

Country Guidance: Iran

Country Guidance: Iran

Common analysis and guidance note

January 2025



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Introduction

The country guidance documents provide country-specific common analysis and guidance in relation to the assessment criteria established in the recast [Qualification Directive \(QD\)](#)⁽¹⁾ and in the newly adopted [Qualification Regulation \(QR\)](#)⁽²⁾ which will repeal the QD with its entry into application on 1 July 2026. They are developed by the EUAA together with a network of senior-level policy officials from EU+ countries and represent their joint assessment of the situation in main countries of origin, in accordance with current EU legislation and jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU).

The aim of the country guidance documents is to assist decision-makers and policy-makers in their daily work and to foster convergence in the assessment of applications for international protection and the type of protection granted in the context of the Common European Asylum System.

The development, review and update of country guidance is regulated under [Article 11 of the EUAA Regulation](#).



In accordance with [Article 11\(3\) EUAA Regulation](#), Member States have the obligation to take into account the common analysis and guidance notes when examining applications for international protection, without prejudice to their competence to decide on individual applications.

This common analysis is based on country of origin information (COI) covering the period 1 January 2023 - 17 October 2024.

The analysis and guidance in this document should be considered valid as long as current events and developments in the country fall within the trends and patterns described within the COI on which the assessment at hand is based on.

The analysis and guidance provided in this document are not exhaustive.

⁽¹⁾ Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted (recast).

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/1347 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection and for the content of the protection granted, amending Council Directive 2003/109/EC and repealing Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council.



Common analysis, guidance note and methodological approach

The country guidance document consists of two important components: the guidance note and the common analysis. These two parts focus on the situation in the country of origin and provide analysis and guidance on the assessment of relevant international protection needs.

Guidance note

The guidance note is the first part in the structure of the document.

It outlines the key conclusions of the common analysis in a light user-friendly format.

Common analysis

The common analysis is the second, more detailed, part. It analyses the available COI and provides guidance in accordance with the applicable legislation, relevant jurisprudence and general guidance.

They should be read in conjunction with the separate document '[Country Guidance: explained](#)'.

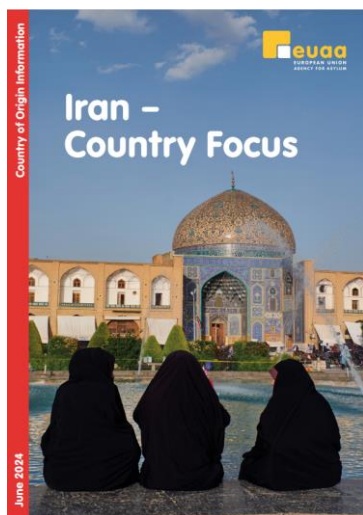


This document outlines the general guidance relied upon in this analysis, as well as the methodological framework, approach and indicators used to assess the different elements of qualification for international protection.

Scope of this development

This development focuses on the international protection needs of the most encountered profiles of applicants for international protection in the caseload of EU+ countries. It covers the situation of individuals perceived by the Iranian authorities as criticising them; deserters and those encouraging desertion; individuals considered as converts, apostates, blasphemers, atheists; individuals perceived to have transgressed Islamic norms or laws; ethnic and religious minorities; women and girls, and persons with diverse SOGIESC. Additionally, this development covers the international protection needs of Iranian applicants under the meaning of Article 15 QD/QR, as well as the potential availability of an internal protection alternative. The main actors in Iran are covered by the sections on actors of persecution or serious harm and actors of protection. Finally, general exclusion considerations to take into consideration when assessing international protection needs of Iranian applicants are also dealt with in the present development.

This development is based on the following recent COI:



[Country Focus 2024](#)

EUAA COI Report:
Iran - Country focus
(June 2024)

COI QUERY	
Country of Origin	IRAN
Title	Major political, security, and humanitarian developments
Reference period	16 April to 7 October 2024
Topics	1. Political situation with a focus on reformists 2. Security situation 3. Humanitarian developments
Date of completion	7 October 2024
Query Code	QF7-2024
Contributing EU+ COI units	N/A

[COI Update 2024](#)

EUAA COI Query:
Iran – Major political, security,
and humanitarian developments
(7 October 2024)

COI QUERY	
Country of Origin	Iran
Title	Human rights situation
Reference period	January 2023 to 7 October 2024
Topics	1. Treatment of certain profiles 1.1. Protesters 1.2. Activists 1.3. Ethnic minorities 1.4. Religious minorities 1.5. Women and girls 1.6. Restrictions on artists 1.7. Criminal activities including trafficking in human beings (THB) 2. Return to Iran 2.1. Potential legal restrictions to travel back to Iran 2.2. Treatment upon return for political activities abroad 3. Armed actors 3.1. Deserters from the armed forces 3.2. State actors involved in human rights violations 3.3. Being and child recruitment Annex 1: Chronology
Date of completion	17 October 2024
Query Code	QF2-2024
Contributing EU+ COI unit	The Persian content of this query was reviewed by the Danish Immigration Service (DIS), Denmark.

[COI Human Rights](#)

EUAA COI Query:
Iran – Human rights situation
(17 October 2024)

COI QUERY	
Country of Origin	IRAN
Main subject	Desertion/draft evasion from the army and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)
Question(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overview on the Iranian military forces <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Regular army (Artesh) 1.2 Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) 1.3 Military service 2. Legal framework on desertion/draft evasion 3. Treatment of deserters/draft evaders by the authorities 4. Prison conditions
Date of completion	9 February 2022
Query Code	06-2022
Contributing EU+ COI units (if applicable)	N/A

Disclaimer
This response to a COI query has been elaborated according to the [EUAA COI Report Methodology](#) and [EUAA Writing and Referencing Guide](#).
The information provided in this response has been researched, evaluated and processed with utmost care within a limited time frame. All sources used are referenced. A quality review has been performed in line with the above mentioned methodology. This document does not claim to be exhaustive rather conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to international protection. If a certain event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.
The information in the response does not necessarily reflect the opinion of EUAA and makes no political statement whatsoever.
The target audience is caseworkers, COI researchers, policy makers, and decision-making authorities. The answer was finished on 9 February 2022. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this answer.

COI QUERY	
Country of Origin	IRAN
Title	Situation of atheists and non-religious individuals, including legislation, treatment by state actors and society, availability of state protection
Reference period	January 2021 to 16 November 2023
Topic(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Desertion 2. Legislation 3. Treatment by Society 4. Treatment by the State 5. Availability of state protection
Date of completion	17 November 2023
Query Code	081-2023
Contributing EU+ COI units (if applicable)	N/A

Disclaimer
This response to a COI query has been elaborated according to the [EUAA COI Report Methodology](#) and [EUAA Writing and Referencing Guide](#).
Query responses are produced in response to COI information requests received from asylum authorities within EU+ countries or initiated by EUAA based on COI information needs. Query responses are produced within a limited time period, typically within 5 to 10 days. Within these time constraints, the information provided in this response has been researched, evaluated and processed with utmost care.
All sources used are referenced and cited in the bibliography section. A quality review has been performed in line with the above mentioned COI methodology. This document does not claim to be exhaustive or conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to international protection. If a certain event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.
The information in the response does not necessarily reflect the opinion of EUAA and makes no political statement whatsoever. The target audience is caseworkers, COI researchers, policy makers, and decision-making authorities. Any event taking place after the reference period is not included in this query response.

[COI Desertion](#)

EUAA COI Query:

Iran - Desertion/draft evasion from the army and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)

(February 2022)

[COI Atheists](#)

EUAA COI Query:

Iran – Situation of atheists and non-religious individuals, including legislation, treatment by state actors and society, availability of state protection

(November 2023)

[Annex II: Country of origin information references](#) provides further details and links to all COI documents used as a basis for the analysis within this document. References within this document are to the respective sections of these COI documents.

To access EUAA COI reports, visit <https://euaa.europa.eu/coi-publications>

Guidance note

Last update: January 2025

The guidance note on Iran is produced by the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) together with EU+ countries⁽³⁾ in accordance with [Article 11 of the EUAA Regulation](#)⁽⁴⁾. It is based on and summarises the conclusions of the comprehensive common analysis. The aim of the guidance note and the common analysis is to assist EU+ countries in the examination of applications for international protection, thereby fostering convergence of asylum practices and decisions across the EU.

The guidance note is part of the 'Country Guidance: Iran' and should be read in conjunction with the [Common analysis](#).

In light of the willingness and capabilities of the Iranian authorities to track and monitor activities of Iranian nationals abroad, the conclusions of the common analysis should also be considered generally applicable for **sur place activities**⁽⁵⁾.

[The Iranian authorities](#) are the main Actors of persecution or serious harm in the country. In addition, a number of [Other actors](#) are also to be considered as actors of persecution or serious harm such as the society at large, communities, and family members.

Among the most commonly encountered profiles of applicants for international protection, the following would be **highly likely to qualify for refugee status**:

- [Members and sympathisers of opposition parties and movements seen by the Iranian authorities as advocating for a regime change, including monarchists and separatists](#)
- [Human rights defenders, activists and lawyers](#)
- [Journalists and other media workers dealing with anti-regime topics or perceived as such by the Iranian authorities](#)
- [Individuals perceived by the Iranian authorities as encouraging desertion](#)
- [Individuals perceived to have committed blasphemy and/or apostasy, including converts](#)

⁽³⁾ The assessment and guidance reflect the conclusions of the EUAA Country Guidance Network, which consists of EU Member States, Norway and Switzerland. The guidance note has been endorsed by the EUAA Management Board.

⁽⁴⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/2303 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2021 on the European Union Agency for Asylum and repealing Regulation (EU) No 439/2010.

⁽⁵⁾ In this regard, the CJEU has recently ruled on the interpretation of Article 5(3) QD, clarifying that rejecting a subsequent application based on circumstances which the applicant has created *sur place*, constitutes an exception. See CJEU, *Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl v JF*, C-222/22, Third Chamber, judgment of 29 February 2024, <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=283282&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=req&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=8663025>



- [Individuals perceived to have committed any of the acts punishable under *hadd* punishments](#)
- [Christians frequenting house churches and Christian proselytisers](#)
- [Persons with diverse SOGIESC \(also referred to as LGBTIQ persons\)](#)

Further guidance is provided on the **risk-impacting circumstances** which may affect the probability of granting refugee status for the following profiles:

- [Members and sympathisers of opposition parties and movements seen as critical by the Iranian authorities while respecting the foundations of the Islamic Republic](#)
- [Protesters and their family members](#)
- [Journalists and media workers \(perceived as\) critical of the Iranian authorities while respecting the foundations of the Islamic Republic](#)
- [Deserters from armed forces](#)
- [Atheists](#)
- [Individuals perceived to have transgressed Islamic norms or laws when considered to have committed other acts than the ones punished under *hadd* punishments](#)
- [Kurds, including Faili Kurds and Yarsan Kurds](#)
- [Baluches](#)
- [Christians, other than those frequenting house churches and Christian proselytisers](#)
- [Baha'is](#)
- [Women and girls](#)

If an applicant is not considered eligible for refugee status, Member States should proceed to consider the granting of **subsidiary protection**.

[Article 15\(a\) QD/QR](#) relating to the risk of death penalty or execution may be applicable when there is a reasonable degree of likelihood of death penalty or execution by the Iranian authorities or execution by other (non-state) actors, such as in the case of *qesas* punishment.

[Article 15\(b\) QD/QR](#) relating to the risk of torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment may be applicable, such as in the cases of deliberate denial of or unequal access to healthcare, certain socio-economic conditions, arbitrary arrests and detentions, life-threatening prison conditions, corporal punishment and violent crimes.

With regard to subsidiary protection under [Article 15\(c\) QD/QR](#), it is concluded that, in the whole territory of Iran, there is no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected by indiscriminate violence within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR.

Please note that, while it is generally considered that a civilian would not be affected by indiscriminate violence within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR in Iran, including Tehran, this does not imply that Iran, including Tehran, is considered a safe area for any applicant. All circumstances specific to the applicant's individual case have to be thoroughly assessed.

The protection needs of certain individuals are further substantiated by the lack of State protection. State protection is generally not considered available for women facing domestic or honour-related violence, and gender-based violence, including harmful traditional practices; for Kurds, especially those who served the IRGC and Basij; for individuals perceived to have transgressed Islamic norms or laws and facing persecution by the society at large since the State is in itself an actor of persecution; for persons with diverse SOGIESC facing social discrimination and/or violence from their families, their communities and healthcare providers because of the legal constraints and the hate speech of the authorities against persons with diverse SOGIESC; for atheists and converts from Islam to another religion. Additionally, no other actors are deemed to meet the requirements under Article 7 QD/QR to be considered as an [Actors of protection](#).

Taking into account the reach of the Iranian authorities as the main actor of persecution, [Internal protection alternative](#) in accordance with Article 8 QD/QR in Tehran would be substantiated only in certain limited cases such as for single able-bodied men and married couples with or without children.

Finally, Exclusion considerations may be relevant in a number of cases concerning applicants from Iran. Examples include members of the Iranian government institutions, members of the Iranian military, members of armed groups, individuals involved in criminal activity and individuals having committed violence against women and children.



Common analysis

1. General situation in Iran

Last update: January 2025

The information below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2024](#). Please note that Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

The Iranian Revolution culminated in the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of an Islamic Republic in 1979. A growing secular sentiment amongst some religious officials and common Iranians advocating for the separation of the state and the religion in the country has been observed in the recent years.

Iran has experienced numerous protests, both domestically and internationally. The 'Women, Life, Freedom' protests, which originated in Iran following the death of Mahsa Amini in 2022, have sparked a significant movement advocating for women's rights and broader social freedoms. Demonstrators in Iran demand an end to gender-based discrimination and systemic oppression, facing severe crackdowns by authorities. This movement has transcended borders, inspiring solidarity protests across Europe and beyond.

Iran is among the leading practitioners of the death penalty, employing it against individuals convicted of crimes, including children, and under vaguely defined national security charges. The list of crimes punishable by death in Iran includes murder, rape, drug trafficking, armed robbery, kidnapping, terrorism, and crimes considered offences against the religion and the State. The death penalty is frequently used as a tool by Iranian authorities to instil fear and suppress opposition.

Political dissent in Iran endures significant repression. The Islamic Republic has responded to various forms of dissent by employing extensive surveillance both domestically and internationally, monitoring online activities, and using intimidation, lethal violence, imprisonment, and censorship to silence critics. Opposition parties and activists face intense scrutiny, arbitrary arrests, and harsh sentences.

