

# SYSTEMATIC APARTHEID AGAINST THE KURDISH NATION IN IRAN

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report highlights the systematic apartheid faced by the Kurdish nation in Iran, detailing the political, legal, social, and economic discrimination imposed by the Iranian regime since the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Despite the Iranian state's international legal obligations, the Kurdish people endure state-sponsored oppression, cultural erasure, and severe human rights violations.

### Political and Legal Discrimination

The Iranian constitution enshrines discrimination, restricting citizenship rights to Twelver Shi'ites and institutionalizing exclusion. The Islamic Penal Code harshly targets Kurdish activists, using charges like "rebellion" to impose the death penalty without fair trials. Political representation is inaccessible to Kurds, as only Shi'ite loyalists can hold public office.

### Social and Cultural Apartheid

Linguistic discrimination is severe, with Persian mandated as the sole official language. Kurdish language activists face imprisonment, while government budgets solely support Persian cultural development. Social apartheid extends to the educational system, where Kurdish children struggle due to forced Persian-language instruction.

### Economic Marginalization

Kurdistan suffers economic neglect, with minimal state investment despite its resource wealth. High unemployment, poverty, and food insecurity are prevalent. Many Kurds are forced into hazardous jobs as porters (Kolbers), risking death from harsh conditions and military violence.

### Environmental Destruction and Eco-Terrorism

The regime's environmental policies have devastated Kurdistan's ecosystem. Lake Urmia has nearly dried up due to water mismanagement. Deliberate forest fires, unsustainable dam construction, and exploitation of natural resources reflect an environmental war aimed at displacing Kurdish communities.

### Psychological and State-Sponsored Terrorism

The Iranian regime wields psychological terrorism through mass propaganda, forced confessions, and targeted assassinations of Kurdish activists. The Revolutionary Guards engage in state-

sponsored terrorism beyond Iran's borders, with hundreds of Kurdish dissidents assassinated worldwide.

## Call to Action

The report calls on the international community, including the United Nations and human rights organizations, to:

- Enforce Compliance: Demand Iran's adherence to international human rights treaties.
- Recognize Kurdish Rights: Support the Kurdish people's struggle for self-determination.
- Hold the Iranian Regime Accountable: Impose sanctions and pursue legal action against Iran's human rights violations.

The Kurdish people's resilience continues despite decades of systemic repression. International solidarity and decisive action are imperative to end these human rights abuses and promote peace and justice in the region.

## INTRODUCTION

Forty-five years ago, following the Iranian revolution, a democratic system elected by the people was established in East Kurdistan due to the presence of secular political parties and organizations. In other parts of Iran, a political and religious Islamic system was established. After the Kurdish people boycotted the April 1st, 1979, referendum for the Islamic Republic, the newly established regime under Ayatollah Khomeini declared jihad against the Kurdish nation. According to Islamic principles, the order of jihad, or holy war, is issued by the Supreme Leader of Islam against non-Muslim nations, despite more than 90% of the Kurdish people being Muslims.

Before Khomeini's declaration of jihad on August 19th, 1979, the Iranian regime attacked Kurdish towns and villages from several areas during Newroz of the same year. This report briefly describes the different aspects of the Iranian regime's systematic apartheid against the Kurdish people in East Kurdistan.

## DEFINITION

Apartheid refers to the state, systematic, and legal application of racist policies, originally against Black people in South Africa. This led to the rise of the anti-apartheid movement and the eventual release of Nelson Mandela after 27 years in prison. Mandela, who became a symbol of the struggle against racism, was elected President of South Africa from 1994 to 1999.

Similar apartheid policies are being implemented in Iran against the Kurdish nation, though this is not widely recognized in the Western world. In Iran, apartheid has taken on a state, systematic, legal, and religious form. Discrimination in Iran is legally organized and begins with the country's constitution, which is based on Islamic principles. Non-Shiites and those who do not believe in the absolute authority of the jurist are deprived of citizenship rights.

Apartheid in the Islamic Republic begins with the country's constitution. The Islamic Republic is a religious republic whose official religion is Islam. According to Article 13 of the Iranian Constitution, the country's official religion is Twelver Shi'ism. In other words, under the Islamic regime in Iran, human rights are not recognized universally; instead, rights are granted based on religious affiliation, like how rights in South Africa were based on race, with white people having all the rights.

## LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

The Iranian state is a party to numerous international human rights conventions and treaties that are legally binding and must be implemented. Some of these treaties were signed and ratified during the Shah's regime, and some after the Islamic Republic came to power. Iran is a party to international human rights conventions, especially the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. However, since the establishment of the Islamic regime, both the constitution and other laws of Iran have been contrary to the content of these international treaties. Despite this, the Islamic Republic has not withdrawn from these treaties and is obliged to implement their contents.

