

Country – capital	Islamic Republic of Iran – Tehran. ¹
Population	Total population 88.4 million (est. 2024). Ethnic groups: Persian, Azeri, Kurd, Lur, Baloch, Arab, Turkmen, and Turkic tribes. ²
Geography	Middle East, bordering the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, and the Caspian Sea, between Iraq and Pakistan. ³
Languages	Persian Farsi (official), Azeri and other Turkic dialects, Kurdish, Gilaki and Mazandarani, Luri, Balochi, Arabic. ⁴
Writing system	Persian (from right to left). ⁵
Education and literacy	89% of adults is literate, females slightly lower than males at 85% and 93% resp. (2022). ⁶ Education is free through secondary school and compulsory for primary school grades (until grade 6). In fifth grade, pupils must pass a national examination to enter middle school (grades 7-9). Secondary education (grades 9-12) is streamed into academic or technical levels. If academic, the pupil chooses one of the literature and culture, physics / mathematics, socioeconomics, or experimental sciences streams. If vocational, they choose one of the agriculture, business / vocational training, and technology streams. University entrance is dependent on passing the national entrance examination, then passing universities' entrance examinations. ⁷
Religions	Shi'a ⁸ Muslim (official) 98.5%, Christian 0.7%, Baha'i 0.3%, agnostic 0.3%, other 0.2% (2020 est.). ⁹
Conflict history and overview	Iran became an Islamic Republic following the Iranian Revolution in 1979. Conservative clerical forces established a theocracy with political authority held by a religious scholar, called the Supreme Leader. The US has designated Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism since 1984. Conservative politicians blocked attempts at reforms in the 2000s and by 2021 the conservatives had a monopoly across all of the regime's institutions. Iran is under a range of international sanctions and export controls for its involvement in terrorism, weapons proliferation, human rights abuses, and concerns over its nuclear programme. In September 2022 Mahsa Amini, a Kurdish Iranian woman died in morality police custody, leading to many months of female-led protests for regime change. ¹⁰ Iran has border conflicts with Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, and Pakistan and there are frequent clashes between Iranian security forces and Kurdish, Sunni Muslim, and Arab militant groups. ¹¹
Humanitarian situation	Life expectancy at birth: 75.6 yrs (2024). ¹² Population below poverty line: 28.1% (2020). ¹³ Iran faces economic challenges from sanctions, limited trade and foreign relations, fluctuating oil prices and depreciation of its currency. Inflation surged to over 53% in January 2023 with food prices accounting for 40% of inflation, whilst real wages fall. ¹⁴
Human rights situation	Iranian authorities have committed serious human rights violations against opponents including excessive and lethal force, torture, sexual assault, enforced disappearances, and arbitrary detention or imprisonment. Freedom of assembly and expression is severely restricted, and the authorities have targeted activists, lawyers, journalists, and artists. Women and girls are prosecuted for not following compulsory <i>hijab</i> laws. Femicide and honour killings are prevalent but there is no Iranian law on domestic violence to prevent abuse or protect survivors. ¹⁵
Situation of women FGM – early marriages	Maternal mortality rate: 22 deaths per 100,000 live births (2020). ¹⁶ Child marriages: no minimum legal age of marriage, 3% of girls are married by the age of 15, and 17% by 18. ¹⁷ FGM: has been reported but no recent data. ¹⁸
Situation of LGBTI	Consensual same-sex conduct is punishable by flogging and, for men, the death penalty. Iran permits and subsidises sex reassignment surgery, but no law prohibits discrimination against transgender individuals. ¹⁹
Internally displaced persons (IDPs)/ Asylum/migration in Malta	IDPs within Iran: 7.2 million (2023). ²⁰ Number of asylum applications in the EU: 9385 (2024). ²¹ Malta: Iranian sea arrivals: unknown. ²² Iranian asylum applications in Malta: 3 (2023). ²³

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- ¹ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/iran/>
- ² <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/iran/>
- ³ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/iran/>
- ⁴ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/iran/>
- ⁵ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/iran/>
- ⁶ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS?locations=IR>
- ⁷ <https://www.scholaro.com/db/Countries/Iran/Education-System>
- ⁸ <https://www.cfr.org/article/sunni-shia-divide>
- ⁹ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/iran/>
- ¹⁰ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/iran/#introduction>
- ¹¹ <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-august-23-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-january-17-2025>; <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/militants-kill-5-iranian-security-officers-southeast-state-media-says-2024-04-04/>
- ¹² <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/iran/>
- ¹³ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099110623175541902/pdf/P1777150fa1dcd02108b55086af5f3268f5.pdf>
- ¹⁴ <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/1c94cb80-5f40-408f-a5c7-c7cfd97dc438/content>
- ¹⁵ <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/iran>; <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/iran/>
- ¹⁶ <https://knoema.com/atlas/Iran/Maternal-mortality-ratio>
- ¹⁷ <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/learning-resources/child-marriage-atlas/atlas/iran/>
- ¹⁸ <https://www.fgmc.org/continent/middle-east/>
- ¹⁹ <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/iran#49dda6>
- ²⁰ <https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/iran/>
- ²¹ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/migr_asyappctzm_custom_15754508/bookmark/table?lang=en&bookmarkId=6245cf10-3093-4f61-adf3-1077778a9abf
- ²² <https://www.unhcr.org/mt/figures-at-a-glance>
- ²³ https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/AIDA-MT_2023-Update.pdf

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