** 01/06/1998;
Mohamadreza Nezamdoust, Ali Abedzadeh, Parviz Jeihooni, Ahmad Makhmali, Hojjatollah Bakhtiyary.

48 **Anjoman-e Elam-e Faregholtahsilan-e Italia Islamic Association of Graduates From Italy,** 01/06/1998;
Seyed Mohamadbaqer Hosseini, Mohamadhassan Qadiri-Abyaneh, Hojjat Bahrami, Qodratollah Karbalaie, Hassan Haaj-najjari, Hossein Madadi.

49 **Majma-e Namaayandegan-e Advaar-e Mokhtalef-e Majles-e Shoraa-ye Elam League of All-Term Majlis Deputies,** 01/06/1998;
Aliasghar Rahmani-Khalili, Mohsen Rahami, Asghar Faqih-Aliabadi, Gholamreza Ansari, Zabiollah Safaie.

50 **Hezb-e Hambastegi-e Iran-e Elam Islamic Iran Solidarity Party,** 10/07/1998;
Mohamadreza Raahchamani, Seyed Mahmood Mirlohi, Gholamreza Ansari, Elyass Hazrati, Qodratollah Nazarinia, Aliasghar Abde-ahmadi, Gholamheydar

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

Ebrahimbai-Salami, Seyed Mohammad Hashemi, Qorbanali Qandehari, Seyed Waliollah Tavakkoli.

51 **Jam'iyat-e Fadaian-e Rahbar Society of Devotees of Leader,** 21/07/1998;
Nematollah Taqaa', Abbas Toobaie, Mohamadhossein Roozitalab, Mohamadreza Moshfeqian.

52 **Jam'iyat-e Hoqooqdanaan-e Irani-e Modaafe-e Hoqoq-e Bashar Society of Iranian Lawyers Defending Human Rights,** 30/08/1998;
Gholamreza Amini, Ghodratollah Noroozi, Fatemeh Hizomi-Araani, Mansour Alizadi, Nabiollah Ahmadloo, Ahmad Arabameri, Said Khorshidi, Abaazar Mohebbi, Hamidreza Dehqanboudeh.

53 **Jam'iyat-e Elam-e Zanan Islamic Society of Women,** 18/10/1998;
Maryam Mohseni, Batool Rangbar-Kohan, Fatemeh Azizabadi, Sahara Azizabadi-Faraahani.

54 **Kanoon-e Namaayandegan-e Advaar-e Majles-e Shoraa-ye Elam Center for Deputies of Various Terms of Majlis,** 08/11/1998;
Ali Mobini-Dehkordi, Alinaqi [Seyed-] khamoushi, Mostafa Naseri, Mohamadhashem Rahbari, Abdollah Noroozi.

55 **Jam'iyat-e Khedmatgozaaran-e Sazandegi-e Khorassan Khorassan Construction Servants Society,** 08/11/1998;
Ahmad Yarahmadi-Khorassani, Ghafoor Helmi-Tarfi, Seyed Jalal Fayyazi, Abdollah Koopaie, Seyed Khalil Mehdizadegan, Mohsen Amirian, Mohamadreza Mohseni, Alireza Safari, Gholamhossein Heidari, Mostafa Yaqini, Javad Aryanmanesh, Abdolmajid Helmi, Aliasghar Azami.

56 **Majma-e Elam-e Karmandan-e Khatt-e Emam Islamic League of Employees Following the Imam Line,** 08/11/1998;
Ali Toohidloo, Seyed Hassan Kazemi, Mohamadali Safari, Ramazan Mirzaiepour-Shafi'i, Massoumeh Mohtarami.

57 **Jame-e Elam-e Pezeshkan Islamic Association of Physicians,** 10/11/1998;
Khossro Rahmani, Seyed Ahmadali Kazemi, Amirmahmoud Tafazzoli, Reza Sadeqi.

58 **Majma-e Nirooha-ye Khatt-e Emam League of Imam Line Forces,** 10/11/1998;
Seyed Hadi Khamenei, Rahmatollah Khossravi, Ahmad Hakimipour.

59 **Jam'iyat-e Tarafdaraan-e Nazm va Qanoon Society of Advocates of Law and Order,** 24/11/1998;
Hossein Tajarloo, Ali Bazm-azmoon, Yussef Sheikhinejad, Ali Movasheh.

60 **Kanoon-e Elam-e Ostadaan-e Daneshgahi Tehran Islamic Center of Tehran University Lecturers,** 25/11/1998;
Behzad Moshiri, Karen Abrinia, Mojtaba Shariati-Niyasar, Mohamadhassan Panjehshahi, Hassan Farhangi, Nasser Soltani, Reza Shiva, Seyem Mohamadhossein Pishbin.

61 **Jame-e Elam-e Fareqoltahsilan-e Honar Islamic Association of Arts Graduates,** 25/11/1998;

Abdolhadi Qazvinian, Mohamadjavad Rassaie, Mirlatif Mussavi-Gargari.

62 **Jame-e Elam-e Varzeshkaraan Islamic Association of Sportsmen,** 25/11/1998;
Mahmoud Mashhoon, Seyed Mostafa Mirsalim, Mohamadreza Rahimi, Hassan Ghafourifard, Eidi Alijani, Mohammad Ansari, Seyed Amirahmad Mozafari, Ahmad Nateq-Noori.

63 **Majma-e Elam-e Baanuan Women Islamic League,** 20/12/1998;
Fatemeh Karrubi, Soheila Jelodarzadeh, Soussan Seif.

64 **Jam'iyat-e Peirovan-e Velayat-e Faqihi Dashtestan Association of Followers of Guardianship of Supreme Jurisprudent in Dashtestan,** 20/12/1998;
Ali Behbahani, Seyed Esmail Hosseininejad, Mohammad Abedi, Masoud Atashi, Akbar Mohajeri.

65 **Anjoman-e Elam-e Karkonan-e Bimehi Alborz Islamic Association of Alborz Insurance Employees,** 25/12/1998;
Davoodali Shirazi, Hedayat Sadeqi-Arsegah, Maryam Karimi, Alireza Moqarrab, Qorbanali Fatthi-Gerashini.

66 **Hezb-e Tamaddon-e Elam Islamic Civilization Party,** 03/01/1999;
Mohammad Honardoust, Mojtaba Haraati-Nik, Alireza Manzari, Morteza Mahmoudi, Mohammad Motevallian, Mirmehdi Najafi, Hamidreza Elmolhoda, Mohamadali Aqaie.

67 **Majma-e Pooyandegan-e Andisheha-ye Elam League of Searchers for Islamic Schools of Thought,** 09/01/1999;
Mohammad Ashrafi-Mahabadi, Mohamadali Khallaaqpour, Ali Daastaani, Ali Tirdaad, Massoud Shafeizadeh, Eivaz Tizjang, Manouchehr Ebaadi.

68 **Anjoman-e Elam-e Farhangian-e Ostaan-e Qom Islamic Association of Qom Province Educators,** 09/01/1999;
Seyed Yussef Pour-yazdanparast, Taqi Nazeri, Abbas Mohammadi, Gholamreza Rezaiean-Maleki, Seyed Aliasghar Borqei.

69 **Anjoman-e Rooznamehnegaaran-e Zan-e Iran Association of Iranian Female Journalists,** 09/01/1999;
Jamileh Kadivar, Ashraf Geraamizadegan, Homeira Hosseini-Yeganeh, Jaleh Faramarzian-Borugeni, Parvaneh Mohhi.

70 **Kanoon-e Elam-e Modaressan-e Marakez-e Tarbiat-e Mo'allem Islamic Center for Teachers of Teacher-Training Institutions,** 14/01/1999;
Ayyoob Vahdatnia, Mohamadreza Hezaveh, Habibollah Jadidi, Tahereh Shaalchian, Mohammad Vakili-Mahallati, Ruhangiz Dorobaati, Tayyebeh Yazdani.

71 **Majma-e Daneshjooyan va Fareqoltahsilan-e Gilani League of Gilaki Graduates and Undergraduates,** 19/01/1999;
Behzad Roohi, Seyed Saber Mir-ataie, Sirous Bahramzadeh, Ali Ferdowsi, Shahrokh Ramazan-nejad.

