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Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Iran: Military Service

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Preface

Purpose

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and analysis of COI for use by Home Office decision makers handling particular types of protection and human rights claims (as set out in the [Introduction](#) section). It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into two main sections: (1) analysis and assessment of COI and other evidence; and (2) COI. These are explained in more detail below.

Assessment

This section analyses the evidence relevant to this note – i.e. the COI section; refugee/human rights laws and policies; and applicable caselaw – by describing this and its inter-relationships, and provides an assessment of, in general, whether one or more of the following applies:

- A person is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm
- The general humanitarian situation is so severe as to breach Article 15(b) of European Council Directive 2004/83/EC (the Qualification Directive) / Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights as transposed in paragraph 339C and 339CA(iii) of the Immigration Rules
- The security situation presents a real risk to a civilian's life or person such that it would breach Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive as transposed in paragraph 339C and 339CA(iv) of the Immigration Rules
- A person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- A person is reasonably able to relocate within a country or territory
- A claim is likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- If a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts.

Country of origin information

The country information in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual, 2013](#). Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

The structure and content of the country information section follows a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to this note.

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the 'cut-off' date(s) in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after these date(s) is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available, and is from generally reliable sources. Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information, and
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

Multiple sourcing is used to ensure that the information is accurate, balanced and corroborated, so that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture at the time of publication is provided of the issues relevant to this note.

Information is compared and contrasted, whenever possible, to provide a range of views and opinions. The inclusion of a source, however, is not an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a brief footnote; full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve our material. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this note, please email the [Country Policy and Information Team](#).

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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Assessment

Updated: 6 April 2020

1. Introduction

1.1 Basis of claim

- 1.1.1 Fear of persecution and/or serious harm by the state because of:
- (a) The treatment and/or conditions likely to be faced by the person during compulsory military service duties; and/or
 - (b) The penalties likely to be faced by the person's refusal to undertake, or their desertion from, military service duties.

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2. Consideration of issues

2.1 Credibility

- 2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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2.2 Exclusion

- 2.2.1 Whilst there is no evidence that those completing their military service have been deployed to Syria, it is important to note that members of Iran's armed forces have been deployed in Syria in support of President Bashar al-Assad. The Assad regime and its allies have carried out indiscriminate attacks that directly targeted civilians and have been accused of perpetrating war crimes (see the country policy and information note on [Syria: the Syrian civil war](#)).
- 2.2.2 Decision makers must consider whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses applies. If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.
- 2.2.3 For further guidance on the exclusion clauses and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instructions on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and [Restricted Leave](#).

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2.3 Convention reason(s)

- 2.3.1 Where a person is considered to be at risk of persecution or serious harm, decision makers must consider whether this is for a Refugee Convention (or other) reason.

- 2.3.2 The [Asylum Instruction on Military Service and Conscientious Objection](#) and paragraph 22 of the House of Lords judgment in the case of [Sepet & Another v. SSHD \[2003\] UKHL 15](#) explains that it is necessary to carefully examine the real reason for the persecution, looking at the real reason in the mind of the persecutor rather than the reason which the victim believes to be the reason for the persecution.
- 2.3.3 There is limited evidence to suggest that the Iranian government views a person's refusal to undertake military service as an act of political disobedience. The Islamic Penal Code proscribes that persons effectively encouraging military forces to rebel, escape, surrender or disobey military orders shall be considered as 'mohareb', i.e. as taking up arms against the government. Therefore it is unlikely a person who is a conscientious objector will be able to establish that their claim falls under political opinion.
- 2.3.4 If persons are punished on return, it is likely to be for the criminal offence of evading or deserting national service. The nature and duration of punishment will depend on the person's circumstances.
- 2.3.5 However, where it can be established that punishment for refusing to perform military service would be persecutory, in order for that persecution to be "for reasons of" a Convention reason it must be shown that there is discrimination in the application of the punishment and that the discrimination is based, or partly based, on a Convention reason. Refer to the [Asylum Instruction on Military Service and Conscientious Objection](#).
- 2.3.6 Persons who have evaded or absconded from national service do not form a particular social group (PSG) within the meaning of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. This is because they do not share an innate characteristic or a common background that cannot be changed, or share a characteristic or belief that is so fundamental to identity or conscience that a person should not be forced to renounce it and they do not have a distinct identity because it is not perceived as being different by the surrounding society.
- 2.3.7 However someone might be able to establish grounds as a member of a PSG if they are a LGBTI person or are perceived as such.
- 2.3.8 In the absence of a link to one of the 5 Convention grounds necessary for the grant of refugee status, the question is whether the particular person will face a real risk of serious harm sufficient to qualify for Humanitarian Protection (HP).
- 2.3.9 For further guidance on the 5 convention reasons, including particular social groups, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.4 Risk

a. General approach

- 2.4.1 Military service, where active duty can last up to 24 months, is compulsory for males aged between 18 and 49, although a person can volunteer from the age of 15. There is no alternative to military service in Iran and conscientious objection is not recognised. Once a person has completed active service they spend a further 23 years in varying stages of reserve

service. There are limited exemptions available, such as being the only son or breadwinner in a family, certain medical reasons or for exceptional academic or sporting achievements. The option to 'buy out' of military service is also a possibility for those who meet certain conditions and can afford it. According to an Iranian military spokesman in June 2016 alone, 10,000 people applied to buy out of their military service (see [Exemptions](#)).

- 2.4.2 Compulsory national service is a prerogative of sovereign states. It is therefore reasonable that draft evasion and desertion are criminal offences and punishable by law – points provided for in the [UNHCR Handbook and Guidelines on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status](#) (paras 167-174) and confirmed by the House of Lords in the case of [Sepet & Another v. SSHD \[2003\] UKHL 15](#).
- 2.4.3 Therefore, a requirement to undergo compulsory military service – or punishment for failing to complete this duty – does not, in itself, constitute persecution. It will only do so where:
- (a) military service would involve acts, with which the person may be associated, which are contrary to the basic rules of human conduct;
 - (b) the conditions of military service would be so harsh as to amount to persecution; or
 - (c) the punishment for draft evasion or desertion is disproportionately harsh or severe.
- 2.4.4 See also the [Asylum Instruction on Military Service and Conscientious Objection](#).

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b. Acts which are contrary to the basic rules of human conduct

- 2.4.5 'Acts ... which are contrary to the basic rules of human conduct' is taken to mean being required to act in a way that would bring that person within the scope of Article 1F of the Refugee Convention and/or Article 12 of Council Directive 2004/83/EC ('the Qualification Directive').
- 2.4.6 For further information see the [Asylum Instruction on Exclusion: Article 1F of the Refugee Convention](#).
- 2.4.7 The [Asylum Instruction on Military Service and Conscientious Objection](#) explains that the test is met if the armed conflict in general is contrary to international law. However, persecution will arise only if there is a "real risk" that a person would, in the course of their military service, be involved in acts contrary to international law and that they would be punished for failure to undertake such military service. The Court of Appeal in [Krotov v Secretary of State for the Home Department \[2004\] 1 WLR 1825](#) that a Convention ground is established if there is satisfactory evidence that:
- the level and nature of the conflict, and the attitude of the relevant governmental authority towards it, has reached a position where combatants are or may be required on a sufficiently widespread basis to act in breach of the basic rules of human conduct generally recognised by the international community; and

- the person will be punished for refusing to carry out the act(s); and
- disapproval of such methods and fear of such punishment is the genuine reason motivating the refusal of an asylum seeker to serve in the relevant conflict.

2.4.8 There is no evidence to suggest that those performing military service in Iran would be required to engage in any military acts which are contrary to the basic rules of human conduct but each case must be assessed on a case by case basis (see [Treatment](#)).

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c. Conditions of military service in Iran

2.4.9 Most conscripts serve in the army in one of the country's military branches. However well-educated conscripts may work in non-military government-owned organisations promoting 'education, production and healthcare'. Recently, particularly talented individuals may spend their time working in knowledge-based companies in the private sector.

2.4.10 As the [Asylum Instruction on Military Service and Conscientious Objection](#) explains, although the conditions in many armed forces may be described as harsh, in order for a person to establish that these conditions amount to persecution a person would need to show:

- that this harsh treatment amounted to persecution; and
- that there is a reasonable likelihood that they may face this harsh treatment.

2.4.11 Conditions for most conscripts are reported to be poor with low pay, insufficient food, distressing or stressful working environments and long periods without days off. There have been reports of harassment and physical and psychological abuse of conscripts by commanding officers as well as other conscripts which has led to self-harm and suicide. Religious minorities may experience additional harassment. Yarsanis have been being forcibly shaved during military service (the moustache is a holy symbol for the Yarsan community) when they refuse to pray (see [Treatment](#)).

