



Home Office

# **Country Policy and Information Note**

## **Iran: Military service**

**Version 3.0**

**November 2022**

# 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 2 parts: (1) an 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 - that is information in 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
- that the general humanitarian situation is so severe that there are substantial grounds for believing that there is a real risk of serious harm because conditions amount to inhuman or degrading treatment as within [paragraphs 339C and 339CA\(iii\) of the Immigration Rules](#) / Article 3 of the [European Convention on Human Rights \(ECHR\)](#)
- that the security situation is such that there are substantial grounds for believing there is a real risk of serious harm because there exists a serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in a situation of international or internal armed conflict as within [paragraphs 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 \(COI\)](#), 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. 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
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

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

The inclusion of a source is not, however, an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote. Full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the bibliography.

### Feedback

Our goal is to provide accurate, reliable and up-to-date COI and clear guidance. We welcome feedback on how to improve our products. 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 on 11 November 2022

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Basis of claim

#### 1.1.1 Fear of persecution and/or serious harm by the state because:

- military service would involve acts, with which the person may be associated, which are contrary to the basic rules of human conduct
- of the treatment and/or conditions likely to be faced by the person during military service
- of the penalties likely to be faced if the person refuses to undertake, evades, or deserts from, military service

### 1.2 Points to note

#### 1.2.1 Military service is compulsory for all males aged between 18 and 49 although there are some grounds for exemption (see [Eligibility](#)).

#### 1.2.2 For guidance on the general principles and definitions of what amounts to a persecution or serious harm and relevant caselaw on considering claims related to military service, see the Asylum Instruction on [Military Service and Conscientious Objection](#).

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### 1.3

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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 In cases where there are doubts surrounding a person's claimed place of origin, 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 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons for considering whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.
- 2.2.2 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection (which has a wider range of exclusions than refugee status).
- 2.2.3 For guidance on exclusion and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instruction on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and the instruction on [Restricted Leave](#).

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## 2.3 Convention reason(s)

- 2.3.1 In general, a person evading or deserting from military service do not fall within the scope of one of the 5 Refugee Convention grounds.
- 2.3.2 The [Asylum Instruction on Military Service and Conscientious Objection](#) and paragraph 22 of the House of Lords judgement in the case of [Sepet & Another v. SSHD \[2003\] UKHL 15](#) explain that it is necessary to carefully examine the reason for the persecution in the mind of the persecutor rather than the reason which the victim believes is why they are being persecuted.
- 2.3.3 A person refusing to do military service, including as a conscientious objector, may claim to do so due to their religious or political beliefs. However, there is limited evidence to suggest that the Iranian government views a refusal to undertake military service as an act of political disobedience. Therefore a person, even a conscientious objector, who refuses, evades or deserts from military service is unlikely to be able to

establish their claim falls within the scope of the Refugee Convention (see Draft evaders and desertion – [Legal context and penalties](#)).

- 2.3.4 Persons who have evaded or deserted from military 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 which is perceived as being different by the surrounding society.
- 2.3.5 In the absence of a link to one of the 5 Refugee 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).
- 2.3.6 For guidance on Humanitarian Protection see the Asylum Instruction, [Humanitarian Protection](#), and on the 5 Refugee Convention grounds see the Asylum Instruction, [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## 2.4 Risk

- 2.4.1 Military service is compulsory for all males aged between 18 and 49, and lasts for between 18 and 24 months (see [Eligibility](#)).
- 2.4.2 Exemptions may apply under medical grounds (severe mental or physical illness), and under some non-medical grounds, including outstanding scholastic abilities, being the only son in the family, having elderly parents; and having a brother currently serving in the military (see [Exemptions](#)).
- 2.4.3 Gay men and trans persons are also exempt (for further information see the Country Policy and Information Note, [Iran: Sexual orientation and gender identity and expression](#)).
- 2.4.4 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instructions on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#) and [Military Service and Conscientious Objection](#).

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### a. Acts contrary to the basic rules of human conduct

- 2.4.5 In general, a military service conscript is not likely to be required to commit an act that is contrary to the basic rules of human conduct. However, each case will need to be considered on its facts with the onus on the person to demonstrate that they are likely to be required to commit such acts.
- 2.4.6 Sources indicate that specific military training is limited and that tasks may involve activities such as office work, gardening, driving, cleaning and labouring. Educated and talented conscripts can serve at knowledge-based companies. There is no evidence to indicate conscripts are likely to be involved in acts contrary to the basic rules of human conduct whilst performing military service in Iran (see [Deployment and duties](#)).
- 2.4.7 For guidance on Article 1F see the [Asylum Instruction on Exclusion: Article 1F of the Refugee Convention](#). For further guidance on assessing risk, see



the Asylum Instructions on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#) and [Military Service and Conscientious Objection](#).

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b. Conditions in military service

- 2.4.8 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. Each case must be considered on its facts, with the onus on the person to demonstrate that they face a risk of serious harm or persecution.
- 2.4.9 Conditions for conscripts may vary. Information on the treatment and working conditions of conscripts is limited but conditions in the Revolutionary Guard are said to be better than other parts of the security forces. Salaries are low, although in March 2022 it was reported that pay was doubled to US\$100 (£88.50) per month. The average salary is US\$200 per month. Some conscripts may suffer from poor physical and/or mental health, while drug use is said to be prevalent amongst serving soldiers due to stress (see [Deployment and duties](#) and [Conditions and treatment](#)).
- 2.4.10 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instructions on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#) and [Military Service and Conscientious Objection](#).