Gender discrimination is institutionalised in Iran. Women face significant legal and social restrictions that deeply impact their lives, particularly in areas such as employment, education, and personal freedoms. Some women showed non-compliance in the streets and on social media to the State-imposed *hijab*. Women's rights activists often face severe persecution for their advocacy stance.

Iranian authorities do not allow conversion from Islam to another religion. Most Iranians are considered Muslims, and conversion to Christianity is seen as apostasy and may be punished by death. The situation of ethnic and religious minorities in Iran, such as the Kurds, is marked by systemic discrimination and limited access to social, economic, and political rights. Other groups, such as Baha'is, have been increasingly targeted by the Islamic Republic.



2. Actors of persecution or serious harm

[Article 6 QD/QR](#)



The contents of this chapter include:

[2.1. The Iranian authorities](#)

[2.2. Other actors](#)

The following sections highlight the main actors of persecution or serious harm in Iran in a non-exhaustive manner.

2.1. The Iranian authorities

Last update: January 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2024](#), 1; [COI Human Rights](#), 1.1, 3.2. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

Iran is an Islamic Republic in which Shia Muslim clerics, Shia Muslim belief and a Persian-dominated central government maintain control over every aspect of public life. Any threat against the State or its highest authority, the Supreme leader, is considered as an 'enmity against God' and punishable by death.

The Iranian armed forces consist of:

- the army (*artesh*) tasked to secure territorial integrity;
- the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) mandated to preserve the Islamic Republic, guarding the Islamic Revolution and its achievements and backed by the *Basij* to maintain order;
- the Law Enforcement Command of the Islamic Republic of Iran (*farmandehi-ye entezami-ye jomhuri-ye eslami-ye iran* - FARAJA) which includes the police forces, the anti-riot police, the Counter-Terror Special Forces (*niroo-ye vizhe pasdar-e Velayat* – NOPO), and the morality police whose tasks include enforcing and monitoring compliance with the *hijab* rules in public.

Intelligence agencies are also part of the Iranian armed forces. They conduct domestic surveillance, including by the *herasat* offices in universities and public institutions, and foreign surveillance, the latter with agents based in Iranian embassies across Europe. They closely monitor social media platforms, collect information online, and remove critical content against the Islamic Republic for example by shutting down Instagram accounts. Authorities have the

ability to track activities such as registering for a phone SIM card, vehicle registration, purchasing a phone, or booking a flight. They conduct interrogations and engage in wiretapping. They monitor and target internal political rivals, and carry-out activities abroad also by hiring criminal groups, arresting exiled dissidents, bringing them back to Iran and executing them.

The Iranian authorities have committed a wide range of human rights violations against different categories of individuals. For example, they have engaged in harassment, arbitrary arrest, detention, ill-treatment, and torture. Affected groups include [Members and sympathisers of opposition parties and movements \(perceived as\) critical of the Iranian authorities](#), as well as [Journalists and other media workers \(perceived as\) critical of the Iranian authorities](#), [Protesters](#), [Human rights defenders, activists, and lawyers](#), with [Women and girls](#) often facing harsher treatment. Furthermore, individuals from [Ethnic minorities](#) and [Religious minorities](#) have faced arrests, prosecution, and harassment, including confiscation of personal belongings and properties.

The EU sanctioned several individuals and entities as perpetrators of serious human rights violations including the involvement in Mahsa Amini's death and the violent suppression of protests in Iran, the broadcasting of forced confessions, and arbitrary arrests over online criticism.



For further information on human rights violations committed by the Iranian authorities and related actors, and their relevance as potential exclusion grounds, see [Exclusion](#).

2.2. Other actors

Last update: January 2025

Human rights violations are also committed by non-State actors, such as the society at large, communities, family members, armed groups, and criminals, etc.

Some examples include domestic violence, 'honour' violence by family members, sexual violence, violence against persons with diverse SOGIESC, etc. See, for example, the profiles of [Individuals perceived to have committed blasphemy and/or apostasy, including converts and atheists](#), [Individuals perceived to have transgressed Islamic norms or laws](#), [Women and girls](#) and [Persons with diverse SOGIESC \(also referred to as LGBTIQ persons\)](#), etc.



The reach of a specific non-State actor depends on the individual case. The assessment may include aspects such as their family, ethnic or other networks for tracing and targeting the applicant. The individual power positions of the applicant and the actor of persecution or serious harm should be assessed, taking into consideration their gender, social status, wealth, connections, home area and residence, etc.



Please note that an applicant may have been targeted by both State and non-State actors. Some examples include [Individuals perceived to have committed blasphemy and/or apostasy, including converts and atheists](#), and [Persons with diverse SOGIESC \(also referred to as LGBTIQ persons\)](#), etc.



For further information on human rights violations committed by other actors and their relevance as potential exclusion grounds, see [_Exclusion](#).

3. Refugee status

[Article 2\(d\) QD](#) / Article 3(5) QR

[Article 9 QD/QR](#)

[Article 10 QD/QR](#)

This chapter provides analysis and guidance on the potential international protection needs of selected profiles of applicants. These profiles were selected based on their relevance in the caseload of EU Member States.

The list of profiles addressed in this chapter is non-exhaustive and the fact that a certain profile is included or not is without prejudice to the determination of their protection needs. Furthermore, the order of listed profiles does not reflect any ranking of the potential level of risk of persecution.



The contents of this chapter include:

[General remarks](#)

[3.1.1. Members and sympathisers of opposition parties and movements \(perceived as\) critical of the Iranian authorities](#)

[3.1.2. Protesters](#)

[3.1.3. Human rights defenders, activists, and lawyers](#)

[3.1.4. Journalists and other media workers \(perceived as\) critical of the Iranian authorities](#)

[3.2 Desertion from armed forces](#)

[3.3. Individuals perceived to have committed blasphemy and/or apostasy, including converts and atheists](#)

[3.4. Individuals perceived to have transgressed Islamic](#)

[3.5.1. Kurds, including Faili Kurds and Yarsan Kurds](#)

[3.5.2. Baluches](#)

[3.6.1. Christians](#)

[3.6.2. Baha'is](#)



[3.7. Women and girls](#)

[3.8. Persons with diverse SOGIESC \(also referred to as LGBTIQ persons\)](#)

General remarks

Last update: January 2025

While the conclusions under this common analysis provide general guidance, the protection needs of each applicant should be **examined individually**. The non-exhaustive lists of risk-impacting circumstances, which would increase or decrease the risk of persecution, are to be taken into account.

The considerations under each profile should, furthermore, be viewed without prejudice to the credibility assessment of the applicant's claims. This common analysis deals solely with issues of risk analysis and qualification.

For each profile, the guidance responds to the following questions:

Step 1: Do the reported acts qualify as persecution?
This part provides examples of acts reported to be committed against individuals belonging to the profile as well as guidance on whether such acts would reach the level of persecution according to Article 9 QD/QR.
Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?
This part assesses how likely it is for applicants within the profile to have a well-founded fear of persecution. Further guidance is provided with regard to the circumstances which should be taken into account in the individual assessment, addressing also how they would impact the risk.
Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?
This part provides guidance on whether in case of established well-founded fear of persecution, this would be connected to a reason falling within the provision of Article 10 QD/QR (nexus).

Relevant COI is also included in the analysis to substantiate the guidance provided. Links to the relevant EUAA COI reports and/or queries are also added.



For more guidance on how to read the following subsections, please refer '[Country Guidance: explained: Refugee Status](#)'.



The conclusions of the common analysis should also be considered generally applicable for **sur place activities**.

For assessing international protection needs related to *sur place* activities, please refer to [EUAA Practical Guide on Political Opinion](#), 3.6. Political opinion expressed *sur place*, [EUAA Practical Guide on Interviewing Applicants with Religion-based Asylum Claims](#), 4.1. Conversion to another religion.

Also, the CJEU has ruled on the interpretation of Article 5(3) QD, notably⁽⁶⁾:

'Article 5(3) of Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted must be interpreted as precluding national legislation which makes the recognition of the status of refugee following a subsequent application within the meaning of Article 2(q) of Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection, based on a risk of persecution arising from circumstances which the applicant has created by his or her own decision since leaving his or her country of origin, subject to the condition that those circumstances must constitute the expression and continuation of convictions held by the applicant in that country.'

3.1. Political dissent and opposition

Last update: January 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2024](#), 1.1.3, 3.8, 3.9, 4.1, 4.2; [COI Human Rights](#), 2.2. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

Political dissent refers to the expression of disagreement or opposition to the policies, actions, or authority of a governing body or political system. It encompasses a wide range of activities, such as: political activism including protests and online and social media activities, advocating for human rights, publishing in media and publications, and artistic expression.

⁽⁶⁾ CJEU, *Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl v JF*, C-222/22, Third Chamber, judgment of 29 February 2024, operative part (Court's ruling), <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=283282&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=req&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=8663025>



The Iranian authorities are reported to view the activities of wide categories of individuals as political dissent. Intimidation and harassment of political activists, journalists, and opposition figures are prevalent, with threats and violence often extending to the families of dissidents. Political dissent in Iran encounters substantial governmental repression.

The Islamic Republic employs a range of strategies to suppress dissent. A primary method is extensive surveillance, both domestically and internationally, utilising advanced technology to monitor communications and social media interactions. This enables the State to identify and target potential threats. A ‘cyber army’ monitors online opinions, leading to threats, physical attacks, kidnapping and killing of some of those who express dissent, even outside Iran. Arbitrary arrests and imprisonment are routine, with detainees frequently subjected to torture and denial of medical care. Trials are often conducted in secret and lack fundamental fairness including forced and public confessions, resulting in long sentences and, in some cases, executions. The death penalty is wielded by Iranian authorities as a tool of political repression against dissidents.

Censorship is another tool, with the government exercising strict control over the media, banning independent outlets, and silencing journalists who report on abuses or opposition activities. Despite these oppressive measures at times leading to self-censorship, political dissent persists, driven by widespread dissatisfaction with economic conditions, corruption, and the lack of political freedom.

High-profile activists, journalists, and human rights defenders may be monitored outside the country and arrested upon their return. Ordinary Iranians are generally not under systematic surveillance unless they share sensitive content on social media, which could draw State attention. Some Iranian activists have managed to enter the country without being identified or detained at the airport. However, posting on social media from within the country could attract State scrutiny.



For practical information on the different ways of **expressing one’s political opinion**, please refer to the [EUAA Practical Guide on Political Opinion](#), 1.3. Manifestations of political opinion. For assessing international protection needs related to activities on **social media**, please refer to [EUAA Practical Guide on Political Opinion](#), 3.7. Political opinion expressed via social media.

For assessing international protection needs related to **sur place** activities, please refer to [EUAA Practical Guide on Political Opinion](#), 3.6. Political opinion expressed sur place.

See also CJEU, *Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl v JF*, C-222/22, Third Chamber, judgment of 29 February 2024⁷).

⁷ CJEU, *Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl v JF*, C-222/22, Third Chamber, judgment of 29 February 2024, <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=283282&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=req&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=8663025>



The contents of this section include:

[3.1.1. Members and sympathisers of opposition parties and movements \(perceived as\) critical of the Iranian authorities](#)

[3.1.2. Protesters](#)

[3.1.3. Human rights defenders, activists, and lawyers](#)

[3.1.4. Journalists and other media workers \(perceived as\) critical of the Iranian authorities](#)

3.1.1. Members and sympathisers of opposition parties and movements (perceived as) critical of the Iranian authorities

Last update: January 2025

This sub-profile covers the situation of dissenting political parties and movements perceived by the Iranian authorities as advocating for a regime change such as the monarchists, including the Constitutional Party of Iran (CPI), the New Iran Party (NIP), and the Workers Communist Party of Iran (WPI); for separatism, such as the Arab Struggle Movement for the Liberation of Ahwaz (ASMLA); and for reforms in the respect of the foundations of the Islamic Republic, such as the reformists.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Country Focus 2024](#), 3.8, 3.9, 4.1; [COI Update 2024](#), 1; [COI Human Rights](#), 1.1. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.



For practical information on the difference between being a member or a sympathiser of an organisation, please refer to the [EUAA Practical Guide on Political Opinion](#), 1.3.1, Expressed political opinion.

The Iranian Constitution allows political parties and associations to be established, but only if they align with State ideology and do not challenge Islam or State principles. This means only compliant organisations operate freely, while independent parties, opposition groups, civil society organisations, and trade unions are banned.

For the situation of Kurdish opposition groups, please refer to [Kurds, including Faili Kurds and Yarsan Kurds](#). For the situation of Baluches opposition groups, please refer to [Baluches](#).



Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which members and sympathisers of opposition parties (perceived as) critical of the Iranian authorities could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, activities of independent and opposition groups, including monarchists, are repressed through death penalty and execution, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, and harsh penalties such as corporal punishments and long prison sentences. The political crimes law and other provisions in the Islamic Penal Code are used to suppress dissent. Vaguely defined charges like ‘spreading propaganda against the system’ and ‘gathering and colluding to commit crimes against security’ allow for broad interpretation and harsh penalties, including the death penalty. Critics of the government frequently face severe penalties, including execution. Reports indicate that numerous political prisoners have been executed for their association with opposition activities or protests, often following trials with significant due process violations and allegations of torture.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that individuals under this sub-profile could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should also be considered. For example, some members and sympathisers of opposition parties and movements have seen their freedom of movement being restricted.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

Punishment faced by members and sympathisers of opposition parties and movements seen as critical of the foundations of the Islamic Republic, or, in other words, advocating for a regime change, is severe. Repression of opposition figures is historical and ongoing, resulting in leaders placed under house arrest without formal charges. Government critics in regions inhabited by ethnic minorities are labelled as separatists, facing death sentences and other severe punishments. Authorities charge perceived dissidents with broadly defined offences, often leading to severe penalties, including death. The judicial and prosecutorial system supports the regime's efforts to suppress dissent, with courts and the Public Prosecutor's Office determining political crimes broadly and harshly.

Therefore, **a well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated for members and sympathisers of opposition parties and movements seen by the Islamic Republic as advocating for a regime change, including perceived monarchists and separatists.**

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for members and sympathisers of opposition parties and movements seen as critical by the Iranian authorities while respecting the foundations of the Islamic Republic to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as:

- **Visibility, and nature of activities:** visibility to the authorities is a critical factor impacting the risk of persecution. Due to their activities, some individuals under this sub-profile are more visible than others and, as such, face a higher risk.