2.4.12 However, in general, the conditions and/or treatment likely to be faced by a person required to undertake compulsory military service would not by virtue of its nature or repetition be so harsh as to amount to a real risk of serious harm or persecution.

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d. Penalties for draft evasion or desertion

2.4.13 The [Asylum Instruction on Military Service and Conscientious Objection](#) explains, as the House of Lords held in [Sepet & Another v. SSHD \[2003\] UKHL 15](#), that it is legitimate for countries to require their citizens to perform compulsory military service and therefore punishment for failing to complete this duty will not automatically be regarded as persecution. It is also reasonable that draft evasion and desertion are criminal offences and punishable by law and that this punishment will not amount to persecution unless it is disproportionately harsh or severe.

- 2.4.14 Draft evaders are liable for prosecution. A person who deserts from or evades the army will have to continue military service upon return if he is under the age of 40. Evading military service for up to a year during peace time or 2 months during war can result in between 3 and 6 months added to a person's military service. Longer draft evasion (more than 1 year in peacetime or 2 or more months during war) may result in criminal prosecution from between six months to two years. Draft evaders may also be denied driving licences, have their passports revoked or be banned from leaving the country or restrictions placed on their ability to work (see [Evaders and desertion](#)).
- 2.4.15 There is no information to indicate whether persons who evade or desert are punished beyond what is described in law and what would be disproportionate to the crime. A June 2016 report suggested that due to increasing numbers of draft evaders the process of tracking them down had intensified. However, it is not known how active the Iranian authorities currently are in pursuing and prosecuting draft evaders (see [Evaders and desertion](#)).
- 2.4.16 It is unlikely that in the majority of cases the consequence of a person's general unwillingness to serve in the armed forces or objection to enter a 'combat zone' will result in the person being subject to treatment which amounts to serious harm or persecution. Each case though should be considered on its individual merits. Decision makers should consider whether those claiming to be unwilling to serve in the armed forces can 'buy out' of compulsory service (see [Evaders and desertion](#)).
- 2.4.17 In some cases where asylum claims are made based on a fear of persecution owing to a refusal to perform military service it may be claimed that if imprisoned the conditions would be so severe as to make removal a breach Article 3 ECHR (prohibition of torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment).
- 2.4.18 In [SF \(Article 3- Prison Conditions\) Iran CG \[2002\] UKIAT 00973](#) it was held that, in general, the conditions in Iranian prisons may well be regarded as harsh, but there was no sufficient indication from the material before the Tribunal that this Respondent would run the risk of facing treatment which amounted to a breach of Article 3. However, each case must be assessed on its own facts.

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e. Sexual orientation and gender identity

- 2.4.19 Under Iranian law, a designation as a 'homosexual' or transsexual/transgender is considered to constitute a medical and psychological condition that warrants an exemption from compulsory military service. Evidence suggests that those wishing to obtain an exemption on the grounds of their sexuality/gender identity have to undergo numerous humiliating physical and psychological tests and examinations and provide intimate information regarding their life. Furthermore, their sexual orientation will be documented in an exemption card which could later become a basis for further discrimination and ill-treatment. A person who has been granted exemption on the grounds of their sexuality/gender identity may be able to

show that this places them at risk of persecution as a result (see [Sexual orientation and gender identity](#)).

- 2.4.20 For information and assessment of risks faced by gay and trans persons, see the country policy and information note on [Iran: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#).
- 2.4.21 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.5 Protection

- 2.5.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution from the state, they are unlikely to be able to avail themselves of the protection of the authorities.
- 2.5.2 For further guidance on assessing the availability of state protection, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.6 Internal relocation

- 2.6.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution from the state, it is unlikely to be possible to expect them to relocate to escape that risk.
- 2.6.2 For further guidance on internal relocation see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.7 Certification

- 2.7.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.
- 2.7.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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Country information

Section 3 updated: 6 April 2020

3. Background

- 3.1.1 The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook, last updated on 21 February 2020, explained that as of 2019 the military and security forces of Iran comprise of:
- 'Islamic Republic of Iran Regular Forces (Artesh): Ground Forces, Navy (includes marines), Air Force, Air Defense Forces;
 - 'Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (Sepah, IRGC): Ground Forces, Navy (includes marines), Aerospace Force (controls strategic missile force), Qods Force (special operations), Cyber Command, Basij Paramilitary Forces (Popular Mobilization Army);
 - 'Law Enforcement Forces (border and security troops, assigned to the armed forces in wartime)'.¹
- 3.1.2 In a July 2019 article 'Iran – Military Conscription', Global Security noted that: 'Compulsory conscription has been in effect since 1926, when Reza Shah's Military Service Act was passed by the Majlis. As of 2019, the Iranian armed forces number about 525,000 troops, of whom about 250,000 (mostly in the Army) were conscripts.'²
- 3.1.3 The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) published a report on 11 January 2018 entitled 'The Crisis in Iran: What Now?' and stated that 'Iran's military forces now total some 523,000: 350,000 in the army; 125,000 in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC); 18,000 in the Navy; 30,000 in the Air Force; and at least 40,000 paramilitary forces like the Basij. Iran's security forces also conscript or process well over 100,000 young men a year for at least 21 months of service.'³
- 3.1.4 An article published by The Iran Project in July 2018 stated that:
- 'Military service begins with two months of physical training [...] and education in weapons, self-defence and responding to chemical attacks.
 - '[...] Soldiers must do their compulsory service in one of the country's military branches which include the Army Ground Force, the Iranian Navy, the Air Force (IRIAF), the Khatam al-Anbiya Air Defence Headquarters, the IRGC Ground Force, the IRGC Navy, the IRGC Aerospace Force, and the Law Enforcement.'⁴
- 3.1.5 ACCORD's COI July 2015 compilation on Iran, citing the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, BZ) December 2013 'General Official Report on Iran', reported that:
- 'There is no alternative civilian service in Iran.'⁵

¹ CIA, 'The World Factbook - Iran' 2019, last updated 21 February 2020, [url](#).

² Global Security, 'Iran – Military Conscription', 20 July 2019, [url](#).

³ CSIS, 'The Crisis in Iran: What Now?', p4, revised 11 January 2018, [url](#).

⁴ The Iran Project, 'Iran parliament working on plan to abolish conscription', 30 July 2018, [url](#).

⁵ ACCORD, 'Iran: Selected Human Rights Issues: COI Compilation', p210, July 2015, [url](#).

4. Legal context

4.1 Constitution

4.1.1 Article 3 of the Iranian Constitution states, that among other things, the Islamic Republic government of Iran is obliged to use all of its resources in 'the complete strengthening of the national defense, through universal military training, with the aim of securing the country's independence, its territorial integrity, and its Islamic system'⁶.

4.1.2 Chapter 9, Section 2 of the Iranian Constitution relates to the army and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps:

'Article 144: The Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran must be an Islamic army, i.e. committed to Islamic ideology and the people. It must accept into its service deserving individuals who are true to the goals of the Islamic Revolution and devoted to realizing them.

'Article 151: In accordance with the venerable Qur'anic verse, "Muster against them all the men and cavalry at your command, so that you may strike terror into the enemy of God and your enemy and others beside them who are unknown to you but known to God" (8: 59), the government is responsible for providing for all the citizens a program of military training and its facilities, in accordance with the criterion of Islam such that everyone will always be able to engage in the armed defense of the country and the order of the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, the possession of arms requires the permission of the official authorities.'⁷

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4.2 Age and gender

4.2.1 The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook, last updated on 21 February 2020, stated that the ages for military service were 15 years for Basij forces (Popular Mobilization Army), 16 years for volunteers, 17 years for Law Enforcement Forces and 18 years of age for compulsory military service. Women are exempt from compulsory military service⁸.

4.2.2 Global Security also noted that 'Iranian males 18 to 49 years of age are legally eligible for conscription.'⁹

4.2.3 A report by BBC Monitoring published in August 2018 stated:

'An Iranian military official has said a proposal being discussed at the parliament for conscription of girls "sounds like a joke", hardline Tasnim news agency reported on 5 August [2018].

"This proposal sounds like a joke, and presently there is no such plan for girls' conscription," head of the human resources department of the General

⁶ WIPO, 'Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (1989 Edition)', undated, p8, [url](#).

⁷ WIPO, 'Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (1989 Edition)', undated, p32, [url](#).

⁸ CIA, 'The World Factbook - Iran' 2019, last updated 21 February 2020, [url](#).

⁹ Global Security, 'Iran – Military Conscription', 20 July 2019, [url](#).

Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, Brig-Gen Musa Kamali said, as reported by Tasnim.

‘He was responding to remarks made earlier by female MP Tayyebah Siyavoshi (Siavashi), who said the Majlis Legal and Judicial Committee was discussing conscription of girls, asserting, however, that girls will only be employed for education and health services during their military service.