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c. Draft evasion or desertion

- 2.4.11 In general, a person who deserts from or evades military service is unlikely to be subject to a punishment that amounts to serious harm or persecution. Each case must be considered on its facts, with the onus on the person to demonstrate that they face a risk of serious harm or persecution.
- 2.4.12 Draft evaders are liable for prosecution. An individual who evades military service by leaving the country must complete their service on return if they are under the age of 40. For those over 40, a fine is the most common punishment. Draft evaders may lose social benefits and civil rights including access to employment, education and ability to leave the country (see [Draft evaders and desertion](#)).
- 2.4.13 Deserters may face imprisonment or, depending on their intentions, considered as mohareb (a person who commits moharebeh, defined as drawing a weapon on the life, property or chastity of people or to cause terror as it creates the atmosphere of insecurity), which can invoke the death penalty. However, there is no indication that such penalties against deserters occur in practice (see [Bibliography](#) and [Draft evaders and desertion](#)).
- 2.4.14 In [SF \(Article 3- Prison Conditions\) Iran CG \[2002\] UKIAT 00973](#), heard on 21 March 2002 and promulgated on 4 April 2002, the Immigration Appeal Tribunal held that prison conditions in Iran ‘may well be regarded as harsh’, but that there was ‘no sufficient indication from the material before us that [the respondent in question] would run the risk of facing treatment which

amounted to a breach of Article 3.’ However, each case must be considered on its facts (see [Prison conditions](#)).

- 2.4.15 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instructions on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#) and [Military Service and Conscientious Objection](#).

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## 2.5 Protection

- 2.5.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution from the state they will not, in general, be able to obtain protection from the authorities.
- 2.5.2 For further guidance on assessing state protection, see the Asylum 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 or serious harm from the state, they are unlikely to be able to relocate to escape that risk.
- 2.6.2 For further guidance on considering internal relocation and factors to be taken into account see the Asylum 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

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## 3. Legal context

### 3.1 Constitution

3.1.1 Article 3 of the Constitution states that, among other things, the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran is obliged to use all of its resources to strengthen ‘... the foundations of national defence to the utmost degree by means of universal military training for the sake of safeguarding the independence, territorial integrity, and the Islamic order of the country...’<sup>1</sup>

3.1.2 Chapter 9, Section 3 of the Constitution relates to the army and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and states:

‘Article 143

‘The Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran is responsible for guarding the independence and territorial integrity of the country, as well as the order of the Islamic Republic.

‘Article 144

‘The Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran must be an Islamic Army, i.e., committed to Islamic ideology and the people, and must recruit into its service individuals who have faith in the objectives of the Islamic Revolution and are devoted to the cause of realizing its goals...

‘Article 147

‘In time of peace, the government must utilize the personnel and technical equipment of the Army in relief operations, and for educational and productive ends, and the Construction Jihad, while fully observing the criteria of Islamic justice and ensuring that such utilization does not harm the combat-readiness of the Army...

‘Article 151

[in accordance with the Koran]

‘the government is obliged to provide a programme of military training, with all requisite facilities, for all its citizens, in accordance with the Islamic criteria, in such a way that all citizens will always be able to engage in the armed defence of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The possession of arms, however, requires the granting of permission by the competent authorities.’<sup>2</sup>

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### 3.2 Military and armed service laws

3.2.1 In March 2022, a preprint study assessing the harmful effects of obligatory military service on the health of soldiers by Mohammad Reza Shadmand Foumani Moghadam, a research assistant at the Varastegan Institute for

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<sup>1</sup> Constitute, ‘[Iran \(Islamic Republic of\)’s Constitution](#)’ (Article 3 (11)), 1979, revised 1989

<sup>2</sup> Constitute, ‘[Iran \(Islamic Republic of\)’s Constitution](#)’ (Article 143, 144, 147, 151), 1979, revised 1989

Medical Sciences, Mashhad, Iran<sup>3</sup>, cited relevant articles of the 1984 'National Law for Military Service in the Islamic Republic of Iran' (hereafter, military service law). Moghadam noted that 'According to article 1 of Iran military service law... defending the independence and territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the lives, property and honour of the people in the religious and national duty of every Iranian and in the performance of this duty **all male citizens** [emphasis added] of the Islamic Republic of Iran are obliged to perform military service following the provisions of this law.'<sup>4</sup>

3.2.2 A copy of the military service law could not be found amongst the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).

3.2.3 The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) cited the Armed Forces Offences Law in a report dated October 2020, noting that it mentions various offences that might be punishable by the death sentence:

'This law stipulates that military personnel, and any civilians convicted of perpetrating offenses in connection with military personnel, should be deemed as mohareb in numerous cases. Such offenses include: devising plans to topple the government or effective involvement in an association for that purpose; taking action to harm the territorial integrity of the country; surrendering the personnel or bases under their command or submitting documents to the enemy; conspiring with the enemy; helping a government at war with the country or the mohareb and corrupt groups; taking armed action against the Islamic Republic; providing the enemy with documents and information harmful to the security of military facilities; submitting secrets of the armed forces to the enemy; disobeying commands leading to the enemy's domination of territory or the army's personnel; failing to use weapons or other facilities to fight hence leading to the defeat of the "Islamic front"; and willfully sleeping while on guard duty against enemies and the moharebs, on the condition that the action leads to disruption of the national security or the defeat of the "Islamic front".'<sup>5</sup>

3.2.4 A copy of the 2003 Armed Forces Offences Law could not be found amongst the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).

See also [Draft evaders and desertion](#) for laws relating to these offences.