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

72 **Jame-e Daneshjooyan va Fareqoltahsilan-e Kermanshahi Association of Kermanshahi Graduates and Undergraduates,** 19/01/1999;
Hamidreza Samadi-shohreh, Marzieh Mahidashti, Nooshin Mohammadi, Hamid Fadaie, Morad Hosseini, Qodratollah Najafi, Mehdi Rangbar.

73 **Hezb-e Islami-e Kar Islamic Labor Party,** 24/01/1999;
Alireza Mahjoob, Soheila Jelodarzadeh, Abdolrahman Tajeddin.

74 **Majma-e Elam-e Fareqoltahsilan-e Daneshgahi Abu Reyhan Birouni Islamic League of Graduates From University of Abu Reyhan Birouni,** 24/01/1999;
Mohammad Jariani, Seyed Abdolhossein Vahedi, Mohamadtaqi Shirkavand, Mohamadreza Sharifnia, Seyed Ahmad Mussavi, Seyed Morteza Sahri, Akbar Hakkakaan.

75 **Kannon-e Tarbiat-e Elam Islamic Training Center,** 24/01/1999;
Hossein Ahmadi, Alireza Baraatian, Yussef Soltani, Mahmoud Farshidi, Nosratollah Taheri.

76 **Jam'iyat-e Zanan-e Enqelab-e Elam Islamic Revolution Women Society,** 24/01/1999;
Sahara Mazloomifard, Sediqehbeigom Hejazi-Taaqaanaki, Sediqeh Tajifard, Nayyereh Qavi, Minakhanoom Behzadi, Kobra Khaz-ali, Hakimeh Jafarinasab-Kermani.

77 **Tashakkol-e Elam-e Fareqoltahsilan-e Lorestani Islamic Organisation of Lorestani Graduates,** 29/01/1999;
Ebrahim Baraani-Beiranvand, Ali Mikhak-Beiranvand, Mohammad Sharafi, Bahador Walizadeh, Majid Sabbah, Aliyar Rashidpour, Faroud Hashemi.

78 **Majma-e Daneshjooyan va Fareqoltahsilan-e Yazdi League of Yazdi Graduates and Undergraduates,** 18/02/1999;
Ali Afkhami-Fatthabad, Mohamadali Salmaninejad, Mohamadhossein Shariati-nasab.

79 **Jam'iyat-e Javanaan-e Enqelab-e Elam Youth Society of Islamic Revolution,** 18/02/1999;
Seyed Hossein Hosseini, Asghar Abulqassem-Pourkia, Aliasghar Mirzaie.

80 **Jam'iyat-e Ansar ul-Mahdi Ansar ul-Mahdi Society,** 19/02/1999;
Khanoom-ozra Ansari, Seyed Mostafa Hosseini, Abdorrahman Ansari.

81 **Jam'iyat-e Mostaqel-e Iran-e Elam Islamic Iran Independent Society,** 19/02/1999;
Qodratali Heshmatin, Javad Baqerzadeh, Ahmadali Amjadian, Ebadollah Fallahi, Fereshteh Heshmatian.

82 **Hezb-e Farzandan-e Iran Children of Iran Party,** 19/02/1999;
Jamshid Irani, Mohamadreza Abulhassani, Mohamadtaher Ahangari-Osbouie, Araasb Ahmadian, Behrooz Sabouri-Sobhani, Ali Javadi.

83 **Jebhe-ye Mosharekat-e Iran-e Elam Islamic Iran Participation Front,** 19/02/1999;
Mohamadreza Khatami, Hossein Kashefi, Hossein Nasiri.

84 **Kanoon-e Elam-e Qozzat Islamic Center for Judges,** 19/02/1999;
Mohamadhassan Mirzabeigi, Jamal Qezavati, Mohammad Mohammadi.

85 **Kanoon-e Zendanian-e Siasi-e Mosalman-e Doran-e Qabl az Piroozi-e Enqelab Center for Muslim Political Prisoners Before Victory of Revolution,** 08/03/1999;
Seyed Kazem Akrami, Mostafa Barzegar, Ahmadali Borhanifar, Ahmad Hatami-Yazd, Jalal Samsaami-Fard, Hossein Tousi, Mohamadreza Alihosseini-abbasi, Javad Mansouri, Allahkaram Mirzaie.

86 **Anjoman-e Modiran va Motekhassesin-e San'ati va Eqtesadi-e Iran Association of Iranian Industrial and Economic Specialists and Executives,** 04/05/1999;
Mohsen Safaie-Faraahani, Morteza Alviri, Morteza Haji, Nourollah Abedi, Seyed Reza Norooz-zadeh.

87 **Kanoon-e Hambastegi-e Farhangian-e Iran Center for Solidarity of Iran Educators,** 04/05/1999;
Ali Fa'ezi, Mohsen Ashtiyani-Araqi, Mahmoud Kazemi-Bidhendi, Abbas Elam-Mofidabad.

88 **Kannon-e Farhangi-e Missaq-e Shohada Cultural Center for Allegiance to Martyrs,** 25/05/1999;
Bibiqodsiyeh Seyedi-alavi, Zohreh Erfanian Zeirparvar-Javan, Nayyereh Pourjavad.

89 **Jam'iyat-e Isargaran-e Enqelab-e Elam Society of Devotees of the Islamic Revolution,** 26/07/1999;
Davood Danesh-jafari, Hossein Fadaie, Ali Yussefpour, Abdolhussein Ruholamin, Ali Darabi, Asghar Sabouri, Mojtaba Shakeri, Ahmadali Moqimi.

90 **Hezb-e Islami-e Refahi Kargaran Islamic Labor Welfare Party,** 15/08/1999:
Hossein Sarafraz, Abbas Allahyar, Hassan Faraji-Golhin.

91 **Majma-e Daneshgahian-e Ostaan-e Golestan League of Golestan Province Academicians,** 05/03/1999;
Hamid Haqshenas, Yahya Samadinejad, Ehsan Maktabi, Massoud Rahnamaie.

92 **Hezb-e Kargozaran-e Sazandegi-e Iran Executives of Construction Party of Iran,** 15/08/1999;
Mohammad Hashemi-Bahremani, Ataollah Mohajerani, Mohsen Noorbakhsh, Mohamadali Najafi, Faezeh Hashemi-Bahremani, Hossein Mar'ashi, Reza Amrollahi.

93 **Anjoman-e Eslami-e Fareqoltahsilan Islamic Association of Graduates,** 15/08/1999;
Vahid Ahmadi, Mahmoud Nili-Ahmadabadi, Adel Torkaman-Rahmani, Rahmatollah Qajar, Mohamadali Doostari, Seyed Hessameddin Zagardi, Ziaeddin Shoaie.

94 **Hezb-e Sa'adat-e Iran Iran Prosperity Party,** 19/05/1999;

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

Gholamreza Sediqi Ora'i, Hassan Jamshidi, Mohamadjavad Faza'eli-Akhlaqi, Nasser Mohammadi, Seyed Reza Vasse'i, Hossein Rathaie, Hamidreza Qandehariyoun.

95 Hezb-e Esteqlal-e Iran Iran Independence Party, 09/07/1999; Secretary Sadeq Shams.

Return to Contents

Annex C: Prominent people

Government affiliated

Leader (rahbar): Ayatollah Ali Khamenei

Head of state: President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected in June 2005, replacing Mohammed Khatami who had served two terms elected by universal suffrage for a four-year term for a maximum of two terms. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected in June 2005, replacing Mohammed Khatami who had served two terms

First Vice president: Parviz Davudi

Head of presidential office: Gholam-Hossein Elham

Presidential adviser and chief of the presidential inspectorate: Davud Ahmadinejad

Executive: The post of prime minister was abolished in 1989. Most ministers in a new cabinet were approved by the Majlis in August 2005

Main political parties: The conservative Abadgaran-e Iran-e Islami bloc holds an outright majority in the Majlis. The Second of Khordad (May 23rd) coalition, which dominated the 2000-04 Majlis, represents reformist interests.

Key ministers and posts.

