

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	1090
Land:	Iran
Kilde:	Freedom House
Titel:	Freedom in the World 2024 – Iran
Udgivet:	9. marts 2024
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	28. juni 2024

Iran

NOT FREE

11
/100

<u>Political Rights</u>	4 /40
<u>Civil Liberties</u>	7 /60

LAST YEAR'S SCORE & STATUS

12 /100 Not Free

Global freedom statuses are calculated on a weighted scale. See the methodology.



Overview

The Islamic Republic of Iran holds elections regularly, but they fall short of democratic standards due in part to the influence of the hard-line Guardian Council, an unelected body that disqualifies all candidates it deems insufficiently loyal to the clerical establishment. Ultimate power rests in the hands of the country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and the unelected institutions under his control. These institutions, including the security forces and the judiciary, play a major role in the suppression of dissent and other restrictions on civil liberties. Iranian authorities have maintained a protracted crackdown after the antigovernment “Woman, Life, Freedom” protests, which were sparked by the 2022 death of Jina Mahsa Amini at the hands of the morality police, were held that year.

Key Developments in 2023

- Iranian authorities continued a campaign of repression in the wake of the Woman, Life, Freedom protest movement, intensifying pressure on dissidents and activists ahead of the one-year anniversary in September. Demonstrations marking the anniversary occurred nevertheless, and some were met with a violent response by security forces.
- In September, the parliament approved a bill that, if passed, would increase penalties for women deemed to have violated the mandatory hijab law. The Guardian Council returned the bill to the parliament for further review in October, though the Expediency Council—a body tasked with mediating disputes between the Guardian Council and the parliament—upheld it in mid-December.
- Authorities continued to crack down on dissent in universities during the year, targeting those who supported the Woman, Life, Freedom protests or otherwise resisted the compulsory wearing of the hijab. As of June, at least 720 students were arrested since the beginning of those protests. At least 26 professors were reportedly dismissed for supporting those protests as of September.

Political Rights

A. Electoral Process

A1 0-4 pts

Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections?

0 / 4

The supreme leader, who has no fixed term, is the highest authority in the country. He is the commander in chief of the armed forces and appoints the head of the judiciary, the heads of state broadcast media, and the Expediency Council, which mediates disputes between the Guardian Council and the parliament. He also appoints six members of the Guardian Council; the other six are jurists nominated by the head of the judiciary and confirmed by the parliament, all for six-year terms. The supreme leader is appointed by the Assembly of Experts, which monitors his work. However, in practice his decisions appear to go unchallenged by the assembly, whose proceedings are kept confidential. The current supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, succeeded Islamic Republic founder Ruhollah Khomeini in 1989.

The president, the second-highest-ranking official in the Islamic Republic, appoints a cabinet that must be confirmed by the parliament. He is elected by popular vote for up to two consecutive four-year terms. Ebrahim Raisi, then head of the judiciary, won the presidency in 2021 with 62 percent of the vote in a heavily manipulated contest. The Guardian Council had rejected most of the nearly 600 aspiring candidates—including 40 women—approving only seven applicants. Among those rejected were outgoing first vice president Eshaq Jahangiri, a reformist, and former parliament speaker Ali Larijani, a conservative. Three approved candidates dropped out several days before the poll.

The election was also affected by official pressure on the media, with journalists told to refrain from issuing reports that were critical of the balloting or Raisi. Voter turnout, at just 48.8 percent, was the lowest for a presidential election in the Islamic Republic's history.

A2 0-4 pts

Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?

1 / 4

Members of the 290-seat parliament are elected to four-year terms. Elections for the body were held in 2020, with most seats going to hard-liners and conservatives loyal to the supreme leader. Ahead of the vote, the Guardian Council disqualified more than 9,000 of the 16,000 people who had registered to run, including large numbers of reformist and moderate candidates. Voter turnout was the lowest for parliamentary elections in the history of the Islamic Republic.

Elections for the Assembly of Experts, a group of 86 clerics chosen by popular vote to serve eight-year terms, were last held in 2016. Only 20 percent of the would-be candidates were approved to run, a record low. A majority of the new assembly ultimately chose hard-line cleric Ahmad Jannati, head of the Guardian Council, as the body's chairman. Jannati was reelected to the Assembly of Experts' chairmanship in February 2023. In July, 97-year-old Jannati was also reelected as head of the Guardian Council.