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## 4. Military and security forces

### 4.1 Armed forces structure

4.1.1 According to a 2019 report by the US Department Intelligence Agency (DIA), Iran's armed forces is comprised of the:

- Artesh (Farsi for 'army'), consisting of Ground Force, Navy, Air Force, Air Defense Force, estimated 420,000 personnel

<sup>3</sup> ORCID, '[Mohammad Reza Shadmand Foumani Moghadam](#)', last modified 20 October 2022

<sup>4</sup> Moghadam, MRSF, '[Obligatory military service in Iran: 21st-century slavery...](#)', 15 March 2022

<sup>5</sup> FIDH, '[No one is spared – The widespread use of the death...](#)' (pages 17 to 18), October 2020

- Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), consisting of Ground Force, Navy, Aerospace Force, Qods Force, Basij, estimated 640,000 personnel, including 450,000 Basij (reserves)
  - Law Enforcement Force, the national police force (commonly referred to by its Farsi acronym NAJA<sup>6</sup>), estimated 200,000 to 300,000 personnel<sup>7</sup>
- 4.1.2 According to the DIA report, armed forces recruits are made up of conscripts and some volunteers<sup>8</sup>.
- 4.1.3 The CIA World Factbook noted that ‘... as of 2019, approximately 80% of Artesh ground forces personnel were conscripts, while Navy and Air/Air Defense Force personnel were primarily volunteers; conscripts reportedly comprised more than 50 percent of the IRGC (most volunteers were reportedly recruited from the Basij Forces).’<sup>9</sup> The same source described the Basij as a ‘... volunteer paramilitary group with local organizations across the country, which sometimes acts as an auxiliary law enforcement unit subordinate to IRGC ground forces.’<sup>10</sup>
- 4.1.4 A December 2021 joint report, based on a range of sources, by Landinfo (Norwegian Country of Origin Information Service), the Belgian Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS) and the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), noted that ‘Approximately half of the police force is comprised of conscript soldiers who are completing their compulsory national military service.’<sup>11</sup>
- 4.1.5 For a more detailed description of the Artesh, IRGC and NAJA, see the December 2019 DIA report on [Iran Military Power](#), and the December 2021 joint report by Landinfo, CGRS and SEM – [Iran: Criminal procedures and documents](#).

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## 5. Conscription

### 5.1 Eligibility

- 5.1.1 The CIA World Factbook, US Department of State (USSD) and Global Security all stated that military service was compulsory for all males aged over 18<sup>12</sup> <sup>13</sup> <sup>14</sup>. Global Security noted that the upper age limit for conscription was 49<sup>15</sup>. The Australian Government’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) indicated it was compulsory for men aged between 18 and

<sup>6</sup> Landinfo and others, ‘[Iran: Criminal procedures and documents](#)’ (page 18), December 2021

<sup>7</sup> DIA, ‘[Iran Military Power](#)’ (pages 1, 10 and 11), December 2019

<sup>8</sup> DIA, ‘[Iran Military Power](#)’ (page 11), December 2019

<sup>9</sup> CIA, ‘[The World Factbook – Iran](#)’ (Military and security), last updated 10 August 2022

<sup>10</sup> CIA, ‘[The World Factbook – Iran](#)’ (Military and security), last updated 10 August 2022

<sup>11</sup> Landinfo and others, ‘[Iran: Criminal procedures and documents](#)’ (page 19), December 2021

<sup>12</sup> CIA, ‘[The World Factbook – Iran](#)’ (Military and security), last updated 10 August 2022

<sup>13</sup> USSD, ‘[2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Iran](#)’ (section 6), 12 April 2022

<sup>14</sup> Global Security, ‘[Iran - Military Conscription](#)’, no date

<sup>15</sup> Global Security, ‘[Iran - Military Conscription](#)’, no date

40<sup>16</sup>. According to the CIA World Factbook, the age for voluntary military service generally is 16 years, 17 years for NAJA, and 15 years for Basij<sup>17</sup>.

- 5.1.2 Whilst the Constitution states that the military must be Islamic and committed to Islamic ideals<sup>18</sup>, religious minorities must complete military service even though non-Muslims cannot be recruited into the Iranian armed forces<sup>19 20</sup>.
- 5.1.3 The US Department of State's International Religious Freedom Report for 2021 (USSD IRF Report 2021) noted that 'Members of recognized religious minorities [Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians<sup>21</sup>] with a college education may serve as officers during their mandatory military service, but they may not continue to serve beyond the mandatory service period to become career military officers.'<sup>22</sup>

See also [Exemptions](#).

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## 5.2 Call-up process

- 5.2.1 The Military Draft Board (Nezam Vazifeh in Farsi), part of the Law Enforcement Force (NAJA), is responsible summoning draftees for the recruitment, registration, and determination of eligibility for compulsory military service<sup>23 24</sup>.
- 5.2.2 The Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD) COI Compilation on Iran, dated July 2015, cited the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, BZ) December 2013 'General Official Report on Iran', which stated 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...'<sup>25</sup>
- 5.2.3 The Washington Post wrote in February 2021 that conscripts were '... not allowed to select which branch of the military they enter. Iranian officials have said that roughly 400,000 men show up for their compulsory service each year and are sent to either the army, a law enforcement agency or the IRGC.'<sup>26</sup>
- 5.2.4 Writing in March 2022, Sina Azodi, non-resident Fellow at the Atlantic Council and PhD candidate in International Affairs<sup>27</sup>, described his military

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<sup>16</sup> DFAT, '[Country Information Report Iran](#)' (paragraph 3.159), April 2020

<sup>17</sup> CIA, '[The World Factbook – Iran](#)' (Military and security), last updated 10 August 2022

<sup>18</sup> Constitution, '[Iran \(Islamic Republic of\)'s Constitution](#)' (Article 144), 1979, revised 1989

<sup>19</sup> USSD, '[2021 Report on International Religious Freedom: Iran](#)' (section II), 2 June 2022