The Iranian constitution is a "scriptural and Islamic" constitution, based on an ideology, and all articles of the Iranian constitution and laws follow this principle. According to Iranian law, people who do not have a scriptural affiliation, such as those who are not Shiites of the 12 Imams and do not believe in the absolute authority of the jurist, are not considered Iranian citizens and are deprived of all citizenship rights. The only institution that has the right to interpret the constitution and laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran is the Guardian Council<sup>1</sup>, whose members are appointed by the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The content of the Iranian constitution is apartheid, which means discrimination against the country's citizens. All officials of the Islamic Republic, from the bottom up, must be Shiites and believe in the absolute authority of the jurist (Velayat-e Motlaqaye Faqih). People who belong to other religious groups, including Sunnis and Shiites who do not believe in the absolute authority of the jurist, cannot participate in the country's governance process. According to Article 4 of the Iranian Constitution, all laws and regulations of the country must be based on Islamic principles and standards, which means, according to Article 12 of the constitution, laws must be drafted on the basis of the Shiite sect of Twelver Shī'ism<sup>2</sup>.

The army and the Revolutionary Guards of the Islamic Republic of Iran are armed and ideological forces. Their duty is not only to protect Iran's borders but also to suppress the so-called "enemies of God and Islam" within the country. According to the Iranian constitution, the army and the Revolutionary Guards are based on the verse of the Qur'an: "And prepare against them whatever force and horses you can, with which you may destroy the enemy of God, your enemy, and others besides them." On August 19, 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini declared jihad against the Kurdish nation, calling it an infidel and enemy of God. The hostility of the Islamic Republic of Iran is not only based on the jihadist orders of Khomeini but is also systematic and constitutional.

According to the Islamic Republic's constitution, Iran's judicial system is based on preventing "deviations from the Islamic Ummah." Accordingly, all imprisonment, torture, killing, and even assassination of opponents of the regime, especially Kurdish activists, are seen as part of keeping the Islamic Ummah clean.

## THE PENAL CODE

After the killing of Jina (Mahsa) Amini by the moral police of the Iranian regime on September 16, 2022, and the beginning of the "Jin Jiyan Azadi" (Women, Life, and Freedom) movement, the Islamic Republic of Iran imposed the punishment of "rebellion<sup>3</sup>" on most Kurdish political prisoners. Under Iran's Islamic Penal Code, treason is a security charge punishable by the death penalty. According

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<sup>1</sup> شورای نگهبان (*Shourā-ye Negahbān*)

<sup>2</sup> شیعه اثنی عشری

<sup>3</sup> Baghy (Arabic: البغي) (lit: trespass) is the riot or rebellion against the Imam or the Islamic ruler. Prominent examples of baghy are battles of Jamal, Siffin, and Nahrawan during the government of Imam Ali (a). There are disagreements among Islamic denominations over the details of baghy. For baghy to obtain, some conditions must hold: one's parting from the Imam is because of doubts, one is so powerful that there is no way other than fight, and one is outside the territories in which the Imam has the authority. The agent of baghy is called "baghi". There are two classes of baghis: those who have a brigade and those who do not. After the battle, the two classes are treated differently. There is a disagreement over whether baghis count as unbelievers (kafir) or just vice (fasiq). An Islamic ruler first advise the baghis to stop their rebellion, and if they do not listen, he will fight them. Baghy is different from muharaba.

<sup>3</sup>

to Article 287 of the Islamic Penal Code, a “rebel” is a person who fights against the “foundation of the Islamic Republic system” and takes armed action. Consequently, according to Article 288 of the same law, if a rebel is arrested before armed conflict and the use of weapons, their punishment shall not be death. Those executed for the crime of “rebellion” are not given the opportunity to defend themselves and are not allowed to hire a lawyer. The defense lawyer has practically no right or authority to defend the accused and their duty is a formality to demonstrate the legality of the sentences imposed. People accused of “rebellion” without committing a crime can be sentenced to death under Article 287 of the Islamic Penal Code.

The punishment of rebellion is generally carried out only in Kurdistan and Baluchistan, serving as a legal provision for the administration of systematic apartheid even when imposing sanctions. Most political prisoners in the Persian-speaking regions face the punishment for “war and corruption on earth,” which can result in two to 15 years in prison instead of the death penalty under Article 19 of the Islamic Penal Code.

## POLITICAL AND SECURITY APARTHEID

The use of violence against society is another aspect of the apartheid process against the Kurdish nation. Between September 2022 and April 2023 alone, following the assassination of Jina Amini by the Iranian regime, 56% of the deaths in demonstrations occurred in Kurdistan and Baluchistan. According to statistics, more than 70% of executed political prisoners are Kurds, and more than 50% of political prisoners in Iran are Kurds, despite Kurds making up only 14% of Iran's population.