‘The MP said she was not aware of the details of the plan, but added that “it is clear that girls will not have to carry a gun” during their conscription.’¹⁰

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4.3 Duration

4.3.1 Global Security stated:

‘The total period of service is twenty-five years, divided as follows: two years of active military service, six years in standby military service for draftees, then eight years in first-stage reserve and nine years in second-stage reserve.

‘[...] The duration of compulsory military service ranges from 18 to 24 months, depending on the geographical location of the conscript service. General Musa Kamali, the Vice Commander of the Headquarters for Human Resources of the Iranian Armed Forces, was quoted as saying that “the duration of military service is 18 months in combat and in insecure regions, 19 months in the regions which are deprived of facilities and have bad weather conditions, 21 months in other places, and 24 months in government offices”. In general males are expected to serve for a period of 20 months and for service in impoverished areas, the duration can last 24 months while service in boundary areas can last 22 months.’¹¹

4.3.2 The Iran Project stated in an article published on 30 July 2018, that ‘According to Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, all men older than 18 years old must go for military service or conscription. The length of conscription is between 18 months and 2 years.’¹² The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook, last updated on 21 February 2020, also stated that conscripted military service obligation is between 18 and 24 months.¹³

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4.4 Religion

4.4.1 The US Department of State (USSD) stated in its 2018 International Religious Freedom Report:

‘The constitution states the military must be Islamic, must be committed to Islamic ideals, and must recruit individuals who are committed to the objectives of the Islamic revolution. In addition to the regular military, the IRGC [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps] is charged with upholding the Islamic nature of the revolution at home and abroad. The law does not

¹⁰ BBC Monitoring, ‘Iran general dismisses girls’ military service plan as “joke”’, 6 August 2018, [url](#)

¹¹ Global Security, ‘Iran – Military Conscription’, 20 July 2019, [url](#).

¹² The Iran Project, ‘Iran parliament working on plan to abolish conscription’, 30 July 2018, [url](#).

¹³ CIA, ‘The World Factbook - Iran’ 2019, last updated 21 February 2020, [url](#).

provide for exemptions from military service based on religious affiliation. The law forbids non-Muslims from holding positions of authority over Muslims in the armed forces. Members of recognized religious minorities with a college education may serve as officers during their mandatory military service, but may not continue to serve beyond the mandatory service period to become career military officers.

“Yarsanis reported continued discrimination and harassment in the military [...]. A March report by the UN special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran stated Yarsanis continued to face a range of human rights violations, including attacks on their places of worship, the destruction of community cemeteries, and arrests and torture of community leaders. The report provided “accounts of [...] individuals being forcibly shaved (the moustache is a holy symbol for the Yarsan community) when they refused to pray, for example when undertaking military service”.¹⁴

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4.5 Call-up procedures

- 4.5.1 ACCORD's COI July 2015 compilation on Iran, citing the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, BZ) December 2013 'General Official Report on Iran', reported that ‘...all men, upon reaching the age of 18, are called up as part of their military service duties. They must report to the military authorities within one month after the start of the Iranian calendar year in which they turn 18. Announcements are made via the media (including newspapers, radio and television) calling upon men born in a given year to report to the local conscription bureau.’¹⁵

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4.6 Service Cards

- 4.6.1 The US State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs (USSDBCA) Iran Reciprocity Schedule noted with regards to military records (Kart-e Sarbazi (military card); Kart-e Payan-e Khedmat doreye Zaroorat (service completion card) that ‘All service cards show national ID number, given name, surname, father's name, date of birth (Persian), dates of service, card issuance date, rank, photo, and contain a chip. Older cards include detailed biographical information such as blood type, hair color, weight, height, eye colour, physical defects, and sometimes level of education.’¹⁶

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Section 5 updated: 6 April 2020

5. Exemptions

5.1 Overview

- 5.1.1 A report produced by OutRight Action International in October 2016 stated: ‘There are various grounds that can exempt young men from military service, such as being the only son of the family, the sole caretaker of a parent or ill

¹⁴ USSD, ‘2018 Report on International Religious Freedom: Iran’, p9, p25-26, 21 June 2019, [url](#).

¹⁵ ACCORD, ‘Iran: Selected Human Rights Issues: COI Compilation’, p210, July 2015, [url](#).

¹⁶ USSDBCA, ‘Iran Reciprocity Schedule (Military Records)’, undated, [url](#).

sibling, or demonstrating “exceptional scholastic achievement.” Individuals can also be exempt if they suffer from a mental or physical illness or disability that renders them unable to carry out military service. Once an individual is deemed exempt, they are issued a military exemption card, which identifies the reasons for their exemption. The recruitment, registration, and determination of eligibility for compulsory military service in Iran is the responsibility of the Military Draft Board (MDB) (Nezam Vazifeh in Persian), which is a part of Iran’s Law Enforcement Agency.’¹⁷

5.1.2 ACCORD’s COI July 2015 compilation on Iran, citing the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, BZ) December 2013 ‘General Official Report on Iran’, stated that:

‘a person can be freed from his military service duties, if he:

- Is an only son and his father was sixty or older when the son turned eighteen;
- Is a caretaker for a disabled father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, brother or sister;
- Is the breadwinner of an unmarried sister up to the age of twenty-four;
- Has (a) brother(s), who is (are) currently in military service
- Is married and has a child (this only applies in times of peace)
- Has a disability;
- Is “mentally ill” (homosexual);
- Is a hermaphrodite;
- Has a father or brother who died in the Iran-Iraq War; this is combined with additional conditions;
- Is the breadwinner of his mother who is divorced de facto and de jure;
- Is a student studying abroad and has bought out military service’¹⁸

5.1.3 The same source further noted that ‘it is not possible for young men in the military age to leave Iran before the compulsory military service is completed, unless a deposit (150 million IRR, which is roughly equivalent to \$15,000) is paid. The latter is of relevance if one wishes to study abroad.’¹⁹

5.1.4 The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) also provided information on exemptions from military service in a [query response](#) published in March 2014²⁰. CPIT was not able to find more recent material in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).

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¹⁷ Outright Action International, ‘Being Transgender in Iran’, p28-29, October 2016, [url](#).

¹⁸ ACCORD, ‘Iran: Selected Human Rights Issues: COI Compilation’, p211, July 2015, [url](#).

¹⁹ ACCORD, ‘Iran: Selected Human Rights Issues: COI Compilation’, p210, July 2015, [url](#).

²⁰ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, ‘Iran: Military Service’, 28 March 2014, [url](#).

5.2 Medical exemptions

5.2.1 The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) provided information on exemptions from military service on medical grounds in a query response published in March 2014, based on a range of sources. Their response noted that the undated website of the Iranian Embassy in the Hague (NB the webpage quoted is now unavailable) stated:

‘[a]ccording to regulations of Medical Exemption of Military Service, those liable to the duty of service can be generally categorized into 4 main groups in terms of their conditions:

- Individuals being in a state of complete physical and mental health and hence entirely capable of being drafted to the mandatory service period.
- Individuals who have a handicap or suffer from a certain illness and are thus not in a complete state of health, however yet well capable of carrying out non-combat/military-related services in offices.
- Those who due to weak disposition, growth deficiency or suffering from physical or mental illnesses are temporarily not capable of serving for the mandatory period.
- Those who due to handicaps or mental and/or physical illnesses are permanently unable to be drafted for mandatory service period.

‘The IHRDC [Iran Human Rights Documentation Centre] indicates that some exemptions “on account of physical or mental health problems or disabilities” include “schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, manic-depressive tendencies and other serious mental illnesses” (7 Nov. 2013).’²¹

5.2.2 Documents (translated from Farsi to English) on the Interests Section of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the Embassy of Pakistan in Washington DC describe the process and requirements of applying from abroad for military service exemption for medical reasons (see [Annex A](#)). The instructions state that there is a list of medical conditions on the Vazifeh Police Website that are eligible for military exemption, however CPIT was unable to access this website to view this list²².

5.2.3 The instructions further stated that ‘students with service commitment and those who have left the country on security are not eligible for applying for military service exemption for medical reasons’ and that ‘if the application is rejected by the medical commission of the Military Service Organization, the applicant will have to do his military service, and in case of non-attendance, he will be considered an evader from the date of the rejection of the application’²³.

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²¹ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, ‘Iran: Military Service’, 28 March 2014, [url](#).