- **Ethnic and religious background:** due to their ethnic and/or religious background, some individuals under this sub-profile may be at higher risk. Please refer to [Ethnic minorities](#) and [Religious minorities](#).
- **Gender:** in regard of the general situation of women in Iran, female members and sympathisers of opposition parties and movements (perceived as) critical of the Iranian authorities are at higher risk than their male counterparts. Please refer to [Women and girls](#).

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant falling under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of (imputed) political opinion and/or religion, as members and sympathisers of opposition parties and movements would be seen as critical of the Islamic Republic.

3.1.2. Protesters

Last update: January 2025

A protester is a person who publicly advocates for a given issue by standing in public spaces, taking part in demonstrations, shouting, carrying signs, etc.⁽⁸⁾.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Country Focus 2024](#), 3.9, 4.2; [COI Human Rights](#), 1.1. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

Even though the Constitution of Iran allows public demonstrations, they must adhere to Islamic principles and require government authorisation. This effectively bans gatherings critical of the government, leading to the suppression of unauthorised protests through detentions and use of lethal force. Since the foundation of the Islamic Republic, several large-scale protests with respective agendas such as economic grievances, contestation of election results, and denunciation of human rights violations, were violently repressed by the Iranian authorities. Following the death of Mahsa Amini in September 2022, nationwide protests erupted highlighting discrimination against women and ethnic minorities.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which protesters could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. Notably, the ‘Women, Life, Freedom’ protests were violently suppressed by the authorities, with sources reporting on mass arrests, killings of protesters and bystanders, and beatings. Security forces reportedly used excessive force, such as unlawful use of live ammunition, including handguns, and automatic weapons. The death penalty was wielded by the Iranian authorities as a tool of political repression against protesters. Mass arrests during major demonstrations, such as the 2019 fuel price protests and the ‘Women, Life, Freedom’ movement, have resulted in high number of deaths,

⁽⁸⁾ Adaptation based on Cambridge Dictionary.



thousands of detentions, and numerous cases of torture. Expeditious trials and executions took place in response of the ‘Women, Life, Freedom’ protests. Many protesters were charged with severe crimes carrying heavy penalties, including the death penalty. Others were charged with serious crimes like *moharebeh* (‘waging war against God’) and *efsad fil-arz* (spreading corruption on Earth), often leading to execution or long prison sentences. Use of torture, including to extract confessions and violations of due process were common. There were reports of arrests of children, with some subjected to torture, sexual assault, and denial of due process. Despite a general amnesty announced in February 2023, some protesters and activists remained at risk of re-arrest and severe punishment. Some family members of protesters, particularly those killed or detained during protests, are increasingly targeted by the authorities in an attempt to silence them. The government has resorted to harassing, threatening, and even detaining the families of protesters in an effort to suppress dissent.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that protesters could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should also be considered. For example, some protesters faced two separate trials for the same offence. Other protesters have seen their freedom of movement being restricted.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The legal framework allows for discretionary punishments under *ta’zīr*, encompassing a wide range of offences such as insulting religious figures and spreading propaganda against the government. Protests critical of the regime are met with violent crackdowns by security forces, including live ammunition and mass arrests. The ‘Women, Life, Freedom’ protests in 2022 highlighted widespread grievances and were violently suppressed, resulting in hundreds of deaths and reports of torture and arbitrary detention. Despite occasional amnesties, the government selectively excludes certain individuals from leniency, indicating ongoing targeting of dissenters. International observers consistently document these abuses, confirming the precarious and oppressive environment for protesters in Iran.

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for protesters and their family members to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as:

- **Visibility, including being known to the authorities:** visibility to the authorities is a critical factor impacting the risk of persecution. Protesters who use government-controlled technologies, such as state-run internet service providers or social media platforms like Instagram, and particularly those with high numbers of followers, face a higher risk. Iranian authorities have ramped up their surveillance capabilities, particularly through the use of state-controlled technologies such as mobile data and internet services. The government's surveillance capabilities became more evident since the 2022 ‘Women, Life, Freedom’ protests, with many protesters being identified and later persecuted for their participation. Those with high numbers of followers on social media platforms have seen their mobile services cut off or social media accounts suspended.

- **Frequency of participation in demonstrations:** the frequency with which an individual participates in protests directly influences the risk of persecution. While not all protesters are arrested, those who are involved in several demonstrations, especially large-scale or anti-regime protests, are often viewed as organisers or ringleaders, and face a higher risk of being identified and targeted.
- **Political background:** individuals with a known political stance against the regime, especially those with past affiliations with opposition movements like the Green Movement (2009) or anti-regime protests, face a higher risk. The government perceives anti-state protests as ‘riots’ and protesters can at times be considered as organisers, depending on their profile.
- **Geographical area of activities:** individuals having protested in areas affected by more extensive and long-lasting protests face a higher risk. Those areas include the capital Tehran, Kurdish regions, and Sistan and Baluchistan, and the cities of Divandareh, Garmsar, Hamedan, Kerman, Marivan, Mashhad, Mehrshahr, Rasht, Saghez, Sanandaj, and Shiraz. The highest numbers of deaths were reported in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities: Sistan and Baluchistan province, provinces of Kurdistan and Kermanshah, and parts of Western Azerbaijan. Past security threats, such as separatism, terrorism, and drug trafficking, had led to militarisation in minority-populated provinces. It enables the government to respond swiftly and violently to any protest or dissent.
- **Ethnic and religious background:** protesters belonging to an ethnic and/or religious minority face a higher risk, as some protesters were targeted by the security forces based on discriminatory grounds, such as ethnicity.
- **Gender:** in regard of the general situation of women in Iran, and because specific protesters have been targeted by the security forces based on their gender, female protesters face a higher risk than their male counterparts. Women, especially those from ethnic and religious minorities, have been subjected to gender-based violence, including rape and torture. Iranian authorities have reportedly increased online surveillance of women involved in the ‘Women, Life, Freedom’ movement and have charged some of them under national security laws for opposing the compulsory *hijab*. Please refer to [Women and girls](#).

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this sub-profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of (imputed) political opinion, as protesters would be seen as being critical of the authorities.

3.1.3. Human rights defenders, activists, and lawyers

Last update: January 2025

A human rights defender is a person who, individually or in association with others, professionally acts to promote or protect human rights. Examples of human rights defenders



include lawyers, members of human rights NGOs, academics, and trade unionists⁽⁹⁾. A human rights activist is a person who believes strongly in political or social change based on the respect of human rights, such as the abolishment of the death penalty, and takes part in activities to try to make this happen⁽¹⁰⁾. Such activities include protests, strikes, boycotts, online campaigns, civil disobedience, protest art, etc.⁽¹¹⁾. Human rights activism also covers, for example, ethnic and religious minorities rights, SOGIESC person's rights and women's rights activism. Human rights lawyers act to protect human rights, advocate for the rights of clients against ill-treatment by the authorities, etc.



For assessing international protection needs related to activities on social media, please refer to [EUAA Practical Guide on Political Opinion](#), 3.7. Political opinion expressed via social media.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and Queries: [Country Focus 2024](#), 4.3, 4.12; [COI Human Rights](#), 1.2 1.6; [COI Musicians](#). Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

In Iran, human rights defenders, activists, and lawyers face increasing restrictions and pressure, especially following the 'Women, Life, Freedom' protests.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts reported to be committed against individuals under this sub-profile are of such severe nature that they amount to persecution. More specifically, human rights defenders, activists, and lawyers face arbitrary arrest, detention, criminal prosecution including on charges of committing crimes against the country's national security, torture, flogging, and ill-treatment in detention. Human rights defenders, who openly express solidarity with the protesters of the 'Women, Life, Freedom' movement and defence lawyers representing persons implicated in protest-related cases face reprisals. Lawyers are targeted for their professional activities, including providing legal assistance to protesters and their families, advocating against torture and ill-treatment of their clients, as well as for expressing solidarity with the protests and speaking to the media. Lawyers defending converts to Christianity are similarly targeted, with several being convicted to various prison terms. Furthermore, the Iranian authorities have put increased pressure on women activists and human rights activists who advocate for the abolishment of the death penalty including by imposing criminal charges on them. Female lawyers in Iran face challenges such as mandatory *hijab* rules and harassment in the court room. Activists and lawyers advocating for SOGIESC person's rights, too, face censorship, harassment, and arbitrary arrest by the Islamic Republic. Iranian authorities often refer to vague laws such as 'morality' or 'national security' to silence dissent

⁽⁹⁾ European Union External Action Service, Human rights defenders, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/human-rights-defenders_en

⁽¹⁰⁾ Adaptation based on Cambridge Dictionary.

⁽¹¹⁾ Liberties, Democracy and Justice, What is Activism: Definition, Types, Role, Examples, Importance, <https://www.liberties.eu/en/stories/activism/44871>

and target individuals who promote SOGIESC person's rights. Artists who publicly supported the 'Women, Life, Freedom' movement risk imprisonment.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that human rights defenders, activists, and lawyers could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should also be considered. For example, human rights defenders, activists, and lawyers have been subjected to harassment including judicial harassment, interrogations, threats, suspension from legal practice, travel bans, (internal) exile, prohibition on residing in Tehran, a ban on joining political and social groups, and disciplinary actions by bar associations because of pressure by the authorities. Artists whose art challenges political constraints, including musicians, face enhanced online monitoring, punishments or restrictions on their ability to work and travel.

Please refer to [Individuals perceived to have transgressed Islamic norms or laws](#) for the situation of artists challenging cultural constraints.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

A well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated for human rights defenders, activists, and lawyers.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant falling under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of (imputed) political opinion, as human rights defenders, activists and lawyers would be perceived as being critical of the authorities.

3.1.4. Journalists and other media workers (perceived as) critical of the Iranian authorities

Last update: January 2025

This sub-profile refers to journalists and other media workers perceived by the Iranian authorities as dealing with anti-regime topics as well as those dealing with other sensitive topics while respecting the foundations of the Islamic Republic.

A journalist is a professional who is involved in the process of gathering, assessing, creating, and broadcasting news and information in newspapers, magazines, on the internet, on the radio, or television. Other media workers include a wide range of roles such as producers, directors, technicians, and many others who are involved in the creation and dissemination of media content.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2024](#), 4.4. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.



The Iranian Constitution guarantees the freedom of press if it does not violate the fundamental principles of Islam or the rights of the public. However, censorship is imposed on newspapers, magazines, and online platforms and Iran is regarded as one of the world's most repressive countries for journalists. The situation deteriorated notably after the 2022 protests.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which journalists and other media workers, seen by the Iranian authorities as critical of them, could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, prominent dissident journalists have been executed. Other journalists critical of the authorities have faced arbitrary arrests, imprisonment, and unfair trials conducted by Revolutionary Courts. A number of foreign-based journalists and media-activists have been convicted *in absentia*.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that journalists and other media workers could be subjected to, and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be also taken into account. Journalists and other media workers have been subjected to surveillance, intimidation and interrogations. Anti-defamation crimes included in the Penal Code are often used to threaten them. The Iranian authorities impose tight control over newspapers, magazines, and online platforms. A considerable number of Iranian journalists have faced legal proceedings, some sentenced to travel bans and suspension of work permits. Self-censorship is widely spread in Iran.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

Journalists generally rely on their visibility and accountability to ensure their credibility. Their visibility is even more important because of digital media. Journalists who engage in critical reporting on controversial political matters questioning the foundations of the regime or other sensitive topics (especially regarding the Mahsa Amini protests, women's rights, and corruption) are particularly targeted in Iran.

Therefore, **for journalists and other media workers dealing with anti-regime topics or perceived as such by the Iranian authorities, well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated.**

For journalists and media workers (perceived as) critical of the Iranian authorities while respecting the foundations of the Islamic Republic, the individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as:

- **Visibility, including being known to the authorities:** visibility to the authorities is a critical factor impacting the risk of persecution. Due to their activities, some media workers are more visible than others. For example, a cameraman is more visible than a person working in post-production.

- **Links with Western countries:** individuals who have links with Western countries, such as those media workers operating in Western countries or working for media companies based in Western countries, and those perceived as such by the Iranian authorities have a higher risk. Also, foreign based outlets in Persian may face increased scrutiny for alleged propaganda against the Iranian authorities.
- **Ethnic and/or religious background:** due to their ethnic and/or religious background, some media workers may be at higher risk. Please refer to [Ethnic minorities](#) and [Religious minorities](#).
- **Gender:** in regard of the general situation of women in Iran, female media workers are at higher risk than their male counterparts. Please refer to [Women and girls](#).

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant falling under this profile, this is highly likely to be for (imputed) political opinion, since such journalists or other media workers would be seen as critical of the authorities as they have been accused of spreading false information and propaganda against the State, including collaborating with foreign governments.

3.2. Desertion from armed forces

Last update: January 2025

This profile covers the situation of deserters from armed forces and the situation of individuals encouraging desertion. A deserter is a soldier serving within the armed forces and who left his military post or function without leave, or resists being called to fulfil military obligations⁽¹²⁾.

This profile addresses the issue of desertion from the regular army (*artesh*) or the IRGC (*sepah*).



For assessing international protection needs related to desertion from armed forces or, more generally, to military service, please refer to the [EUAA Practical Guide on Political Opinion](#), 3.1. Military service.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and Queries: [Country Focus 2024](#), 1.2.7, 4.6; [COI Human Rights](#), 3.1; [COI Desertion](#). Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

⁽¹²⁾ EUAA Practical Guide on Political Opinion, 3.1. Military service, p.54, <https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-guide-political-opinion>



Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Prosecution and punishment for desertion in itself, when proportionate, is not considered persecution, except if Article 9(2)(e) QD/QR applies.

In Iran, desertion is punished as a *Hadd* crime and deserters can be sentenced to imprisonment. Depending on individual circumstances, based on (imputed) political opinion, punishment can be harsher and prison conditions can amount to torture or ill-treatment, including prolonged and indefinite solitary confinement, sexual abuse and forced confessions.

Encouraging someone to desert is considered as *moharebeh* (a crime of 'waging war against God') and can be punished by the death penalty.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

A well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated for individuals perceived by the Iranian authorities as encouraging desertion.

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for a deserter from armed forces to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as:

- **Force the applicant belongs to and rank/position:** the targeting by the Iranian authorities could depend on the position and the rank of the applicant in the armed forces and the specific armed force they belonged to.
- **Political affiliation:** the targeting by the Iranian authorities could depend on the political opinion of the deserter as he could be seen as critical to the authorities.
- **Ethnic and/or religious background:** if Baluches or Kurds demonstrate opposition to the military institution, they could be suspected of being political opponents and thus can be treated severely by the State. Kurds could be punished harsher than Persians if they desert, because the Islamic Republic views their desertion as a sign of disloyalty and distrust to the State.
- **Situation in which the desertion occurred:** the specific situation in which the desertion occurred could have an impact on the level of risk. For example, the punishments for desertion in war time is harsher than the punishment during peace time.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for a deserter, this is highly likely to be for reasons of (imputed) political opinion, whereas it is highly likely to be for reasons of religion for those encouraging desertion.