The journal Strategic Defense Studies of the National Defense Military University has described the increase in the Sunni population as a security threat. In response, the Islamic Republic of Iran has attempted to prevent population growth in regions such as East Kurdistan and Sistani-Baluchistan. Research by the Ministry of Health's Research Directorate indicates that the incidence of upper gastrointestinal tract cancers, particularly stomach and esophagus cancer, is higher in the Kurdistan provinces than in the rest of Iran. Treatment for this cancer in Kurdistan is very difficult, if not impossible, and patients often have to travel to Tehran or Isfahan for care. The main causes of this cancer are economic and political pressure and the resulting systematic distribution of drugs among the Kurdish people.

## LEGAL APARTHEID AGAINST MINORITIES IN IRAN

In addition to the above, the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran implements political and systematic apartheid in the following ways: discrimination between Muslims and non-Muslims, discrimination among non-Muslims (e.g., Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Yarsanis, Baha'is, and atheists), differences between Shiites and other sects of Islam, differences among Ja'fari Muslims, and discrimination between men and women. This also includes distinctions between Muslim and non-Muslim husbands and wives.

The ideology of cleansing identities, in addition to the official identity that the Islamic Republic of Iran and its predecessor, the monarchy, have targeted, is systematically and legitimately carried out. This is the same policy that was implemented against Black people in South Africa. All relevant laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran are contrary to the human rights treaties and declarations to

which Iran is a signatory and must legally comply with. Iran has tried to find “jurisprudence” and “legitimate” excuses for its laws, thus making apartheid a religious pretext and part of the “jihad<sup>4</sup> to Persianize” the Kurdish nation. When the leader of a regime declares jihad against a nation, it means expelling that nation from Islam, and it becomes the duty of the Islamic Ummah to either cleanse that nation from the face of the earth or forcibly convert it to Islam.

## LINGUISTIC APARTHEID

Iran's Persian language development budget in 2021 was about 270 billion rials<sup>5</sup>. Iran spends 110 million rials to create each Persian word. In June 2018, Khamenei, the leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, emphasized the need to preserve the strength and authenticity of the Persian language as an "element of Iran's national identity." On June 21 of this year, Mohammad Mahdi Esmaili, the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, called the increase in the cultural budget for the development of the Persian language one of the main priorities of the presidential government.

Meanwhile, other languages in the political geography of Iran, including Azerbaijani Turkic, Kurdish, Turkmen, Gilaki, Arabic, Balochi, and others, have not been allocated budgets. Cultural activists who voluntarily work to revive their languages at their own expense are subject to punishment. They face heavy sentences and imprisonment for their efforts. An example is the five-year prison sentence for Zara Mohammadi, a Kurdish language teacher, in Sanandaj in 2019. Currently, more than a dozen activists for oppressed languages are imprisoned by the Islamic Republic of Iran for the crime of teaching in their mother tongue.

Linguistic apartheid, also known as glossophobia, is unfair behavior based on the use of one language against others. For example, when a government designates a language as "official," those whose mother tongue is a "non-official" language are judged on wealth, education, social status, personality, or other traits, such as accent, leading to discrimination.

Finnish writer and linguist Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, in the mid-1980s, defined linguistic apartheid as discrimination against other nations through language, legitimizing the unequal distribution of power and resources. Language discrimination is a clear sign of social and cultural apartheid by the ruling nation.

The choice of Persian as the "official" language in Iran has not unified Iranian nationalities but has caused differentiation in cultural, social, and economic growth among regions. This makes Persian a colonial language among other nations in Iran. The colonial language benefits elites dependent on the government and harms the majority of the non-Persian population. Although Persian may be a beautiful or rich language, it is not neutral. It uses cultural concepts and values to dissolve other languages, cultures, and values, with judgments based on Persian cultural references.

It is natural for people to want to belong to a society, often through social and linguistic groups. While some groups easily attract government attention and resources, others, such as national, ethnic, and linguistic groups, face discrimination and threats from the central government. American linguist Carmen Fought believes that language use can classify individuals into social groups. In Iran, Persian speakers often view those who speak Kurdish or Turkic as less intelligent or

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<sup>4</sup> Ayatollah Khomeini declared Jihad against Kurdish people on August 19<sup>th</sup>, 1979.

<sup>5</sup> Government budget for the year 1401, [Link](#)



cultured, with Persian language and central regions seen as superior. Non-Persian languages become a bridge for prejudice against non-Persian nations.