²² Interests Section – Iran, ‘Military Service Exemption for Medical Reasons’, 25 July 2018, [url](#)

²³ Interests Section – Iran, ‘Military Service Exemption for Medical Reasons’, 25 July 2018, [url](#)

5.3 Exemption cards

- 5.3.1 The US State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs (USSDBCA) Iran Reciprocity Schedule noted that ‘Exemption cards [Kart-e Mo’afiyat az khedmate doreye zaroorat] show the reason for exemption in the usual place of service dates, and these cards also have a different photo border from service cards.’²⁴
- 5.3.2 The same source also states: ‘For mass exemptions, a copy of the exemption announcement and the birth certificate (proof of their condition) can be provided in lieu of exemption card. Temporary student exemptions may also be substantiated by a letter from the conscription authority and proof of the student’s bond payment to exit Iran’²⁵

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5.4 Sexual orientation and gender identity

- 5.4.1 The USSD 2019 Iran Human Rights Report stated that: ‘The law requires all male citizens older than age 18 to serve in the military but exempts gay men and transgender women, who are classified as having mental disorders. [...] According to the NGO 6Rang, this practice identified gay or transgender individuals and put them at risk of physical abuse and discrimination.’²⁶
- 5.4.2 The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Iran country report published in June 2018 stated: ‘Homosexuality or a designation as a transsexual are regarded as medical and psychological conditions that warrant an exemption. Those dismissed from military service due to their sexual orientation receive special exemption cards indicating the reason for their dismissal, which may become the basis for later discrimination.’²⁷
- 5.4.3 The same source also noted ‘men whose homosexuality or transgenderism has been established (through an intrusive medical examination) are exempted from military service and given the designation ‘mentally ill’ on their military cards, which can lead to later difficulties when seeking employment.’²⁸
- 5.4.4 A report produced by OutRight Action International in October 2016 stated: ‘Trans women seeking exemption from the military draft can do so pursuant to the “Regulations on Medical Exemption from the Draft,” which were approved by the president’s cabinet on May 11, 2014. Under these regulations, the exemption of trans individuals from military service is mentioned under “Chapter 5: Psychiatric Diseases,” which covers mental and psychological conditions such as schizo affective disorder, delusional disorder, or schizophrenia, and certain intellectual and developmental disabilities. Section 12 of Chapter 5 stipulates: “Gender Identity Disorder (TS) that is certified by the LMO [Legal Medicine Organisation] and confirmed by the Armed Service’s medical centers [is grounds for] for permanent exemption.” The regulations also address the issue of exemption

²⁴ USSDBCA, ‘Iran Reciprocity Schedule (Military Records)’, undated, [url](#).

²⁵ USSDBCA, ‘Iran Reciprocity Schedule (Military Records)’, undated, [url](#).

²⁶ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2019 – Iran’, 11 March 2020, [url](#).

²⁷ DFAT, ‘Country Information Report – Iran’, p37, 7 June 2018, [url](#).

²⁸ DFAT, ‘Country Information Report – Iran’, p36, 7 June 2018, [url](#).

for gay men, but do so under Article 7, which states, “perversions that violate the social and military code of conduct (such as sexual perversion and homosexuality) [warrant] a six-month deferment.” Under Article 7, “after six-months’ deferment, and upon confirmation by the Armed Service’s medical centers, [the applicant is eligible] for a permanent exemption.

‘The official classification of trans experience as a mental disorder under Section 12 of the medical exemption regulations means that those trans individuals who succeed in securing a medical exemption run the risk of being stigmatized, harassed, or discriminated against by their future employers or anyone who is legally allowed to review their military exemption card.’²⁹

5.4.5 An article published in May 2016 by 6Rang, the Iranian Lesbian and Transgender Network, stated:

‘In Iran, the exemption of young gay individuals from compulsory military service comes at the cost of revealing the most intimate details of their sexual life at the disposal of law enforcement; while same-sex relations is illegal and punishable by up to one hundred lashes or even the death penalty.

‘According to Iranian law, all male citizens are required to report for military service at age 18 and must serve a consecutive 24 months period. Homosexuals and transsexuals are not required to serve in the military. Prior to the ratification of the new regulation, both categories were exempt from military draft under a section of the law which classified homosexuality and transsexuality as a mental disorder. However, after the ratification of the new regulations, although homosexuality and transsexuality are still categorized as mental disorders, a specific section of the law provided two new provision with regard to these groups which are specified on their ID cards and would in essence identify them as homosexuals and transsexuals. Not only the new protocol is more time consuming, but it is also degrading and violates the basic human rights of the individual applicants. The process forces the individual applicants to declare having same sex relations and reveals intimate details of their sexual lives.

‘Asad, one of the applicants who was able to obtain their permanent military exemption status after two years told 6Rang: “After a while you would have been told in no uncertain terms that if you don’t confess to your sexual relations; they’d probably draft you. It is not enough to be only a homosexual; you need to report that you have had same sexual relationships which is an illegal act.”

‘All the individuals who seek the so-called medical exemptions on homosexuality grounds are required to take the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory test which is a questionnaire form with 567 questions. If someone takes this test with their real name and identity, a significant amount of information with regard to their identity, personality, beliefs, character and even socio-political ideology would be revealed to the police. Furthermore, they are asked to seek treatments from a psychologist or

²⁹ Outright Action International, ‘Being Transgender in Iran’, p28-29, October 2016, [url](#).

psychiatrist – who is trusted by the police and military system – during their 6 months exemption.’³⁰

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5.5 Buy out

5.5.1 The DFAT report published in June 2018 noted that:

‘Wealthy families can purchase exemptions for their sons through paying absence fines. This practice is common: in June 2016, the chief conscription officer for the armed forces told a local newspaper that more than 10,000 people had applied to pay absence fines in the past month alone. The amount of the fine reportedly differs based on levels of education, with those with a higher education liable for higher fines than those without.’³¹

5.5.2 A report published by Kayhan Life in December 2018 stated that initially the Iranian government’s budget excluded the option for citizens to buy out their military service across 2019 and 2020. However, the report further stated that the government were going to reconsider this in order to generate revenue and boost the military’s budget³².

5.5.3 The Interests Section of the Islamic Republic of Iran found on the Embassy of Pakistan’s website provided information regarding the purchase of military service. Form 011, dated 7 January 2019 stated:

‘In accordance with notice number 22213/12/3 dated 7 May 2017 by Headquarters of the Armed Forces, and the budget resolution for 2017, all men who have been absent from [evaded] military service for more than 8 years can take action to purchase their military service.

‘Applicant conditions:

- At least 8 years should have been passed from the date of having had to do military service (starting age is 18)
- Not being eligible for Supreme Leader’s pardon [form 427 – see Paragraph 5.6.1 and [Annex C](#)]

‘[...] Required Documents to be sent to Attorney in Iran:

- Original Iranian passport or a certified copy of it
- Original birth certificate or a certified copy of it (old birth certificates are not valid and the birth certificate must be in the new format bearing a photo)
- Original National ID card or a certified copy of it
- Original birth certificate of the wife and children (in case of being married)
- Four photos, as per photo instructions [not obtained/translated]

³⁰ 6Rang, ‘Confessing to same-sex relations is new norm for military exemptions’, 20 May 2016, [url](#).

³¹ DFAT, ‘Country Information Report – Iran’, p37-38, 7 June 2018, [url](#).

³² Kayhan Life, ‘Iran May Reinstitute Military Service Buy-Out Scheme’, 18 December 2018, [url](#).

- Preparing power of attorney for military service on the TAK system (if the applicant or the parents cannot attend in person for submitting the application)
- Preparing the military service purchase commitment and sending it to the agency office for certification
- Verification of educational qualifications, as per student affairs instructions (instructions 50)
- Fees as per notice 600³³

5.5.4 The same source provided information and detail regarding rules and regulations, including how much certain individuals need to pay to become exempt from military service. It stated:

‘The base payment fees according to the educational qualifications are as follows:

Degree	Base Fee in Rials
Under the level of diploma	100,000,000
Diploma	150,000,000
Associate Degree	200,000,000
Bachelor’s Degree	250,000,000
Master’s Degree	300,000,000
Nonmedical Doctorate	350,000,000
Medical Doctorate	400,000,000
Specialist Doctor and Higher	500,000,000

(NB As of 2 March 2020, 100,000,000 Rials was approximately £1859.53³⁴)

5.5.5 To view a full translation of this document see [Annex B](#).

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5.6 Education, employment and research

5.6.1 The Interests Section of the Islamic Republic of Iran found on the Embassy of Pakistan’s website in Washington DC provided information on military exemption with a Leader’s pardon based on an individual’s level of education and eligibility (see [Annex C](#)). A translation of form 427 dated 23 July 2018 stated:

‘According to the suggestion made by Headquarters of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran and approval of the Supreme Leader and Commander of All Forces, the legal violation of all the military service evaders and deserters will be pardoned in the following manner and a military exemption certificate will be issued in accordance with leader’s pardon on the year of during which they have served the nation.

