

Systematic apartheid against the Kurdish nation in Iran

Apartheid was mostly about the state, systematic and legal application of racist policies against blacks in South Africa. The result of this racist discrimination was the rise of the anti-apartheid movement, which eventually led to the release of freedom fighter Nelson Mandela after 27 years in prison in 1990 after years of struggle against the apartheid regime. Nelson Mandela was elected President of South Africa from 1994 to 1999 and became a symbol of the struggle against racism and freedom and passed away on December 5, 2013.

The same apartheid policy and actions are being implemented in Iran against the Kurdish nation. However, this fact is not visible to the Western world. Apartheid is more commonly known as "racism," but in the Islamic Republic of Iran, apartheid has taken on a state, systematic, legal, and religious form.

We talk about apartheid in Iran because much of the discrimination in Iran is based on both the constitution and laws passed by the Islamic Consultative Assembly and state resolutions. In fact, discrimination is legal and organized in Iran.

Apartheid in the Islamic Republic begins with the country's constitution. The Islamic Republic is a religious republic whose religion is Islam. According to Article 13 of the Iranian Constitution, the country's official religion is the Shiite Twelfth¹. In other words, there is no such thing as human beings in Iran under the Islamic regime, just as in South Africa it was not "human beings" who had rights, but "race" and "white people" who had all rights.

Apartheid in the laws of the Islamic Republic

The Iranian state is a party to numerous international human rights conventions and treaties that must naturally be legally binding and 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 our international treaties. This is even though the previous regime accepted the above treaties unconditionally and the Islamic Republic has not withdrawn from these treaties since its establishment and is obliged to implement the contents of these treaties.

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. In other words, according to Iranian

¹ شیعه اثنی عشری

law, people who do not have a scriptural affiliation, for example, 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 Council², 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 absolute authority of the jurist, cannot access 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.

The army and the Revolutionary Guards of the Islamic Republic of Iran are armed and ideological forces. In other words, the duty of the army and the Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) 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 army 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."³ On August 19, 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini declared jihad against the Kurdish nation, calling it an infidel and enemy of God. In this regard, the hostility of the Islamic Republic of Iran is not only based on the jihadist orders of Khomeini but also it is 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 Kurdistan activists, is seen as part of keeping the Islamic Ummah clean.

Economic apartheid

According to Article 13th of the 3rd Chapter of the Constitution of Iran, "the duty of the government is to establish a correct and just economy according to Islamic rules to create prosperity and eliminate poverty, and to eliminate any type of deprivation in the fields of nutrition, housing, work, health, and generalization of insurance".

Despite its constitution, the Islamic Republic of Iran systematically practices economic discrimination against Kurdistan and other oppressed nations, including Baluchistan. According to official statistics of the Islamic Republic, in 2022, the poverty rate in Kurdish provinces were above the Iranian average after Sistan and Baluchistan region. In 2022 the average poverty rate in Iran was 31.4 percent. In

² شورای نگهبان (*Shourā-ye Negahbān*)

³ Surat al-Anfal, verse 148

Sistan and Baluchistan, the poverty rate was 62%, while in Kurdistan provinces of Ilam, Kermanshah, Sanandaj (Sine) and Urmia (West Azerbaijan), the poverty rate was 42%. The same figure for the Persian provinces averaged 17.3 percent. For example, the poverty rate was 19% in Tehran and 17% and 16% in Semnan and Yazd. The systematic increase in the distribution of poverty in Kurdistan and Sistan and Baluchistan regions, despite the enrichment of underground resources of these areas and a young and educated society, is due to several objectives:

1. By distributing poverty among Kurdistan, the Islamic Republic aim to force the Kurdish youth and labor force to migrate to Iran, thus depriving Kurdistan of the labor force, youth and dynamic that can lead to the prosperity of the region. On the other hand, the Iranian regime has practically blocked investment in Kurdistan and imposed an unannounced ban on investment in Kurdistan. Therefore, the best producers and investors of Kurdistan have moved outside Kurdistan.
2. With the dislocation of Kurdistan and migration to Iran, the state's systematic assimilation plan against Kurdish language and culture will be implemented in a process between generations, the Kurdish identity of the people tried be destroyed, and the process of Persianization of Kurdish people will be accelerated. This will carry out a systematic process of ethnic cleansing without mass killings.
3. With the evacuation of Kurdistan from the youth, the average age in Kurdistan will rise and there will be no generation to promote the Kurdish culture and identity is designed to be implemented smoothly.

Those who are not willing to leave Kurdistan are forced to take up jobs for which they were not educated. In fact, young people and families feel that they have wasted their lives after a lifetime of investment in education. This causes the rate of mental illness and suicide among Kurds higher than in other parts of Iran. Those who turn to the difficult and dangerous work of Kolbar⁴ (peasants) are forced to risk their lives to meet the economic needs of their families. It is estimated that one to three Kurdish Kolbers are killed or injured by Iranian armed forces every day. This is in addition to the statistics of falls in the mountains during winter, hypothermia of Kolbars, the death of their horses and the destruction of their transportation equipment by security forces of Iranian regime, which costs hundreds of millions of dollars.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is one of effective measure of the level of welfare and distribution of economic and social security within society. As the level of GDP increases, the level of welfare of the people is expected to increase. Increasing GDP is considered one of the most important policy goals of countries. Comparing the average level of GDP in Iran between Persian provinces and Kurdistan provinces, it can be seen that the general policy and strategy of the Islamic republic of Iran is to impoverish the people and prevent the growth of domestic product in Kurdistan. According to research by Tehran University, in 2022, the average level of gross domestic product in Kurdistan provinces was only 1,388 %, while the Persian provinces had a gross domestic product of 13,593 % and the national average was 3,225 %.⁵ The Gross domestic product in Kurdistan was half the national average. The comparison does not take into account oil production that is not distributed throughout the country.