Exclusion considerations could be relevant to this profile, as persons involved in Iranian Armed Forces may have been involved in excludable acts (see [Exclusion](#)).

3.3. Individuals perceived to have committed blasphemy and/or apostasy, including converts and atheists

Last update: January 2025

This profile covers persons who are considered to have abandoned or renounced the religious belief or principles of Islam (apostasy), as well as persons considered to have spoken sacrilegiously about God or sacred things (blasphemy). It includes individuals who have converted from Islam to a new faith, based on their genuine inner belief (e.g. converts to Christianity), as well as those who disbelieve or lack belief in the existence of God (atheists).

For the situation of Christians by birth, please refer to [Christians](#).



For practical guidance on interviewing applicants claiming having **converted** to another religion than Islam, including **sur place** claims, please refer to the [EUAA Practical Guide on Interviewing Applicants with Religion-based Asylum Claims](#), 4.1. Conversion to another religion.

See also and CJEU, Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl v JF, C-222/22, Third Chamber, judgment of 29 February 2024⁽¹³⁾.

For practical guidance on interviewing applicants claiming to be considered as apostates, blasphemers, and/or atheists, including **sur place** claims, please refer to the [EUAA Practical Guide on Interviewing Applicants with Religion-based Asylum Claims](#), 4.2. Leaving one's religion to adhere to an atheistic, agnostic or non-religious system of belief, and 4.3. Religious minorities.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and Queries: [Country Focus 2024](#), 4.10.2, 4.10.4; [COI Atheists](#); [COI Musicians](#). Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

In Iran, it is illegal or unrecognised to self-identify as 'non-religious'. Although apostasy is not codified as a crime in the Penal Code, Iranian law, including the Penal Code, is used to prosecute persons based on their religious affiliation and views deemed critical or derogatory towards Islam. Iranian authorities do not allow conversion from Islam to another religion. Apostasy, including conversion to another religion than Islam, and blasphemy are seen as offences against the religion. Most Iranians are considered Muslims. Numerous individuals in younger generations consider themselves atheists or agnostics.

⁽¹³⁾ CJEU, *Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl v JF*, C-222/22, Third Chamber, judgment of 29 February 2024, <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=283282&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=req&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=8663025>



Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which individuals considered to have committed blasphemy and/or apostasy, including converts and atheists, could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, blasphemy is punished by death under Iranian law. Apostates might face prosecution for insulting Islam and promoting atheism. In 2023, two individuals accused on these grounds were executed by hanging. Individuals under this profile furthermore face arbitrary detention and torture. Converts from Islam are subjected to arrest, imprisonment and prosecution. At times converts are targeted by their families and their extended family members and society at large (ill-treatment, disinheritance).

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that individuals considered to have committed blasphemy and/or apostasy could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be also taken into account. Individuals considered to have committed blasphemy and/or apostasy, including converts and atheists, might be confronted with severe social stigma, hatred and violence from society. Iranian authorities openly marginalise, harass or incite hatred or violence against non-religious individuals. They also face confiscation of property. Apostates must either lie with respect to their conviction to receive a national identification card or be denied access to services, such as insurance, education, banking, and, most recently, public transportation. Unrecognised religious minority groups face barriers accessing education and employment in government jobs.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

A well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated for individuals considered by the Iranian authorities to have committed blasphemy and/or apostasy, including converts.

Please refer to [Christians](#) for the risk-assessment for Christians by birth.

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for atheists to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as:

- **Nature and visibility:** atheists publicly adopting non-religious behaviours, such as not going to the mosque, face a higher risk. The nature, the repetitiveness and the visibility of the non-religious practice, be it in Iran or abroad, should be taken into account.
- **Home area and residence:** atheists originating or residing in an area where Islamic norms and laws are traditionally respected face a higher risk.
- **Perception of Islamic codes in the family:** atheists belonging to a family where Islamic norms and laws are traditionally respected face a higher risk.
- **Political background:** atheists with a (perceived) political profile face a higher risk.
- **Ethnic background:** atheists belonging to an ethnic minority face a higher risk. Please refer to [Ethnic minorities](#).

- **Gender:** in regard of the general situation of women in Iran, female atheists face a higher risk than their male counterparts. Please refer to [Women and girls](#).

It should be highlighted that no applicant under this profile can reasonably be expected to abstain from their religious practice in order to avoid persecution⁽¹⁴⁾.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant falling under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of religion, as individuals considered to have committed blasphemy and/or apostasy, including converts and atheists, would be seen as insulting Islam.

3.4. Individuals perceived to have transgressed Islamic norms or laws

Last update: January 2025

This profile includes individuals whose actions, behaviours, or practices are seen as transgressing Islamic norms or laws and, as such, irrespective of whether the perceived transgression of norms or laws occurred in Iran or abroad. Practices perceived as a transgression of these norms or laws depend on several factors, such as local context, actors involved and their interpretation of these norms or laws.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and Queries: [Country Focus 2024](#), 3.2.1, 3.9.1, 4.10, 4.11.8; [COI Human Rights](#), 1.6; [COI Musicians](#). Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

A wide range of behaviours may be considered to be transgressive of Islamic norms and laws: non-respect of Islamic obligations, art challenging Islamic constraints, consumption of alcohol, interfaith relationships, extra-marital relations, theft and stealing of others property, listening to or producing heavy metal and foreign music, etc.

This profile may overlap with [Individuals perceived to have committed blasphemy and/or apostasy, including converts and atheists](#), [Women and girls](#), [Persons with diverse SOGIESC \(also referred to as LGBTIQ persons\)](#).

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Acts reported to be committed against individuals under this profile are of such severe nature that they amount to persecution. More specifically, *Hadd* punishments include the

⁽¹⁴⁾ CJEU, *Bundesrepublik Deutschland v Y and Z*, joined cases C-71/11 and C-99/11, judgment of 5 September 2012, para. 80, <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?docid=126364&doclang=en>



death penalty and other severe punishments, such as limb amputation for theft and robbery, flogging for drinking alcohol, stoning for adultery.

Furthermore, insulting 'Islamic sanctities or the Supreme Leader' and offences against public morals and decency, such as illicit relationships between men and women, dress code deemed un-Islamic by the Iranian authorities, and consumption of alcoholic drinks, gambling, and vagrancy may result in *ta'zir* punishments, including imprisonment, flogging, fines, and other penalties. As the offences and the punishments are classified into eight degrees, with the severity decreasing from the harshest in the first degree to the mildest in the eighth, whether the acts would amount to persecution would depend on the specific offence.

Artists challenging Islamic constraints, including musicians, face enhanced online monitoring, punishments or restrictions on their ability to work and travel.

Apart from persecution by the authorities, individuals under this profile, including women and girls who refused forced marriages, who were victim of rape, who got divorced, who had sexual relationships before marriage, or were engaged in adultery, may face honour-related violence that could amount to persecution from non-State actors such as their family members.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

For individuals accused to have committed any of the acts punishable under *hadd* punishment, a category of crimes under Islamic Law, such as sexual intercourse outside marriage/adultery (*zina*), sodomy and homosexual acts between men (*liwat*), lesbian relationship, false accusation of fornication/sodomy, defamation of the Prophet, 'waging war against God' (*moharebeh ba khoda*), corruption on Earth (*efsad fil-arz*), **a well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated.**

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for individuals perceived to have transgressed other Islamic norms and laws to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as:

- **Nature and visibility of the transgression:** the nature, the repetitiveness and the visibility of the transgression, be it in Iran or abroad, impact the risk. Artists whose art challenges Islamic constraints and especially high-profile artists face a higher risk. Please also refer to [Human rights defenders, activists, and lawyers](#) for the situation of artists challenging the political constraints imposed by the Iranian authorities.
- **Gender:** in regard of the general situation of women in Iran, female individuals under this profile may be at higher risk. Please refer to [Women and girls](#).
- **Ethnic and/or religious background:** being a member of some ethnic or religious minorities could impact the risk to face persecution. Please refer to [Ethnic minorities](#) and [Religious minorities](#).
- **Family and social environment:** belonging to a more conservative environment could increase the risk of a transgression being perceived as a violation of Islamic norms or laws.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, both when individuals are targeted by the Iranian authorities, and their family or other non-State actors, persecution may be for reasons of religion and/or for reasons of membership of a particular social group, based on their common background which cannot be changed (perceived past behaviour) and/or a shared characteristic or belief that is so fundamental to identity or conscience that they should not be forced to renounce it (opposition to cultural, social or religious norms and the unwillingness to comply with them). They may also be considered to have a distinct identity in the context of Iran, because they may be perceived as being different by the surrounding society.

In the case of targeting by the Iranian authorities, persecution may (also) be for reasons of (imputed) political opinion as some transgressing behaviours such as ‘war against God’ are seen as offences against the State.

3.5. Ethnic minorities

This section covers the international protection needs of Kurds and Baluches.

There is no commonly agreed definition of ethnic group, but it is generally viewed as a community (including a minority and/or an indigenous people) with common characteristics such as language, religion, common history, culture, customs and mores, way of life or place of residence [[EASO Practical Guide: Qualification for international protection](#), p.22].

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Country Focus 2024](#), 2, 3.9, 4.7; [COI Human Rights](#), 1.3. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

Ethnic minorities in Iran continued to be targeted by the authorities, in particular Kurds and Baluches.

Article 19 of the Iranian Constitution ensures equal rights for all ethnic groups, but in practice, ethnic and religious minorities, particularly Kurds, Baluches, and Arabs, face targeting and discrimination by authorities, including stigmatising and defamatory narratives disseminated by state-sponsored media, which sometimes include incitement to violence. Kurds, Baluches and Arabs who claim political rights are perceived as threats against the national security and territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic. Separatists groups are particularly targeted by the Iranian authorities. The UN Special Rapporteur and USIP reported in 2023 that these minorities are often imprisoned on vague charges and face unfair trials. The UN OHCHR expressed concern over the high number of executions, including those of minority members. In 2023, Human Rights Activists in Iran documented 324 arrests of ethnic minorities members, with 156 occurring without a warrant.

The death penalty has been wielded by the Iranian authorities as a tool of political repression against ethnic minorities.



3.5.1. Kurds, including Faili Kurds and Yarsan Kurds

Last update: January 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2024](#), 2.2, 4. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

As of 2016, Kurds constituted more or less 10% of the total Iranian population of 83.5 million individuals. Iranian Kurds live mostly in the mountainous regions on the border with Türkiye and Iraq. Kurds are predominantly Sunni and partly Shia. Faili Kurds are a cross-border ethnic group residing mainly at the Iran and Iraq border and are Shia Muslims. Yarsan Kurds primarily inhabit the Kurdish provinces in the western part of Iran, comprising a community of approximately three million individuals.

Kurds constitute a specific ethnic group. They speak a different language, have political claims, and have armed groups in Iraq. Kurds continued to be perceived by the Islamic Republic 'as a threat to the foundation of the country'⁽¹⁵⁾. The suppression of the Republic of Mahabad in 1946 and the denial of Kurdish autonomy following the 1979 Islamic Revolution reflect a long history of denying Kurdish autonomy and at times independence. The conflict post-1979 led to the destruction of Kurdish villages and the death of approximately 10 000 Kurds.

For activities seen as political dissent by the Iranian authorities, please refer to [Political dissent and opposition](#).

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which Kurds could be exposed to could, by their severity and/or repetitiveness or because they occur as an accumulation of various measures, amount to persecution. Notably, Kurds face significant political and cultural restrictions. They have limited access to high political positions, and Kurdish language education is prohibited, such as in the city of Saqqez in 2010. In addition, Kurdish regions are economically deprived, forcing Kurds to seek work in other cities where they face ethnic screening and discrimination. Kurdish defendants have been subjected to harsher sentences when they were detained in cities such as Tehran, Urmia, or Isfahan.

Some acts to which Faili Kurds and Yarsan Kurds could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, Faili Kurds faced forced displacement from Iraq to Iran. They have neither gained Iranian nor regained Iraqi citizenship. Due to their statelessness, they have been subjected to discrimination. Yarsan Kurds have experienced difficulties such as systematic discrimination, restrictions on religious practices, arbitrary arrests, and legal harassment aimed at suppressing the Yarsan community's religious identity and activities.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Expert on Kurdish population and regions in Iran, interview 20 March 2024, and email communication, 27 March 2024.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for Kurds to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as:

- **Political profile:** Kurds with a political profile face a higher risk. Kurds undergo security screenings (*gozinesh*) that probe their political affiliations and views on Kurdish independence, creating an atmosphere of constant surveillance and harassment. Kurdish political prisoners face executions on charges such as ‘taking up arms against the State’. The specific targeting and execution of Kurds during protests and regular legal actions against them (e.g., executions for ‘deliberate murder’ and ‘narcotic drugs’) further exemplify persecution. The crackdown on Kurdish protestors has led to many fleeing to Iraq. Members or sympathisers of opposition groups such as the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) are automatically targeted and detained.
- **Ethnic and/or religious background:** Yarsan Kurds are particularly at risk since the Iranian authorities aim at suppressing their religious identity and activities. Being Sunni or Sufi also exposes Kurds to a higher risk since the regime is Shia-dominated. Being Faili also enhances the risk since Faili Kurds have been subjected to discrimination.
- **Occupation:** Kurds working as *kolbars* face severe and targeted violence including shootings from Iranian border forces who consider them as smugglers. Also, Kurds having served in the IRGC or Basij face a backlash from their community, including being labelled as traitors, which can lead to targeted violence from Kurdish armed groups.
- **Gender:** Kurdish women face several layers of oppression, including ethnic, religious, and gender discrimination, increasing their vulnerability. Also, in regard of the general situation of women in Iran, Kurdish women are at higher risk. Please refer to [Women and girls](#).

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this may be for reasons of race, religion (Kurds, including Faili Kurds and Yarsan belong to a distinct ethno-religious group) and/or nationality.

3.5.2. Baluches

Last update: January 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2024](#), 2.1, 4.7.5. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

As of 2016, Baluches constituted 2% of the total Iranian population of 83.5 million individuals. The Baluch region is spread between Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, and within Iran it comprises the provinces of eastern Hormozgan, southern Kerman, southern Khorasan, and Sistan and Baluchistan, where the majority of Baluches live. The Baluch community is based on a tribal and clan system. Baluches are predominantly Sunni Muslims.



Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which Baluches could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, the Baluch population has continued to be targeted by the Islamic Republic since 1979, suggesting a long-standing pattern of discrimination and persecution. They have been subjected to executions, of women included. Baluch defendants faced harsher sentences when they were detained in cities such as Tehran, Urmia, or Isfahan.

When the acts in question are restrictions on the exercise of certain rights of less severe nature or (solely) discriminatory measures, the individual assessment of whether they could amount to persecution should take into account the severity and/or repetitiveness of the acts or whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures. Over 100,000 Baluch people in the Sistan and Baluchistan province lack official documents and are considered stateless, which denies them basic rights and services. Statelessness, in itself, does not amount to persecution, however when it prevents access to public services, this may reach the threshold for persecution. Baluch-inhabited provinces are economically disadvantaged. As a consequence, some Baluches rely on smuggling activities to ensure their basic needs (*sokhtbars*). *Sokhtbars* (fuel carriers) have been shot dead or injured by the Iranian security forces who consider them as smugglers.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for Baluches to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as:

- **Political profile:** Baluch protesters were particularly targeted during protests. Affiliation to *Jaish Al-Adl*, an extremist Sunni Muslim militant group, or to *Ansar al-Furqan*, another Sunni Baluch militia group, increases the risk.
- **Religious affiliation:** being Sunni exposes Baluches to a higher risk since the regime is Shia-dominated.
- **Occupation:** Baluches working as *sokhtbar* (fuel carriers) face severe and targeted violence including shootings from Iranian border forces who consider them as smugglers. The reported deaths of dozens of *sokhtbars* due to shootings highlight severe and targeted violence against the Baluch community. Iranian authorities have executed numerous Baluch individuals, including women, often on charges related to drug crimes. The executions are reported to be frequent and sometimes carried out secretly.
- **Gender:** in regard of the general situation of women in Iran, Baluch women are at higher risk. Please refer to [Women and girls](#).

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this may be for reasons of race, religion (Baluches are a distinct ethno-religious group) and/or nationality.



Exclusion considerations could be relevant to Baluches members of *Jaish Al-Adl* and *Ansar al-Furqan* (see [Exclusion](#)).

3.6. Religious minorities

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Country Focus 2024](#), 4.8; [COI Human Rights](#), 1.4. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

According to Article 13 of the Iranian Constitution of 1979, ‘Zoroastrian, Jewish, and Christian Iranians are the only recognised 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’. Religious freedom continues to be restricted, even for these groups.

Proselytising in Iran is considered as a crime against the internal and external security of the State and is ‘punishable by death’.

This chapter on religious minorities should be read in conjunction with [Individuals perceived to have committed blasphemy and/or apostasy, including converts and atheists](#).

3.6.1. Christians

Last update: January 2025

This sub-profile covers the situation of individuals belonging to the Christian community that was existing before the establishment of the Islamic Republic (referred to in this section as ‘Christians by birth’). It includes ‘ethnic Christians’ (Armenians, Chaldeans, and Assyrians) and ‘non-ethnic Christians’ (protestants).

For the situation of converts to Christianity, please refer to [Individuals perceived to have committed blasphemy and/or apostasy, including converts and atheists](#).

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2024](#), 4.8.2. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

According to Article 13 of the Iranian Constitution of 1979, Christians by birth are a recognised religious minority, 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.



Proselytising in Iran is considered as a crime against the internal and external security of the State and is 'punishable by death'.

In Iran, Christians by birth who wish to worship in the national language (Persian) meet in private places, which are known as house-churches.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which Christians by birth could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, Christian beliefs perceived as insulting Islam and some practices (such as practising in Persian, possessing religious material in Persian, preaching to other Iranians, inviting them to their churches, and inviting converts) are considered as crimes by the Iranian authorities and are punishable by death under *ta'zir*. Christians who proselytise or visit house churches are subjected to arrest, imprisonment and prosecution.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that Christians could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should also be considered. Depending on the Christian group and the expression of their religious belief, Christians by birth have been subjected to confiscation of property, monitoring and discrimination.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

For Christians by birth frequenting house churches and Christian proselytisers, a well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated.

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for other Christians by birth to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as:

- **Visibility of the applicant:** applicants with a specific profile in a Christian community such as being a leader of the community in Iran or abroad, or appearing in the media, in Iran or abroad, as a representative of the community would impact the risk since those elements substantiate the public expression of the faith.
- **Being known to the authorities:** applicants already known to the authorities such as those who were already arrested, whether in relation to their faith or other reasons, face a higher risk.
- **Link to foreign actors:** in the context of Iran, an individual with links to a Western actor (such as a Western country, a non-governmental organisation or an international organisation settled in a Western country) faces a higher risk.
- **Gender:** in regard of the general situation of women in Iran, Christian women by birth are at higher risk. Please refer to [Women and girls](#).

It should be highlighted that no applicant under this profile can reasonably be expected to abstain from their religious practice in order to avoid persecution⁽¹⁶⁾.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant falling under this sub-profile, this persecution is highly likely to be for reasons of religion, as Christians would be seen as insulting Islam and/or promoting atheism. As Christianity is categorised under 'political-security crimes' and is seen by the Islamic Republic 'as a Western religion', where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated, this persecution may also be for reasons of (imputed) political opinion.

3.6.2. Baha'is

Last update: January 2025

This sub-profile includes persons who believe in and practice the Baha'i religion and/or are part of the Baha'i community in Iran.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Country Focus 2024](#), 4.8.3; [COI Human Rights](#), 1.4. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

The Baha'i religion is not recognised in Iran and its followers are perceived by the Islamic Republic as a non-Muslim group. The Baha'is have historically faced systematic ideological, political, educational, and economic pressure in Iran and have been increasingly targeted by the Islamic Republic. Followers of the Baha'i faith are banned from publicly practicing their religion, including the establishment of their places of worship.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which Baha'is could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, Baha'is face arrests, raids on their homes, and imprisonment. Such acts have increased as Iranian authorities have accused the Baha'is of instigating the 'Woman, Life, Freedom' movement, and hate speech increased. Furthermore, arbitrary detentions of Baha'i women surged during the September 2022 protests, as part of the State's ongoing targeting of the community.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that Baha'is could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be also taken into account. Baha'is face harassment, confiscation of their personal belongings and properties, refusal to access universities or obtain work permits, and destruction of their cemeteries. Baha'is must either lie about their faith to receive a national identification card or be denied access to services, such as insurance, education, banking, and, most recently, public

⁽¹⁶⁾ CJEU, *Bundesrepublik Deutschland v Y and Z*, joined cases C-71/11 and C-99/11, judgment of 5 September 2012, para. 80, <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?docid=126364&doclang=en>



transportation. Unrecognised religious minority groups face barriers accessing education and employment in government jobs.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for a Baha'i to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as:

- **Political profile:** Baha'is with a political profile, such as taking part to demonstrations, face a higher risk since the Baha'is are accused by the Iranian authorities of initiating the 'Woman, Life, Freedom' movement.
- **Visibility of the applicant:** applicants with a specific profile in the community such as being a leader of the community in Iran or abroad, or appearing in the media, in Iran or abroad, as a representative of the community would impact the risk since those elements substantiate the public expression of the faith.
- **Being known to the authorities:** applicants already known to the authorities such as those who were already arrested, be it in relation to their faith or other reasons, face a higher risk.
- **Gender:** Baha'i women face a higher risk than Baha'i men in regard of the general situation of women in Iran and also because Baha'i women were increasingly targeted during protests, especially during the 'Women, Life, Freedom' protests. Please also refer to [Women and girls](#).

It should be highlighted no applicant under this profile can reasonably be expected to abstain from their religious practice in order to avoid persecution⁽¹⁷⁾.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant falling under this profile, this persecution is highly likely to be for reasons of religion, as Baha'is are seen by the Islamic Republic as a deviant sect of Islam.

3.7. Women and girls

Last update: January 2025

This profile refers to women and girls and the different forms of violence and discrimination to which they are subjected. Please note that women and girls may be targeted by both [The Iranian authorities](#) and [non-State actors](#), such as their family or community.

⁽¹⁷⁾ CJEU, *Bundesrepublik Deutschland v Y and Z*, joined cases C-71/11 and C-99/11, judgment of 5 September 2012, para. 80, <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?docid=126364&doclang=en>

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Country Focus 2024](#), 3, 4.3, 4.7.2, 4.11; [COI Human Rights](#), 1.5, 1.7. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the Iranian government has imposed significant restrictions on the rights of women and girls, which have deeply impacted their lives.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which women and girls could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. In particular, women and girls in Iran have been subjected to the death penalty, torture, corporal punishments, domestic violence including domestic servitude, forced and child marriage, honour killings and FGM practices, trafficking in human beings and related executions in case of trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Forced marriage amounts to persecution. Child marriage is considered forced marriage, therefore, persecution.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that women and girls could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be also considered. Women face institutionalised legal, judicial, social, and economic discrimination. They have been facing restrictions and discrimination, including the lowering of the marriage age for girls, limitations on divorce, child custody, inheritance, and dress code. Women are also prohibited from entering the workplace without wearing a *hijab*, dancing in public, riding bicycles, joining the army, participating in public sports, and becoming president. Women's mobility and autonomy are further restricted by the requirement of a male relative's permission or consent. Their court testimony and inheritance are deemed worth half that of men. The Chastity and Mandatory *Hijab* Bill approved by the Guardian Council in September 2024 further intensified the State's control over women's bodies and movements, and escalated penalties for unveiled women, including social service restrictions, and property confiscation. The enforcement of this bill, despite promises to halt the morality police, signals increased repression.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for women and girls to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as:

- **Political profile:** Women have been subjected to severe restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly, with harsh penalties for dissent, including death or imprisonment. Women activists and protesters are at higher risk of physical, psychological, and sexual violence, including State-sanctioned torture and inhumane and degrading treatment in detention. Please refer to [Political dissent and opposition](#).
- **Ethnic and/or religious background:** Women and girls of ethnic and religious minorities face several layers of discrimination which make them more at risk than other women. Please refer to [Ethnic minorities](#) and [Religious minorities](#).



- **Perception of traditional gender norms in the family:** The risk of honour-based violence as well as of domestic violence is dependent on how the (extended) family, including the husband, perceive the traditional gender norms.
- **Home area and residence:** Women and girls originating from (more) conservative areas are at higher risk. In rural areas, control over women is stricter due to close-knit community surveillance, while in larger cities like Mashhad, Isfahan, and Tehran, the higher education levels and open-minded attitudes afford women more freedom, including the dress-code.
- **Socio-economic situation:** Poor socioeconomic situation could render the applicant more vulnerable to abuses, such as sexual exploitation, trafficking in human beings and trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation.
- **Family status:** Alone women are at higher risk of sexual exploitation, trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation and trafficking in human beings.

Links to persecution under other profiles may also be relevant, in particular [Individuals perceived to have transgressed Islamic norms or laws](#).

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant falling under this profile, this is likely to be for reasons of membership of a particular social group⁽¹⁸⁾. This may apply for instance to women victims of trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Such women may be stigmatised by the surrounding society because of their common background which cannot be changed (sex outside marriage). Other grounds such as religion and (imputed) political opinion may also be substantiated.

3.8. Persons with diverse SOGIESC (also referred to as LGBTIQ persons)

Last update: January 2025

This profile refers to persons who are perceived as not conforming to religious and/or social norms because of their sexual orientation (SO) and/or gender identity and expression (GIE), and sex characteristics (SC), including the treatment of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or trans-gender, intersex and queer, also commonly referred to as (LGBTIQ) individuals.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2024](#), 3.2.1., 3.9.1., 4.12. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

⁽¹⁸⁾ CJEU, *Intervyuirasht organ na Darzhavna agentsia za bezhantsite pri Ministerskia savet v WS*, case C-621/21, judgment of 16 January 2024, para. 81, <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=281302&pageIndex=0&doclang=en&mode=req&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=1717409>

In Iran, same-sex relationships face severe social, religious, and legal prohibitions. The government labels homosexuality as 'faggotry' (*hamjensbazi*) and often refers to LGBTIQ individuals as 'deviant' and 'sick.' The Iranian legal system criminalizes same-sex acts under Islamic *hadd* crimes. Despite the legal acceptance of gender-affirming surgeries, transgender individuals face discrimination, lack of mental health support, and social stigma. They encounter physical and psychological abuse, with recent arrests highlighting ongoing persecution.

Persecution could be by the Iranian authorities or other actors, as well as by the family and/or the society in general, as there is a low societal tolerance in Iran for individuals with sexual orientation, gender identities or gender expression perceived as deviating from the 'norm'.

Please also refer to [Human rights defenders, activists, and lawyers](#) for the general situation of human rights activists, and to [Individuals perceived to have transgressed Islamic norms or laws](#).

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Acts to which persons with diverse SOGIESC could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, The Penal Code stipulates the death penalty for certain same-sex acts. Same-sex relations between men (*livat*) and women (*mosahaqa*) can result in death or corporal punishment. Reports indicate that LGBTIQ individuals often suffer mistreatment and sexual violence in detention facilities. Also, LGBTIQ persons in Iran frequently endure stigma, discrimination, and violence from various societal sectors such as their families, communities and even health care providers.

Activists advocating for LGBTIQ rights further experience censorship, harassment, arbitrary arrests, and can be accused of promoting homosexuality.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

Given the criminalisation of same-sex acts with severe punishments including the death penalty, the widespread discrimination and social stigma reinforced by the authorities' hate speech, the (sexual) violence faced by LGBTIQ persons including in detention, the lack of mental health support and arbitrary arrests, it can be concluded that, **a well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated for both persons with (perceived) SOGIESC and for activists and lawyers advocating for LGBTIQ rights, since they may be perceived as promoting anti-Islamic behaviour.**

It has to be noted that an applicant cannot be expected to conceal their sexual orientation or gender identity to avoid persecution⁽¹⁹⁾.

⁽¹⁹⁾ CJEU, *Minister voor Immigratie en Asiel v X and Y and Z*, joined cases C-199/12 to C-201/12 judgment of 7 November 2013, *X and Y and Z*, paras. 70-76, <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=144215&pageIndex=0&doclang=en&mode=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=7670158>



Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant falling under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of membership of a particular social group, based on a shared characteristic or belief that is so fundamental to the identity of the applicant, that they should not be forced to renounce it, and based on their distinct identity in Iran, because they are perceived as being different by the surrounding society⁽²⁰⁾. Persecution of individuals under this profile may also be for reasons of religion, since the Iranian legal system criminalizes same-sex acts under Islamic *hadd* crimes.