<sup>20</sup> Article 18, '[Trial of "Christian" woman's killer a reminder of Iran's religious...](#)', 17 August 2022

<sup>21</sup> Constitution, '[Iran \(Islamic Republic of\)'s Constitution](#)' (Article 13), 1979, revised 1989

<sup>22</sup> USSD, '[2021 Report on International Religious Freedom: Iran](#)' (section II), 2 June 2022

<sup>23</sup> Outright Action International, '[Being transgender in Iran](#)' (page 29), 28 July 2016

<sup>24</sup> Azodi S, '[I was once conscripted into the Iranian armed forces...](#)', 11 March 2022

<sup>25</sup> ACCORD, '[Iran: Political Opposition Groups, Security Forces, Selected...](#)' (page 210), July 2015

<sup>26</sup> Washington Post, '[Sanctions on Iran's IRGC bars immigration by...](#)', 27 February 2021

<sup>27</sup> Atlantic Council, '[Sina Azodi](#)', no date



conscription experience at aged 19, stating that the selection process was arbitrary. Azodi said that he was:

‘... ordered to report at 4 am to the headquarters of the Law Enforcement Department of the Draft in downtown Tehran. I waited for two long hours until several officers arrived from the Artesh (regular military), Iranian Ground Forces, Air Force (IRIAF), Law Enforcement Forces (Prisons Branch), and Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Navy (IRGC-N). They were tasked with randomly picking conscripts... Draftees were then given paperwork telling them to show up at one of Tehran’s bus terminals two days later to be sent to boot camp.’<sup>28</sup>

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### 5.3 Duration

5.3.1 Moghadam stated that, according to the military service law, compulsory military service consists of ‘3 months of military training and 21 months of services...’<sup>29</sup>

5.3.2 According to the CIA World Factbook, ‘The compulsory period lasts between 18-24 months, depending on the location of service (soldiers serving in places of high security risk and deprived areas serve shorter terms).’<sup>30</sup>

5.3.3 A 2015 response by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) stated that:

‘According to two sources, the length of service depends on the geographical location of the conscript (IHRDC [Iran Human Rights Documentation Center] 7 Nov. 2013; BBC 26 Dec. 2013). The BBC reports that, according to Iranian Students’ News Agency (ISNA), 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” (26 Dec. 2013). According to the IHRDC, “in general males are expected to serve for a period of 20 months” and “[f]or service in impoverished areas, the duration can last 24 months while service in boundary areas can last 22 months” (7 Nov. 2013).’<sup>31</sup>

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### 5.4 Military service cards

5.4.1 According to the USSD Bureau of Consular Affairs Reciprocity Schedule, ‘Kart-e Sarbazi (military card); Kart-e Payan-e Khedmat doreye Zaroorat (service completion card); or Kart-e Mo’afiyat az khedmate doreye zaroorat (exemption card)’ are issued by the ‘Iranian Public Conscription Organization

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<sup>28</sup> Azodi S, ‘[I was once conscripted into the Iranian armed forces...](#)’, 11 March 2022

<sup>29</sup> Moghadam MRSF, ‘[Obligatory military service in Iran: 21st-century slavery...](#)’, 15 March 2022

<sup>30</sup> CIA, ‘[The World Factbook – Iran](#)’ (Military and security), last updated 10 August 2022

<sup>31</sup> IRB, ‘[Iran: Military service, including recruitment age, length of service...](#)’, 28 March 2015

(since 1980), under the Law Enforcement Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran (NAJA); [or] Imperial Armed Forces (before 1980).<sup>32</sup>

5.4.2 The same source noted that:

‘All service cards show national ID number, given name, surname, father’s name, date of birth (Persian [calendar]), 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 color, physical defects, and sometimes level of education. Exemption cards show the reason for exemption in the usual place of service dates, and these cards also have a different photo border from service cards.’<sup>33</sup>

See also [Exemptions](#).

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## 5.5 Buy-outs

5.5.1 On 29 January 2022, IranWire, a collaborative news website run by professional Iranian journalists in the diaspora and citizen journalists inside Iran<sup>34</sup>, and Iran International, a privately-owned UK entity, which aims to provide ‘a fair and balanced view of what happens inside Iran’<sup>35</sup>, reported that the government announced that a buy-out scheme for military service would be reintroduced allowing draftees to buy themselves out of completing the service. A similar scheme was ended 3 years ago, on the basis that it only benefitted the wealthy<sup>36 37</sup>.

5.5.2 Reporting on 30 January 2022, Iran International stated that:

‘The new plan only includes the absentees who are over 35 years old or at least eight years have passed from their conscription due date, the prices differing based on the levels of education, with those with higher education having to pay higher fees.

‘The new rates start at 2.5 billion rials (nearly [US]\$10,000 [approximately, £8,850<sup>38</sup>] at today’s rates) and goes up to 6 billion rials, which are about 11 to 24 times more than the last time the government allowed such exemptions. Average salaries in Iran are about [US]\$200 a month.’<sup>39</sup>

5.5.3 However, the scheme was withdrawn a day later after the plan was met with widespread criticism by both citizens and officials<sup>40</sup>.