⁴ A Kolber or cross-border labor is a worker who is employed to carry goods on his/her back across the borders of Iran, Iraq, and Turkey legally or illegally.

⁵ محمد مولائی قلبچی؛ مجید رمضانی مهریان؛ حمیدرضا طهوری؛ سطح‌بندی استان‌های ایران بر مبنای سهم آن‌ها در تولید ناخالص داخلی ، انتشار آنلاین از تاریخ 18 خرداد 1402 CoCoS1402 با روش (GDPR) منطقه

Research by Tehran University demonstrates that migration from the provinces Kurdistan and Baluchistan regions to the Persian dominated provinces is another source of GDP growth in “center” regions. The study also determines that the Islamic Republic of Iran has systematically tried to destroy the economic potential of Kurdistan and prevent it from achieving equal and sustainable growth and its economic potential from being used for the welfare of the Kurdish people.

Article 9 of the Iranian Constitution, in the name of protecting the “integrity of Iranian territory,” practically prohibits any discussion of ethnic rights of Iranian nations. The Iranian Penal Code (Penal Code Propaganda Racial Discrimination Approved July 21, 1977) prohibits raising religious, racial and ethnic discrimination, and the Press Law also prohibits discussion about ethnic differences and social and ethnic oppression "Territorial integrity" sets the country. Thus, ethnic oppression in Iran is carried out through a legal process and no one has the right to speak out against it. Because opposing these oppressions means endangering the "national security" (Law of Limits of Revenge) and the "territorial integrity" of the country (Article 9 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic). In other word opposing these oppressions means endangering the "national security" (Law of Limits of Revenge) and the "territorial integrity" of the country (Article 9 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic).

Linguistic apartheid

The systematic apartheid of the Islamic Republic of Iran is carried out against the language and national identity of the Kurdish people: Kurdish names are generally not registered in Iran, or if they are registered, they must be accompanied by an “Islamic” name. In 2020, the budget of Persian literature in Iran was 260 billion Iranian Rials. The state spent 11 million Iranian Rials to produce each Persian word. While other languages within Iran's geography, such as Azerbaijani, Kurdish, Turkmen, Gilaki, Arabic, Baluchi and others, have not only received any budget (contrary to Article 13 of the Iranian Constitution). Instead, cultural activists of those languages who voluntarily and at their own expense worked for the development of their languages are arrested and imprisoned. At present, a large number of Kurdish, Turkish, Gileki and Baluchi language activists are in prisons of the Islamic Republic of Iran and have been convicted of discrimination and the development of “racism” in Iran. Zara Mohammadi is the well-known example of this, having been sentenced to five years in prison in 2019. The state budget for the promoting Persian language in the virtual world in 2022 was 6,530 million Iranian Rials. At the same time, the Islamic Republic regime prevents the establishment and development of other languages, especially Kurdish, in the virtual world.

Political apartheid

The use of political violence against society is another trend of the apartheid process against the Kurdish nation. Since September 2022, 56% of the deaths in demonstrations following the killing of Jina “Mahsa” Amini by the Iranian regime were in Kurdistan and Baluchistan. According to statistics, more than 70% of the executed political prisoners are Kurds and more than 50% of the political prisoners in Iran are Kurds. Kurds make up only 14% of Iran's population.

The journal Strategic Defense Studies of the National Defense Military University⁶ has described the increase in the Sunni (Kurdish and Baluchi) population as a security threat.

⁶ <https://sds.sndu.ac.ir/>

In this regard, the Iranian government has created a situation in which Kurdistan has the highest level of loss of human resources due to the increase in death rates, suicides, deaths in traffic accidents and killing of kolbars. According to the research of the Research Directorate of the Ministry of Health, the level of cancer of the upper gastrointestinal tract, especially stomach and esophagus, is higher in Kurdistan provinces than in the whole of Iran. While the cure for this cancer in Kurdistan is very difficult if not impossible and patients have to move to the cities of Tehran, Tabriz, and Isfahan. The main cause of this cancer is 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 between non-Muslims (eg Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Yarsais, Baha'is and atheists), differences between Shiites and other sects of Islam, differences between Ja'fari Muslims, discrimination between men and women These include distinguishing 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, the same policy that was carried out against blacks 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 be legally complied with. Iran has tried to find "jurisprudence" and "legitimate" excuses for its laws, thus making apartheid a religious pretext and part of the "jihad to Persialize" the Kurdish nation. When the leader of a regime declares jihad⁷ against a nation, it means expelling that nation from Islam and it is the duty of the Islamic Ummah to either cleanse that nation from the face of the earth or forcibly convert it to Islam.

⁷ Ayatollah Khomeini declared Jihad against Kurdish people on August 19th, 1979.