A3 0-4 pts

Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies?

1 / 4

The electoral system in Iran does not meet international democratic standards. The Guardian Council, controlled by hard-line conservatives and ultimately by the supreme leader, vets all candidates for the parliament, the presidency, and the Assembly of Experts. The council typically rejects candidates who are not considered insiders or deemed fully loyal to the clerical establishment, as well as women seeking to run in the presidential election. As a result, Iranian voters are given a strictly limited choice of candidates.

B. Political Pluralism and Participation

B1 0-4 pts

Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system

0 / 4

free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?	
--	--

Only political parties and factions loyal to the establishment and to the state ideology are permitted to operate.

B2 0-4 pts

Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?	1 / 4
---	--------------

While some space for shifts in power between approved factions within the establishment has existed in the past, the unelected components of the constitutional system represent a permanent barrier to opposition electoral victories and genuine rotations of power.

Opposition figures face restrictions on their movement. Mir Hossein Mousavi, Zahra Rahnavard, and Mehdi Karroubi—leaders of the reformist Green Movement, whose protests were violently suppressed following the disputed 2009 presidential election—have been under house arrest without formal charges since 2011.

B3 0-4 pts

Are the people's political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means?	0 / 4
--	--------------

The choices of both voters and politicians are heavily influenced and ultimately circumscribed by Iran's unelected state institutions and ruling clerical establishment.

B4 0-4 pts

Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, racial, religious, gender, LGBT+, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities?	1 / 4
--	--------------

Men from the Shiite Muslim majority population dominate the political system. Women remain significantly underrepresented in politics and government. While President Raisi appointed Ensieh Khazali as vice president for women and family affairs in September 2021, he nominated no women to serve in the cabinet the month before. No women candidates have ever been allowed to run for president.

Five seats in the parliament are reserved for recognized non-Muslim minority groups: Jews, Armenian Christians, Assyrian and Chaldean Christians, and Zoroastrians. However, members of non-Persian ethnic minorities and especially non-Shiite religious minorities are rarely awarded senior government posts, and their political representation remains weak.

C. Functioning of Government

C1 0-4 pts

Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government?

0 / 4

The elected president's powers are limited by the supreme leader and other unelected authorities. The 2021 presidential election was tightly controlled by the regime, further reducing the democratic legitimacy of the executive.

The powers of the elected parliament are similarly restricted by the supreme leader and the unelected Guardian Council, which must approve all bills before they can become law. The council often rejects bills it deems un-Islamic.

C2 0-4 pts

Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective?

0 / 4

Corruption remains endemic at all levels of the bureaucracy, despite regular calls by authorities to tackle the problem. Powerful actors involved in the economy, including the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and *bonyads* (endowed foundations), are above scrutiny in practice, and restrictions on the media and

civil society activists prevent them from serving as independent watchdogs to ensure transparency and accountability.

Authorities have resisted recent attempts to uncover official corruption. In June 2023, Khamenei publicly criticized the judiciary over corruption, saying that a small number of officials were abusing their power. In October, media reports claimed that two sons of Mohammad Mossadegh Kahrnemooni, the first deputy of the judiciary, had been arrested in connection with an embezzlement case.

C3 0-4 pts

Does the government operate with openness and transparency?

0 / 4

The transparency of Iran's governing system is extremely limited in practice, and powerful elements of the state and society are not accountable to the public. A 2009 access to information law grants broadly worded exemptions allowing the protection of information whose disclosure would conflict with state interests, cause financial loss, or harm public security, among other stipulations. The ruling establishment has actively suppressed or manipulated information on important topics.

In response to the protests triggered by the death of Jina Mahsa Amini—most often referred to as Mahsa Amini—in 2022, authorities tightly restricted access to related information, including the number, status, and treatment of arrested demonstrators and other political prisoners. Authorities also restricted access to information about 16-year-old Armita Geravand, who fell into a coma and later died after an alleged confrontation with a hijab-law enforcer in October 2023. Human rights organizations have accused the government—which insists that Geravand was not attacked but collapsed due to “a sudden drop in blood pressure”—of orchestrating a cover-up, and have called for an independent investigation into Geravand's death.