5.5.4 According to the Danesh Gostar Kooch E Noor Institute, under certain conditions (date of leaving Iran, age of subject and length of time in foreign country), Iranians living abroad could benefit from exemption by paying 10

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<sup>32</sup> USSD, Bureau of Consular Affairs, ‘[Iran Reciprocity Schedule](#)’ (Military Records), no date

<sup>33</sup> USSD, Bureau of Consular Affairs, ‘[Iran Reciprocity Schedule](#)’ (Military Records), no date

<sup>34</sup> IranWire, ‘[Iranwire.com | About](#)’, no date

<sup>35</sup> Iran International, ‘[About us](#)’, no date

<sup>36</sup> IranWire, ‘[“Extortion”: Iranian MPs U-Turn on Military Service Buy-Out Scheme](#)’, 1 February 2022

<sup>37</sup> Iran International, ‘[Iran To Allow Buy-Out Of Military Service, For The Rich](#)’, 30 January 2022

<sup>38</sup> Xe.com, ‘[Currency converter](#)’, as at 24 October 2022

<sup>39</sup> Iran International, ‘[Iran To Allow Buy-Out Of Military Service, For The Rich](#)’, 30 January 2022

<sup>40</sup> IranWire, ‘[“Extortion”: Iranian MPs U-Turn on Military Service Buy-Out Scheme](#)’, 1 February 2022



million Toman (Rial)<sup>41</sup> (GBP £288<sup>42</sup>). Global Security stated the exemption fee was 100 million rials<sup>43</sup> (GBP £2,862<sup>44</sup>), but added that, in December 2013, the option to buy-out of military service for Iranians living abroad was withdrawn<sup>45</sup>.

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## 6. Exemptions

### 6.1 Legal context

- 6.1.1 According to the military service law, cited by Moghadam, no person can be exempted from military service except in cases sanctioned by the law. Some persons exempt during peacetime will be summoned to service in times of war or public mobilisation<sup>46</sup>.
- 6.1.2 The government and military authorities do not recognise conscientious objection or provide for alternative service<sup>47 48</sup>.

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### 6.2 Gender and sexual orientation

- 6.2.1 Women are exempt from compulsory conscription<sup>49</sup>, but may volunteer for military service<sup>50</sup>. Gay men and trans persons are also exempt, as they are classified as having a mental illness<sup>51</sup>.
- 6.2.2 For further information on the exemption of gay men and trans, see the Country Policy and Information Note, [Iran: Sexual orientation and gender identity and expression](#).

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### 6.3 Medical grounds

- 6.3.1 Moghadam wrote that, according to the military service law, persons with a severe physical or mental illness are exempt from military service<sup>52</sup>.
- 6.3.2 The 2015 IRB response, citing various sources, noted:

'The undated website of the Iranian Embassy in The Hague states that

'[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:

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<sup>41</sup> Danesh Gostar Kooh E Noor institute, '[Conditions for exemptions of military subjects](#)', no date

<sup>42</sup> Bonbast, '[Live Iranian Rial \(IRR\) exchange rates in Iran's free market](#)', as at 8 September 2022

<sup>43</sup> Global Security, '[Iran - Military Conscription](#)', no date

<sup>44</sup> Bonbast, '[Live Iranian Rial \(IRR\) exchange rates in Iran's free market](#)', as at 8 September 2022

<sup>45</sup> Global Security, '[Iran - Military Conscription](#)', no date

<sup>46</sup> Moghadam MRSF, '[Obligatory military service in Iran: 21st-century slavery...](#)', 15 March 2022

<sup>47</sup> DFAT, '[Country Information Report Iran](#)' (paragraph 3.159), April 2020

<sup>48</sup> IRB, '[Iran: Military service, including recruitment age, length of service...](#)', 28 March 2015

<sup>49</sup> CIA, '[The World Factbook – Iran](#)' (Military and security), last updated 10 August 2022

<sup>50</sup> Global Security, '[Iran - Military Conscription](#)', no date

<sup>51</sup> CPIN, '[Iran: Sexual orientation and gender identity and expression](#)' (section 3.9), June 2022

<sup>52</sup> Moghadam MRSF, '[Obligatory military service in Iran: 21st-century slavery...](#)', 15 March 2022

- ‘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. (Iran n.d.b)

‘The IHRDC 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).’<sup>53</sup>

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## 6.4 Non-medical grounds

6.4.1 The DFAT report noted that, aside from medical grounds, reasons for exemption from military service included:

‘... outstanding scholastic abilities; being the only son in the family; having elderly parents; and having a brother currently serving in the military. Students entering university at 18 can defer their military service until they complete their studies... Those exempt from military service are issued exemption cards by the General Conscription Department of the Police Force. An exemption card includes the basic biographical details of the holder, including their name and date of birth. Some cards indicate the reason for exemption...’<sup>54</sup>

6.4.2 The Danesh Gostar Kooh E Noor Institute, authorised by the Iranian Ministry of Science, supports Iranian students planning to study abroad<sup>55</sup>. In regard to Iranians living abroad, the Institute provided undated information on the conditions for exemption from military service. Whilst not specifying precisely who qualified, the Institute noted:

‘Those who have one of the following conditions can benefit from substitution exemption:

- ‘1- Father at the age of more than 59
- ‘2- Father at the age of less than 59, but requiring care
- ‘3- Mother without husband
- ‘4- Grandfather without male or female children and requiring care (father of father or mother)

<sup>53</sup> IRB, ‘[Iran: Military service, including recruitment age, length of service...](#)’, 28 March 2015

<sup>54</sup> DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report Iran](#)’ (paragraph 3.161), April 2020

<sup>55</sup> Danesh Gostar Kooh E Noor institute, ‘[About Danesh Gostar Kooh E Noor Institute](#)’, no date

- '5- Grandmother without husband and male or female children (mother of father or mother)
- '6- Brother at the age of more than 18, without father, wife, and children and requiring care
- '7- Sister at the age of more than 18, without father, husband, and children and requiring care
- '8- Single sister without father
- '9- Underage brother or sister
- '10- Overall constitution of supporting disabled people.'<sup>56</sup>

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## 7. Types and conditions of service

