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## Human Rights and Democracy: The 2010 Foreign & Commonwealth Office Report - Section VII: Human Rights in Countries of Concern

### Iran

The year 2010 was marked by a determined government crackdown against protesters and a continuation of the suppression of rights that followed the disputed June 2009 presidential election. January saw a further wave of arrests, and riot police and armed militia members were a visible presence on streets across the capital Tehran; peaceful vigils were broken up, and on 28 January, two young political prisoners were executed. By mid-February, an overwhelming security presence put an end to large public demonstrations. Throughout the year arrests and intimidation continued, particularly among lawyers, opposition politicians, journalists, student and trade unionists, and religious and ethnic minorities. An already heavily proscribed media faced further restriction, and military resources were increasingly used to monitor and restrict internet usage. Alongside the political repression, executions increased to over 650 in 2010, according to NGO figures, an execution rate surpassed only by China. Iran ended the year with human rights more restricted than at any time during the last decade.

The opportunity for our Embassy to engage with local human rights groups was limited due to the state-sanctioned intimidation of individuals or organisations working with the international community to improve human rights in Iran, including lengthy sentences for crimes such as “contact with foreign diplomats”. The majority of our work continued to focus on highlighting human rights violations, with the aim of holding Iran to account internationally and showing solidarity with those Iranians who campaign for respect for human rights. We played an active role in highlighting the deteriorating human rights situation in Iran through EU co-sponsorship of a UN General Assembly resolution on Iran’s human rights record. As well as being more robust than in previous years, the UN resolution passed with more votes in favour, sending a clear signal to Iran that concern about its human rights record is widely shared by countries from every continent.

We were actively engaged in Iran’s Universal Periodic Review, which was held before the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva in February. Despite the dire human rights situation on the ground, Iran presented its report with no mention of the abuses that had occurred in the months prior. During the debate a large number of countries expressed concern over the deteriorating human rights situation, prompting accusations by the Iranian delegation of “Western” involvement in the post-election protests of June 2009. The UN report highlighted a wide range of concerns about the human rights situation in Iran, and about discriminatory legislation. It also expressed concern about the complete lack of meaningful cooperation with a long list of UN human rights mechanisms.

We called for Iran to end the culture of impunity by allowing the judiciary to investigate allegations of abuse in an independent and transparent manner; to declare an immediate moratorium on juvenile executions; and to bring its new penal code into line with the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Iran’s policies are unlikely to change significantly in 2011. We expect that the authorities will continue to try to silence those who have been victims of abuse and those trying to defend the victims of human rights violations. The reforms to the penal code, which remain stalled in the Majlis, will need to be unlocked and debated. While there are reported to be some welcome additions, including the official removal of stoning as a punishment, a number of other areas must still be addressed. We will continue to urge Iran to officially accept and provide unrestricted access to all thematic UN special rapporteurs to enable them to conduct investigations under their mandates. We will also urge Iran to allow UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navanethem Pillay unrestricted access to all interested parties and locations during her planned visit in 2011.

## Access to justice

A dramatic increase in executions in 2010 and the growing number of arrests highlighted the importance of fair and transparent access to justice. However, for both drug-related and political cases, reliable reports continued to emerge of forced confessions, staged trials and a lack of access to independent legal counsel or even basic services such as translation and consular access for foreign nationals. There was a report of one execution where the victim did not even know that he had been sentenced to death.

We were deeply concerned about the persistent use of ill-defined or vaguely worded charges. In 2010, there were at least 27 executions on the charge of “moharebeh” (enmity towards God). This charge has been applied both to political protesters and to those accused of terrorism, with the distinction being occasionally blurred. The vague and political nature of the charge makes any case very difficult to defend, and in a number of instances, the Ministry of Intelligence reportedly pushed for swift and harsh judgment on the accused.

One of the most alarming trends this year was the increased intimidation and harassment of lawyers. A significant number of lawyers, particularly those involved in high profile cases, were arrested, intimidated into dropping sensitive cases, or forced to flee the country for fear of their and their families’ safety.