Civil Liberties

D. Freedom of Expression and Belief

D1 0-4 pts

Are there free and independent media?

0 / 4

Media freedom is severely limited both online and offline. The state broadcasting company is tightly controlled by hard-liners and influenced by the security apparatus. News and analysis are heavily censored, while critics and opposition members are rarely, if ever, given a platform on state-controlled television, which remains a major source of information for many Iranians. State television has a record of airing confessions extracted from political prisoners under duress, and it routinely carries reports aimed at discrediting dissidents and opposition activists.

Newspapers and magazines face censorship and warnings from authorities about which topics to cover and how. Tens of thousands of foreign-based websites are filtered, including news sites and major social media services. Satellite dishes are banned, and Persian-language broadcasts from outside the country are regularly jammed. Police periodically raid private homes and confiscate satellite dishes. Iranian authorities have intimidated journalists working for Persian-language media outside the country, in part by threatening their families in Iran.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Iranian authorities have arrested approximately 100 journalists in relation to their coverage of Amini's 2022 death and the nationwide protests that followed. During 2023, journalists—and sometimes their lawyers—continued to face arrest, arbitrary penalties, and intimidation by the authorities. In October, journalists Elahe Mohammadi and Niloofar Hamedi, who had helped break the story of Amini's death, were sentenced to 12 and 13 years in prison, respectively, on trumped-up charges that included "collaborating with the hostile government of the United States."

D2 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private?

0/4

Iran is home to a majority Shiite Muslim population and Sunni Muslim, Baha'i, Christian, and Zoroastrian minorities. The constitution recognizes only Zoroastrians, Jews, and certain Christian communities as non-Muslim religious minorities, and these small groups are relatively free to worship. The regime cracks down on Muslims who are deemed to be at variance with the state ideology and interpretation of Islam.

Sunni Muslims say that they have been prevented from building mosques in major cities and face difficulty obtaining government jobs. In recent years, there has been increased pressure on the Sufi Muslim order Nematollahi Gonabadi, including destruction of its places of worship and the jailing of some of its members.

The government also subjects some non-Muslim minority groups to repressive policies and discrimination, including Baha'is and unrecognized Christian groups. Baha'is are systematically persecuted, sentenced to prison, and banned from access to higher education. The clerical establishment is continuing to crack down on the Baha'i faith, arresting and imprisoning Baha'is, demolishing homes, and confiscating property, especially in the northern province of Mazandaran. In August 2023, the Baha'i International Community reported that Iranian authorities launched a renewed crackdown over a period of several weeks. That organization counted 180 repressive incidents against Baha'is during that period. In October, four Baha'is were sentenced to between two and five years in prison on the charge of "membership in illegal groups aimed at disrupting national security."

D3 0-4 pts

Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination?

0/4

Academic freedom remains limited in Iran. Khamenei has warned that universities should not be turned into centers for political activities. Students have been prevented from continuing their studies for political reasons or because they

belong to the Baha'i community. Foreign scholars visiting Iran are vulnerable to detention on trumped-up charges.

Between November 2022 and March 2023, more than 1,200 schoolgirls at nearly 100 schools across Iran were poisoned in what UN experts called “targeted” and “deliberate” attacks. Human rights organizations condemned Tehran for dismissing and downplaying the seriousness of attacks, which continued sporadically through at least October. Many ordinary citizens speculated that the attacks may have been carried out by religious extremists or hard-line regime supporters in retaliation for schoolgirls’ participation in the Woman, Life, Freedom protest movement.

University professors have been dismissed in large numbers for supporting the Woman, Life, Freedom protests or for other political reasons. In August 2023, the *Etemad* newspaper reported that at least 110 academics had been fired since Raisi came to power; individuals who are more closely aligned to the establishment have reportedly replaced them. In September, the Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI) reported that at least 26 professors were dismissed for their apparent support of the Woman, Life, Freedom protests.

Since Raisi became president, students have reported tighter restrictions, including stricter rules on wearing the hijab. As part of their efforts to suppress the nationwide protests that began in 2022, authorities have raided university campuses and arrested students; in June 2023, the CHRI reported that at least 720 students were arrested since the previous September. In May 2023, an Iranian student association reported that at least 35 students at Tehran’s all-women al-Zahra University had been temporarily suspended from their studies since March for allegedly violating the hijab law.