Linguistic colonization has had a destructive effect on the traditions, culture, and values of non-Persian societies. Non-Persian people are forced to use Farsi for business, administrative, and legal relations, threatening other languages due to the central government's neglect. Linguistic colonization through trade, film, and cultural genocide destroys non-Persian societies. The use of Persian in education, trade, and industry is a policy to change and destroy other cultures and languages in Iran. This cultural attack weakens the unity of non-Persian regions, preventing them from developing and uniting. Persian colonialism, unlike Western colonialism, not only loots resources but also aims to destroy non-Persian languages, creating class differences based on language.

Several post-colonial theorists have researched the relationship between language discrimination and the oppression of other cultures. Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o, in "Decolonizing the Mind," argues that language is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture. Linguistic discrimination caused by colonialism erases pre-colonial history and identities. For example, African slaves were forbidden to use their mother tongue, disconnecting them from their culture. Similar signs are seen in Tehran and central cities of Iran, where children of non-Persian families forget their mother tongue and distance themselves from their native culture.

Linguistic discrimination often occurs through education. In non-Farsi regions, the foreignness of Persian at the start of primary education causes children to learn slowly, resulting in lower educational quality compared to Farsi-speaking regions. This soft policy suppresses and colonizes other languages, though mastering the colonial language may provide better economic opportunities for non-Persian people.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasizes that children have the right to use their mother tongue. Suppression of non-Persian languages in Iran's educational system violates this treaty, which Iran has signed. Children forced to study a foreign language from childhood face harm, increasing illiteracy rates. For example, when the French imposed their language on Algerians, literacy rates dropped significantly.

In non-Persian regions, Persian is used as the language of government and business, similar to colonial languages. Non-Persian people may have the right to vote for officials but are ridiculed and humiliated for not speaking Persian fluently, reducing their chances of holding high-ranking positions. This creates serious obstacles in legal and administrative matters.

The language policies of Iran's central government cause language discrimination, affecting people based on language use. In workplaces, marketing, and education, non-Persian speakers face discrimination. Teachers often force students to use Persian, and non-Persian dialects are sources of economic and social problems.

These policies threaten the elimination of non-Persian languages. Allocating budgets for Persian threatens non-Persian languages and nations. This cultural invasion causes other languages to mix with Persian, leading to their disintegration.

The Islamic Republic's systematic apartheid against the Kurdish language endangers its existence. The Kurdish language is one of the oldest indigenous languages in the region and the world. Preserving and developing this language is crucial for human development and social peace.

## SOCIAL APARTHEID AND DRUGS

Since the beginning of the Iranian regime's rule, the state has systematically promoted the sale and use of drugs among the Kurdish people to passively exclude youth from education, participation in social activities, and political struggle for their national rights. According to the Iranian regime, opium use, which is readily available in the markets of towns and villages in East Kurdistan, accounts for 40% of all drug use in Iran, despite Kurdistan having less than 20% of the country's population. More than 30 tons of drugs are trafficked annually in the four central provinces of East Kurdistan: Ilam, Kermanshah, Kurdistan, and Urmia. The Iranian regime has established the largest drug laboratories in the cities of Piranshahr and Sardasht in East Kurdistan. The average age of drug use in East Kurdistan is 21 years. This indicates the Iranian regime's strategic plan to disable the creative force and social dynamo of Kurdistan, which could otherwise become substantial human capital and create new opportunities for the region.

## ECONOMIC APARTHEID

The Iranian regime is committing economic genocide against the Kurdish nation, employing strategies reminiscent of the Soviet Union's Holodomor, which led to the deaths of over 5 million Ukrainians between 1932 and 1933. Investment in Kurdistan aimed at establishing and operating factories or industrial centers is prohibited for various political and economic reasons.

The unemployment rate in East Kurdistan's provinces consistently exceeds the national average in Iran. For instance, in 2019, the unemployment rate in Urmia, Kurdistan, Kermanshah, Ilam, and Lorestan provinces was 44.38%, which is 5.88 percentage points higher than the Iranian national average. Kermanshah province, despite having 46.5% oil resources, ranks as the most underdeveloped region, closely followed by Kurdistan province with 46.2%. However, the Iranian regime denies locals access to the economic benefits derived from these natural resources.

According to official statistics from the Islamic Republic of Iran, the provinces of Kurdistan experience the highest levels of food insecurity in the country. In contrast, Kurdish citizens are often forced into precarious and hazardous jobs, such as becoming *Kolbers*<sup>6</sup>—porters who carry loads ranging from 50 to 150 kilograms over distances of 10 to 100 kilometers across Kurdistan's treacherous mountain borders. In addition to facing harsh environmental conditions, *Kolbers* are frequently shot, arrested, and subjected to home confiscations by Iranian security forces.