1 **Minister of Agriculture:** Jihad: Mohammad-Reza Eskandari
2 **Minister of Commerce:** Masoud Mir-Kazemi
3 **Minister of Communications and Information Technology:** Mohammad Soleymani
4 **Minister of Cooperatives:** Mohammad Nazemi Ardakani – Acting
5 **Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance:** Mohammad-Hossein Saffar-Harandi
6 **Minister of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics:** Mostafa Mohammad Najjar
7 **Minister of Economy and Finance:** Davoud Danesh-Ja'fari
8 **Minister of Education:** Ali Akbar Ash'ari [not sanctioned by Majlis]
9 **Minister of Energy:** Parviz Fattah
10 **Minister of Foreign Affairs:** Manouchehr Mottaki
11 **Minister of Health, Treatment and Medical Education:** Kamran Baqeri Lankarani.
Vice president for physical training and chairman of the Physical Education Organization: Mohammad Aliabadi
12. **Minister of Housing and Urban Development:** Mohammad Sa'idi-Kia.
13 **Minister of Industries and Mines:** Ali-Reza Tahmasbi
14 **Minister of Information (Intelligence):** Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie
15 **Minister of the Interior:** Mostafa Pour-Mohammadi.
Interior Ministry political deputy: Ali Jannati
16 **Minister of Justice:** Jamal Karimi-Rad
17 **Minister of Labour and Social Affairs:** Mohammad Jahromi
18 **Minister of Science, Research and Technology:** Mohammad-Mehdi Zahedi
19 **Minister of Transportation:** Mohammad Rahmati

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

20 **Minister of Oil:** Ali Sa'idlou [not sanctioned by Majlis]
21 **Minister of Welfare and Social Security:** Davoud Madadi – Acting

Cultural Advisor and Head of the Documents and National Library Organization: Ali-Akbar Ash'ari
National Security Council: Ali Larijani
Chairman of the Expediency Council: Ayatollah Ali-Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani
Secretary of the Expediency Council: Mohsen Rezai
Planning & Management Organisation: Farhad Rahbar
Supreme Speaker of the Majlis: Gholam Ali Haddad Adel
Deputy parliamentary speaker: Mohammad Reza Bahonar
Judiciary chief: Ayatollah Mahmud Hashemi-Shahrudi
Tehran public and revolutionary courts: Muhammad Karami
Central bank governor: Ebrahim Sheibani
Stock Exchange secretary-general: Hussein Abdeh-Tabrizi
Commander of the regular army: Major General Ataollah Salehi
Commander of the regular ground forces: Brigadier General Mohammad Hussein Dadras
Deputy Commander of the regular ground forces: Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Qarai-Ashtiani
Chief of the army's general staff: Brigadier General Seyyed Abdorrahim Musavi
Deputy Inspector of the regular armed forces general staff: Brigadier General Abdul Ali Purshasb
Commander of the regular navy: Rear-Admiral Sajjad Kucheki -Badlani
Chief of the Joint Staff: General Hassan Firuzabadi
Head of the Research Centre for Strategic Defence: Admiral Ali Shamkhani
Commander of the IRGC: Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi
Deputy Commander of the IRGC: Mohammad-Baqer Zolqadr
Commander of the IRGC Ground Forces: Brigadier General Ahmad Kazemi
Commander IRGC Centre for Strategy: Brigadier General Mohammad-Ali (Aziz) Jaafari
The Supreme Leader's representative to the Basij: Hojatoleslam Heidar Moslehi
Basij Commander: General Mohammad Hejazi
The First Deputy Commander of the Basij: General Mirahmadi,
The Tehran commander: Seyyed Mohammad Haj Aqamir
The Deputy Basij commander for Tehran: General Ahmad Zolqadr
Basij Commander in Tabriz: Brigadier General Mohammad Yusef Shakeri
Iranian Atomic Energy Organisation: Gholam-Reza Aghazadeh
Mohammad Saidi, the deputy head.
Mayor of Tehran: Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf

OTHERS

Aghajari Hashem
Political activist and university lecturer

Bani-sadr Abolhasan
President 1980-1981. Dismissed by Khomeini and exiled to France.

Batebi Ahmad
Iranian student leader who shot to prominence during the Tehran University uprising of 1999. After being pictured on the front cover of The Economist waving the bloodied clothing of an injured contemporary, the 21-year-old undergraduate was sentenced to death in camera by a Revolutionary Court for sullying the name of the Islamic Republic.

The tariff was subsequently commuted to 15 years in prison. Given temporary release in early 2005 following an outcry from human rights groups, Batebi skipped bail and is now on the run.

Bazargan Dr Mehdi
Leader of Liberal Movement of Iran Nehzat-Azadi. Prime Minister in provisional government Feb-Nov 1979. Died in January 1995.

Ebadi Shirin
Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003 for her work defending the rights of Iranian women.

Ebtekar Ma'sumeh
One of seven vice presidents appointed in 1997 and the first woman appointed to such a senior government post since the Islamic Revolution.

Ganji Akbar
Jailed dissident.

Hashemi-Shahrudi Mahmoud
Head of the judiciary and close to both the president and the supreme leader. He has promised to co-operate with President Khatami in reforming the judiciary. He is broad-minded and relatively untouched by the factionalism which affects the ruling clerics in Tehran.

Hedjri Moustapha
Secretary-General, of KDPI.

Karbaschi Gholamhossein
The former mayor, who took office in 1989, was convicted on embezzlement charges and sentenced in July 1998 to five years in prison, later reduced to two years on appeal. He was also barred from any public function. Mr Karbaschi, who was hated by Iran's conservatives, insisted that his conviction was politically motivated. His jail term began in May 1999, following a trial that was widely seen as a witch hunt by conservatives trying to settle scores with the reformist President Mohammad Khatami. The mayor's support helped the president win the election in 1997.

Kazemi Zahra
Canadian photojournalist who was beaten to death at Evin in summer 2003.

Khamenei Hojatoleslam Ali
President 1981 - 1989. Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Chief of State and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, 1989- .

Kharrazi Kamal
Former Foreign Affairs Minister.

Khatami Seyed Mohammad
President August 1997-2005 following landslide election victory in May 1995.

Khomeini Ruhollah
Ayatollah. Exiled 1964-1979. Supreme leader 1979-1989. Died 3 June 1989. Traditionalist Muslim: issued fatwa against Salman Rushdie.

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

Montazeri Hussein Ali
He is one of Iran's highest ranking theologians and has a mass following among religious reformists. He was once nominated to succeed Ayatollah Khomeini, but was sacked by him for disagreeing on policy issues including human rights on which he took a softer line. He was put under house arrest in the holy city of Qom after criticising Ayatollah Khamenei for interfering in secular matters. He was finally freed from house arrest on January 2003 amid concern over his deteriorating health.

Moussavi Mir Hussein
Prime Minister 1981-1989; post abolished. Senior advisor to President Khatami, October 1997-2005.

Nateq-Nuri Ali Akbar
Majlis Speaker in 1997; unsuccessfully opposed Khatami in 1997 Presidential elections, despite backing of Khamenei.

Pahlavi Mohammad Reza
Shah of Iran 1941-1979. Died in Egypt, July 1980.

Pourmand Hamid
A colonel in the Iranian army from the city of Bushehr, imprisoned solely on account of his religion, stemming from legal discrimination against Christians in Iran.

Rafsanjani Ali Akbar Hashemi
President 1989-1995. One of seven vice-presidents appointed in 1997 [1997-.].

Rajavi Massoud
Leader of MEK. Active in overthrow of Shah and led unsuccessful coup in 1981. Fled to France 1981.

Rahjavi Maryam
Wife of Massoud Rajavi; significant figure in MEK.

RAJANI Muhammad Ali
Prime Minister 1979-1981. Elected President July 1981; assassinated late August 1981.

Soltani Abdolfattah
Jailed lawyer.

Yazdi Mohammad
The former head of the judiciary, which he turned into a bastion of the right. One of his changes was to establish general courts which gave total power to the judge and did away with many of the safeguards for the defendant. He was deputy speaker in parliament under Rafsanjani for several years. He is now a member of the powerful Council of Guardians.