Mohammad Mostafaei was one example. He was the original lawyer defending Sakineh Mohammadi-Ashtiani, condemned to death by stoning for adultery. When her case came to global prominence in July, he gave a number of interviews and released documents into the public domain to highlight the flaws in her case. As a result, his offices were repeatedly raided. Refusing to back down, Mr Mostafaei was arrested a number of times and questioned about his activities in defending Ms Ashtiani. Facing growing and determined harassment, and with another arrest warrant out against him, Mr Mostafaei was forced to flee Iran. Close family members were then arrested in an attempt to make him return to Iran. Another lawyer took up Ms Ashtiani’s case. When he continued the publicity campaign to keep her sentence in the global conscience, he too was arrested. He remains in prison. These were not isolated cases. A number of other lawyers have been arrested and several have been handed lengthy prison sentences, such as Nasrin Sotoudeh who was given 11 years, invariably on ambiguous charges such as “offences against national security”.

In 2010, Iran increased its use of televised confessions in response to heavy criticism for its human rights abuses from NGOs and from the international community. Used in high-profile cases, including that of Sakineh Mohammadi-Ashtiani, these acts are contrary to Iran's international and domestic commitments to human rights. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the international community strongly condemned these televised confessions on a number of occasions in 2010.

Access to justice is central to upholding human rights and we made it a key area of activity, working closely with the EU and other international states. We repeatedly raised our concerns with the Iranian authorities, both in private and publicly. For example, showcasing the struggle of Iranian human rights defenders was a central part of the campaign organised by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) on Human Rights Day in December.

### **Rule of law**

Law enforcement in Iran is performed by a number of groups. The key duties fall to the Iranian police, the Intelligence Ministry, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and the Basij government-sponsored militia. The actions of each of these branches in the post-election protests of 2009 contributed to a climate of fear surrounding their activities and greatly reduced the confidence of ordinary Iranian citizens in their ability to enforce the law impartially. The year 2010 began with a massive security crackdown on protesters that effectively ended the cycle of post-election demonstrations. Subsequently, there were numerous examples of small scale peaceful protests and vigils that were broken up by the violent actions of the authorities.

In a number of high-profile cases, we were aware of unwarranted raids against offices and private houses. There were a number of instances, including in Mr Mostafaei's and Dr Shirin Ebadi's cases, when family members and friends were detained in order to put pressure on suspects either to confess or to turn themselves in. Alongside other countries, we raised these issues directly with the Iranian authorities.

### **Death penalty**

The government of Iran continued to use the death penalty extensively. We had grave concerns over its application, not least because of limited respect for fair trial rights, lack of transparency, and repeated reports of forced confession. Iran also continued to execute those who committed crimes as minors, and to conduct public executions.

Estimates suggest that Iran executes more people per capita than any other country in the world. The year 2010 saw a steep increase in the number of executions in response to a tough new anti-drugs policy. Credible reports suggest that the execution figure rose from at least 388 publicly reported executions in 2009, to more than 650 in 2010. Reports indicate that roughly 590 people were executed for drugs trafficking in 2010.

In addition to the number of executions, we also had serious concerns about the methods used. The Iranian penal code still allows for execution by a range of methods that we consider to be cruel and that prolong the suffering of the condemned. Suspension strangulation – in which the victim is winched slowly upward – is still applied in some cases, and stoning sentences were handed down, despite a non-binding moratorium on its use. Although, we are not aware of any stoning sentences being carried out since 2008, it is important that Iran abolishes these sentences in order to meet its international obligations on minimum standards when conducting capital punishments. A bill removing several sentences, including stoning, has been stuck in the Iranian parliament for several years.

The extent of international feeling about the use of stoning was made clear to Iran in July when the case of Sakineh Mohammadi-Ashtiani, sentenced to be stoned on alleged adultery charges, was brought to global attention. As the case developed and publicity grew, the charges against her evolved into murder charges for involvement in the killing of her husband. The international outcry against her stoning may have contributed to the temporary stay of Ms Ashtiani's execution, and highlighted the importance of continuing to raise such cases internationally.

The UK, along with EU partners, continued to raise these concerns with the Iranian authorities. This included discussing methods of execution, transparency of judicial process in execution cases, concerns over juvenile executions, and other cases where we believe due process was not met. We raised these concerns in meetings with Iran and in bilateral and multilateral statements, such as during Iran's Universal Periodic Review and in the UN General Assembly resolution on the human rights situation in Iran.