On average, more than 200 Kurdish *Kolbers* are killed annually by the Iranian regime. In 2019 alone, at least 252 *Kolbers* were killed or injured by Iranian forces. In January 2020, more than 20 *Kolbers* were either killed or injured. This systematic targeting mirrors the Holodomor experience, reflecting

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<sup>6</sup> A kolbar (Persian: کولبر) or kolber (Kurdish: کۆلبەر) or cross-border labor[1] is a worker who is employed to carry goods on his/her back across the borders of Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey legally or illegally. Most kolbars live in Iranian Kurdistan, where the Kurdish provinces are among the poorest in the country. Since kolbar work is mostly considered illegal, kolbar workers have no insurance, retirement plans and unions. Among the kolbars are highly educated young people, who have no job because of high unemployment in Kurdish provinces. According to Iranian statistics, only in the Kurdistan Province more than twenty thousand people depend on being a kolbar for sustenance. The phenomenon of kolbari is tied to the de-development of the east Kurdistan region (Iran).

a deliberate policy aimed at starving the population and implementing social and economic genocide against the Kurdish people.

Despite Article 13 of the Iranian Constitution, which mandates the state to "establish a sound and just economy, health, and general insurance," the Iranian regime systematically enforces economic discrimination against Kurdistan and other marginalized regions such as Baluchistan.

According to official statistics, the poverty rate in East Kurdistan's provinces was significantly above the Iranian national average in 2021, second only to Sistan and Baluchestan. The poverty rate in Sistan and Baluchestan was 62%, while it stood at 42% in the Kurdish provinces of Ilam, Kermanshah, Sanandaj, and Urmia. By comparison, Persian-speaking provinces reported an average poverty rate of 17.3%, with Tehran at 19%, Semnan at 17%, and Yazd at 16%.

The Iranian regime's policies toward Kurdistan reflect several strategic objectives:

**1. Forced Migration and Labor Deprivation:**

By perpetuating poverty, the regime forces young people and the labor force from Kurdistan to migrate to Persian-speaking provinces, stripping Kurdistan of its most vital and dynamic workforce. This unspoken ban on regional investment drives local entrepreneurs and capital owners to relocate outside Kurdistan.

**2. Ethnic and Cultural Assimilation:**

Through migration and forced displacement, the Iranian government implements a systematic plan of cultural and linguistic assimilation against the Kurdish population, often described as ethnic cleansing.

**3. Suppressing Resistance:**

With young people leaving Kurdistan, the average age in the region rises, leaving a weakened population less capable of resisting systemic oppression or advancing national liberation efforts.

Those unwilling or unable to leave are forced into jobs outside their areas of expertise or education, contributing to higher rates of mental illness and suicide among Kurds than in other parts of Iran. Many Kurds take up the dangerous work of *Kolbers*, risking their lives daily to provide for their families.

The unemployment rate in East Kurdistan's provinces remains persistently higher than the national average. In 2024, it was projected to be 44.38%—5.88 percentage points above Iran's national unemployment average. Despite its vast natural resources, Kurdistan continues to experience widespread food deprivation, reinforcing a cycle of economic marginalization.

## Economic Disparities and GDP

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is a key indicator of economic welfare and the equitable distribution of economic and social security in a society. As GDP increases, so does the expected welfare of the population. However, comparing GDP levels in Iran's Persian provinces to those in East Kurdistan reveals the state's discriminatory policies aimed at impoverishing the region and suppressing its economic potential.

Research conducted by Tehran University<sup>7</sup> in 2023 revealed that the average GDP in Kurdish provinces stood at just 1,388 percent, compared to 13,593 percent in Persian provinces and a national average of 3,225 percent. This discrepancy highlights systematic policies designed to obstruct the economic development of Kurdistan. Additionally, the calculation excluded oil production revenues, which are centralized and not distributed equitably.

Migration from Kurdish and Baluchi provinces to central Iran significantly boosts the GDP in Persian-speaking areas, further reinforcing the structural inequalities entrenched by the state. Tehran University's research clearly demonstrates the Iranian government's deliberate efforts to stifle the economic potential of Kurdistan, undermining prospects for sustainable development and preventing the Kurdish people from benefiting from their region's vast natural and human resources.

## Legal Justification for Economic Oppression

Article 9 of the Iranian Constitution, under the guise of protecting the "integrity of Iranian territory," effectively bans any acknowledgment of the national rights of Iranian ethnic minorities. Similarly, the Iranian Penal Code prohibits discussions of religious, racial, and ethnic discrimination, while the Press Law bans reporting on ethnic differences and social and ethnic oppression, which are considered threats to "territorial integrity."