³³ Interests Section – Iran, ‘Purchasing Military Service’, 7 January 2019, [url](#)

³⁴ XE.com, Iranian Rial to British Pound Conversion, 2 March 2020, [url](#)

'This exemption is divided into four categories based on the individual's level of education and eligibility:

1. Below diploma (secondary school certificate), diploma (secondary school certificate), associate degree, and bachelor's degree (born before the end of 1354 [21 March 1976])
2. Master's degree (born before the end of 1352 [21 March 1974])
3. Nonmedical doctorate (born before the end of 1350 [21 March 1972])
4. Doctorate in medicine and veterinary (born before the end of 1344 [21 March 1966])

'Note: By virtue of the clause in Article 9 of the executive bylaw of the Public Military Service Law, ratified on 27 January 2013, the original photo birth certificate of all the eligible individuals who are over 50 years old, provided that no change has been made in their birth certificate, will be considered as their exemption card from conscription.'³⁵

- 5.6.2 In August 2018, The Iran Project reported that certain conscripts could carry out their military service at 'knowledge-based companies'. The article stated:

'The educated and talented conscripts can serve their two years of compulsory military service at knowledge-based companies, the chief conscription officer at the armed forces Mousa Kamali announced in a press conference on Sunday [12 August 2018].

'Up to now, some educated conscripts can perform their military services in 150 non-military organization[s] to promote education, production and healthcare, he said.

'However, this is the first time that the conscripts can perform their military service in the private sector, he said.

"In this way, we can fully benefit from the time that talented and educated workforce attended the armed forces," he explained.

"Through this facilitation at the military service, the country can efficiently benefit from talented human resources."

'Previously, talented conscripts could do researches in national defense and security issues, which were proposed by the armed forces, he said.

'Those conscripts who have university degree and do not have any experience can perform their military service at the knowledge-based companies, he said.'³⁶

- 5.6.3 Another article published by The Iran Project in 2015 reported that as many as 2000 conscripts carried out research projects in the space of a year in order to be eligible for a military exemption card³⁷.

- 5.6.4 The December 2013 General Official Report of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that 'students are eligible for deferment of military

³⁵ Interests Section – Iran, 'Military Exemption with Leader's Pardon', 23 July 2018, [url](#)

³⁶ Iran Project, 'Conscripts can do military service at knowledge-based companies', 14 Aug 2018, [url](#).

³⁷ Iran Project, 'Iran elite do research, win exemption from military service', 7 August 2015, [url](#).

service. They are expected to enter military service within six months after finishing their studies. In practice, this period can be extended due to administrative delays. If a person does not report to the authorities within this timeframe, he is considered a draft evader or objector³⁸

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5.7 Athletes

- 5.7.1 The Iran Project reported in an article published in November 2018 that Iranian male athletes who won a gold, silver or bronze medal at the world and Asian sport competitions would be exempt from military service, in addition to those already eligible for winning a medal at the Olympics³⁹.

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Section 6 updated: 6 April 2020

6. Evaders and desertion

- 6.1.1 The DFAT report published in June 2018 stated:
- ‘Draft evaders are liable for prosecution. A person who deserts from the military must complete his service on return if he is under the age of 40. Evading military service for up to a year during peace time or two months during war can result in the addition of between three and six months to the total length of required service. More than one year’s draft evasion during peace time or two or more months during war may result in criminal prosecution. Draft evaders may lose social benefits and civic rights, including access to government jobs or higher education, or the right to set up a business. The government may also refuse to grant draft evaders drivers licences, revoke their passports, or prohibit them from leaving the country without special permission. Iranian authorities periodically crack down on draft evaders. In June 2016, the chief conscription officer for the armed forces announced that authorities would intensify the process of identifying and arresting those who had attempted to avoid their military service. DFAT understands that the desire to evade military service is a key motivating factor for the emigration of middle-class families with teenaged sons.’⁴⁰
- 6.1.2 An article published by the Middle East Eye in June 2016 reported that General Moussa Kamali, chief conscription officer for the Iranian armed forces, stated that between 30,000 and 35,000 people had been arrested in the first six months of 2016 for attempting to evade military service⁴¹.
- 6.1.3 A report ‘Denied Identity: Human Rights Abuses Against Iran’s LGBT Community’ published in July 2014 by the Iran Human Rights Documentation Centre (IHRDC) stated that ‘A failure to serve without being granted an exemption can result in the government’s refusal to grant a driver’s license to that individual, revocation of their passport and a ban on them leaving the country without special permission.’⁴²

³⁸ ACCORD, ‘Iran: Selected Human Rights Issues: COI Compilation’, p211, July 2015, [url](#).

³⁹ Iran Project, ‘Ayatollah Khamenei exempts Iranian medalists from conscription’, 6 Nov 2019, [url](#).

⁴⁰ DFAT, ‘Country Information Report – Iran’, p38, 7 June 2018, [url](#).

⁴¹ Middle East Eye, ‘Iran to crack down on evaders of military service’, 20 June 2016, [url](#).

⁴² IHRDC, ‘Human Rights Abuses Against Iran’s LGBT Community’, (§5.7.1) 30 July 2014, [url](#).

6.1.4 The December 2013 General Official Report of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that:

‘The evasion of military service is punishable under Article 40 of the Armed Forces Penal Law by imprisonment of six months to two years, or an extension of the service.

‘Young men from the age of 18 who are called for military service but do not present themselves to the authorities are considered as draft evaders. There is no alternative military service in Iran and conscientious objection is not recognized. Draft evasion is liable for prosecution. Persons who evade military service for up to three months during peace time (or up to 15 days during war) must serve three months in addition to the regular term. If the draftee is absent for longer than three months during peace time (or 15 days during war), the military service will be extended by six months. Longer draft evasion (one year during peace or two months during war) may result in criminal proceedings before a military court. Draft evaders risk losing social benefits and civic rights including their right to work, to education or the right to set up a business. If a draft evader evaded reports for military service voluntarily, the duration of service will be extended by three months, whereas if a draft evader is arrested, he is obliged to serve for an extra six months.’⁴³

6.1.5 The same source went on to note that:

‘The penalty for desertion depends on the circumstances of the case, including whether the desertion occurred during peace time or war time, or whether the soldier was on duty or on leave. The soldier’s type of duty or mission is considered as well. It is also relevant whether a person deserted with or without weapons, ammunition or military equipment, and whether the case falls under the jurisdiction of the military courts (peace time) or the military war council (war time). It is not known whether, in practice, the Iranian authorities pursue a policy of actively tracking down and prosecuting draft evaders and deserters. Draft evaders may also be divested of social and civic rights including their right to work, to education or to set up their own business.’⁴⁴

6.1.6 Article 504 of the Islamic Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran stated:

‘Article 504 - Anyone who effectively encourages combatants or those in military forces to rebel, escape, surrender, or disobey military orders, with the intention to overthrow the government or to defeat national forces against the enemy, shall be considered as mohareb [someone who takes up arms against the Islamic government]; otherwise (if he does not possess the intention) if his acts are effective he shall be sentenced to two to ten years, and if not, to six months to three years’ imprisonment.’⁴⁵

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⁴³ ACCORD, ‘Iran: Selected Human Rights Issues: COI Compilation’, p212-213, July 2015, [url](#).

⁴⁴ ACCORD, ‘Iran: Selected Human Rights Issues: COI Compilation’, p213, July 2015, [url](#).

⁴⁵ IHRDC, ‘Penal Code of Iran – Book 5’, 15 July 2013, [url](#).

7. Treatment during military service

- 7.1.1 The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Iran country report published in June 2018 stated ‘Conditions for conscripts are often poor, with low pay, poor living conditions, malnutrition, and frequent physical and psychological abuse by senior officers all contributing to low morale. However, military service conditions can vary considerably depending on individual placements and circumstances.’⁴⁶
- 7.1.2 A report published in August 2018 by Kayhan Life reported that ‘Abolfazl Abutorabi, a member of the Majlis (Iranian Parliament) Committee on Council and Internal Affairs, has described the Iranian military service program as the worst in the world. [...] Abutorabi said some conscripted soldiers developed psychological and emotional problems that could lead to suicide.’⁴⁷
- 7.1.3 An article published by the Los Angeles Times in September 2017 reported on a number of deadly shootings carried out by conscripts. The article stated that many young draftees ‘described Iran’s military training as a 21-month ordeal of physical humiliation, psychological stress and petty corruption, where mental health problems fester and socioeconomic grievances are magnified. Many said superiors often trample on poor and disadvantaged recruits while the wealthy and well-connected avoid the toughest tasks – or dodge the draft altogether’⁴⁸
- 7.1.4 The same article stated: “‘Almost everyone is a victim of hazing and mistreatment,” Ahmad [a 25-year-old draftee] said. “I am educated, so I don’t have it as bad. But I hate the service and I hate my surroundings. I don’t feel any patriotism in my heart.”’⁴⁹
- 7.1.5 An article published in June 2016 by IranWire reported on the conditions for Emad, a 20-year-old conscript who is carrying out his military service at Rajaei Shahr prison. The report stated:
- ‘Conscripts work long hours, sometimes without food, and in conditions that are almost always distressing.
- ‘[...] According to Emad [a 20-year-old conscript from Khorramabad], the soldiers are lucky if they get a pack of cookies or a bite of bread and cheese — not enough to sustain them for a long day of work. Usually, they are simply too busy to eat, whether they are assigned to guard duty, run errands for prison officials, or sent to the court or the hospital.
- ‘[...] Conscripts are supposed to have five days off each month, but in reality, at best it is 10 days off every three months. If conscripts go AWOL, they face a few days’ solitary confinement as punishment. The same is true if they disobey orders from their superiors.
- ‘To top it all off, the pay is pitiful. “This month they deposited 80,000 tomans (around [US]\$27) in our accounts,” Emad says. “But most months it is much

⁴⁶ DFAT, ‘Country Information Report – Iran’, p37, 7 June 2018, [url](#).