### **Torture and other ill treatment**

There were frequent and credible reports of torture and repressive treatment of protesters still detained following the 2009 protests. There are many cases documented by

protesters and journalists showing that the most common of these methods were beatings by guards, and psychological torture. There is clear evidence that a large number of confessions, particularly in high-profile cases, are extracted under duress and later retracted.

The use of flogging as a punishment for a wide range of crimes is frequently applied, as are amputations and “*qisas*” – an eye for an eye – punishments. An increase in public amputations as a deterrent against robbery was a disturbing trend in the latter half of 2010. Capital punishments amounting to cruel and degrading treatment continued in 2010 and in a number of cases the condemned were lashed prior to execution, increasing their suffering.

Despite widespread internal anger about the treatment of political prisoners, the Iranian government’s response remains limited. Following the public outcry about the death of three detainees in July 2009 after sustained torture in Kahrizak detention centre, authorities launched a lengthy investigation. In June, 11 prison officers were convicted, but two sentenced to death were later pardoned by the victims’ families. Public demands for senior officials to be held accountable continue.

Torture is contrary to Article 38 of the Iranian constitution and the Iranian government claims it does not sanction or permit it. However, Iran has not yet signed or ratified the UN Convention against Torture, and shows no willingness to do so. During its Universal Periodic Review, Iran also rejected a number of recommendations to allow the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture to visit Iran.

We continued to raise individual cases directly with the Iranian government, where we believed torture, or cruel and inhumane sentencing had occurred. In 2010, we repeatedly called on the Iranian government to prosecute those guilty of abuse and we will continue to follow these cases into 2011. We also urged Iran to sign and ratify the UN Convention against Torture, and to adhere to its protocols.

## **Prisons and detention issues**

The Iranian authorities continued to use detention as a political deterrent in 2010. Arrests and intimidation of groups opposing the government continued. These included lawyers, opposition politicians, journalists, student and trade unionists, and religious and ethnic minorities. Unofficial figures placed the number of those detained since June 2009

in the thousands. A majority were swiftly released, but reportedly with the explicit threat of re-arrest if they continue to protest against government policy. Arrests without a warrant, particularly in political cases, reportedly continued throughout 2010. These often took place at night and family members could spend days without knowing where detainees were being held, let alone on what charges.

The large number of ongoing detentions following the disputed 2009 elections highlighted a range of concerns about prison conditions. At a minimum, many of those detained have been subjected to overcrowded and/or insanitary conditions. As a result of a number of deaths from previous medical conditions, concerns were also expressed about the level of medical care provided. Abuse of prisoners' rights was also rife, with numerous reports of violence and sexual abuse against prisoners, regular beatings, credible allegations of torture and increased and extended use of solitary confinement.

Political prisoners asked us to raise public awareness about the use of solitary confinement to place prisoners under psychological pressure. Reports from NGOs and from those who have been released suggested that prisoners can spend up to 23 hours a day in solitary confinement, where they were subjected to insanitary and cramped conditions.

Iran regularly highlights its progressive approach to drugs rehabilitation in detention centres and its pragmatic approach to HIV and AIDS prevention. During a visit to a drugs rehabilitation detention centre on 29 April, diplomats were told that prisoners received clean needles and condoms. However, NGOs cautioned that such programmes are patchily applied, often at the discretion of the prison governor, and that many facilities provide no such services. Iran is to be praised for these programmes, but we would welcome further transparency about the extent of their application.

The treatment of prisoners is central to a number of our human rights concerns. While we are clear in a number of cases that the detention of prisoners is arbitrary and unlawful, it is important that their rights are not further violated. We have consistently pushed with the Iranian authorities for a prisoner's right to due process to be respected, so that those wrongfully accused are given full opportunity to defend themselves without prejudice. In 2010, we called for Iran to show full cooperation with all UN special procedures, including on the issues of arbitrary detention and judicial independence. These issues were also highlighted in Iran's Universal Periodic Review and in the UN General Assembly resolution.



We continued to raise both the level and use of detention with the Iranian authorities, urging Iran to live up to its domestic and international obligations.

### **Human rights defenders**

With the government having almost total control over the media in Iran, the work of human rights defenders in promoting civil liberties and highlighting abuses was key to showing the true story of what was occurring in post-election Iran. This made them a key target of the government crackdown, with a large number of prominent defenders and lawyers arrested in 2010.