Score Change: The score declined from 1 to 0 because the government has removed large numbers of academics from their posts and has arrested or otherwise punished scores of students as part of an ongoing crackdown on dissent.

D4 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution?

0 / 4

Vaguely defined restrictions on speech, harsh criminal penalties, and state monitoring of online communications are among several factors that deter citizens from engaging in open and free private discussion. Despite the risks and limitations, many do express dissent on social media, in some cases circumventing official blocks on certain platforms. However, authorities have taken steps to limit the availability and usage of circumvention tools.

In 2022, the Supreme Council for Cyberspace quietly implemented three articles of a draft bill under consideration by the parliament, establishing a reorganized regulatory commission that included representatives of the security forces and had extensive authority over online content and services.

After mass protests began in September 2022, authorities arrested thousands of people, including celebrities, human rights defenders, and others who had expressed support for the movement through posts on social media or by publicly disobeying the hijab requirements that had led to Amini's arrest and death. The IRGC called on the judiciary to prosecute anyone spreading "false news and rumors."

Many remain in prison for peacefully challenging the clerical establishment and criticizing human rights abuses. Several individuals were arrested for their opposition to the regime in 2023. In October, *Etemad* reported via Telegram that political activist Majid Tavakoli began serving a five-year prison sentence that month; he had been convicted of disseminating antiregime propaganda in July. Tavakoli was initially placed under "preventative arrest" during the 2022 mass protests, although he had not participated in the demonstrations.

E. Associational and Organizational Rights

E1 0-4 pts

Is there freedom of assembly?

0/4

The constitution states that public demonstrations may be held if they are not “detrimental to the fundamental principles of Islam.” In practice, only state-sanctioned demonstrations are typically permitted, while other gatherings have been forcibly dispersed by security personnel, who detain and use lethal violence against participants.

Protesters mounted mass demonstrations in more than 100 cities beginning in September 2022. Antigovernment protests evolved into the Woman, Life, Freedom movement, which saw protesters call for freedom and denounce state violence against women in response to the death of Amini, a 22-year-old Kurdish woman who had been arrested and beaten by the so-called morality police in Tehran for allegedly wearing her hijab improperly.

Authorities responded harshly; security forces used water cannons and tear gas against protesters, but reportedly also fired birdshot and live rounds. Officers were filmed violently beating demonstrators, including women. Authorities were also accused of using rape and other sexual violence to suppress protests. In September 2023, Iran Human Rights (IHR) reported that at least 551 protesters had died in the ensuing violence, most of them in 2022.

Ahead of the one-year anniversary of the protests in September 2023, authorities increased pressure on dissidents, activists, and the family members of those killed in an attempt to prevent additional protests. Demonstrations marking the anniversary were nevertheless held, and some were met with the same type of violent repression seen in 2022. Authorities also repeatedly disrupted internet access during the 2023 protests, notably in the province of Sistan and Baluchistan.

E2 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights– and governance-related work?

0 / 4

Nongovernmental organizations that seek to address human rights violations are generally suppressed by the state. For example, the Center for Human Rights Defenders remains banned, with several of its members imprisoned. Groups that focus on apolitical issues have also faced crackdowns in recent years.

E3 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations?

1 / 4

Iranian authorities do not permit the creation of labor unions; only state-sponsored labor councils are allowed. Labor rights groups have come under pressure in recent years, with key leaders and activists sentenced to prison on national security charges. Workers who strike are vulnerable to dismissal and arrest. Despite such reprisals, labor protests have increased in recent years due to growing economic hardship.

In June 2023, labor activist Davood Razavi was given a five-year discretionary prison sentence for organizing protests for improved wages and better working conditions. Razavi was also given a two-year ban on participating in political parties and groups as well as online activities. The Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company Workers' Union condemned Razavi's sentence.

F. Rule of Law

F1 0-4 pts

Is there an independent judiciary?

1 / 4

While the courts have a degree of autonomy within the ruling establishment, the judicial system is regularly used as a tool to silence regime critics and opposition members. The head of the judiciary is appointed by the supreme leader for renewable five-year terms. Deputy head Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei was named to the judiciary's top post in 2021, succeeding Raisi after he was elected president. Ejei previously served as an intelligence minister and prosecutor general.