⁴⁷ Kayhan Life, ‘Iran has the world’s worst military service program’, 7 August 2018, [url](#).

⁴⁸ Los Angeles Times, ‘What’s wrong with the Iranian army?’, 28 September 2017, [url](#).

⁴⁹ Los Angeles Times, ‘What’s wrong with the Iranian army?’, 28 September 2017, [url](#).

less, 50 or 60,000 toman. It depends on how generous they feel. There is no official amount.”

‘Several conscripts say the worst part is witnessing executions. Ali Akbar is assigned to Ghezel Hesar Prison. His worst memory is from the execution hall at the prison, which has left him dazed and shattered. “I had gone to the execution hall to do a chore for my commander,” he says. “I was about to leave when the doors were locked. I had to watch the executions. They put the nooses around the necks of the three convicts and the hydraulic pedestal on which they were standing was suddenly lowered. The 10 minutes that the three convicts fought against death was the most horrifying experience I have had during my service. I will not forget those 10 minutes as long as I live.”’⁵⁰

7.1.6 An article entitled ‘Military Service: A Nightmare for Minority Recruits’ published on 13 April 2015 by IranWire stated:

‘It used to be that families viewed military service as a way to turn irresponsible boys into responsible men. But, for most families, over the last 20 years, military conscription has become a synonym for coercion. The severity of this coercion depends on a range of factors including ethnicity, beliefs, religion, marital status, education and the social and financial situation of the conscripted soldier.

‘This unpaid labor and abuse of the system are bad enough, but when it comes to minority conscripts, the situation is even worse — especially for members of unrecognized religious minorities, who are officially referred to as citizens but are actually stripped of all legal rights.

‘According to a study by an Iranian medical journal, there is a direct correlation between suicides and reports of senior commanders psychologically and physically abusing conscripted soldiers. The report also says that “the geographic location of the base, the level of solidarity among soldiers and how much the soldiers have in common” also affect suicidal tendencies among soldiers.

‘In addition to suicide, there are high numbers of incidents of self-mutilation. Many soldiers maim themselves as a way of being exempted from military service.

“There are no accurate statistics about suicide and self-mutilation among Iranian soldiers,” a sociology student who has done research on the subject told me. “The military system currently in place prevents any information from being published. It prevents the distribution of reliable statistics that might actually be useful to produce sound studies on the subject. Even so, the small number of published reports that are available lead us to believe that ethnic and religious minorities represent a high percentage of the victims.”

‘Much of the abuse and discrimination against minorities during their period of military service is covered up, buried in the grounds of the barracks. “What is the use?” many people say, justifying their refusal to speak up. Many are forced to self-censor out of fear or in deference to social taboos.

⁵⁰ IranWire, ‘Conscripts: Iran’s Other Prison Victims’, 3 June 2016, [url](#).

'Karim Ghasem-Nejad, a young Kurdish man from a village near Salmas in West Azerbaijan committed suicide. The police delivered his body to his family in early February 2013, told them their son had killed himself, but gave no explanation for the burn marks and bruises on his body. [...] same thing happened to Nasser Isa-Zadeh, also from Salmas. His death was declared a suicide but he had burn marks around his neck and his waist, and his legs were broken.'⁵¹

- 7.1.7 A Middle East Eye report of June 2016 noted that 'Members of Iran's armed forces are currently deployed in Syria in support of President Bashar al-Assad. However, it is not known whether Iranian nationals completing their military service have been deployed there – the majority of low-ranking soldiers sent to Syria by Iran are alleged to be Afghan refugees living in Iran who are enticed to fight with by high wages and promises of Iranian citizenship once they complete their service.'⁵²
- 7.1.8 In addition to the above, a joint report published in February 2018 by the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) looking at the recruitment of Iranian nationals to the war in Syria made no mention of those undergoing their military service being deployed to Syria. The report stated that it was the elite and professional members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps or Special Forces rather than ordinary military recruits who were taking part in the fighting there⁵³.

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⁵¹ IranWire, 'Military Service: A Nightmare for Minority Recruits', 13 April 2015, [url](#).

⁵² Middle East Eye, 'Iran to crack down on evaders of military service', 20 June 2016, [url](#).

⁵³ DIS, 'Iran: Recruitment of Iranian nationals to the war in Syria', p5, February 2018, [url](#).

Annex A: Instructions for Military Service Exemption for Medical Reasons – Translation (Original available on request)

In the Name of God

EMBASSY OF PAKISTAN

INTERESTS SECTION OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

1250 23RD STREET N.W. SUITE # 200, WASHINGTON, DC 20037

TEL: (202) 965 - 4990 FAX: (202) 965 - 1073 WWW.DAFTAR.ORG

Instructions for Military Service Exemption for Medical Reasons

In accordance with the arrangements made with the Military Service Organization of the Islamic Republic Law Enforcement, all the applicants for medical exemption, after having studied the executive bylaw of the medical examination and exemption for the applicants and the list of illnesses annexed to the mentioned bylaw on the website of vazifeh.police.ir can apply for an exemption. It should be mentioned that, based on the decision of the Military Service Organization, students with service commitment and those who have left the country on security are not eligible for applying for military service exemption for medical reasons.

- Applicants should note that the submitted documents will be first verified by the Interests Section of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Washington, and then sent to one of the medical examination centres for applicants resident outside the country, in Munich in Germany, Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, or Beijing in China. The relevant medical centre will send the medical documents to reliable doctors for preliminary evaluation, so that the doctor would announce their opinion to the relevant medical centre about the applicant's illness within the framework of the regulations of the Military Service Organisation of the Islamic Republic of Iran Police (bylaw and medical exemption).
- After receipt of all the documents, if under the regulations of the Military Service Organisation the applicant's illness is considered eligible, the relevant medical centre will make arrangements with the doctor, doctors, or hospital trusted by the medical commission for an examination appointment in person, and the Interests Section in Washington will be informed. An appointment will be made for the applicant's presence in the mentioned medical centre, and the applicant is required to attend the centre for the necessary examinations.
- By virtue of the regulations approved by the medical commission, it is necessary for the medical exemption applicants to be present in person at the

specified centre for medical examinations and authentication of identity on a date that the medical centre will determine, together with their passport and other Iranian identity documents. Evidently, not attending the centre on the specified date will be considered as the applicant's withdrawal and their case will be closed and archived without any further action.

- The actions regarding obtaining the visa for the country in which the medical examination takes place, accommodation (if necessary), doctor's fees, and other relevant matters are the responsibility of the applicant and the agencies of the Islamic Republic of Iran abroad do not have any responsibility regarding the above-mentioned arrangements.
- The final decisions of approving or rejecting medical exemption applications are made by the medical commission located at the Military Service Organisation of the Islamic Republic of Iran inside the country, and examinations carried out by medical centres outside the country located in Munich, Dubai, and Beijing do not guarantee the exemption of the applicants.
- Evidently, if the application is rejected by the medical commission of the Military Service Organization, the applicant will have to do his military service, and in case of non-attendance, he will be considered an evader from the date of the rejection of the application.
- At the end, after the final opinion given by the doctor and approval by the medical centre, the documents will be sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Office of Iranian Affairs Abroad (located in building No. 3) by the applicant's parents or attorney to the Military Service Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran Police (located at Sepah Square, Tehran) for investigation and issue of the exemption card.
- Before attending the Office of Iranian Affairs, in order to get information about the receipt of the case by the secretariat of this office from the relevant agency, call 61153239.