This legal framework ensures that ethnic oppression in Iran is institutionalized and protected by state mechanisms. Speaking out against these injustices is classified as a national security threat, invoking severe legal consequences under the "Law on Limits of Retaliation" and Article 9 of the Iranian Constitution.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL TERRORISM

The Islamic Republic's philosophy for maintaining power is encapsulated in the phrase: "*Victory comes from fear.*" This belief forms the foundation of much of the Tehran regime's violence against critics, opposition figures, activists, and human rights defenders within Iran's political landscape. Following the emergence of the Women's Revolution, the regime increasingly relied on psychological terrorism to suppress dissent and manage successive national crises.

The central objective of the Islamic Republic's campaign of psychological terrorism is to intimidate the population. The regime has deepened and expanded the scope of its state-sponsored terror through mass media propaganda and public communication tools. This strategy of intimidation has enabled the Iranian regime to maintain control over various aspects of public life while diverting people from advocating for their rights. Through its campaign of psychological terrorism, the regime seeks to impose a climate of fear and distrust, forcing people into submission and creating an atmosphere of helplessness and anxiety.

Psychological terrorism encompasses a series of calculated acts targeting the mental and emotional well-being of society to instill fear, insecurity, and anxiety. This tactic destabilizes social life by fostering uncertainty and making individuals afraid to take a stance on social issues. In this context, societal life is permeated by fear, unhappiness, and hopelessness. The primary aim of

<sup>7</sup> محمد مولائی قلیچی؛ مجید رمضانی مهربان؛ حمیدرضا طهوری؛ ، سطح‌بندی استان‌های ایران بر مبنای سهم آن‌ها در تولید ناخالص داخلی منطقه (GDP) با روش CoCoS، انتشار آنلاین از تاریخ ۱۸ خرداد ۱۴۰۲

psychological terrorism is to manipulate the human mind by evoking emotional insecurities, sowing distrust, and fostering paranoia toward others, oneself, and the broader world.

One hallmark of psychological terrorism is the systematic targeting of specific societal groups, making individuals in those groups feel increasingly vulnerable. For example, university professors have been dismissed en masse and replaced with regime loyalists, while many university students have been denied access to education based on political affiliations. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, personal security is foundational to human well-being. When this need is undermined, all other human needs—including physical well-being—are severely compromised.

## The Impact of Psychological Terrorism on Individuals

According to the World Health Organization (2008), participation in civil society and the political process is essential for individual health and well-being. Civic engagement fosters a sense of responsibility toward the welfare of both individuals and society at large. However, the Iranian regime's use of political violence and psychological terror erodes people's confidence in participating in social and political life, resulting in isolation, withdrawal, and widespread disillusionment with political activism.

Through a range of oppressive measures, the Islamic Republic has methodically reduced public participation in political life, reserving such engagement only for loyalists whose devotion stems either from ideological alignment or personal financial interests. As a result, many citizens have lost hope in the possibility of change.

Distrust, persecution, and withdrawal are the inevitable consequences of the regime's psychological terrorism. It suppresses collective communication and prevents individuals from engaging in public discourse about community issues. Even factions within the regime, such as the so-called "reformists," have retreated from political activities due to the climate of repression.

Research conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO) demonstrates that psychological terrorism and political violence can undermine people's confidence in seeking social support, further isolating individuals from their communities. The Iranian regime's tactics have led to a widespread loss of trust in social institutions, with many viewing administrative systems as adversarial rather than protective.

The regime's systematic use of torture against political activists and prisoners serves as a clear example of how psychological terrorism enforces compliance. Televised "forced confessions" aim to break activists' spirits while spreading fear among the broader population. In some cases, the regime coerces political prisoners into leaving the country, further severing social ties. These acts of psychological and physical violence have left deep emotional scars, causing long-term trauma and a persistent sense of dehumanization among victims.

## The Impact of Psychological Terrorism on Society

Society is commonly defined as a network of relationships built on shared beliefs, social norms, and mutual concerns. Healthy societies rely on open communication, social cohesion, and mutual trust to function effectively—particularly in times of trauma or tragedy. However, psychological terrorism disrupts these relationships, weakening the foundations of society.

Research indicates that social cohesion, when combined with individual empowerment, can drive collective progress and enhance public welfare. However, psychological terrorism works against this dynamic by dismantling social institutions, undermining shared values, and fostering social confusion. WHO studies confirm that damage to a society's physical and cultural spaces results in weakened cultural identities and social bonds.

