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3.5.2. Baluches

COMMON ANALYSIS
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).

See other contents related to Ethnic minorities:

- 3.5.1. Kurds, including Faili Kurds and Yarsan Kurds
- *3.5.2. Baluches*

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