One such case was that of Nasrin Sotoudeh. As one of Iran's most prominent lawyers, she worked hard to secure the release of a number of protesters who had been arbitrarily arrested and jailed without charge following the post-election protests. As a close friend and associate of Nobel laureate Dr Shirin Ebadi, she also represented Dr Ebadi's interests in Iran while Dr Ebadi remained in exile. On 4 September, Ms Sotoudeh was arrested on charges of acting against state security and spreading propaganda against the regime. There was convincing evidence that the charges against her were simply for daring to speak up about ongoing abuses and for continuing her work as a lawyer despite threats from the authorities and demands that she drop Dr Ebadi's case.

While detained, Ms Sotoudeh was denied her rights as a prisoner to visits or regular phone calls from her family. She was held in solitary confinement for an extended period of time. In protest, Ms Sotoudeh went on hunger strike twice in six weeks, not eating for approximately five of those weeks. When she was finally granted a family visit from her two young daughters, Ms Sotoudeh was in a grave physical condition having lost a significant amount of weight. On 9 January 2011, Ms Sotoudeh was sentenced to 11 years in prison and a 20-year ban from practising law and leaving Iran. Her official charges were acting against national security, propaganda against the regime and membership of the Human Rights Defenders' Centre.

Despite this ongoing campaign of fear, lawyers showed courage in continuing their work while facing the real possibility of imprisonment. It remains vital that they are allowed to continue their work unimpeded and are supported by the international community. Our

Ambassador's blog to mark Human Rights Day focused on Nasrin Sotoudeh. The blog generated intense media and government interest in Iran.

In addition to statements highlighting our concerns, we continued to work closely with the EU in cases involving human rights defenders. It was important that Iran remained aware that the international community was united in condemnation of their actions to pervert the course of justice and to silence the oppressed. Over the course of the year, the EU démarched the Iranian authorities on a number of occasions to highlight our shared concerns. We also held a number of meetings both in London with the Iranian Embassy, and in Tehran with the relevant government ministries to highlight our concerns and remind Iran of its international commitments.

### **Freedom of expression**

In 2010, freedom of expression continued to be severely restricted, in spite of constitutional protections for freedom of expression and the press. The crackdown on journalists, bloggers and opposition figures following the disputed 2009 elections continued during 2010, with journalists, bloggers and filmmakers harassed and imprisoned: publications suspended; and continued restrictions on internet access. It is clear that, as in 2009, Iran failed to meet its obligations to protect freedom of expression as a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In early December, Reporters Without Borders and the Committee to Protect Journalists identified 37 journalists imprisoned within Iran. This was the highest number of any country in the world. In September, journalist and human rights defender Emadeddin Baghi was sentenced to six years in prison, which was added to an earlier one-year sentence imposed in July. Mr Baghi was convicted on the vague charges of "propaganda against the system" and an offence against national security. In September, young journalist and rights activist Shiva Nazar Ahari was also sentenced to six years and 74 lashes. Ms Nazar Ahari's charges included "disturbing public peace of mind". These are typical charges used against journalists and bloggers. In December, six journalists from *Shargh* newspaper were arrested. Two remained in detention at the end of the year. The Iranian authorities also continued to suspend or close publications. In June, Amnesty International estimated that at least 20 publications had been banned since the 2009 elections.

Iranian film-makers also faced harassment and imprisonment in 2010. In December, award-winning Iranian film-maker Jafar Panahi was sentenced to six years' imprisonment and a 20-year ban on film-making for "propaganda against the system" and participating in a gathering. He had earlier been released on bail after an international campaign launched at the Cannes festival.

The Iranian authorities continued to actively censor the internet, restricting access to a wide range of sites including Facebook and YouTube and targeting bloggers and online journalists. The military-run Cyber Army was reported to have taken a leading role in monitoring and disrupting internet sites and other online tools, including email and blog sites. In September, prominent blogger Hossein Derakhshan was sentenced to 19-and-a-half-years in prison, and blogger Hossein Ronaghi Maleki to 15 years. These are the longest sentences ever handed down to bloggers in Iran. By the end of 2010, Reporters Without Borders estimated that seven bloggers were imprisoned in Iran.