### 7.1 Deployment and duties

- 7.1.1 The DFAT report noted that 'One cannot choose in which force and geographic location to undertake military service.'<sup>57</sup>
- 7.1.2 A Middle East Eye article 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.'<sup>58</sup>
- 7.1.3 A joint report by the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), published in February 2018, which looked 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 there<sup>59</sup>.
- 7.1.4 Iran maintains a military presence in Syria in the form of IRGC advisors and Iran-backed militia groups<sup>60 61 62</sup>.
- 7.1.5 Sina Azodi wrote that 'Since the Iran-Iraq War ended in 1988, most Iranian conscripts have seen no combat, and their military service is often devoid of actual combat training.'<sup>63</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Danesh Gostar Kooh E Noor institute, '[Conditions for exemptions of militarys subjects](#)', no date

<sup>57</sup> DFAT, '[Country Information Report Iran](#)' (paragraph 3.159), April 2020

<sup>58</sup> Middle East Eye, '[Iran to crack down on evaders of military service](#)', 20 June 2016

<sup>59</sup> DIS/DRC, '[Iran: Recruitment of Iranian nationals to the war in Syria](#)' (page 5), February 2018

<sup>60</sup> MEI, '[Iran's growing presence in Syria's al-Hasakah poses a direct threat to US...](#)', 24 March 2022

<sup>61</sup> UK Home Office, '[Country Policy and Information Note: Syria security...](#)' (page 18), June 2022

<sup>62</sup> SOHR, '[Iran's presence in Syria in October 2022 | Ongoing demographic change in Rif Dimashq...considerable military movements in western Euphrates...continuous Israeli attacks • The Syrian Observatory For Human Rights \(syriaahr.com\)](#)', 7 November 2022

<sup>63</sup> Azodi S, '[I was once conscripted into the Iranian armed forces...](#)', 11 March 2022

- 7.1.6 No information to indicate that military service conscripts take part in armed conflict could be found amongst the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).
- 7.1.7 Tehran Times reported in August 2018 that the chief conscription officer at the armed forces announced that ‘... educated and talented conscripts can serve their two years of compulsory military service at knowledge-based companies... Up to now, some educated conscripts can perform their military services in 150 non-military organization 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.’<sup>64</sup>
- 7.1.8 IranWire stated in April 2019 that:  
 ‘The Imam Hussein University – the most important educational entity of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC)... offers programs and benefits to attract researchers. Researchers can get two months off their military draft, or even entirely substitute the draft, by doing research. Elite students chosen by “Iran’s National Elites Foundation” (Bonyad-e Melli Nokhbegan) and the “Military Forces’ Elites Foundation” (Bonyad-e Nokhbegan-e Niroohay-e Mosalah) can substitute their military service with a research project after a short introductory military training.’<sup>65</sup>
- 7.1.9 According to an article dated 21 May 2022 by Iran International, the majority of conscripts were ‘... drafted into the traditional Army, but some with the right connections serve with the Revolutionary Guard where conditions are much better. However, many serve in national police units, which is also used in suppressing protests.’<sup>66</sup>
- 7.1.10 Citing his own experience of military service, Sina Azodi wrote that ‘After completing basic training outside of Semnan Air Defense Base, I received some mediocre training as a member of the military police and mostly did office work.’<sup>67</sup>
- 7.1.11 Moghadam noted in regard to military service duties that, according to some reports, aside from soldiers serving on the border:  
 ‘... some soldiers are engaged in an occupation that neither related to their specialization nor their rank or the established description for this service. Some of these works that were declared by soldiers are 1. Gardening, 2. Shepherding, 3. Labouring, 4. Footman, 5. Cleaning, 6. Officers personal drivers, 7. Secretary and 8. Doing officers personal jobs like buying groceries, ironing, and taking care of their children. This is while, some soldiers who were at barracks declared, their two-year service is abstracted in daily marching without any specific executive military training.’<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Tehran Times, ‘[Talented conscripts can do military service at knowledge-based...](#)’, 13 August 2018

<sup>65</sup> IranWire, ‘[The IRGC’s Social, Cultural, Scientific and Educational Institutions](#)’, 9 April 2019

<sup>66</sup> Iran International, ‘[Iran Doubles Pay For Conscripts Amid Crackdown On Popular...](#)’, 21 May 2022

<sup>67</sup> Azodi S, ‘[I was once conscripted into the Iranian armed forces...](#)’, 11 March 2022

<sup>68</sup> Moghadam MRSF, ‘[Obligatory military service in Iran: 21st-century slavery...](#)’, 15 March 2022