Return to Contents

Annex D: List of Source Material

[1] Europa publications:

a Europa Regional Survey of the World: The Middle East and North Africa 2005: 51st Edition

b Europa World Year Book: 2004: 45th Edition

[2] Documentation, Information and Research Branch, Immigration and Refugee Board, Canada

a Iran: Chronology of Events June 1989-July 1994 [January 1995] http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/publications/index_e.htm?docid=191&cid=110 **Accessed 2 August 2005**

b Iran: Chronology of Events August 1994-February 1995 [April 1995]

c Human Rights in Iran: Update on Selected Issues [May1997] Accessed via UNHCR website.11 September 2003

d Women in the Islamic Republic of Iran [June 1994]

e Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, REFINFO, 23 February 2001, IRN36431.E, on abortions

f Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, REFINFO, 5 April 2001, IRN36718.E, on the Tudeh Toodeh/Communist Party of Iran

g Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, REFINFO, 4 June 2001, IRN37122.E, Information on the rules and regulations about licensing and/or policies related to the owning and operating of a print shop

h Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, REFINFO, 29 June 2001, IRN37446.E, Monarchist organisation entitled Javid Iran

i Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, REFINFO, 14 August 2001, IRN37430.E, on commemorative demonstrations, Tehran, July 2000

j Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, REFINFO, 11 February 1998, IRN28636.E, Update on the situation of homosexuals

k Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, REFINFO, 18 February 1997, IRN26039.E, Information on the punishment for adultery and on the standard of proof applied in Islamic courts

l Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, REFINFO, 8 May 1998, IRN29331.E, legal penalties for enticing someone into adultery

m Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, REFINFO, 2 July 1998, IRN29543.E, whether sexual relationships of divorced woman considered as adultery

n Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, REFINFO, 30 March 1999, IRN31378.E, adultery between single male and married woman

o Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, REFINFO, 16 July 1999, IRN31893.E, Treatment of lesbians

p Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, REFINFO, 17 April 1998, IRN29210.E, options open to a Muslim accused of being an apostate

q Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, REFINFO, 4 January 1996, IRN22544.E, consequences for converting

r Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, REFINFO, 26 January 1999, IRN30910.E, Apostasy and penalties imposed 1997 – 1998

s Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, REFINFO, 22 December 1998, IRN30744E, Armenian Christians and Proselytization

t Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, REFINFO, 9 July 1999, IRN32264.E, treatment of refugee status claimants in Iran

u Iran: July 1999 Demonstrations in Tehran. DIRB December 2000

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

v Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, REFINFO, 11 July 2000, IRN34691.E whether non-students are still being sought by authorities; those arrested and/or sentenced by the authorities
w Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, REFINFO, 28 August 2001, IRN37557.E Whether people detained during the week following the student demonstrations of July 1999 have been released; whether there have been further arrests; situation of those arrested

[3] UNHCR
a Background Paper on Refugees and Asylum Seekers from Iran, September 1998
b Background Paper on Refugees and Asylum Seekers from Iran, October 1995
c UNHCR/ACCORD: 7th European Country of Origin Information Seminar Berlin, 11-12 June 2001 – Final Report
d More Iranian refugees flee intimidation in Iraq. UNHCR News Stories, 13 May 2003 http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/news/opendoc.htm?tbl=NEWS&page=home&id=3ec122b94 **Accessed 2 August 2005**
e Iran's largest refugee camp closes. UNHCR News Stories, 9 February 2004
f UNDP to set up women's information centre in Iran. UNHCR News Stories. 10 March 2004
g Background Paper on Refugees and Asylum Seekers from Iran, January 2001
h UNHCR Comments on the Iran Country Report of April 2005, August 2005
i UNHCR Declarations and reservations to the Convention on the Rights of the Child http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/crc-reserve.htm **Acccessed 2 August 2005.**

[4] US State Department Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor
a Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1996, January 1997
b Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997, January 1998
c Profile of Asylum Claims and Country Conditions, February 1996
d Profile of Asylum Claims and Country Conditions, August 1997
e –
f Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998, February 1999
g Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1999, February 2000 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/1999/409.htm **Accessed 2 August 2005**
h Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2000, February 2001
i International Religious Freedom Report for 2000, October 2001 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2001/ **Accessed 2 August 2005**
j Background note: Iran. Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, August 2005 http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5314.htm **Accessed 2 August 2005**
k Country Report on Human Rights Practice for 2001, March 2002
l International Religious Freedom Report for 2002, October 2002
m Country Report on Human Rights Practice for 2002, March 2003
n Country Report on Human Rights Practice for 2003, February 2004
o International Religious Freedom Report for 2004, September 2004
p Country Report on Human Rights Practice for 2004, February 2005 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41721.htm **Accessed 2 August 2005**

[5] Reuters/Business Briefing
a Iran, Iraq Reach Agreement on Pilgrims to Shia Sites. Voice of Iran, 7 July 1998, BBC Monitoring Service, 9 July 1998

b Iranian President Offers To Mediate between Syria, Turkey. Vision of the Islamic Republic Network 1, 7 October 1998. BBC Monitoring 9 October 1998
c –
d Four New Political Associations Receive Permits, Vision of Islamic Republic Network, 14 July 1998 BBC Monitoring Service, 6 July 1998
e Majlis Discusses Unemployment in Closed Session. Vision of Islamic Republic Network 1 BBC Monitoring, 9 September 1998
f Majlis Closed Session Debates Recession, Unemployment. Vision of Islamic Republic Network 1 BBC Monitoring, 6 October 1998
g Majlis Votes to make Medical Institutions consistent with Islamic Laws. Vision of Islamic Republic Network 4 October 1998 BBC Monitoring, 5 October 1998
h Khatami's Interview with CNN. Vision of Islamic Republic Network 1, 8 January 1998, BBC Monitoring Service, 9 January 1998
i EP Adopts Resolution on Death Sentence in Iran. European Union Press Release, 9 October 1998
j Iran Lifts Death Sentence on German. South China Morning Post, 21 February 1999
k German's Death Sentence Rejected by Supreme Court. Xinhua News Agency 20 February 1999
l Iranian Security Chief Stands Trial for Tortures. Xinhua News Agency, 3 May 1999
m Iran's Khatami demands Justice for the Press. Reuters Ltd. 27 June 1999
n Britain says Iranian Government Reforming Itself. Reuters Ltd, 8 July 1999
o Iran Ministry Drops Charges against Newspaper. Reuters Ltd, 8 July 1999
p Iran's leading Reformist Newspaper stays Shut. Reuters Ltd, 9 July 1999
q Iran Jails Police Official Clears Him of Torture. Reuters Ltd, 10 July 1999
r Iran Ansar Vigilantes Seen Close to Secret Police. Reuters Ltd, 13 July 1999
s Iran holds Nationalist Dissidents over Unrest. Reuters Ltd, 26 July 1999
t Germany holds Iranian for "Spying" on Exiles. Reuters Ltd, 29 July 1999
u The meaning of freedom, Economist, 31 July 1999
v –
w Reformist Editor gets Three Years in Jail for Sacrilegious Articles. IRNA, 27 November 1999, BBC Monitoring Service, 29 November 1999
x Iran Politics. International Relations Business Middle East. Economist Intelligence Unit from Reuters Business Briefing, 6 March 2002
y Iran Politics. Domestic Politics. Economist Intelligence Unit from Reuters Business Briefing, 6 March 2002
z Khatami appoints Representative to join WTO. IRNA Reuters Business Briefing, 20 February 2002
aa Iran MPs Approve Outline of Bill Banning Torture. Reuters Business Briefing, 6 March 2002
ab A Small Victory for Iranian Reformists. The Hindu Reuters Business Briefing, 17 January 2002
ac UN Official supports Iran's WTO membership bid. Economist Intelligence Unit Reuters Business Briefing, IRNA, 28 May 2002
ad Official says no consensus on Privatisation Programme. IRNA Reuters Business Briefing, BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 7 May 2002
ae Official says National Unemployment rate 14 per cent. IRNA Reuters Business Briefing, BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 6 August 2002
af –

