

Please cite as: EUAA, '3.1.1. Members and sympathisers of opposition parties and movements (perceived as) critical of the Iranian authorities' in *Country Guidance: Iran*, January 2025.

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

COMMON ANALYSIS
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.

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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.

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 oppositions 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.

See other contents related to Political dissent and opposition:

- *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

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