## 7.2 Conditions and treatment

- 7.2.1 Information on the treatment of conscripts was limited in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).
- 7.2.2 The DFAT report stated that ‘A local source who had undergone military service told DFAT they had not experienced or witnessed abuse or malnourishment, but could not discount them, particularly in more remote areas of the country.’<sup>69</sup> Sina Azodi stated that conscripts were ‘... often mistreated by officers’ but did not provide further detail.<sup>70</sup>
- 7.2.3 Moghadam stated that the quality of life, in terms of salary, physical and mental health, was low for conscripts, but did not provide specific details.<sup>71</sup>
- 7.2.4 In May 2022, Iran International reported that ‘Iran has doubled the salaries of conscripts serving their compulsory military service, amid a huge jump in food prices and sporadic anti-government protests. According to a report by Fars news agency, affiliated with Iran’s Revolutionary Guard, the average salary of the conscripts has increased about 115 to 145 percent compared with the previous Iranian year (ended on March 20) to over [US]\$100 [£88.50<sup>72</sup>] per month.’<sup>73</sup> Iran International reported in January 2022 that ‘Average salaries in Iran are about [US]\$200 a month.’<sup>74</sup>
- 7.2.5 In September 2021, IranWire cited reports dated from 2015 and a study from the ‘latest issue of Imam Hossein University’s quarterly journal Military Psychology’, which indicated the prevalence of drug use by soldiers serving in the military (so did not specify if these were full-time recruits or military service conscripts), reportedly due to stress<sup>75</sup>. The 2015 study found that ‘... just over 28 percent of the 176 soldiers surveyed were at “high risk” of suicidal thoughts, which had a “direct and significant relationship” with substance abuse.’<sup>76</sup> Citing the latest study, IranWire noted that ‘Among those that owned up in the survey, codeine pills and cough syrup were the main drugs of choice both before and after enlisting, followed by opium. Smaller numbers said they self-medicated with alcohol, cannabis, tramadol, painkillers and sleeping pills. Tramadol was the fifth most popular drug before military service, and the third most popular during, while alcohol dropped from third place to fifth after enlisting.’<sup>77</sup> The article noted that the latest study concluded, ‘Participating in military service did not make a difference to the duration of drug dependency compared to pre-military service...’<sup>78</sup>
- 7.2.6 The Report of the Special Rapporteur, Javaid Rehman, on the situation of human rights in Iran, dated July 2019, noted that he had received reports that members of the religious minority, the Yarsan, had been ‘... forced to

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<sup>69</sup> DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report Iran](#)’ (paragraph 3.159), April 2020

<sup>70</sup> Azodi S, ‘[I was once conscripted into the Iranian armed forces...](#)’, 11 March 2022

<sup>71</sup> Moghadam MRSF, ‘[Obligatory military service in Iran: 21st-century slavery...](#)’, 15 March 2022

<sup>72</sup> Xe.com, ‘[Currency converter](#)’, as at 24 October 2022

<sup>73</sup> Iran International, ‘[Iran Doubles Pay For Conscripts Amid Crackdown On Popular...](#)’, 21 May 2022

<sup>74</sup> Iran International, ‘[Iran To Allow Buy-Out Of Military Service, For The Rich](#)’, 30 January 2022

<sup>75</sup> IranWire, ‘[Iranian Study: One in 13 Soldiers Are Heavy Drug Users](#)’, 28 September 2021

<sup>76</sup> IranWire, ‘[Iranian Study: One in 13 Soldiers Are Heavy Drug Users](#)’, 28 September 2021

<sup>77</sup> IranWire, ‘[Iranian Study: One in 13 Soldiers Are Heavy Drug Users](#)’, 28 September 2021

<sup>78</sup> IranWire, ‘[Iranian Study: One in 13 Soldiers Are Heavy Drug Users](#)’, 28 September 2021

shave their moustache (a holy symbol for the Yarsan community) when they refused to pray during military service. The Government stated that “the soldiers recruited from amongst the members of this sect are exempt from the requirement to shave their moustache during their military service”.<sup>79</sup> The USSD IRF Report 2021 noted that ‘Yarsanis reported continued discrimination and harassment in the military...’<sup>80</sup>

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## 8. Draft evaders and desertion

### 8.1 Legal context and penalties

- 8.1.1 Article 504 of the Islamic Penal Code (IPC), translated by the IHRDC, states that ‘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; 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.’<sup>81</sup>
- 8.1.2 In the IPC, moharebeh is defined as drawing a weapon on the life, property or chastity of people or to cause terror as it creates the atmosphere of insecurity (mohareb is a person who commits moharebeh)<sup>82</sup>. The hadd punishment for moharebeh includes the death penalty, at the discretion of the judge<sup>83</sup>.
- 8.1.3 According to the FIDH October 2020 report, ‘Under the 1996 IPC, the charge of moharebeh was frequently used against political dissidents, and even individuals who had overseas relatives who belonged to groups that opposed the Iranian government, even if they had not used arms. The 2013 IPC makes political dissent punishable also under different provisions, such as “spreading corruption on Earth” and insurrection.’<sup>84</sup>
- 8.1.4 The same report cited the Armed Forces Offenses Law, which mentions the crime of desertion:
- Article 23 – Forcing or inciting armed forces personnel or others at the service of the armed forces to desert, surrender or disobey duties
  - Article 65 – Desertion from service by permanent military personnel during war and armed conflict
  - Article 74 – Desertion of more than two persons with prior collusion<sup>85</sup>.
- 8.1.5 The FIDH October 2020 report did not specify the penalties for these offences or whether they applied to military service conscripts.

<sup>79</sup> OHCHR, ‘[Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of...](#)’ (paragraph 70), 18 July 2019

<sup>80</sup> USSD, ‘[2021 Report on International Religious Freedom: Iran](#)’ (section II), 2 June 2022

<sup>81</sup> IHRDC, ‘[Islamic Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran – Book Five](#)’ (Article 504), 15 July 2013

<sup>82</sup> IHRDC, ‘[English Translation of Books I & II of the New Islamic...](#)’ (Article 279), 4 April 2014

<sup>83</sup> IHRDC, ‘[English Translation of Books I & II of the New Islamic...](#)’ (Articles 282, 283), 4 April 2014

<sup>84</sup> FIDH, ‘[No one is spared – The widespread use of the death...](#)’ (page 14), October 2020

<sup>85</sup> FIDH, ‘[No one is spared – The widespread use of the death...](#)’ (pages 55 to 56), October 2020



8.1.6 Article 46 of the 1982 Constitution of the Revolutionary Guard states, 'Should a member of the Revolutionary Guard be absent without leave for over fifteen days in peacetime or five days in wartime, he shall be considered a deserter and shall be pursued by the military courts and subject to punishment under the law. The punishment for desertion shall be less than the punishment for desertions according to the disciplinary regulations ratified by the Revolutionary Guards' Supreme Council.'<sup>86</sup>

8.1.7 The DFAT report noted that:

'Draft evaders are liable for prosecution. An individual who evades military service by leaving the country must complete their service on return if they are under the age of 40. For those over 40, a fine is the most common punishment. Evading military service for up to a year during peacetime 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 peacetime or two or more months during war may result in criminal prosecution.'<sup>87</sup>

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## 8.2 Treatment of draft evaders

8.2.1 Information on the treatment of draft evaders was limited in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).