Political dissidents and advocates of human and labor rights have continued to face arbitrary judgments, and the security apparatus's influence over the courts has reportedly grown in recent years.

F2 0-4 pts

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters?

0/4

The authorities routinely violate basic due process standards, particularly in politically sensitive cases. Activists are arrested without warrants, held indefinitely without formal charges, and denied access to legal counsel or any contact with the outside world. Many are later convicted on vague security charges in trials that sometimes last only a few minutes.

Some 19,200 people were arrested in connection with the Woman, Life, Freedom protests as of January 2023, and they reportedly faced widespread due process violations. Some 25 people were sentenced to death in 2023, and many were reportedly denied access to legal counsel of their choice. At least 7 were known to have been executed as of September, though Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that 11 cases were overturned. In December, Amnesty International separately reported that at least 5 people faced the death penalty and 15 people were at risk of receiving that sentence.

Lawyers who take up the cases of dissidents have been jailed and banned from practicing, and a number have been forced to leave the country to escape prosecution. During the 2022 protests, authorities arrested at least 44 lawyers, including defense attorneys who represented demonstrators. In August 2023, Saleh Nikbakht, the Amini family's lawyer, was brought before a Tehran court over accusations that he engaged in antistate propaganda.

Dual nationals and those with connections abroad have also faced arbitrary detention, trumped-up charges, and denial of due process rights in recent years. In 2022, a Swedish diplomat working for the European Union (EU), Johan Floderus, was arrested in Tehran and accused of spying for Israel. Swedish and EU officials have called for Floderus's release; the diplomat, whose trial on dubious espionage charges began in December 2023, remained in prison in Iran at year's end.

F3 0-4 pts

Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies?

0/4

Former detainees have reported being beaten during arrest and subjected to torture until they confess to crimes dictated by their interrogators. Some crimes can be formally punished with lashes in addition to imprisonment or fines. Political prisoners have repeatedly engaged in hunger strikes in recent years to protest mistreatment in custody. In 2022, Amnesty International reported that at least 88 prisoners had died in custody from torture, the use of firearms or tear gas, or other ill-treatment since 2010, while 96 prisoners had died from being denied adequate medical care.

Prisons are overcrowded, and prisoners often complain of poor detention conditions, including denial of medical care. Video recordings taken in Evin prison and distributed in 2021 captured incidents in which prisoners were assaulted or mistreated, along with evidence of overcrowding. In 2022, a series of fires destroyed parts of Evin prison under unclear circumstances, killing at least eight people. Security forces reportedly attacked prisoners who attempted to flee the blazes.

Iran has generally been second only to China in the number of executions it carries out, putting hundreds of people to death each year. Convicts can be executed for offenses other than murder, such as drug trafficking, and for crimes they committed when they were younger than 18 years old. The number of executions has increased since Raisi became president. Executions for drug-related offenses disproportionately impact people from marginalized communities. According to Amnesty International, Iranian authorities executed at least 173 people convicted of drug-related charges in the first five months of 2023, accounting for two-thirds of all death sentences carried out in that period. According to a UN report released in November, authorities executed at least 419 people in the first seven months of the year, a 30 percent increase over the same period in 2022.

In addition to the violence stemming directly from state repression, the country faces a long-term security threat from terrorist and insurgent groups that recruit among disadvantaged Kurdish, Arab, and Sunni Muslim minority populations.

Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?

1/4

Women do not receive equal treatment under the law and face widespread discrimination in practice. For example, a woman's testimony in court is given half the weight of a man's, and the monetary compensation awarded to a female victim's family upon her death is half that owed to the family of a male victim.

A majority of the population is of Persian ethnicity, and members of ethnic minorities experience various forms of discrimination, including restrictions on the use of their languages. Some provinces with large non-Persian populations remain underdeveloped. Activists campaigning for the rights of ethnic minority groups and greater autonomy for their respective regions have come under pressure from the authorities, and some have been jailed. The Kurdish population played an important role in the 2022 protests triggered by the death of Amini, who was Kurdish, and the state crackdown was especially heavy in Kurdish areas. Disproportionate numbers of protest-related deaths were also reported in Sistan and Baluchistan Province, where Sunni Muslim, ethnic Baluch residents form a majority.