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

ah Conservative Clerics Reject Majlis Bill on Children's Rights. Reuters Business Briefing, BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 29 August 2002
ai Female Police Officers begin activity in Islamic Republic of Iran. Reuters Business Briefing BBC Worldwide Monitoring - 30 August 2002
aj Girls Advancing in Education System. Reuters Business Briefing, BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 4 September 2002
ak Women to be Appointed Charge d'affaires. Reuters Business Briefing, BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 27 May 2002
al Feminists hail new Custody Law. Reuters Business Briefing, BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 29 May 2002
am Iran Watchdog Rejects Bill on Women Divorce Rights. Reuters Business Briefing, BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 28 September 2002
an –
ao Till his Death do they Part..... Reuters Business Briefing, BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 14 July 2002
ap Iranian Authorities Ban Women, Youth from Smoking Narguileh. Reuters Business Briefing, IPR Strategic Business Information Database, 11 August 2002
aq Iran grants first Blood Money to a Christian. Reuters News Service, 1 September 2002
ar Two Thirds of Iranian Prisoners in Jail on Drug Related Offences. Reuters Business Briefing, BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 1 September 2002
as Three per cent of Iranians are Drug Addicts. Reuters Business Briefing, BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 20 September 2002
at Official outlines measures for Treatment of Drug Addicts. Reuters Business Briefing, BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 1 September 2002
au Official says Number of HIV Positive people increasing in Multitudes. Reuters Business Briefing, BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 26 August 2002
av Drug Smugglers Hanged in Iran. Reuters Business Briefing, Albawaba 2002, 21 May 2002
aw Eighty Five Publications Banned in Four Years, says Official. Reuters Business Briefing, BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 11 August 2002
ax Iran's Reformers – Go Online. Reuters Business Briefing, The Hindu, 7 August 2002
ay Iranian Court Jails over 30 Liberal Dissidents. Reuters Business Briefing, Reuters News Service, 27 July 2002
az Envoy Invites UN Human Rights Commission to Visit Iran. Reuters Business Briefing, BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 26 July 2002
ba Iran killer, rapist to be thrown off cliff in sack. Reuters News, 18 July 2002
bb Violence in Election Aftermath Kills Eight in Iran, Reuters News, 20 February 2000
bc Iran hardliners keep lid on ancient fire festival. Reuters News, 16 March 2005

[6] "Middle East" publications

a New Political Party Officially Up and Running. IRNA. 8 July 1998. Summary of World Broadcasts – BBC Monitoring, Middle East, 10 July 1998
b British Airways starts Direct Flights to Tehran. Voice of Iran Radio. 5 August 1998. Summary of World Broadcasts, BBC Monitoring, Middle East

[7] Repressed Desires. Newsweek, 19 January 1998

[8] Human Rights Watch

a Power versus choice, March 1996

b World Report, 1998 [issued December 1997]
c Middle East overview, 1996
d World Report on Iran, 1999
e Iran, Religious and Ethnic Minorities, Discrimination in Law and Practice.1 September 1997
f World Report, Middle East and North Africa, 2002
g Veto on Torture Bill Condemned, 12 June 2002
h World Report 2003 issued January 2003
i Press Crackdown Intensifies, 15 January 2003
j "Like the Dead in Their Coffins" Torture, Detention, and the Crushing of Dissent in Iran. 7 June 2004
k World Report 2005, issued January 2005
l "No Exit: Human Rights Abuses Inside the Mojahedin Khalq Camps"19 May 2005
m Iran: End Juvenile Executions, 27 July 2005
n Iran: Security Forces Kill Kurdish Protestors. Government Must Investigate Killings and Release Detained Activists, 11 August 2005. http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/08/11/iran11619.htm
Accessed 12 August 2005

[9] Amnesty International
a Country Report 1996
b Country Report 1997
c State Injustice: Unfair Trials in the Middle East and North Africa, April 1998
d Annual Report 2005. Covers January 2004 to December 2004
e –
f –
g Fear of Safety, 22/6/99
h Newsflash-Iran: stonings should stop. AI Index MDE 13/024/2001, 11 July 2001
i Newsflash-Iran: Halt the surge of executions. AI Index MDE 13/031/2001, 17 August 2001
j Iran: A Legal System that Fails to Protect Freedom of Expression and Association. December 2001
k Further Information – Death Penalty. AI Index MDE13/041/2001, 28 September 2001
l Medical Negligence/Prisoner of Conscience. AI Index MDE 13/040/2001, 27 September 2001
m Annual Report 2001, covers January – December 2000
n Torture/Imminent Execution. AI Index MDE 13/005 2002, 6 March 2002
o Fear of ill treatment/torture/detention without charge. AI Index MDE 13/009/2002, 19 June 2002
p Further Information Siamak Pourzand. AI Index MDE 13/011/2002. 31 July 2002.
q Annual Report 2002, covers January to December 2001
r UA 49/03 Death Penalty Iran. Sasan Al-e Kena'n, 19 February 2003
s UA 49/03 Further Information, 21 February 2003
t 1,526 executed in 2002. AI Index: ACT 50/007/2003, 11 April 2003
u Fear of imminent amputation. AI Index MDE 13/001/03, 8 Jan 2003
v Further Information on UA 69/02. AI Index MDE 13/007/2003
w Fear for Safety/Fear of Torture or Ill-Treatment. AI Index MDE 13/016/2003, 26 June 2003.
x Thousands of Students Arrested in Iran. The Wire, August 2003

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

y Rejecting Women's Convention undermines Iran's Commitment to International Human Rights Standards. MDE 13/029/2003
z Annual Report 2003.covers January – December 2002.
aa Iran: Only an independent investigative body can serve justice and human rights. AI Index MDE 13/026/2003
ab Medical negligence/prisoner of conscience. AI Index MDE 13/039/2001
ac Torture or Ill-Treatment/Possible Unfair Trial /Death Penalty. MDE 13/028/2003
ad Death Sentences and Executions in 2003. AI Index 50/006/2004
ae Prisoner of Conscience Appeal Case – Siamak Pourzand: a case study of flagrant human rights violations. AI Index: MDE 13/025/2004
af Annual Report 2003 Covers January – December 2003.
ag Fear of Imminent Execution/Fear of possible ill treatment or torture. Karin Tuzhali: AI Index: MDE 13/002/2002
ah Iran: Amnesty International outraged at reported execution of a 16 year old girl. AI Index: MDE 13/036/2004, 23 August 2004
ai Iran: No more empty promises – no more child executions. MDE 13/006/2005 – WA 0605, 9 February 2005
aj Facts and Figures on the Death Penalty. www.amnesty.org/death penalty. Accessed 5 April 2005.
ak Iran Nasser Zarafshan (m) aged 59, Human rights defender and lawyer - MDE 13/007/2005, 15 February 2005
al Iran: Amnesty International calls for an urgent investigation into the killing of demonstrators. AI Index: MDE 13/043/2005 (Public), 5 August 2005
am Khuzestan, Iran: Amnesty International calls for an end to the cycle of violence in Khuzestan and an investigation into the root causes of recent unrest. AI Index: MDE 13/017/2005 (Public), 20 April 2005
an Iran: Prisoner of Conscience Appeal Case: Hamid Pourmand: Imprisonment due to religious belief (Reports) – MDE 13/060/2005 – 01 September 2005

[10] United Nations: Documentation

a Question of the Violation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, 1/4/98
b Report on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 28/1/98
c UN Human Rights International Instruments; Chart of Ratifications as at 31/12/96
d Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs for Iran, 19/3/98
e Iran at a Glance HIV and AIDS in Iran. Accessed www.youandaids.org 16 August 2004
f Committee on the Rights of the Child: Thirty-eighth session. Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 44 of the Convention.Concluding Observations: The Islamic Republic of Iran, 31 March 2005
g Report on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 11/2/97
h Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, 20/8/98
i Report on the Violation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, 20/4/98
j Further Promotion and Encouragement of Human Rights, 29/7/98
k Human Rights of all Persons subjected to any form of Detention or Imprisonment, 24/12/97
l A Written Statement by the Baha'i International Community, 23/2/98

m Report on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 28/12/98
n Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, 17/12/98
o –
p Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran. E/CN.4/2002/42. Special Rapporteur, 16 January 2002
q Civil and Political Rights, including the Question of Conscientious Objection to Military Service. E/CN.4/2002/188, 24 April 2002
r Integration of The Human Rights of Women and the Gender Perspective – Violence against Women. E/CN.4/2002/83/Add.1 – 28 January 2002
s Question of the Violation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms E/CN.4/Sub.2/2002/NGO/7, 19 July 2002
t Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. Press Release 14 February 2003
u Ethnic and Religious Groups in the Islamic Republic of Iran. E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.5/2003/WP.8, 5 May 2003 http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?c=86&su=92 **Accessed 2 August 2005**
v Committee on the Rights of the Child Initial State Party report - CRC/C/41/Add.5, July 1998, 9 December 1997
w Committee on the Rights of the Child – Twenty-fourth session. CRC/C15/Add.123 Concluding Observations/Comments
x Commission on Human Rights – Civil and Political Rights, including the question of Torture and Detention – Report of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention – Visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran (15-27 February 2003) E/CN.4/2004/3/Add.2, 27 June 2003
y Commission on Human Rights-Civil and Political Rights, including the question of Freedom of Expression-Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Freedom of Opinion and Expression-Visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran (04 to 10 November 2003) E/CN.4/2004/62/Add.2 - 12 January 2004
z Question of the Violation of Human Rights and Fundamental freedoms in any part of the World. Written statement submitted by the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues (FIDH), a non-governmental organisation in special consultative status E/CN.4/2004/NGO/164,10 April 2004.
aa Question of the Violation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in any Part of the World. Written statement submitted by Baha'i International Community, a non-governmental organisation in special consultative status. E/CN.4/2003/NGO/102, 12 March 2003

[11] The Baha'i World.
a The Baha'i World. Official Web Site of the Baha'i Faith. www.bahai.org/ Accessed 5 April 2002
b Dismay at lack of human rights resolution on Iran as persecution worsens, 14 April 2005, http://news.bahai.org/story.cfm?storyid=367 **Accessed 2 August 2005**

[12] The Islamic Punishment Act Ta'azirat, 12 June 1996
a Extract: Articles 512–516.
b Extract: Articles relating to homosexuality.