⁽²⁰⁾ CJEU, *Minister voor Immigratie en Asiel v X and Y and Z*, joined cases C-199/12 to C-201/12 judgment of 7 November 2013, *X and Y and Z*, paras. 45-49, <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=144215&pageIndex=0&doclang=en&mode=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=7670158>

4. Subsidiary protection

[Article 15 QD/QR](#)

This chapter addresses the EU-regulated status of subsidiary protection. Where the applicant has not been found to qualify as a refugee, they may be eligible for subsidiary protection in accordance with Article 15 QD/QR.



The contents of this chapter include:

Under the section [Article 15\(a\) QD/QR](#), the analysis focuses on the applicable EU legal framework and the factual circumstances surrounding the ‘death penalty or execution’ in Iran.

The section on [Article 15\(b\) QD/QR](#) looks into the risk of ‘torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment’ in relation to particular circumstances in Iran.

Under the section [Article 15\(c\) QD/QR](#), the analysis covers the different elements of the provision, looking into: ‘armed conflict’, ‘qualification of a person as a ‘civilian’, ‘indiscriminate violence’, ‘serious and individual threat’ (where further individualisation elements are discussed), ‘qualification of the harm as ‘threat to life or person’, and the interpretation of the nexus ‘by reasons of’.

4.1. Article 15(a) QD/QR: death penalty or execution

Last update: January 2025

[Article 15\(a\) QD/QR](#)

As noted in the chapter [Refugee status](#), some profiles of applicants from Iran may be at risk of death penalty or execution. In such cases, there would often be a nexus to a reason for persecution falling under the definition of a refugee (for example, [Members and sympathisers of opposition parties and movements \(perceived as\) critical of the Iranian authorities](#), [Protesters](#), [Journalists and other media workers \(perceived as\) critical of the Iranian authorities](#), [Individuals perceived to have transgressed Islamic norms or laws](#), [Ethnic minorities](#), and [Persons with diverse SOGIESC \(also referred to as LGBTIQ persons\)](#), and those individuals would qualify for refugee status.



In cases where there is no nexus to a Convention ground, the need for subsidiary protection under Article 15(a) QD/QR should be examined.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2024](#), 3.4, 3.7, 3.9. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

Iran is among the leading practitioners of the death penalty globally. Cruel and inhumane practices were reported among the methods employed in executions, such as hanging by cranes.

Death penalty is envisaged under the Iranian Penal code and can be imposed for offences, such as drug trafficking, financial corruption, vandalism, and peaceful exercise of freedom of expression. Offences punished by death-penalty are categorised under *hadd*, *qesas* (intentional or unintentional homicide) or *ta'zir* (drug-related offences). In the case of *qesas* punishments, members of the victim's family were encouraged to carry out executions themselves. Under *hadd*, a wide series of offences can lead to a death penalty sentence: sexual offences, such as incest, rape, sexual intercourse outside marriage/adultery (*zina*), sodomy or consensual homosexual penetrative sex (*livat*), and intercrural sex where the 'active party' is a non-Muslim and the 'passive party' is a Muslim (*tafkhez*); offences against the State, such as 'war against God', (*moharebeh ba khoda*), corruption on Earth (*efsad fil-arz*) and rebellion (*baghy*), and offences against the religion such as insulting the prophet (*sabot-nabi*) and apostasy (*ertedad*); repeated offences on the fourth occasion including theft, adultery, sodomy, lesbian sex (*mosahegheh*), intercrural sex, pimping, alcohol consumption, false accusation of sodomy or adultery (*qadf*) and the crimes of *moharebeh*, *efsad-filarz* and *baghy*.

Execution of minors is permissible beginning at 9 years old for girls and 13 for boys.

Since 2010, the Revolutionary Courts have handed down death sentences resulting in at least 4 541 executions. These courts, established in the aftermath of the 1979 revolution, hold the power to adjudicate all matters pertaining to national security, which encompasses political and press crimes. They also deal with crimes involving drugs and psychotropic substances, cases involving financial crimes, trafficking or counterfeiting of goods, economic offences, smuggling of cultural heritage or national assets abroad, illegal reproduction of audio-visual works, crimes related to public and private health institutions, bribery, embezzlement, fraud and gambling, etc. Cases potentially involving death penalty were generally assigned to judges executing the wishes of the security and intelligence agencies. Death sentences were pronounced despite confessions having been physically coerced. Complaints about torture were disregarded. Rights to a fair trial and due process were violated.

Other Criminal Courts handle criminal charges that carry the death penalty, such as murder and rape, as well as cases related to adultery and LGBTIQ persons.

More than 800 persons were executed in Iran in 2023, constituting a sharp increase in comparison with the previous years, partially due to the rise of executions linked to drug-related offences. Ethnic minorities, and especially the Baluches, were overrepresented in the total number of executions. Geographical disparities reportedly impact court sentences with

persons in areas such as Kurdistan and Sistan and Baluchistan potentially facing death penalty while persons in Tehran would face imprisonment for the exact same offence.

If there is a reasonable degree of likelihood of death penalty or execution, subsidiary protection under Article 15(a) QD/QR shall be granted, unless the applicant is to be excluded in accordance with Article 17/QR QD.



In some cases, the death penalty would have been imposed for a serious crime committed by the applicant, or for other acts falling within the exclusion grounds (Article 17 QD/QR). Therefore, although the criteria of Article 15(a) QD would be met, exclusion considerations should be examined (see [_Exclusion](#)).

4.2. Article 15(b) QD/QR: torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

[Article 15\(b\) QD](#)

As noted in the chapter on [Refugee status](#), some profiles of applicants from Iran may be at risk of torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (see for example [Protesters](#), [Human rights defenders, activists, and lawyers](#), [Desertion from armed forces](#), [Individuals perceived to have transgressed Islamic norms or laws](#), [Women and girls](#), and [Persons with diverse SOGIESC \(also referred to as LGBTIQ persons\)](#)). In such cases, there would often be a nexus to a reason for persecution falling under the definition of a refugee, and those individuals would qualify for refugee status. However, with reference to cases where there is no nexus to a Convention ground, the need for subsidiary protection under Article 15(b) QD/QR should be examined.



The contents of this section include:

[4.2.1. Healthcare and socio-economic conditions](#)

[4.2.2. Arbitrary arrests and detentions, and prison conditions](#)

[4.2.3. Corporal punishments](#)

[4.2.4. Criminal violence](#)



4.2.1. Healthcare and socio-economic conditions

Last update: January 2025



It is important to note that serious harm must take the form of conduct of an actor ([Article 6 QD/QR](#)). In themselves, the general unavailability of healthcare, education or other socio-economic elements (e.g. difficulties in finding livelihood opportunities, housing) are not considered serious harm meeting the requirements of inhuman or degrading treatment under Article 15(b) QD/QR in relation to Article 6 QD/QR, unless there is intentional conduct of an actor, such as the intentional deprivation of the applicant of appropriate healthcare.

4.2.2. Arbitrary arrests and detentions, and prison conditions

Last update: January 2025

Special attention should be paid to the phenomena of arbitrary arrests and illegal detention, as well as to prison conditions.

Arbitrary arrests, judgements and detentions along with violations of fair trial and due process, and sentences based on vague laws were reported [[Country Focus 2024](#), 3.1, 3.7, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.11.2, 4.12]

Despite legal safeguards prohibiting and punishing their use to obtain confessions, torture and ill-treatment, including sexual assault and rape, as well as denial of medical care were reported to be used in detention. Torture and ill-treatment were particularly reported in relation to treatment of persons involved in the 'Women, Life, Freedom' protests, including children, and in particular during arrests and interrogations. Detainees faced physical and psychological abuse, including verbal abuse of a sexual nature or based on ethnicity and religion and threats of death, rape and harm to family members. Sexual and gender-based violence was used against women, men, and children, including LGBTIQ persons. Dozens of deaths in prison under 'suspicious circumstances' were recorded since 2010. [[Country Focus 2024](#), 3.8]

When assessing the conditions of detention, the following elements may be taken into consideration, cumulatively: number of detained persons in a limited space, adequacy of sanitation facilities, heating, lighting, sleeping arrangements, food, recreation or contact with the outside world. In Iran, prison conditions are characterised by overcrowding, lack of sanitation and ventilation, inadequate provision of food and insect infestation. Detainees suffered from hunger and insufficient medical help. Conditions of persons arrested in connection with the 2022 protests, including women and children, have been qualified by the UN Human Rights Council as 'inhuman, cruel, or degrading treatment, and in certain

instances, constituted torture'. Political prisoners were detained with potentially violent and dangerous criminals. [[Country Focus 2024](#), 3.8]



In cases where the prosecution or punishment is grossly unfair or disproportionate, or where a person is subjected to prison conditions which are not compatible with respect for human dignity, a situation of serious harm under Article 15(b) QD/QR can occur.

It should be highlighted that in some cases of individuals facing the risk of arrest or detention in Iran, there would be a nexus to a reason for persecution falling under the definition of a refugee, and those individuals would qualify for refugee status. If nexus to a reason for persecution is not substantiated, Article 15(b) QD/QR would apply.

[Exclusion](#) considerations may be relevant.

4.2.3. Corporal punishments

Last update: January 2025

The Iranian Penal Code stipulates corporal punishments for a wide range of offences, including death penalty, crucifixion, limb amputation, blinding, stoning, retributive 'eye for an eye' punishments, flogging, etc. Flogging could be used as a punishment for at least 148 offences, while the punishment of amputation was used for 20 offences. In some cases, the punishment is at the discretion of the judge [[Country Focus 2024](#), 3.2.].

Please also refer to [Article 15\(a\) QD/QR: death penalty or execution](#).



Corporal punishments, such as those described above, would meet the requirements of serious harm under Article 15(b) QD/QR.

Where there is no nexus to a reason for persecution under the refugee definition, and there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for the individual to be subjected to corporal punishment, this risk would qualify under Article 15(b) QD/QR.

[Exclusion](#) considerations may be relevant.

4.2.4. Criminal violence

Last update: January 2025

Criminal gangs are involved in trafficking in human beings that take various forms such as forced labour, domestic servitude, forced marriage, trafficking for the purpose of sexual



exploitation within Iran as well as to Iraq. Also, trafficking of human organs and blood in criminal markets takes place in major cities like Tehran, Shiraz and Tabriz. Efforts have been made by the Iranian authorities to combat trafficking in human beings that led to organ removal. [[COI Human Rights](#), 1.7]



A real risk of violent crime, such as violence related to **trafficking in human beings, trafficking of human organs, and drug trafficking**, would meet the requirements under Article 15(b) QD/QR.

Where there is no nexus to a reason for persecution under the refugee definition, and there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for the individual to face violent crime, this risk would qualify under Article 15(b) QD/QR.

Please also refer to [Other](#) actors under [Actors of persecution or serious harm](#), and [Women and girls](#) for violence linked to trafficking in women and girls.



Exclusion considerations may be relevant to this profile, as some criminals may have been involved in excludable acts (see [Exclusion](#)).

4.3. Article 15(c) QD/QR: indiscriminate violence in situations of armed conflict

[Article 15\(c\) QD/QR](#)

This section focuses on the application of the provision of Article 15(c) QD/QR. Under Article 2(f) QD/3(6) QR in conjunction with Article 15(c) QD/QR, subsidiary protection is granted where substantial grounds have been shown for believing that the person would face a real risk of suffering serious harm defined as **serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict**.

As mentioned in '[Country Guidance: Explained](#)', all of these elements have to be fulfilled in order to grant subsidiary protection under Article 15(c) QD/QR.

4.3.1. Reference period

Last update: January 2025

The following assessment is based on the EUAA Country Focus 2024, published in June 2024 and concerning the reference period 1 January 2023–17 April 2024, with some limited information added during the finalisation of the report until 21 May 2024, and on the COI Update 2024, concerning the reference period 18 April 2024–7 October 2024, unless differently specified.



This guidance should be considered valid as long as current events and developments fall within the trends and patterns of violence observed within the reference period of the mentioned COI report. New events and developments that cause substantial changes, new trends or geographical shifts in the violence, may lead to a different assessment. The security situation in a given territory should always be assessed in light of the most up-to-date COI available.

4.3.2. Assessment of indiscriminate violence in Iran

Last update: January 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Country Focus 2024](#), 2; [COI Update 2024](#), 2. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

Please refer to [The Iranian authorities](#) to know more about Iranian authorities as an actor of persecution or serious harm.

Deliberate targeting of Kurds at Iran and Iraq border areas by the Iranian security forces occurred. See [Kurds, including Faili Kurds and Yarsan Kurds](#). Deliberate targeting of Baluches also occurred. See [Baluches](#).

Security challenges leading to clashes occurred in the province of Sistan and Baluchistan (bordering Afghanistan and Pakistan) between Iranian security forces and Sunni militants as well as drug traffickers. Different anti-government groups including Baluch, Kurdish and Arab groups were active, none of them having territorial control.

Clashes with, and attacks by, Baluch armed groups led to deaths in Iranian border forces, police forces, IRGC, and security personnel. Kurdish armed groups, several of whom have camps and bases in Kurdistan region of Iraq, were attacked by the Iranian authorities, both in Iran and Iraq. Arab groups mainly operate in Khuzestan province (bordering Iraq). A direct confrontation between Iran and Israel also occurred during the reference period.

Out of the security incidents recorded by ACLED, 66 of the 96 battles and 11 of the 33 explosions occurred in Sistan and Baluchistan province, while 8 of the 96 battles and 11 of the 33 explosions occurred in Kurdistan. One battle occurred in West Azerbaijan.



No real risk

Nonetheless, taking into consideration the generally stable security situation in Iran, the territorial control of the Iranian State over the whole territory, the low numbers of security incidents, the majority of them being battles between armed actors with no impact on civilians, it is assessed that, in the whole territory of Iran, there is no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected by indiscriminate violence within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR.



Since it is assessed that no indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict is taking place in the whole territory of Iran, it is not necessary to assess the other elements (serious and individual threat, qualification of the harm as a 'threat to (a civilian's) life or person', 'nexus'/by reason of') of the definition of serious harm under Article 15(c) QD/QR.



Please note that while it is generally considered that a civilian would not be affected by indiscriminate violence within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR in Iran, including Tehran, this does not imply that Iran, including Tehran, is considered a safe area for any applicant. All circumstances specific to the applicant's individual case have to be thoroughly assessed.