Since the issuance of Ayatollah Khomeini's *jihad* decree on August 19, 1979, the Iranian regime has aimed to destroy Kurdish society through mass killings, terrorism, and bombings of Kurdish villages, political headquarters, and even refugee camps. The regime's hostility extends beyond individual targets to an entire people. The 2022 *Zhina (Women, Life, Freedom)* movement demonstrated that the regime perceives the entire Kurdish population as its enemy. Comparative research on political violence in countries such as Ireland, Bosnia, Sri Lanka, Peru, El Salvador, and Zimbabwe underscores how sustained political violence can prevent societies from developing future leaders and achieving educational progress.

The destruction of physical environments—such as through environmental exploitation, forced displacement, and targeted bombings—further erodes cultural identity and communal pride. Since coming to power, the Iranian regime has systematically looted Kurdistan's natural resources, constructed dams that fail to meet environmental standards, and diverted water supplies. Lake Urmia's near-total drying is one such environmental catastrophe, with the long-term ecological and social consequences yet to be fully understood.

## The Role of State Institutions in Psychological Terrorism

In a functioning democracy, basic freedoms, pluralism, and mutual responsibility contribute to social welfare and individual well-being. However, in Iran, state institutions have become instruments of psychological terror. Rather than providing essential services such as emergency healthcare, sanitation, and education, these institutions are used to impose fear and control.

The Iranian regime's psychological terrorism has caused:

1. **Disruption of Administrative Systems:** Essential services required for daily life have been compromised or manipulated for political purposes.
2. **Weakened Public Institutions:** The state sector has deteriorated due to widespread distrust, reducing public responsibility for maintaining shared resources.

Between 2018 and 2023, Iran was ranked among the three angriest countries globally, according to the Global Happiness Center—reflecting the consequences of systematic psychological terrorism. The regime's use of violence, blackmail, and missile attacks on Kurdish refugee camps and political headquarters further reveals its intent to destroy both individuals and broader communities.

By fostering fear and social fragmentation, the Islamic Republic seeks to extinguish Kurdish resistance and suppress any aspirations for freedom and equality. The deliberate destruction of Kurdistan's environment is also intrinsically linked to cultural erasure and national oppression.

## STATE TERRORISM

Terrorism, defined as the deliberate creation of fear and distrust within society, has long been a central policy of the Iranian regime against the Kurdish people in East Kurdistan. The regime has pursued its political, religious, and ideological objectives through systematic violence, intimidation, and the elimination of activists and dissidents. State-sponsored terrorism remains a key element of the Iranian state's strategic agenda.

The establishment of the Quds Force highlights the regime's use of terrorism as a tool of both domestic and international policy. While the Quds Force officially operates to safeguard Iran's security and expand its influence in the Middle East, it also engages in terrorist activities targeting the regime's opponents, particularly Kurdish political activists.

Since 1979, at least 450 Kurdish political activists, including prominent leaders and civil society figures, have been assassinated outside Iran. Over 10 of these assassinations were carried out on European Union territory, underscoring the global reach of the Iranian regime's campaign of violence. Within Kurdistan itself, 134 Kurdish women have been killed under various pretexts, while 59 Kurdish children have also been assassinated.

Over the past four decades, the Iranian regime has executed at least 380 Kurdish children, including six minors under the age of 18. This record reflects the regime's systematic targeting of vulnerable groups within Kurdish society.

Iran's commitment to terrorism is further demonstrated by its substantial financial investment in violent activities abroad. The regime currently allocates over \$2 billion annually to fund terrorist operations outside Iran. In a recent move, the Iranian government added an additional 200 million euros to the Quds Force's annual budget, further enhancing its capacity to carry out acts of terror beyond the country's borders.

## ECO-TERRORISM OF THE IRANIAN REGIME AGAINST KURDISTAN

Eco-terrorism, defined as acts of environmental destruction aimed at advancing political goals, has also become a key component of the Iranian regime's broader campaign against the Kurdish people. Alongside its military and political assaults, the regime has launched an environmental war on East Kurdistan, systematically undermining the region's ecological stability to disrupt the Kurdish population's way of life.

East Kurdistan is one of the most agriculturally and environmentally valuable regions within Iran's political geography, offering rich potential for agriculture, animal husbandry, and renewable energy production. However, the Iranian regime has weaponized environmental destruction to weaken the Kurdish people's economic and social resilience.

One of the regime's primary strategies has been the construction of unnecessary dams, diverting critical water resources from East Kurdistan to other parts of Iran. This intentional mismanagement has exacerbated water scarcity in the region, endangering agricultural livelihoods and forcing many Kurds into economic hardship.

Additionally, the Iranian regime has implemented a scorched-earth policy by deliberately setting Kurdish forests on fire. This environmentally destructive practice has led to the extinction or displacement of many animal species and has further degraded the region's natural ecosystem.