[13] The Baha'is of Iran, Roger Cooper, The Minority Rights Group, August 1985

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

[14] The Daily Telegraph
a Iran Women loosen the Fashion straight Jacket. 13 May 1998
b Pressure to Stop Stoning. 5 June 1998
c Rushdie Death Penalty will NOT be carried out. 2 February 1998
d Rushdie: Is threat fading? 24 September 1998

[15] The Times
a Condom Factory. [Sunday Times] 17 May 1998
b Death by Stoning. 12 February 1998
c Means Freedom says Rushdie. 25 February 1998
d Victory for Khatami [Financial Times] 10 February 1999
e Head of Security Resigns. 10 February 1999
f Adulterer cheats Death. 23 January 1998
g Jews jailing will hit West [Financial Times] 3 July 2000
h Ayatollah revives the death fatwa on Salman Rushdie, 3 July 2005
http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2-1448279,00.html
Accessed 2 August 2005

[16] The Guardian
a Prove Islamism or Die. 17 February 1998
b Rushdie Fatwa talks. 24 September 1998
c Lifeline for Rushdie. 23 September 1998
d UN rights watchdog attacks Iranian jails. 27 February 2003
e Cleric's Torture Ban recognises Iran's Record. 29 April 2004.
f A fatwa for freedom. 27 July 2005

[17] Keesings Record of World Events
a News Digest June 1998
b News Digest May 1998
c News Digest December 1998
d News Digest February 2002
e News Digest January 2003

[18] The Independent
a Students fight with Police in Tehran. 13 July 1999
b Iran to end execution of juveniles. 29 September 2003

[19] The European Union Council
a Situation in Iran, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, December 1988
CIREA 13 – 5649/13 – 2 February 1999

[20] United Kingdom Legislation
a The Statement of Changes in the Immigration Rules HC 395 – laid before Parliament 23/5/94, came into effect 1/10/94
b The Immigration Transit Visa Amendment No.3 Order 1998 – made 6/10/98, came into force 8/10/98

[21] BBC News Online/Monitoring / CNN.com
a Iran's Guardians allege poll fraud. 7 May 2000
b Iranian leader endorses poll results. 18 May 2000
c Rafsanjani gives up his seat. 25 May 2000
d Iran and India improve ties. 23 April 2000
e Iran president praises relations with China. 22 June 2000
f Khatami's high risk adventure. 10 July 2000

g Iran head's speech attracts Albright. 6 September 2000
h, Iran frees German businessman. 21 January 2000
i Trial of Iranian Jews Adjourned. 13 April 2000
j Iranian opposition leaders held. 8 April 2001
k Constitutional crisis delays Khatami's swearing-in. 4 August 2001
l Khatami hits at Iran conservatives. 8 August 2001
m Struggle for Iran's future. 8 August 2001
n Iranian woman reformist jailed. 22 August 2001
o Khatami cabinet wins approval. 22 August 2001
p Iran condemns attacks on US. 17 September 2001
q The two sides of Iran. 26 September 2001
r Iran calls for UN lead. 25 September 2001
s Iran fears influx of Afghan refugees. 8 October 2001
t Some 380,000 People used Internet in the Country in 2001. IRNA 7 January 2002 BBC Monitoring. 10 January 2002
u Strict Laws announced for Cybercafés. Entekab Newspaper 7 January 2002. BBC Monitoring. 10 January 2002
v Minister Rejects Curbs on Internet. Iran Daily Newspaper 30 January 2002. BBC Monitoring. 31 January 2002
w Official says Iran's Membership to WTO essential. IRNA 6 February 2002 BBC Monitoring. 7 February 2002
x –
y UK names Iran Ambassador. BBC News, 24 September 2002
z Web gives a Voice to Iranian Women. BBC News, 17 June 2002
aa Five Convicted Criminals Hanged in Public. BBC Monitoring, 29 September 2002
ab Vice Squad confiscates 11,191 satellite dishes in Tehran Province. BBC Monitoring. 26 May 2002
ac Judiciary calls for Laws against Internet related Offences. BBC Monitoring. 15 September 2002
ad Thousands Flout Iran Rally Ban. BBC News. 9 July 2002
ae Iran's Khatami wants more Powers. BBC News. 24 September 2002
af Iran's Teachers protest poor pay. BBC News. 22 January 2002
ag –
ah –
ai New British Ambassador takes up post in Tehran. BBC Monitoring. 2 December 2002
aj Khatami 'storms out' of meeting. BBC News. 15 March 2003
ak MP says Majlis would not bend to accept Guardian Council's budget rise. BBC Monitoring 18 March 2003
al Iranian paper says Guardian Council "will kill off electoral reform bill." BBC Monitoring. 7 November 2002
am Iran parliament backs reformist bill. BBC News. 10 November 2002
an Iran election 'an alarm bell'. BBC News. 03 March 2003
ao Jailed Iranian Jews pardoned. BBC News. 27 October 2002
ap Iranian student arrests confirmed. BBC News. 26 November 2002
aq Iran academic sent back to death court. BBC News. 17 February 2003
ar Iran MPs attack student punishments. BBC News. 10 March 2003
as Leading Iranian reformist 'arrested'. BBC News. 4 November 2002
at Iran: Court said to have sentenced pollsters Abdi, Qazian to seven, eight years. BBC Monitoring. 2 February 2003
au Iran's Montazeri 'out of danger'. BBC News. 5 February 2003
av More than 100 MPs seek Iran's accession to anti-torture convention. BBC Monitoring. 16 March 2003

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

aw Majlis to debate citizenship rights for foreign spouses of Iranian women. BBC Monitoring. 1 December 2002
ax. Iran: Guardian Council rejects amendment to election law. BBC Monitoring. 2 April 2003
ay. Iran stops stoning of women adulterers. BBC News. 27 December 2002.
az. Iran segregating addicted prisoners in bid to check AIDS. BBC Monitoring. 17 January 2003
ba Iran identifies 4,200 AIDS cases, estimates total at 20,000. BBC Monitoring. 5 November 2002
bb Iran manufactures generic AIDS drugs, market to be supplied soon. BBC Monitoring. 13 February 2003
bc Police to confiscate "unauthorised" satellite dishes under new law. BBC Monitoring. 18 December 2002
bd Women set to join Iran police. BBC News. 4 January 2003
be First Women bus driver takes to Iran roads. BBC Monitoring. 2 November 2002
bf Constitution watchdog approves bill giving women rights to divorce. BBC Monitoring. 1 December 2002
bg Iran: Foreign Ministry official says expatriates will be given passports. BBC Monitoring. 2 September 2002
bh Iranian Official says unemployment stands at 15 per cent. BBC Monitoring. 21 July 2003
bi Iranian Protests Fail to Bring Change. BBC News. 22 June 2003
bj Iran Students Ordered Released. BBC News. 7 August 2003
bk Iran Dissident Angry at Verdict. BBC News. 14 July 2003
bl Iran: Majlis Passes Bill to Monitor Judiciary Performance. BBC Monitoring. 3 September 2003
bm Guardian Council Rejects Khatami's Election Reform Bill, Two Rights Bills. BBC Monitoring. 13 August 2003
bn Iran: Guardian Council wants further changes to Law on Torture Convention. BBC Monitoring. 9 September 2003
bo Iran: Khatami says Twin Bills not to be sent to Expediency Council. BBC Monitoring. 13 August 2003
bp Iran's first Female Police Officers to Graduate in August. BBC Monitoring. 14 May 2003
bq Iranian Women workers said to Face Twice as many Problems as Men. BBC Monitoring. 2 August 2003
br MPs back Iran's adherence to UN Women's Convention. BBC Monitoring. 9 August 2003
bs Iran Cancels Envoy's Visit. BBC News. 15 July 2003
bt Iranian Government approves Anti AIDS/HIV Virus directive. BBC Monitoring. 23 August 2003
bu Iranian reformist's plea gagged. BBC News. 5 May 2003
bv Iran's youth seek future overseas. BBC News. 29 May 2003
bw Iran leader denies profiteering. BBC News. 15 July 2003
bx –
by Iran's Policewomen return to the Beat. BBC News. 4 October 2003
bz Iran reformists denounce judges. BBC News. 28 October 2003
ca New press court set up with three judges in charge. BBC Monitoring. 11 October 2003
cb Students go on hunger strike protesting dormitory food. BBC Monitoring. 1 November 2003
cc Official says no student rallies allowed outside university compound. BBC Monitoring. 24 November 2003