Required Documents to Apply for Exemption for Medical Reasons:

1. Completed consular affairs form (form 001)
2. Completed medial exemption form (form 429)
3. Completed police forms
4. Original valid Iranian passport
5. Original Iranian birth certificate
6. Original National ID card
7. Original Residence document
8. Copy of the final educational qualification which has been certified by the office as per student's instructions
9. 10 photos, as per photo instructions
10. Uploading medical documents together with a complete series of copies of illness history and a report of the current status of the patient in English on TAK system (if the documents and medical history records of the applicant are related to Iran, before any action, they need to be verified by the Medical Council Organization of Iran)
11. Power of attorney prepared by the applicant through TAK system to follow up the case in Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Military Service Organization (If the

parents intend to follow up the case, there is no need to sign a power of attorney)

12. Payment of fee as per notice 600 (copies of certified documents in the required number + certified photo)

Names of medical centres to be written carefully in the table below:

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	

If you need more space, please use a separate sheet of paper with a table following the above model.

For all applicants:

I confirm that the information stated in the form and the other submitted documents is accurate. Otherwise, I will be accountable before the law. Therefore, please send my medical documents to the general consulate in Munich, Germany ☐ Dubai, the UAE ☐ Beijing, China ☐.

Name and last name: _____

Signature:

Date:

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Annex B: Purchasing Military Service – Translation (original available on request)

In the Name of God

EMBASSY OF PAKISTAN

INTERESTS SECTION OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

1250 23RD STREET N.W. SUITE # 200, WASHINGTON, DC 20037

TEL: (202) 965 - 4990 FAX: (202) 965 - 1073 WWW.DAFTAR.ORG

PURCHASING MILITARY SERVICE

In accordance with notice Number 22213/12/3 dated 7 May 2017 by Headquarters of the Armed Forces, and the budget resolution for 2017, all men who have been absent from [evaded] military service for more than 8 years can take action to purchase their military service.

Applicant conditions:

- At least 8 years should have been passed from the date of having had to do military service (starting age is 18)
- Not being eligible for Supreme Leader's pardon (go to the Supreme Leader' pardon from (form 427))

In order to do this, the applicant's attorney or parents need to go to a Police + 10 office with the following documents and apply to purchase the military service. If you are attending in person to purchase military service, through the following procedures, you could get a one-off exit stamp, and there will be no need to wait to receive the exemption card:

1. Attending the social affairs department of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and receiving military service commitment form and validating it
2. Attending the Police + 10 office located at Sepah Square to open a file for military service and determining the amount of fine
3. Payment of the fee at a bank and submission of the receipt to Police + 10 office
4. Receiving a letter from the Police + 10 office and submitting it along with the passport to the Passport Department located on Shahr Ara Street to receive a one-off exit permit.

Required Documents to be Sent to Attorney in Iran:

1. Original Iranian passport or a certified copy of it

2. Original birth certificate or a certified copy of it (old birth certificates are no valid and the birth certificate must be in the new format bearing a photo)
3. Original National ID card or a certified copy of it
4. Original birth certificate of the wife and children (in case of being married)
5. Four photos, as per photo instructions
6. Preparing power of attorney for military service on the TAK system (if the applicant or the parents cannot attend in person for submitting the application)
7. Preparing the military service purchase commitment and sending it to the agency office for certification (sample attached)
8. Verification of educational qualifications, as per student affairs instructions (instructions 50)
9. Fees as per notice 600

For more information and finding out about the amount of fine, visit the military service organization website at vazife.police.ir.

In the Name of God

[Emblem]

Classification: [blank]

Islamic Republic of Iran
Law Enforcement

No.: 23/2/3/468

Date: 7 August 2016

Attachment: [blank]

From: Military Service Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran Law Enforcement
- Deputy of Exemption Affairs

With respect and blessings to Prophet Mohammad and His family

Executive instructions of the amount of fine for purchasing military service for evaders

Section One: Rules and Regulations

1. How to calculate the absence:

- A. Individuals who ended their education (graduation, withdrawal, drop-out or dismissal) before entering the age of service (from the first day of the month in which they turn 18) will enter absence from military service from the beginning of the month in which they turn 18 years old.

Example: the date for a person born on - 6 March 1991 to start military service is 19 February 2009, and if he has finished his education before that date, his absence will be calculated from 19 February 2009, and if he finishes his education at a later time, his absence will be calculated from the date of ending his education.

- B. University students who still studying and have not finished their education, in case of dismissal, withdrawal, or drop-out, will be treated in accordance with the following regulations:
1. If more than 8 years have passed since their dismissal until the end of 1395 [21 March 2017], their absence will be calculated from the date of dismissal or drop-out and will be included in this law.
 2. If they have dropped out or been dismissed before 22 September 2014, their absence will be calculated from the date of graduation from the previous education level.

Example: If the applicant dropped out of a bachelor's degree program on 22 September 2019, his absence will be calculated from the date of graduation from high school diploma (vocational school majors) and pre-university (for high school majors).

- C. University students who have finished their education, and have graduated, will be considered absent from the date of graduation from the

same program, and if their absence reaches more than 8 years by the end of 1395 [21 March 2017], they will be covered by this exemption.

Example: If the applicant has graduated on 21 September 2008 from a master's degree program, his absence will be calculated from 21 September 2008.

- D. If studying at university level has ended with dismissal or dropping-out with a lower degree, absence will be calculated from the date of drop-out or dismissal.

Example: The length of absence for a bachelor's degree program student who has been dismissed or has dropped out on 22 September 2010 by getting an associate degree, will be calculated from 22 September 2010 and will not be covered by this law.

- E. For the applicants who have left the country before or after reaching the age of military service and have studied abroad using study exemption, the absence will be calculated from the date of graduation from the same program, whether they have graduated within the authorized years of education or outside those years.

Note: If the above-mentioned applicant's study has not led to a degree (due to dropping out, dismissal, or withdrawal), their absence will be calculated according to sections 1 and 2 of Part B, stated in the section one of the instructions.

- F. Absence of the applicants who have been studying abroad as the children of the civil servants of the Islamic Republic of Iran government abroad, will be calculated according to clause E.
- G. For those applicants who left the country before reaching the age of military service and studied abroad without study exemption, the absence will be calculated from the time they reach the age of military service, but the amount of fine will be calculated based on the submitted degree.
- H. Determining the last qualification of the applicants who are resident abroad (whether they left the country with or without study exemption) depending of the type of the qualification, will be the responsibility of the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology, Ministry of Health, Treatment, and Medical Education, international affairs centre, and the schools outside the country. However, the submitted documents will be verified against the information available on the Military Service Organization.

Note: Only the degrees issued by foreign universities and certified and stamped outside the country by the embassy or agencies of the Islamic Republic of Iran abroad and translated at certified and authorised translation agencies are acceptable.

- I. Conscripts doing their service who had been absent from service for more than 8 years before starting conscription until 19 March 2017 are included in this exemption.

Example 1: Individuals born on 6 March 1991 who have gained their high school diploma on 22 June 2007 and have not continued their education after that; if they started military service on 10 November 2015, their absence will be calculated from 19 February 2009 until 20 March 2017, therefore they will have had more than 8 years of absence and will be included in this exemption.

Example 2: The individuals who start their military service on 8 May 2016, if their absence reaches more than 8 years until the end of 1395 [21 March 2017], they will be covered by this exemption.

Note: Conscripts in service will be discharged from service after their condition is verified and the procedures have been followed.

- J. In the case of conscription deserters for whom more than 8 years have passed since their desertion and have not started the service yet, their desertion will be calculated until the time of investigation and they will be covered by this exemption.

Example: An individual born on 26 June 1988 with education level of third year at high school who is admitted to conscription on 10 August 2007 deserts the military service on 12 January 2011 and does not reported back. In that case, his absence will be considered from the date of his desertion and his absence will be more than 8 years until the end of 1395, making him eligible for this exemption.

- K. In the case of conscription deserters that more than 8 years have not passed since their date of desertion, regardless of the fact if they had been engaged in military service or not, their absence will be calculated from the date of entering absence until the end of 1395. If from the starting day of absence until the end of 1395, more than 8 years have passed, therefore they will be covered by the regulations.

Example: An individual born on 26 June 1989 with the education level of third year in high school was admitted to military service on 10 August 2010 with some absence and deserted service on 12 January 2011. In that case, his absence will be calculated from the last deadline for his report on 10 July 2007 until the end of 1395; it will be more than 8 years and he will be covered by this exemption.

- L. For individuals who receive Iranian nationality, if more than 8 years have passed from the time they received Iranian nationality (receiving birth certificate and National ID card) until the end of 1395, the commencement date of absence will be calculated from the date of receiving nationality.
- M. For individuals who receive Iranian nationality, if less than 8 years have passed from the time they received Iranian nationality (receiving birth

certificate and National ID card) until the end of 1395, the commencement date of absence will be calculated from the beginning of the month they turn 18 (according to section A).