LGBT+ people face harassment and discrimination, though the problem is underreported due to the criminalized and hidden nature of this community in Iran. The penal code criminalizes all sexual relations outside of traditional marriage, and Iran is among the few countries where individuals can be put to death for consensual same-sex conduct.

G. Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights

G1 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education?

1/4

Freedom of movement is restricted, particularly for women and perceived opponents of the regime. Many journalists and activists have been prevented from leaving the country. Women are banned from certain public places and can generally obtain a passport to travel abroad only with the permission of their fathers or husbands. Women had been barred from attending soccer matches in stadiums since the 1979 revolution, but in recent years a limited number of women have been allowed into stadiums for international matches amid increased pressure on Iran to remove the ban.

G2 0-4 pts

Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors?

1 / 4

Iranians have the legal right to own property and establish private businesses. However, powerful institutions like the IRGC play a dominant role in the economy, limiting fair competition and opportunities for entrepreneurs, and bribery is said to be widespread in the business environment, including for registration and obtaining licenses. Women are denied equal rights in inheritance matters.

During 2023, authorities shut down dozens of cafes, restaurants, and other businesses for allegedly failing to comply with the mandatory hijab law. Business owners have also faced reprisals for supporting the Woman, Life, Freedom protest movement, including restrictions on access to banking services.

G3 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance?

1 / 4

Social freedoms are restricted in Iran. All residents, but particularly women, are subject to obligatory rules on dress and personal appearance, and those who are deemed to have violated the rules face state harassment, fines, and arrest.

Following Amini's death in 2022, an increasing number of women appeared in public without their headscarves as an act of civil disobedience. Dozens were

arrested, including several prominent actresses. In September 2023, the parliament approved a bill that would impose heavier penalties, including steeper fines and longer prison terms, on women who do not wear the hijab. The Guardian Council, which must approve the bill before it becomes law, returned the draft legislation to the parliament for further review in October, though the Expediency Council upheld it in mid-December. The bill has drawn intense criticism from human rights defenders for its severity and the possibility that it would be violently enforced. Women were also warned that they could be denied access to banking services and public transport for violating rules on dress.

Police have long conducted raids on private gatherings that breach rules against alcohol consumption and the mixing of unrelated men and women. Those attending can be detained and fined or sentenced to corporal punishment in the form of lashes.

Women do not enjoy equal rights in divorce and child custody disputes.

Abortion is permitted within the first four months of a pregnancy if three doctors decide that the mother's life is at risk or if the fetus shows signs of severe disability. The judiciary has increased its efforts to restrict abortions in recent years. In 2021, the Guardian Council ratified a law strengthening enforcement of abortion restrictions and establishing a committee that includes judicial representatives, Islamic jurists, doctors, and legislators to develop new regulations. The law also bans voluntary sterilization and the distribution of free contraceptives. In August 2023, a midwife was arrested in Qom for allegedly performing an illegal abortion, and her clinic was shuttered.

According to the *Shargh* newspaper, official reports indicate that 165 women were killed by male family members between July 2021 and July 2023, though experts believe the actual number is significantly higher.

G4 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation?

1 / 4

The government provides no protection to women and children forced into sex trafficking, and both Iranians and migrant workers from countries like Afghanistan

are subject to forced labor and debt bondage. The IRGC has allegedly used coercive tactics to recruit thousands of Afghan migrants living in Iran to fight in Syria. HRW has reported that children as young as 14 are among those recruited.

The population faces widespread economic hardship driven by a combination of US-led trade sanctions and mismanagement by the regime. The crisis has resulted in the rapid devaluation of the national currency and soaring prices for basic goods. In 2022, Alena Douhan, the UN special rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures, reported that sanctions on Iran affected most aspects of life in the country, and called for them to be lifted.



On Iran

See all data, scores & information on this country or territory.

[See More >](#)

Country Facts

Population

88,550,000

Region

Middle East

Global Freedom Score

11/100 **Not Free**

Internet Freedom Score

11/100 **Not Free**

Other Years

2023

Be the first to know what's happening.

Join the Freedom House weekly
newsletter

Subscribe

ADDRESS

1850 M St. NW Floor 11
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 296-5101

GENERAL INQUIRIES

info@freedomhouse.org

PRESS & MEDIA

press@freedomhouse.org

@2024 FreedomHouse