cd Law-Enforcement Force disperses vigilantes preventing student rally. BBC Monitoring. 7 December 2003
ce Iranian police reportedly kill one, injure two in Kurdish town. BBC Monitoring 22 October 2003
cf How Iran votes. BBC News. 3 February 2004
cg Q&A: Iran election crisis. BBC News. 1 February 2004
ch Predicted win for Iranian hardliners. BBC News. 25 February 2004
ci Five dead in Iran riot. BBC News. 5 December 2003
cj Hard line Iranian Group offers reward for killing British Author. BBC Monitoring. 16 February 2004
ck Iran has 5,780 AIDS patients. BBC Monitoring. 19 November 2003
cl Iran police in fashion crackdown. BBC News. 12 July 2004
cm Ayatollah sentences author to death. BBC News On this Day. 14 February 1989.
cn "Political crime" bill to be submitted to Iran Majlis. BBC Monitoring 22 June 2004
co Iran's blocked websites resurface. BBC News. 1 September 2004
cp Iran MPs push for women's rights. BBC News. 10 May 2004
cq Iran 'forced' Afghans to go home. BBC News. 21 January 2005
cr Iran admits to abuse of prisoners. BBC News. 24 July 2005 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4712597.stm **Accessed 2 August 2005**

[22] Islamic & Republic News Agency
a Tehran Election Results. 26 February 2000
b Majlis approves new regulations on military service exemption. 25 February 2004
c 132 former MKO members arrive home. 9 March 2005
d Action against freedom of press is against social progress, Khatami 12 July 2005 http://www.irna.ir/en/news/view/line-17/0507121119172246.htm **Accessed 2 August 2005**

[23] Iranmania web site
a Iran Elections. 24 May 2000
b Iran Jews' sentences cut on appeal. 21 September 2000
c My client should not serve prison term. 10 March 2005

[24] Economist
a Country Briefings. February 2003. **Accessed 8 April 2003**
b Iran's Kurds: The Lucky Ones. 21 December 2001. **Accessed 30 January 2002**
c A sorry election. 23 February 2004. **Accessed 25 February 2004**
d Iran Report 2005, Economist Intelligence Unit, September 2005. **Accessed 8 September 2005** http://db.eiu.com/index.asp?layout=displayIssueArticle&issue_id=1994260005&article_id=209426006 **Accessed 2 August 2005**

[25] War Resisters International 1998

[26] Foreign and Commonwealth Office
a FCO Correspondence: Medical Facilities in Iran. 23 January 2002
b –
c FCO Correspondence Email: Zoroastrianism. 14 August 2002
d FCO Country Profiles – Iran. website – www.fco.gov.uk – **Accessed 24 August 2005**
e FCO Correspondence: Penalties for Illegal Exit from Iran. 20 August 2001

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

f FCO Correspondence: Treatment Returned Asylum Seekers. 5 September 2002
g FCO Correspondence: Request for document Authentication. 4 December 2000
h FCO. Human Rights. Annual Report 2002 Extract. Foreign Office website: www.fco.gov.uk – Accessed September 2002
i FCO. Human Rights. Annual Report 2003 Extract. Foreign Office website: www.fco.gov.uk – Issued 18 September 2003 Accessed October 2003
j FCO. Human Rights. Annual Report 2005 Extract. Foreign Office website: www.fco.gov.uk – Issued 21 July 2005

[27] Mental Health Care in the Developing World. Psychiatric Times January 2002

[28] World Health Organisation
a World Health Organisation: Mental Health: A Call for Action. 2001 **Accessed March 2002**
b World Health Organisation: Project Atlas 2002
c Lessons learned in the Eastern Mediterranean Region... Mental Health. Presentation Meeting of Interested Parties. Geneva 2000

[29] Committee to Protect Journalists
a Committee to Protect Journalists. Middle East and North Africa. 2001. **Accessed 3 April 2002**
b Committee to Protect Journalists. Middle East and North Africa. 2003. **Accessed 25 March 2004**
c Committee to Protect Journalists. Middle East and North Africa. 2004. **Accessed 25 March 2004**

[30] Iran: Child Soldiers Global Report 2004. 15 November 2004
http://www.child-soldiers.org/regions/country.html?id=101 **Accessed 2 August 2005**

[31] Statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the UN General Assembly on Children. 10 May 2002

[32] US Defense Security Service. Citizenship Criteria. 16 October 2001

[33] Minorities at Risk Project – Extract. CIDCM – University of Maryland. – website accessed 13 August 2001 – Arabs, Azeris, Baluchis, Kurds.

[34] Revisiting 'The Hidden Epidemic' A Situation Assessment of Drug Use in Asia in the Context of HIV/AIDS. January 2002.
Gary Reid. Principal author of report, The Centre for Harm Reduction
http://ahrn.net/index.php

[35] U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
a World Refugee Survey 2002 – Iran. June 2002
b World Refugee Survey 2003 – Iran. May 2003
c World Refugee Survey 2005 – Iran. 15 June 2005

[36] World Bank Group
a Iran: Overview, 2005.

[37] The Washington Post

a Iranian Cleric Rules on Death by Stoning. 29 December 2002

[38] Reporters sans Frontières/Reporters without Borders
a Hardliners step up control of Internet. 1 January 2003
b Five journalists arrested in less than a week. 3 March 2003
c Iran 20 Journalists in prison, dozens summonsed. 28 August 2003
d Measures to stifle the Internet. 18 June 2003
e European Union challenged about the Middle East's biggest prison for journalists. 28 June 2004
f Internet Under Surveillance 2004. 22 June 2004
g Student gets nearly four years for criticising regime online. 3 August 2004
h New attacks on Internet freedom deplored. 28 August 2004
i Iran – Annual Report 2004. 3 May 2004
j Iran – Annual Report 2005. 3 May 2005
k Iran: Police beat and arrest families of Akbar Ganji and Nasser Zarafshan.16 June 2005

[39] Albawaba.com
a Feminism rising in Iran. Albawaba.com 30 January 2003
b Iran's Judiciary lays down new strict rules on Internet. 18 June 2003

[40] Scotland on Sunday
a Girls take lead in Iran reform. 24 November 2002

[41] Council of the European Union
a Danish fact-finding mission to Iran – September 2000
b Dutch Report - Situation in Iran August 2000

[42] RFE/RL: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty
a Iran: Human rights groups condemn cases of stoning. 4 July 2001
b Iran: Iraqi Refugees leaving Iran. 31 March 2004
c Guardians Council Leadership Unchanged. 26 July 2004
d Iranian Legislature Revises Five Year Plan. 18 August 2004
e Iran: Technocrats And Reformists Square Off Against Conservatives And Labor Over WTO Membership. 28 June 2005
f Iran: Is There An Anti-Homosexual Campaign? 1 September 2005
g Iran: Country Faces Agitated Kurdish Population. 22 July 2005
h Iran: Blaming British For Arab Unrest Has Historical Roots. 17 August 2005

[43] Report on the Mission to Iran – 16 May – 06 July 2002 – CEDOCA

[44] The World Fact Book 2005 – CIA – August 2005

[45] International Monetary Fund
a –
b International Monetary Fund. Press Release No. 04/123. 23 June 2004
c International Monetary Fund. Public Information Notice (PIN) No. 04/109 27 September 2004

[46] Asia Times Online
a Iran's Clerics take the First Round. 5 June 2003
b Iran: Invisible hands guide military ambitions. 28 May 2004 http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/FE28Ak05.html **Accessed 2 August 2005**

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

[47] Freedom House
a Freedom in the World 2003 – June 2003

[48] The Calgary Sun
a Iran: Murder Charges Dropped. 2 September 2003.