5. Actors of protection

Last update: January 2025

[Article 7 QD/QR](#)



The contents of this chapter include:

[The State](#): outlining and analysing the capacity of the Iranian authorities to provide protection in accordance with Article 7 QD/QR.

[Parties or organisations](#), including international organisations: analysing whether other parties or organisations could qualify as actors of protection under Article 7 QD/QR.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2024](#), 1.1, 3, 4.2, 4.7.2, 4.11.9, 4.12; [COI Human Rights](#), 1.4. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

5.1. The State

The term ‘State’ (Article 7(1)(a) QD/QR) encompasses any organ exercising legislative, executive, judicial or any other functions and acting at any level, be it central, federal, regional, provincial or local. Sometimes, private entities may also be given State powers and be made responsible for providing protection under the control of the State. In order to qualify as an actor of protection, the State has to be able and willing to protect persons under its jurisdiction.

The protection in the country of origin has to be effective, non-temporary and accessible to the applicant.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is a hybrid governing system with theocratic authority and republican elements, under the Constitution of which separation of power exists between the executive, legislative and judiciary bodies. However, all State institutions are controlled by the Supreme Leader.

Iran’s judicial system is based on *Sharia* (Islamic law). The judiciary in Iran consists of a Supreme Court, a Supreme Judicial Council, and lower courts and is defined as an independent power. However, the independence of the judiciary is constrained by the role of the Supreme Leader. The security apparatus is said to have gained more influence over the courts in recent year. Non effectiveness of appeals, issues to access independent legal aid, and violations of due process have extensively been reported.



The Iranian police force is part of the Law Enforcement Command of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FARAJA), and it operates as a national armed force organisation. The FARAJA was drawn from the urban police, the judicial police, the Gendarmerie, and the Islamic committee. More specifically, both the anti-riot police (*yegan-e vizhe*) and plain-clothed security agents were deployed in large numbers during protests, during which the Special Units of Iran's Law Enforcement Forces (LEF Special Units) used excessive and lethal force against unarmed protesters.

The Iranian Islamic Penal Code does not explicitly criminalise violence against women. Iranian law lacks the means to provide adequate protection for victims of domestic violence. Intentional homicide cases, including honour killings and murder for adultery, may be punishable with retribution in kind (*qesas*) and, in case of forgiveness by the next of kin, may lead to a prison sentence of less than 10 years.

Furthermore, killings related to the protection of honour are addressed according to *sharia* and often entail reduced sentences for the perpetrators.



Effective protection is presumed not to be available when the State or agents of the State are the main actors of persecution or serious harm (Recital 27 QD/QR).

When assessing the availability of State protection against other (non-State) actors, individual circumstances, such as home area, ethnicity, gender, social status, wealth, personal connections, actor of persecution and type of human rights violation must be taken into account.

State protection is generally not considered available in situations where the applicant faces persecution or serious harm at the hands of society at large for reasons related to the prevalent social norms in Iran. This includes:

- In light of the climate of impunity for acts of violence against women, it is considered that **State protection is generally not considered available for women facing domestic or honour-related violence, and gender-based violence, including harmful traditional practices.**
- Some Kurds who served the IRGC or the Basij denounced their community members if they were involved in activism. As a consequence, Kurds that served the IRGC and Basij were perceived by their community as collaborators and/or 'traitors' and targeted by Kurdish armed groups. **State protection is generally not considered available for Kurds, especially for those who served the IRGC and Basij.**
- **State protection is generally not considered available for individuals perceived to have transgressed Islamic norms of laws** and facing persecution by the society at large since the State is in itself an actor of persecution.
- **State protection is generally not considered available for atheists and converts from Islam to another religion.**

- Because of the legal constraints and the hate speech of the authorities against persons with diverse SOGIESC, **State protection is generally not considered available for persons with diverse SOGIESC facing social discrimination, violence from their families, their communities and healthcare providers.**

5.2. Parties or organisations

In the context of Article 7 QD/QR, it is necessary that those parties or organisations control the State or a substantial part of the territory of the State. In order to consider that parties or organisations control a region or a larger area within the territory of the State, it should be established that they exercise governmental functions. Furthermore, those parties or organisations have to be willing and able to provide protection against persecution or serious harm as defined in Article 7(2) QD/QR.



No parties or organisations that control a region or larger area within the State and are able to provide protection were identified in Iran.

In case protection needs have been established in the home area, and in the absence of an actor who can provide protection in the meaning of Article 7 QD/QR, the examination may continue with consideration of any internal protection alternative (IPA), if applicable in accordance with national legislation and practice.



6. Internal protection alternative

Last update: January 2025

[Article 8 QD/QR](#)



The contents of this chapter include:

[Preliminary remarks](#)

[6.1. Part of the country](#)

[6.2. Safety](#)

[6.3. Travel and admittance](#)

[6.4. Reasonableness to settle](#)

Preliminary remarks

This chapter looks into the topic of internal protection alternative. It analyses the situation in Tehran in relation to the requirements of Article 8 QD/QR.

In order to determine that internal protection alternative is available in a particular part of the applicant's country of origin, three cumulative criteria have to be met, namely: 'safety', 'travel and admittance' and 'reasonableness to settle'.

In relation to these elements, when assessing the applicability of IPA, the case officer should consider the general situation in Tehran, as well as the individual circumstances of the applicant.

6.1. Part of the country

Last update: January 2025

The first step in the analysis of IPA is to identify a particular part of the country with regard to which the criteria of Article 8 QD/QR would be examined in the individual case.

The example of **Tehran** has been selected as the capital, biggest city, and economic centre of Iran.

The selection of Tehran for this common analysis and guidance note does not prevent case officers from considering the application of IPA for other parts of Iran, provided that all criteria described hereunder are met.

6.2. Safety

Last update: January 2025

6.2.1. Absence of persecution or serious harm

When examining the element ‘absence of persecution or serious harm’, the decision-maker should refer to chapters 2 to 5 of this document.

When assessing the requirement of safety with regard to the applicability of IPA in individual cases of applicants from Iran, the following elements should be taken into account:

General security situation in relation to indiscriminate violence

The general security situation in the particular part of the country that is being examined as an alternative for internal protection in the individual case should be assessed in accordance with the analysis under the section on Article 15(c) QD/QR.

The conclusion with regard to **Tehran**, is as follows:

In Tehran, there is, in general, no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR.

Actor of persecution or serious harm and their reach

In case where the person fears persecution or serious harm by State actors (e.g. political dissidents, ethnic and religious minorities), there is a presumption that IPA would not be available (Recital 27 QD/QR).

In some cases, where the applicant faces persecution or serious harm for reasons related to the prevalent social norms in Iran, especially for women and girls, and the actor of persecution or serious harm is the Iranian society at large (e.g. for [Individuals perceived to have transgressed Islamic norms or laws](#), [Women and girls](#) and [Persons with diverse SOGIESC \(also referred to as LGBTIQ persons\)](#)), taking into account the reach of the actor of persecution or serious harm, the general lack of State protection for such applicants and their vulnerability to potential new forms of persecution or serious harm, the safety criterion would in general not be met.

Whether the profile of the applicant is considered a priority target and/or a threat by the actor of persecution or serious harm



The profile of the applicant could make him or her a priority target, increasing the likelihood that the actor of persecution or serious harm would attempt to trace the applicant in the potential IPA location (e.g. honour-related violence, etc.)

Behaviour of the applicant

It is recalled that an applicant cannot be reasonably expected to abstain from practices fundamental to his or her identity, such as those related to religion or sexual orientation, in order to avoid the risk of persecution or serious harm⁽²¹⁾.

Other risk-enhancing circumstances

The information under the chapter [Refugee status](#) should be used to assist in this assessment.

6.2.2. Availability of protection against persecution or serious harm

Alternatively, case officers may determine that the requirement of safety is satisfied if the applicant would have access to protection against persecution or serious harm as defined in Article 7 QD/QR in the area where IPA is considered. In the case of persecution by the State, a presumption of non-availability of State protection applies.

See the chapter on [Actors of protection](#).



The requirement of safety may be satisfied in Tehran, depending on the profile and the individual circumstances of the applicant. For those who have a well-founded fear of persecution by the Iranian authorities and/or by society at large, the criterion of safety would generally not be met in Tehran.

6.3. Travel and admittance

Last update: January 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2024](#), 4.6, 5.1; [COI Update 2024](#), 3; [COI Human Rights](#), 1.5, 2.1. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

In case the criterion of 'safety' is satisfied, as a next step, it has to be established whether an applicant can safely and legally travel and gain admittance to Tehran.

⁽²¹⁾ CJEU, *Minister voor Immigratie en Asiel v X and Y and Z v Minister voor Immigratie en Asiel*, joined cases C-199/12 to C-201/12 judgment of 7 November 2013, *X and Y and Z*, paras. 70-76, <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=144215&pageIndex=0&doclang=en&mode=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=7670158>
CJEU, *Bundesrepublik Deutschland v Y and Z*, joined cases C-71/11 and C-99/11, judgment of 5 September 2012, para. 80, <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?docid=126364&doclang=en>

The general situation and the individual circumstances of the applicant should be taken into account in this assessment.

Safe travel: there should be a safe route, through which the applicant can practically travel without undue difficulty, so that he or she can access the area of IPA without serious risks. In this regard, the assessment of the travel route from the airport to the city is part of the ‘safe travel’ criterion and has to be assessed carefully based on relevant COI.

Taking into consideration the generally stable security situation in Iran, the territorial control of the Iranian State over the whole territory, the low numbers of security incidents, and the availability of an international airport, **the requirement of safety of travel would in general be considered met with regard to Tehran.**

Legal travel: there should be no legal obstacles that prevent the applicant from travelling to the safe area.

Iranian law guarantees freedom on internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation and these rights are generally respected by the authorities, albeit with certain exceptions concerning released prisoners, women, and migrants. Leaving the country without completing the military service may stop individuals from returning to the country. Freedom of movement of a woman may also be restricted by her husband. A married woman requires her husband’s written consent to secure a passport or travel abroad. Single women over 18 could obtain a passport without permission, however, they still require their guardian’s consent to travel abroad. Furthermore, administrative bodies deny women access to public institutions, including airports, if they do not cover their hair.

Travel bans may be imposed on persons perceived as a threat to national security, such as former political prisoners, human rights defenders, and journalists.

Apart from the abovementioned groups, it is concluded that there are in principle no legal restrictions to travel to and within Iran, including Tehran.

Gain admittance: the applicant should be allowed to access the safe area by the actor(s) who control it.

Every Iranian citizen has the right to return to the country, even without a passport. Iranians residing abroad who, for some reason, do not possess a valid passport and wish to return to the country, provided they left Iran legally, can re-enter the Islamic Republic of Iran using a *barg-e oboor* (travel permit). These permits are being issued by the Iranian embassies abroad.

According to the law, Iranian nationals are required to register their address within 20 days of changing the place of residence to access administrative and government services.



For those applicants who meet the ‘safety’ criterion, the assessment of the availability of IPA should proceed with an assessment of the requirements of safety and legality of travel and of gaining admittance.



Based on available COI, it is concluded that there are, in principle, no legal restrictions to travel or gain admittance to Tehran, albeit with certain exceptions for women and persons perceived as a threat to national security.

6.4. Reasonableness to settle

Last update: January 2025

According to Article 8(1) QD/QR, IPA can only apply if the applicant 'can reasonably be expected to settle' in the proposed area of internal protection. In case the criteria of safety and travel and admittance are met, the assessment of the availability of IPA in Tehran should proceed with an analysis of its reasonableness in light of the general situation in the city and the individual circumstances of the applicant.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2024](#), 5.2; [COI Update 2024](#), 3. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

6.4.1. General situation

Last update: January 2025

Due to increased climate change challenges, Iran's **food security** is threatened by water shortages. At the same time, economic downturn, depreciation of the Iranian *rial* and trade restrictions have negatively impacted the availability of food. As of September 2024, approximately 30 % of Iran's population lived below the poverty line and suffered from absolute poverty due to inadequate incomes to meet their basic needs. Furthermore, about 6 % of the population endured extreme poverty and struggled to obtain even the most basic food items. Poverty is seen disproportionately in certain regions, such as Sistan and Baluchistan.

Housing is largely a privatised sector, with market dynamics regulating purchase and rental prices. As a result of the persistently high cost of housing, in Tehran, and the decline in people's purchasing power, some people are unable to obtain housing in Tehran and relocate to smaller towns surrounding the capital to avoid high rental costs.

The existence of shanty settlements was reported in all 22 districts of Tehran, with nearly four million people living in informal settlements and impoverished areas in Tehran province. These settlements suffered from poor **sanitary conditions** and irregular access to water and heating. Generally, the situation with **water supply** and sanitation in Iran has improved, particularly in regard to accessibility to water supply in urban areas. The country is grappling with a severe **energy** crisis, resulting in power outages lasting up to eight hours.

Primary **healthcare** is free of charge in Iran, provided in Tehran mainly by the nationwide Iranian Primary Health Care (PHC) network. Although there have been some safety incidents

in recent years, in general, sources report good results, such as vaccination coverage and reduction of child mortality.

Although **employment** saw a moderate growth in recent years, the labour market could not reach its pre-pandemic level, with labour participation showing a significant gender gap. Unemployment in Iran varies among subgroups, being the lowest among men and much higher among university graduates, women and the youth. Due to the prolonged economic downturn, scarce job opportunities, and limited access to employment, vulnerable Iranians are finding it increasingly difficult to fulfil their basic needs.



The general circumstances prevailing in Tehran, assessed in relation to the factors above, do not preclude the reasonableness to settle in the city. However, a careful examination should take place, taking into account the individual circumstances of the applicant.

6.4.2. Individual circumstances

Last update: January 2025

In addition to the general situation in the area of potential IPA, the assessment of whether it is reasonable to settle in that part of the country should take into account the individual circumstances of the applicant.

The individual considerations could relate to certain vulnerabilities of the applicant as well as to available coping mechanisms, which would have an impact in determining to what extent it would be reasonable for the applicant to settle in a particular area.

Please note that this is a non-exhaustive list:

- **Gender:** women and girls in Iran are generally subjected to discriminatory restrictions and may need the support of a male family member in order to access different services and to exercise certain rights. Women and girls encounter additional difficulties in relation to education, work, housing, etc. A husband can determine where the couple lives and can prevent his wife from taking certain jobs that he considered contrary to 'family values'. Therefore, the gender of the applicant should be taken into account when considering reasonableness in conjunction with their family status and available support.
- **Family status/support network:** single people, and in particular single women, may face difficulties when resettling without a support network. Additional obstacles may be related to the family status of the woman, such as being a single mother or a widow.
- **Age:** young age as well as elderly age could significantly limit the applicant's access to means of subsistence such as through employment, making him or her dependent on other providers. Therefore, this element should be seen in conjunction with the



available support by family or a broader support network. In the case of children, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration, for example, with regard to access to basic education.