The regime's disregard for environmental sustainability extends to its infrastructure projects, which often lack scientific and environmental planning. Ill-conceived urban designs, reckless construction of roads, and the exploitation of natural resources have caused severe ecological harm in East Kurdistan.

Perhaps the most catastrophic environmental outcome of the regime's policies has been the near-total drying of Lake Urmia, once the largest saltwater lake in the world. Due to mismanagement and excessive water extraction, the lake has turned into a barren salt flat, creating toxic soil conditions that threaten the region's agricultural viability. Salt storms originating from the dried lakebed now pose a serious health and environmental hazard, endangering the lives of tens of millions of people living in and beyond East Kurdistan.

## THE KURDISH ISSUE IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM OF THE IRANIAN REGIME

Iran's population of approximately 81 million consists of various ethnic groups and minorities. Despite this diversity, the Iranian regime operates as a highly centralized state dominated by Persian nationalism. Although Persians constitute less than 50% of the population, they exercise absolute authority across all regions of Iran.

Iran is home to a mosaic of linguistic communities, including Persian, Azerbaijani Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, Baluchi, Gilaki, and Turkmen Turkish speakers. However, according to Iran's constitution, Persian is designated as the official language, and all official documents, government communications, educational materials, and legal texts must be written in Persian.

The Iranian constitution also recognizes Islam and Twelver Shi'ism as the official state religion. This constitutional framework reinforces religious and cultural discrimination, creating systemic exclusion of non-Persian and non-Shiite communities.

Despite constitutional provisions such as Article 15, which theoretically grants minority groups the right to use their native languages in media and cultural education, the reality in regions such as Kurdistan reflects severe suppression of cultural and linguistic rights. Kurdish language instruction, media representation, and cultural expression remain heavily restricted under a state-driven policy of "Persianization" and forced Shi'ism.

The national issue in Iran stems from the regime's longstanding denial of the existence and rights of ethnic minorities. Since the early 20th century, Iranian state policy has regarded the acknowledgment of ethnic diversity as a national security threat. The 1905 Iranian constitution explicitly rejected the recognition of ethnic identities that deviated from its prescribed national identity, treating demands for cultural and linguistic recognition as threats to state security.

This policy persists in modern-day Iran, where multi-ethnicity is legally and institutionally denied. The Iranian regime continues to pursue the forced assimilation of non-Persian nations into Persian culture, Shiite religious doctrine, and the Persian language, threatening the survival of indigenous cultural identities, including that of the Kurdish people.



## APPEAL TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

The Iranian regime is engaged in an active campaign of systemic genocide against the Kurdish people, seeking to erase their cultural, social, political, and national identity. This campaign constitutes a gross violation of international human rights norms and legal standards enshrined in binding international agreements, including the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention against Torture, and numerous other treaties and conventions to which Iran is a signatory.

Iran formally signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on May 22, 1968, committing itself to uphold international law and implement human rights standards. However, the regime's systematic actions against the Kurdish people directly violate these obligations and stand in defiance of international norms.

We call on the United Nations, the Security Council, and member states worldwide to hold the Iranian regime accountable and compel it to fulfill its legal obligations. The Kurdish people must be granted the right to determine their own destiny in accordance with the United Nations Declaration of Social, Political, and Economic Rights. Without a just and peaceful resolution to the Kurdish issue, Iran cannot achieve democracy, stability, or recognition as a responsible member of the international community.

While Iran has ratified many international human rights treaties, it consistently violates these agreements while disregarding its own constitutional guarantees. We believe that respecting human rights within the current Iranian regime is unattainable. Over the past 45 years, the Kurdish people have demonstrated resilience and defiance against state repression. Similarly, the broader Iranian population has intensified its demands for human rights and freedom over the past nine months.

Condemnation alone is no longer sufficient. We urge the international community to take concrete steps to prevent further violations, end impunity, and support the Kurdish people's struggle for survival and self-determination.

We call on the United Nations and its member states to:

- 1. Enforce Iran's Compliance with International Law:**  
Pressure the Iranian regime through diplomatic and international legal channels to abide by international human rights treaties, release political prisoners, and halt all forms of executions.
- 2. Declare Political Support for the Kurdish People:**  
Formally recognize and politically support the Kurdish people's struggle for self-determination, cultural preservation, and fundamental human rights.
- 3. Recognize Kurdish Political Parties as Legitimate Opposition:**  
Officially recognize Kurdish political parties operating in Iranian Kurdistan as legitimate opposition groups and engage with them in efforts to promote democracy, human rights, and peaceful conflict resolution.
- 4. Support Democracy, Equality, and Global Peace:**  
Advocate for democratic principles, equality, sustainable development, and a nuclear-free

world. Supporting the Kurdish people aligns with universal human values and the shared aspiration for a more just and peaceful global society.