[49] Relief Web
a Stranded Iranian refugees start to leave Iraq. Reuters Ltd, 22 May 2003 http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/AllDocsByUNID/c262d0056ff1daf9c1256d2f00594016 **Accessed 2 August 2005**
b Iran to strip Afghans of Refugee Status, promises new curbs. Agence France Presse, 10 March 2004

[50] Islamic Penal Code: Excerpts Relating to Women. Afkhami, Mahnaz and Erika Friedl, eds. In the Eye of the Storm: Women in Post-Revolutionary Iran. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1994
www.learningpartnership.org/BE_article.php3// **accessed 22 September 2003**

[51] A Wedding, Tehrani Style By B. Bagheri
http://www.persianoutpost.com/ **accessed September 2003**

[52] Tehran Times
a –
b Iran Ready to Offer Amnesty to Low Ranking MKO Members: Talabani. 25 November 2003
c MKO Terrorist Groups to be Expelled from Iraq Next Year: Minister. 5 April 2004
d Swiss Human Rights Delegation Visits Iran. 29 February 2004

[53] Payvand News
a Payvand's Iran News Iran's Parliament rejects bill to grant citizenship to Afghans married to Iranian women. 15 January 2003
b Iran's minorities hail approval of law on equal blood money. 29 December 2003
c Iran: Judiciary takes up reform, appoints prosecutor general. 29 April 2003
d Iran: Twice-Condemned Aghajari Released on Bail, Ordered to Remain Silent. 1 August 2004.
e Iran: Prisoners Beat Striking Political Prisoners; Zarafshan and Batebi released on Furlough. 28 July 2004
f Iran's Nobel laureate hails approval of better child custody rights. 2 December 2003
g Zoroastrian Priest: Zoroastrians in Iran are free to perform rituals. 4 January 05

[54] Central Asian and Southern Caucasian Freedom of Expression Network
a Iran Press Freedom Review 2003. 18 March 2003

[55] Kurdistan Observer
a Kurds Riot in Iran. 11 March 2004

[56] FIDH - Federation Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme
a FIDH assessment of the EU/Iran human rights dialogue. 1 December 2003
b Discrimination against religious minorities in Iran. August 2003

c Appraisal of the EU Human Rights Dialogues: Assessment of the Human Rights situation in Iran. July 2004
d Iran - Written Intervention. 61st session Commission on Human Rights 14 March-22 April 2005. 11 February 2005

[57] Human Rights Dialogue Switzerland – Iran: First discussions CISP, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs – 16 October 2003

[58] Swiss open human rights dialogue with Iran. 13 October 2003.
Swiss info.org. **Accessed 2 February 2004**

[59] Iran: Human Rights Overview. Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. 24 March 2004

[60] Project Ploughshares
a Armed Conflicts Report 2003. Update December 2003.

[61] Agence France-Presse
a Four Iranian men sentenced to execution by stoning. 11 November 2003. Reported in Hindustani Times
b Iran to convert solitary confinement jail cells to "suites." 13 November 2003

[62] USA Today
a Iran's president acknowledges key reforms defeated. 17 March 2004

[63] Al-Jazzeera
a Iran launches probe into jails. Jordan Times. 24 December 2003

[64] The Brookings Register
a Zoroastrians celebrate creation of earth. 11 September 2003

[65] Conversion to Zoroastrianism. By Hannah M G Shapero
http://www.pyracantha.com/Z/convertz.html **Accessed 13 April 2004**

[66] The Financial Times
a Iran soccer defeat sparks fresh riots. 24 October 2001

[67] The Christian Science Monitor
a Inside a group caught between three powers. 31 December 2003

[68] NETIRAN.com
a Interview with Shahram Mohammadzadeh about Iran's Citizenship Laws. 26 June 2002

[69] Foreign Affairs Canada
a Iran: Human Rights. www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca **Accessed 16 August 2004**

[70] CNN
a Agent charged with journalist's murder. 22 September 2003

[71] Iran va Jahan
a Brain Drain Problem Hitting Critical Mass. Tehran Times 12 July 2004. **Accessed 16 July 2004**

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."

[72] Center for Contemporary Conflict
a Iranian Politics After the 2004 Parliamentary Election. Strategic Insights, Volume III, Issue 6 (June 2004)
b Op/Ed: The Causes and Consequences of Iran's June 2005 Presidential Election. Strategic Insights, Volume IV, Issue 8 (August 2005)
http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2005/Aug/gasiorowskiAug05.asp
Accessed 2 August 2005

[73] Feminist Majority Foundation Online
a Iran's Parliament Approves Draft of Abortion Bill. 22 July 2004

[74] OpenNet Initiative
a Internet Content Filtering in Iran: Verification of Reported Banned Websites August 13, 2004
b Iran's Internet Censorship Among Strictest In the World, Documents OpenNet Initiative Report, Press Release 21 June 2005

[75] IRINNEWS.ORG
a Iran: Reformists propose equal inheritance rights for women. 22 June 2004
b Iran: Iraqi refugees use new border crossing. 16 July 2004
c Iran: Focus on Child Labour. 16 July 2004

[76] Iran Focus-News
a Imprisoned Iranian Pastor may Face Death Penalty. 8 March 2005
b Women not permitted in cabinet of Iran's new president. 7 August 2005
http://www.iranfocus.com/article.php?storyid=3216 **Accessed 8 August 2005**
c Iranian hardliners reject bill to ease abortion ban. Monday, 9th May 2005
http://www.iranfocus.com/article.php?storyid=2043 **Accessed 2 August 2005**

[77] New York Times
a As Repression Lifts, More Iranians Change Their Sex. 2 August 2004
b Kurds in Iran Cheer Iraqi Neighbors' Efforts for Greater Voice. 14 November 2004

[78] Worldwide Faith News
a Iran's Bahai's Kept Out of University in Human Rights Breach. 11 August 2004

[79] Library of Congress – Federal Research Division
a Country Profile: Iran, September 2004

[80] GlobalSecurity.org
a Pasdaran – Order of Battle. **Accessed 22 March 2005**

[81] US Citizen and Immigration Services
a Iran: Information on Conversion from Islam to Christianity. 14 November 2002

[82] US Energy Information Administration
a Country Analysis Brief March 2005. **Accessed 13 September 2005**
http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/iran.html

[83] The White House, Office of the Press Secretary
Bush Extends National Emergency with Respect to Iran, 10 March 2005

[84] International Crisis Group
a Iran: What Does Ahmadi-Nejad's Victory Mean? 4 August 2005. **Accessed August 2005** http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/middle_east___north_africa/iraq_iran_gulf/b18_iran_what_does_ahmadi_nejad_victory_mean_web.doc

[85] Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces.
a Iran's Security Sector: An Overview. August 2004. http://isn-search.ethz.ch/cgi-bin/s_dcafnew.cgi?q=working+paper+no+146&ul=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.dcaf.ch%2F&cs=utf-8&gr=off **Accessed 02 August 2005**

[86] Danish Immigration Service
a Report from the fact-finding mission to Teheran and Ankara. "Regarding certain crimes and punishments in Iran", 22 January to 29 January 2005

[87] The Beckley Foundation Drug Policy Programme
a Briefing Paper Eight, The Rise of Harm Reduction in the Islamic Republic of Iran, July 2005

[88] U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom
a 2005 Annual Report of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, May 2005. **Accessed 13 September 2005** http://www.uscirf.gov/countries/publications/currentreport/index.html

[89] CBC/Radio-Canada
a Iran's changing story. InDepth: Zahra Kazemi. CBC News Online, 24 July 2005. http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/kazemi/ **Accessed 2 August 2005**

[90] The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)
a Iran: Annual Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights (2004), 6 January 2004. **Accessed 2 August 2005** http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991219458&Language=EN

Return to Contents

Disclaimer: "This country of origin information report contains the most up-to-date publicly available information as at 31 August 2005. Older source material has been included where it contains relevant information not available in more recent documents."