- **Ethnic and/or religious background:** members of ethnic and religious minorities would face difficulties relocating and assimilating into the community in an area dominated by another ethnic or religious group if they would be without familial, tribal, or political networks.
- **Professional and educational background and financial means:** the professional background of the applicant, their level of education and available financial means should be taken into account when assessing the reasonableness of IPA, and in particular the access of the applicant to means of basic subsistence.

It should be noted that these factors would often intersect in the case of the particular applicant, leading to different conclusions on the reasonableness of IPA. In some cases, more than one element of vulnerability would indicate that IPA is not reasonable for the particular applicant, while in other cases, they would balance each other.



The assessment whether it is reasonable to settle in Tehran should take into account the individual circumstances of the applicant, especially gender, family status, and ethno-religious background. Single women especially could face difficulties settling in Tehran, as women and girls in Iran are generally subjected to discriminatory restrictions.

6.4.3. Conclusion on reasonableness

Last update: January 2025

The general conclusions on the reasonableness of IPA for particular profiles of applicants are based on an assessment of the general situation in Tehran and the individual circumstances of such applicants, as outlined in the sections above.



Taking into account the gender, family status and ethnic and/or religious background of the applicant, it could be substantiated that IPA in Tehran would be reasonable for single able-bodied men and married couples without children, including when they do not have a support network. In the case of families with children, internal protection alternative may be reasonable, including without a support network, where the best interests of the child have been duly assessed. In the case of couples, basic subsistence in Tehran has to be ensured for both spouses. In order to ensure their basic needs, other profiles of applicants would in general need a support network in the area of potential IPA.

Although the situation related to settling in Tehran could entail certain hardship, it can still be concluded that such applicants would be able to ensure their basic subsistence, housing, shelter and hygiene, and access to basic healthcare.

It should be highlighted that these conclusions are without prejudice to the criteria of safety, travel and admittance and that the individual circumstances in the case at hand should be fully examined.



7. Exclusion

[Article 12\(2\) QD/QR](#)

[Article 17 QD/QR](#)



The contents of this chapter include:

[7.1. Exclusion based on the commission of international crimes](#)

[7.2. Exclusion based on the commission of a serious crime](#)

[7.3. Exclusion based on acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations](#)

[7.4. Exclusion based on constituting a danger to the community or to the security of the Member State](#)



For general guidance on Exclusion, see [EUAA Practical Guide: Exclusion](#) and [EUAA Practical Guide on Exclusion for Serious \(Non-Political\) Crimes](#).



Given the serious consequences that exclusion may have for the individual, the exclusion grounds should be interpreted restrictively and applied with caution.

The examples mentioned in this chapter are non-exhaustive and non-conclusive. Each case should be examined on its own merits.

In the context of Iran, various circumstances may require consideration of the potential applicability of exclusion grounds. The Qualification Directive does not set a time limit for the application of the grounds for exclusion. Applicants may be excluded in relation to events occurring in the recent and more distant past.

More specifically, the need to examine possible exclusion issues in the context of Iran may arise, for example, in cases of applicants being former or current members of the groups cited below. This list is non-exhaustive:

- Members of the Iranian government institutions, such as government officials and members of political or administrative institutions, of a certain rank or level.
- Members of the Iranian military, security and police forces, including the IRGC, Basij, morality police, Quds forces and intelligence services.
- Judicial officials, prosecution authorities, prison officials and detention personnel.

- Members of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI), also known as Mojahedin-eKhalq (MEK) or Mojahedin-eKhalq Organization (MKO).
- Arab militant groups, including the armed wing of the separatist Arab Struggle for Movement for the Liberation of Ahwaz (ASMLA) (Harakat al-Nida in Arabic).
- Baluch militant groups such as the Jaish Al-Adl and the Ansar al-Furqan.
- Persons who participated in or provided support to activities of Iranian proxies or non-state actors in regional conflicts, such as those in Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, Syria.
- Other individuals who committed serious crimes in or outside Iran, such as drug trafficking and trafficking in human beings.

In relation to potential exclusion considerations, see also the chapters [Actors of persecution or serious harm](#) and [Refugee status](#).

7.1. Exclusion based on the commission of international crimes

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[Article 12\(2\)\(a\) QD/QR](#)

[Article 17\(1\)\(a\) QD/QR](#)

It can be noted that the ground 'crime against peace' is not likely to be of relevance in the cases of applicants from Iran.

Acts reported to be committed in the context of the following past and current confrontations in Iran could be also relevant for Article 12(2)(a) QD/QR and Article 17(1)(a) QD/QR, as they may, depending on the circumstances, amount to 'war crimes' and/or 'crimes against humanity', if the legal requirements in this regard are fulfilled:

- Kurdish rebellion in Iran (1979).
- Khuzestan insurgency (1979).
- Iraq - Iran war (international armed conflict, 1980 - 1988).
- KDPI–Komala conflict (1984–1991).
- KDPI insurgency (1989–1996).
- Arab civil unrest and insurgency on Khuzestan (1999-2020).
- Sistan and Baluchestan insurgency (2004–present).
- Iran–PJAK Conflict (2004–present).
- Western Iran clashes between Kurdish insurgent parties and Iranian security forces (2016–present).
- Iran–Israel confrontations (2024).



[[Country Focus 2024](#), 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 4.7.2; [COI Human Rights](#), 3.2]

Moreover, reported crimes such as murder, extrajudicial executions, unlawful killings, torture, enforced disappearances, rape, political or religious persecution and other inhumane acts by the Iran authorities, including members of the military, security and police forces, judicial and administrative institutions, prison officials etc. could amount to crimes against humanity when committed as part of a widespread and systematic attack against the civilian population.

Namely, in 1988, Iranian authorities, summarily and extrajudicially executed thousands of political prisoners across the country with many implicated individuals still currently enjoying impunity and holding prominent positions within the government [[Country Focus 2024](#), 3.11]. More recently, mass arrests, extrajudicial executions and other unlawful killings, torture, enforced disappearances, and other grave human rights violations were reported during and following the ‘Woman, Life, Freedom’ protests that erupted in Iran in September 2022 [[Country Focus 2024](#), 4.2]. Security forces reportedly used live ammunition, including handguns and automatic weapons against protesters and bystanders [[Country Focus 2024](#), 4.2]. Sexual and gender-based violence was used against women, men, and children, including LGBTIQ persons detained in relation to the 2022 protests [[Country Focus 2024](#), 3.8]. The use of the death penalty and systematic corporal punishments such as floggings against critics of the authorities were also reported [[Country Focus 2024](#), 3.9.3; 4.1].

Crimes in the context of past events, such as the Kurdish opposition groups’ insurgencies and uprisings could also trigger the consideration of exclusion in relation to ‘crimes against humanity’.

See more information on human rights violations committed by different actors under [Actors of persecution or serious harm](#).

7.2. Exclusion based on the commission of a serious crime

Last update: January 2025

[Article 12\(2\)\(b\) QD/QR](#)

[Article 17\(1\)\(b\) QD/QR](#)

Criminal activity in Iran, including drug trafficking and trafficking in human beings, women and girls is reported in Iran [[Country Focus 2024](#), 4.11.7]. Such serious (non-political) crimes would trigger the application of [Article 12\(2\)\(b\)/Article 17\(1\)\(b\) QD/QR](#).

Violence against women and children (for example, in relation to domestic violence, sexual violence, honour-based violence, including honour killings, forced and child marriage) is also

widely reported in Iran and could also potentially amount to a serious (non-political) crime. [[Country Focus 2024](#), 4.11.4; 4.11.6; 4.11.8]

Some serious (non-political) crimes could be linked to an armed conflict (e.g. if they are committed in order to finance the activities of an armed group) or could amount to crime against humanity committed as a part of a systematic or widespread attack against a civilian population, in which case they should instead be examined under [Article 12\(2\)\(a\)/Article 17\(1\)\(a\) QD/QR](#).

In relation to exclusion from refugee status, a crime could fall under this ground if committed in Iran or any third country (for example, while the applicant resided in countries of transit, etc.) prior to the admission of the applicant as a refugee, which means the time of issuing a residence permit based on the granting of refugee status. In relation to subsidiary protection, serious crimes committed by Iran applicants in the host country, would also lead to exclusion.

7.3. Exclusion based on acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations

Last update: January 2025

[Article 12\(2\)\(c\) QD/QR](#)

[Article 17\(1\)\(c\) QD/QR](#)

(Former) membership in groups such as the IRGC or PMOI/MEK/MKO could trigger relevant considerations and require an examination of the applicant's activities under [Article 12\(2\)\(c\)/Article 17\(1\)\(c\) QD/QR](#), in addition to the considerations under [Article 12\(2\)\(b\)/Article 17\(1\)\(b\) QD/QR](#).

The application of exclusion should be based on an individual assessment of the specific facts in the context of the applicant's activities within that organisation. The position of the applicant within the organisation would constitute a relevant consideration and a high-ranking position could justify a (rebuttable) presumption of individual responsibility. Nevertheless, it remains necessary to examine all relevant circumstances before an exclusion decision can be made.

Where the available information indicates possible involvement in crimes against peace, war crimes or crimes against humanity, the assessment would need to be made in light of the exclusion grounds under [Article 12\(2\)\(a\)/Article 17\(1\)\(a\) QD/QR](#).



7.4. Exclusion based on constituting a danger to the community or to the security of the Member State

Last update: January 2025

[Article 17\(1\)\(d\) QD/QR](#)

In the examination of the application for international protection, the exclusion ground under Article 17(1)(d) QD/QR (danger to the community or the security of the Member State) is only applicable to persons otherwise eligible for subsidiary protection.

Unlike the other exclusion grounds, the application of this provision is based on a forward-looking assessment of risk. Nevertheless, the examination takes into account the past and/or current activities of the applicant, such as association with certain groups considered to represent a danger to the security of the Member States or criminal activities of the applicant.

Annex I: List of abbreviations and glossary

Term	Definition
<i>Artesh</i>	Regular army
ASMLA	Arab Struggle for Movement for the Liberation of Ahwaz
Asylum Procedures Directive	Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection.
<i>Basij</i>	Mobilisation
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
COI	Country of origin information
<i>Diyeh</i>	Blood money paid to the victim or their closest relative
<i>Efsad fil-arz</i>	A crime of 'corruption on Earth', punishable by death
EU	European Union
EU+	Member States of the European Union plus Norway and Switzerland
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
FARAJA	Law Enforcement Command of the Islamic Republic of Iran
<i>hadd (plural: hudud)</i>	A category of crime under Islamic Law. Punishment for crimes against God prescribed in the Quran, sometimes punishable by death.
<i>Herasat office</i>	A security service of the ministry of Intelligence
IPA	Internal protection alternative
IRGC	Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps
KDPI	Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran
<i>Kolbar</i>	Worker who transports goods on his/her back across the Iran, Iraq, Syria and Türkiye borders (mainly referring to Kurds)



Term	Definition
LGBTIQ	<p>LGBTIQ persons are persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - who are attracted to others of their own gender (lesbian, gay) or any gender (bisexual); - whose gender identity and/or expression does not correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth (trans, non-binary); - who are born with sex characteristics that do not fit the typical definition of male or female (intersex); or - whose identity does not fit into a binary classification of sexuality and/or gender (queer).
<i>Moharebeh</i>	A crime of 'waging war against God', punishable by death
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PMOI/MEK/MKO	People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI), also known as Mojahedin-e-Khalq (MEK) or Mojahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO)
QD (Qualification Directive)	Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted.
QR (Qualification Regulation)	Regulation (EU) 2024/1347 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection and for the content of the protection granted, amending Council Directive 2003/109/EC and repealing Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council
Qesas	Retributive punishment for murder and other violent crimes
Sharia	The religious law of Islam; Islamic canonical law.



Term	Definition
SOGIESC	Persons who are perceived as not conforming to religious and/or social norms because of their sexual orientation (SO) and/or gender identity and expression (GIE), and sex characteristics (SC), including the treatment of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or trans-gender, intersex and queer individuals.
<i>Sokhtbar</i>	Fuel carrier (mainly refers to Baluches)
<i>Ta'zir</i>	Crimes punished at the discretion of the judge
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States of America
USDOS	US Department of State
<i>zina</i>	A criminal offence in Islamic law referring to unlawful sexual intercourse, fornication or adultery.





Annex II: Country of origin information references

The main COI sources used in the common analysis are the following (listed alphabetically by reference used in the text)	
COI Atheists	<p>EUAA Country of Origin Information Query: Iran - Situation of atheists and non-religious individuals, including legislation, treatment by state actors and society, availability of state protection</p> <p>(November 2023)</p> <p>Available at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2023_11_EUAA_COI_Query_Response_Q61_Iran_atheists.pdf </p>
COI Desertion	<p>EUAA Country of Origin Information Query: Iran - Desertion/draft evasion from the army and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)</p> <p>(February 2022)</p> <p>Available at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2022_01_Q6_EUAA_COI_Query_Response_IRAN_Desertion_Army_IRGC.pdf </p>
COI Musicians	<p>EUAA Country of Origin Information Query: Iran - Treatment of musicians and their family members, including those who are considered critics of the government or dissidents, by authorities and pro-government groups, including the Basij and Sepah; treatment upon return</p> <p>(July 2024)</p> <p>Available at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2024_07_EUAA_COI_Query_Response_Q45_Iran_treatment_musicians.pdf </p>
COI Human Rights	<p>EUAA Country of Origin Information Query: Iran – Human rights situation (January 2023 – 7 October 2024)</p> <p>(17 October 2024)</p> <p>Available at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2024_10_EUAA_COI_Query_Response_Q72_Iran_Human_Rights_Situation.pdf </p>

COI Update 2024	<p>EUAA Country of Origin Information Query: Iran - Major political, security, and humanitarian developments (18 April 2024 – 7 October 2024)</p> <p>(7 October 2024)</p> <p>Available at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2024_10_EUAA_COI_Query_Response_Q67_Iran_Major_political_human_rights_security_and_humanitarian_developments.pdf</p>
Country Focus 2024	<p>EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Iran - Country Focus</p> <p>(June 2024)</p> <p>Available at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2024_06_EUAA_COI_Report_Iran_Country_Focus.pdf</p>