- N. The absence of the conscripts from state organisations and staff of the Armed Forces based on articles 13, 14, and 15 of the Military service Law, who have withdrawn or been dismissed, will be considered from the date of dismissal or withdrawal in the mandate issued by the organisation of the unit they were employed in and until the end of 1395.
- O. For applicants who were eligible for this exemption in 1394 [2015] and have not paid the fine until 10 April 2016, the amount of fine will be recalculated based on these instructions.

2. Base fees and method of Calculation:

A. The base payment fees according to the educational qualifications are as follow:

Degree	Base Fee in Rials
Under the level of diploma	100,000,000
Diploma	150,000,000
Associate Degree	200,000,000
Bachelor's Degree	250,000,000
Master's Degree	300,000,000
Nonmedical Doctorate	350,000,000
Medical Doctorate	400,000,000
Specialist Doctor and Higher	500,000,000

B. For all applicants, 10% (ten percent) will be added to the above fees for any year of absence on top of 8 years. If the period of absence more than 8 years is 6 months and more, the fine will be calculated as a year and if the extra period of absence is less than 6 months, there will be no added fine.

Example: An applicant with 9 years and 3 months absence will not have to pay a fine for the three months.

Note 1: Absences of 8 full years will not be considered. Absence must be more than 8 years.

Example: An applicant with 8 years of absence until the end of 1395 will not be eligible for this exemption, but if his absence is 8 years and 1 day, he will become eligible for the exemption.

Note 2: Absence of more than 6 months or less than 6 months is for the purpose of the 10% fine for each added year and this will not be applied to people with less than 8 years absence.

Example: An applicant with an absence of 7 years and 11 months will not be eligible for this exemption.

C. For married absent applicants 5% of the fine will be deducted, and for the applicants with children, 5% of the fine per each child will be deducted.

Note: Applicants who have adopted a child as their legal child will be eligible for this section.

Example: Amount of fine for a married applicant who has one child with a degree below diploma and 9 years absence:

- 1- Fine for absence of more than 8 years = 100,000,000 Rials.
- 2- For each additional year of absence, beyond the 8 years, (10 percent added to the amount of fine) = 10,000,000 Rials.
- 3- For being married (5 percent deducted from the amount of fine) = 5,500,000
- 4- For one child (5 percent deducted from the amount of fine) = 5,500,000
- 5- The total payable amount considering the fine for the extra year and deductions for being married and having a child: 99,000,000 Rials.

Note: For applicants who were eligible for this exemption in 1394 [2015] and have not paid the fine until 10 April 2016, the amount of fine will be recalculated based on these instructions.

Part Two: Process of Investigation and Registration of Application

- A. The applicant goes to an agency office of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the city or country of his residence.
Note: If Iran does not have an agency in the country of residence, application can be made in the nearest country in which Iran has an agency.
- B. Submitting documents regarding residency and the other specified documents (copy of birth certificate, National ID, marriage certificate, educational qualifications, and ...)
- C. Completing the application form and commitment letter for degree at the presence of the consular expert.
- D. Certification of the documents by the consular expert (with the signature and seal of the consulate)
- E. Sending the documents (completed forms and documents) to Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- F. Verification of the documents by Ministry of Foreign affairs
- G. Submitting the documents to the operation centre for military service applicants through parents or an attorney appointed by the applicant.
Note: If documents are to be submitted by the attorney, they must have a power of attorney.
- H. Examination of the documents by the relevant experts and verification of the conditions.
- I. Attorney attending a Police + 10 Office
- J. Registering application on the comprehensive Military Service system (if the applicant is eligible).
- K. Paying the amount of fine and submitting the receipt to the operations centre of the organization.

- L. Completing the file and referral for issuing the card
- M. Sending the card to the specified address by post.

Head of the Military Service Organization
Islamic Republic of Iran Law Enforcement
Brigadier general Seyed Hamid Sadrolsadat
[Signed]

Commitment form for
educational qualifications
for applicants resident
abroad

[Emblem]

Islamic Republic of Iran
Law Enforcement

Military Service
Organization

Islamic Republic of Iran

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
General Office of Iranians
Abroad Affairs - Iranian
Affairs Office

Section 1	I, name and last name: son of: National ID No.: Date of birth: place of birth: country of residence: ☐ single ☐ married (No. of children:) highest educational degree: would like to apply for military service exemption for absent applicants, subject of section B of clause 11 of the single article of the 1395 Budget Law. Therefore, considering the importance of submitting accurate information to enjoy this exemption, I confirm the accuracy of all the information provided to the Military Service Organisation, and accept that if the mentioned organisation finds out any discrepancy in the provided information, it can revoke my exemption card and I will accept the consequences of this matter. Also, I waive any right to claim and litigate, including civil and criminal, regarding the revocation of the exemption card and a request to refund the paid amounts. Address in the country of residence: Exact postal address in Iran: Phone number of legal attorney or relatives in Iran: Signature and fingerprint of the applicant / date
Section 2	No.: Date: Agency of the Islamic Republic of Iran in certifies: Applicant Mr. came to this office on (date) and his signature and documents offered by him have been verified. Name and last name of the consular officer Signature and seal

Section 3	No.: Date: From: Iranian Affairs Office of Ministry of Foreign affairs To: Military Service Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran Law enforcement - Applicants' Operation Centre Greetings, Cordially, the exemption documents related to applicant Mr. Which have been certified by the agency of the Islamic Republic of Iran in (country) are sent as attachments for necessary action. Head of Iranian Affairs Office
	Note: This sheet should be kept at the Military Service Organisation by the investigator for at least two years.

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Annex C: Military Exemption with Leader's Pardon – Translation (original available on request)

In the Name of God

Interest Section of Islamic Republic of Iran - Washington DC

EMBASSY OF PAKISTAN

INTERESTS SECTION OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

1250 23RD STREET N.W. SUITE # 200, WASHINGTON, DC 20037

TEL: (202) 965 - 4990 FAX: (202) 965 - 1073 WWW.DAFTAR.ORG

Military Exemption with Leader's Pardon

According to the suggestion made by Headquarters of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran and approval of the Supreme Leader and Commander of All Forces, the legal violation of all the military service evaders and deserters will be pardoned in the following manner and a military exemption certificate will be issued in accordance with leader's pardon on the year of during which they have served the nation.

This exemption is divided into four categories based on the individual's level of education and eligibility:

1. Below diploma (secondary school certificate), diploma (secondary school certificate), associate degree, and bachelor's degree (born before the end of 1354 [21 March 1976])
2. Master's degree (born before the end of 1352 [21 March 1974])
3. Nonmedical doctorate (born before the end of 1350 [21 March 1972])
4. Doctorate in medicine and veterinary (born before the end of 1344 [21 March 1966])

Note: By virtue of the clause in Article 9 of the executive bylaw of the Public Military Service Law, ratified on 27 January 2013, the original photo birth certificate of all the eligible individuals who are over 50 years old, provided that no change has been made in their birth certificate, will be considered as their exemption card from conscription.

Applicants can attend in person to Police + 10 offices across the country with the following documents to complete the process of receiving their exemption by Leader's pardon.

1. Original Iranian passport
2. Original valid Iranian birth certificate
3. Original National ID Card
4. 7 photos, as per photo instructions

5. Educational qualification verified by the Interests Section of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Washington, which has been evaluated by the Ministry of Science or Ministry of Health, based on the major. Please see student affairs' help section (Instructions 50)

If it is not possible to attend in person, the applicants can register their application through a parent or by appointing an attorney in Iran with the following documents and by going to a Police + 10 office in any city in the country:

1. Completed application form for military service exemption through leader's pardon in the year of mobilizing serving people and the letter of commitment for leader's pardon exemption (attached forms)
2. Original new birth certificate with photo and two copies of all pages (to be certified by the agency)
3. Original valid passport and a copy of all pages (to be certified by the agency)
4. 7 photos, as per photo instructions
5. Power of attorney (instructions for preparing a power of attorney) for the attorney's attendance to go through the process of receiving the leader's pardon exemption
6. Verification of the educational qualifications by student affairs help (instructions 50)
7. Fee, in accordance with notice 600

July 23, 2018

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Terms of Reference

A 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) is a broad outline of what the CPIN seeks to cover. They form the basis for the [country information section](#). The Home Office's Country Policy and Information Team uses some standardised ToRs, depending on the subject, and these are then adapted depending on the country concerned.

For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Legal Context
- Service
 - Length
 - Type
- Exemptions
- Evasion and desertion
- Treatment

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Version control

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **2.0**
- valid from **6 April 2020**

Changes from last version of this note

Updated COI and assessment.

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