The Iranian authorities also continued to jam periodically satellite broadcasts into Iran, including BBC Persian, Voice of America and new entertainment channel Farsi 1. In spite of this, Iranians continued to be inventive in evading censorship through using proxies and blogging anonymously.

Freedom of assembly was also severely curtailed in Iran in 2010. The heavy crackdown by the authorities on widespread protests on Ashura Day on 27 December 2009, and a heavy security presence on the streets during key national holidays and anniversaries, contributed to an atmosphere of fear, providing a strong deterrent against free association and peaceful protest.

During the Universal Periodic Review of Iran's human rights in February, Iran expressed its willingness to accept visits from UN special rapporteurs. In February, the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression asked to visit Iran. We understand that, by the end of the year, he was still to receive a response from the Iranian authorities.

We continued to raise our concerns about freedom of expression with the Iranian authorities in private and in public, including the cases mentioned above. We also sought to raise awareness of the state of freedom of expression in Iran through digital channels. For example, FCO bloggers from around the world blogged in solidarity with

Hossein Derakhshan in September, seeking to raise the profile of his case. We also used Facebook, Twitter and Iranian link-sharing websites, such as Balatarin, to increase access to information within Iran on the areas where Iran did not meet its international obligations, and to show the international community's concern about human rights in Iran.

### **Freedom of religion and belief**

Under the Iranian constitution, Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism are protected religions. However, in 2010, religious minorities in Iran continued to face restrictions on the right to practise their religion, and faced discrimination and restrictions on access to employment and education. Muslims do not have the right to change their religion in Iran, and apostasy is punishable under law.

Baha'is, who are not a recognised religious minority, continued to face particular harassment and discrimination. In August, seven Baha'i leaders were sentenced to 20 years in prison, a sentence that was subsequently reduced to 10 years on appeal. They were acquitted of the original charges relating to state security and propaganda against the regime, but convicted of charges relating to establishing an illegal organisation in a trial that failed to meet international standards. Other members of the Baha'i community in Iran face discrimination, harassment or imprisonment, with reports of more than 50 Baha'is being detained in Iran at the end of the year.

Christians from more informal "house churches", those who had converted from Islam and those involved in evangelism faced mounting harassment at the end of 2010. Christian pastor Youcef Nadarkhani was reportedly sentenced to death on charges of apostasy in September. His appeal was still outstanding at the end of the year. Pastor Behrouz Sadegh-Khanjani was arrested in June and was charged with apostasy and blasphemy. Christian Solidarity Worldwide reported that 25 Christians from house churches were arrested on 26 December, and up to 100 others were detained and then released. Both Baha'is and some Christians are regularly accused by the Iranian authorities of acting as foreign agents.

We raised the plight of the Baha'i and Christian communities of Iran repeatedly with the Iranian authorities during 2010, urging the government of Iran to cease all harassment and accord them freedom to adhere to their beliefs. We also worked with EU partners to lobby the Iranian government on a number of cases involving religious freedom.

## **Women's rights**

A number of worrying practices remained common in Iran, including forced marriages, temporary marriages, and the legal right of a husband to polygamy without his wife's consent – or even knowledge. In addition, a woman has limited rights within marriage, including being unable to refuse sexual relations with her husband. The Protection of Family Bill, which further limits a number of a wife's rights within a marriage, continues to be discussed in the Iranian parliament.

Women continued to be at the forefront of political protest in 2010, and a significant number of high-profile cases involved female activists, journalists, students and lawyers. When larger-scale protests had ended, mothers of the detained formed small vigils to protest against the arrests of their children. A number of reports indicated that these were broken up with violence and threats against future protests.

Iran has taken a number of steps to promote female access to education. Recent figures indicated that between 60 and 65% of university students were women. Despite the large number of highly qualified women leaving university, women continue to highlight difficulties in accessing the job market. There are a number of professions that are barred to women, and a gender bias in favour of male employees remains widespread.

We were vocal on women's rights, including releasing a statement directly to Iranian women on Iranian Women's Day. We raised concerns about discriminatory laws on a number of occasions with the Iranian government. The issue was also discussed in the UN General Assembly.

