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Iran: EUAA report focuses on Iran’s governance and human rights issues



The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) has just published its first Country of Origin Information (COI) report on Iran, focusing on the country's governance, security institutions, judicial system and socio-economic conditions in Tehran. The report aims to assist EU+ countries in evaluating protection needs of Iranian nationals applying for asylum in the EU. It will further inform the upcoming Country Guidance publication on Iran.

Iran operates under a hybrid system that blends theocratic authority with republican elements and is composed of both nominated and elected institutions. The state is led by the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and safeguarded by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), and its paramilitary wing, the Basij, which permeates all aspects of the Iranian society. Intelligence agencies operate domestically and internationally, targeting activists and dissidents.

The report highlights the nationwide protests following the death of Mahsa (Zhina) Amini in September 2022 while in custody of the morality police for violating mandatory hijab rules. The protests spread to all 31 provinces, and were met with violence by security forces, including mass arrests and killings. By September 2023, 551 protestors were killed, including 49 women and 68 children, with the highest fatalities reported in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities.

Human rights defenders and lawyers supporting protesters faced harassments and arbitrary arrests. Despite crackdowns, Iranian women continued to resist compulsory hijab rules in the streets and on social media, and in April 2024, the morality police resumed its street patrols to enforce these rules.

The report also addresses ongoing targeting of ethnic and religious minorities, such as Kurds, Baluches, Ahwazi Arabs, Christians (including converts) and Bahá?ís, as well as the use of hate speech against LGBTIQ persons.

EU Asylum situation for Iranian nationals

Between January 2023 and March 2024, Iranians **lodged 20 000 applications for international protection in the EU+**. The number of monthly applications began to increase in October 2022, the month following the death of Mahsa Amini, **registering a 51 % increase** compared to August of that year. Overall, the number of applications from Iranian nationals went up by almost 1/3 compared to the previous 15 months. Germany was the main destination country, receiving almost three fifths of all Iranian applications.

EU+ countries have issued **11 000 first instance decisions** on Iranian applications between January 2023 and March 2024, **with a recognition rate of 45 %**, in line with the previous 15 months. The overwhelming majority of positive decisions granted consisted of refugee status. At the end of March 2024, almost 16 000 Iranian cases were pending a first instance decision.

Background

The EUAA Country of Origin Information reports aim to provide accurate and reliable up-to-date information on third countries to support EU+ national asylum authorities involved in international protection procedures.

The report was prepared in accordance with the EUAA COI Report Methodology and was drafted by EUAA COI Sector's researchers. The report was reviewed by several COI Units in EU+ countries. This information is a crucial component when assessing individual protection needs and, separately, developing Country Guidance.

Download the EUAA COI report - Iran Country Focus

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