## **Children's rights**

Juvenile offenders continued to suffer because of the low legal ages of maturity in Iran in 2010. Iranian law continued to view girls as young as nine as adults and answerable for their actions in a court of law, with the age of maturity for boys set at 15. A non-binding moratorium on the use of the death penalty for crimes committed as a minor issued in 2008 indicated unease about the practice within the Iranian system. Despite this, Iran carried out at least two "juvenile executions" in 2010. We continued to urge Iran to implement a full ban on juvenile executions and raised the issue in Iran's Universal Periodic Review.

## **Minorities and other discriminated groups**

In 2010, there were a number of executions of members of minorities who the authorities alleged were involved with terrorist factions. On 9 May, authorities executed Kurds Ali Heydarian, Farhad Vakili, Mehdi Eslamian, Shirin Alam Hooli and Farzad Kamangar. There were severe flaws in their trial. They were executed without notifying the families or lawyers of the condemned. Amnesty International called the executions “a blatant attempt to intimidate members of the Kurdish minority”. The Iranian authorities have used their fight against the Party of Free Life of Kurdistan to suppress the rights of the Kurdish minority, including cultural and linguistic rights, with the ostensible aim of ending the Kurdish call for an independent Kurdistan region.

Homosexuality in Iran continues to be illegal and carries extremely harsh punishments, including the death sentence. One of the most prominent cases in 2010 was that of Ebrahim Hamidi. Mr Hamidi was accused of sexual assault of another male in 2008, when aged 16. He was sentenced to death on the basis of the “judge’s knowledge” and has been on death row ever since. In July, it was revealed that the person who accused Mr Hamidi had withdrawn his statement, saying that he had fabricated the story. Since then, the Iranian Supreme Court has attempted to overturn the judge’s sentence, but to date has not been able to do so owing to the original judge blocking it. At the end of 2010 Mr Hamidi remained on death row.

We continued to condemn discrimination on the basis of gender or sexuality and were very active on the above cases, and in others relating to these issues. We regularly raised our concerns with the Iranian Embassy in London, and with the Iranian authorities.

## **Antisemitism**

The small Jewish population in Iran remains protected as an officially recognised minority. However, some antisemitic news articles were reported which accused the Jewish population of espionage for foreign countries. Vitriol against Israel remained standard practice from all sections and echelons of government, with Israel and “Zionists” being blamed for most of Iran’s ills. These comments are widely replayed in the media. The line between statements against Israel and against Jews outside Iran often remained blurred. Senior government officials, including the president, continued to cast doubt on the historical accuracy of the Holocaust.

## Protection of civilians

Iran is home to the second largest group of long-staying refugees in the world. According to the Iranian Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrant Affairs, in March there were 1,065,000 registered refugees and according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, a further 2 million unregistered refugees. The vast majority of the refugee population are Afghan and many have been in Iran since fleeing Afghanistan after the Soviet invasion in 1979. Those who are registered have access to some primary healthcare facilities, primary and secondary education and some state benefits. The 300,000 in possession of a temporary work permit are able to work legally and therefore contribute to municipality taxes. However, unregistered refugees are not able to access these entitlements and live hand to mouth, working as cheap labour. Registered refugees must also re-register on an annual basis, a process that is haphazard and incurs a fee.

On 28 June, after a three-year suspension, the tripartite agreement between Afghanistan, Iran and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees was re-activated with the aim of creating the conditions conducive to voluntary repatriation. Before the suspension of the agreement in 2007, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees had assisted in the return of more than 870,000 refugees since 2002. Voluntary repatriation is the preferred solution for Iran, but the security situation and the socio-economic conditions in Afghanistan make people reluctant to return. Owing to the lack of progress made on voluntary repatriation, Iran forcibly deports newly arrived Afghan refugees and seeks to disrupt refugee settlement by insisting that refugees either re-locate from towns and cities to refugee settlements or opt for voluntary repatriation.

There is currently no direct UK assistance to refugees in Iran. Iran was invited to January's International Conference on Afghanistan hosted by the UN, UK and Afghanistan in London. Iran declined to accept the invitation, despite repeated public insistence that Iran should be allowed to play a key role in securing Afghanistan's future.

In 2011 we expect the situation of the refugee community to get worse. High inflation and the introduction of the targeted subsidies plan have removed the subsidy on basic goods and refugees are not eligible for the cash compensation allowance paid to the poorest Iranians. They will be hit hardest by the plan and are likely either to return to Afghanistan or to seek passage to other countries.