8.2.2 A 2016 article by Middle East Eye reported that the Iranian government had started a crackdown on young men attempting to avoid the compulsory military service, adding that between 30,000 and 35,000 people were arrested during 2016 for attempting to avoid military service<sup>88</sup>.

8.2.3 In March 2021, the deputy speaker of Iran's parliament, Amir-Hossein Ghazizadeh-Hashemi, called for the end of compulsory military conscription, stating that there were 3 million draft evaders<sup>89</sup>.

8.2.4 Citing Iran's Fars News, in April 2021 The Jerusalem Post reported that over 50,000 people in Iran had signed a petition calling for the end of compulsory military conscription<sup>90</sup>.

8.2.5 On 27 August 2022, Iran International reported on the arrest of at least one person at a protest against compulsory military service. The report noted that:

'... security forces attacked protesters to disrupt a gathering against the Islamic Republic's compulsory military service. A group of university students held the demonstration in front of Iran's Public Conscription Organization in downtown Tehran. They were holding placards bearing slogans against the mandatory service such as "Modern Slavery," "Conscripts have no voice," "Military service: a factory for manufacturing frustration," and "Two years of forced imprisonment".'<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Iran Data Portal, '[Constitution of the Revolutionary Guards](#)' (Article 46), 7 September 1982

<sup>87</sup> DFAT, '[Country Information Report Iran](#)' (paragraph 3.163), April 2020

<sup>88</sup> Middle East Eye, '[Iran to crack down on evaders of military service](#)', 20 June 2016

<sup>89</sup> Iran International, '[Iran Deputy Parliament Speaker Urges End To Conscription](#)', 22 March 2021

<sup>90</sup> The Jerusalem Post, '[More than 50,000 in Iran demand end to military conscription](#)', 1 April 2021

<sup>91</sup> Iran International, '[Police Cracks Down On Protest Against Iran's Compulsory...](#)', 27 August 2022

- 8.2.6 According to Hrana, the news agency of Human Rights Activists, several students and reporters were arrested at the protest<sup>92</sup>.

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### 8.3 Consequence of military service absence

- 8.3.1 The DFAT report stated that 'Draft evaders may lose social benefits and civic rights, including access to government jobs and higher education, and the right to establish 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...'<sup>93</sup>

- 8.3.2 Moghadam noted that, under the military service law, persons who did not present themselves to undertake military service were prohibited from:

- 'Receiving any working or health insurance
- 'Issuance of business license, employment permit and membership in cooperatives.
- 'Employment in any form of full-time, part-time, contractual, daily wage and service purchase.
- 'Receive any loans and assistance for agriculture, industry, animal husbandry and housing purpose.
- 'Registration of any non-compulsory transfer of property directly or indirectly in notaries.
- 'Receive pensions from government and affiliated organizations.
- 'Continuing the education inside or outside of country (if was not able to receive a firm offer up to 1 year from graduation from the previous institute, in addition to a ban to study the same level of education)
- 'Permission to partial or entirely leave of the country for any purpose including education, therapy, vacation, working and etc.
- 'Participate in driving tests and obtain the driving license (currently suspended for a limited period).

'In addition to mentioned limitations, employers or employers of absentees will be punished by paying a fine or other penalty that will be decided. According to the limitations listed above, nearly all the civil rights, even the basic ones, retains from absent individuals that highly could influence their life.'<sup>94</sup>

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## 9. Prison conditions

- 9.1.1 There is limited information that drafters evaders or deserters are punished and imprisoned in the source consulted (see [Bibliography](#)). The information

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<sup>92</sup> Hrana, '[Students and Reporters Arrested in Tehran Protest](#)', 29 August 2022

<sup>93</sup> DFAT, '[Country Information Report Iran](#)' (paragraph 3.163), April 2020

<sup>94</sup> Moghadam MRSF, '[Obligatory military service in Iran: 21st-century slavery...](#)', 15 March 2022



below is about detention conditions generally, including for those persons considered to be political prisoners.

- 9.1.2 According to the USSD Country Report on Human Rights for 2021 (HR Report 2021), 'There were credible reports that security forces and prison personnel tortured and abused detainees and prisoners throughout the year.'<sup>95</sup> The same source noted that 'Prison conditions were harsh and life threatening due to food shortages, gross overcrowding, physical abuse, and inadequate sanitary conditions and medical care. Prisoner hunger strikes in protest of their treatment were frequent.'<sup>96</sup>
- 9.1.3 Freedom House reported in its Freedom in the World report covering 2021 that 'Prisons are overcrowded, and prisoners often complain of poor detention conditions, including denial of medical care. Video footage taken in Evin prison and distributed in August 2021 captured incidents where prisoners were assaulted or mistreated, along with evidence of overcrowding. Criminal cases against six prison guards were opened later that month.'<sup>97</sup>
- 9.1.4 Reports of prisoner abuse in Evin Prison, a site known for housing political detainees, emerged in August 2021 after a self-described group, Edalat-e Ali (Ali's Justice), posted footage that appeared to have come from the prison's surveillance cameras<sup>98</sup>. Mohammad Mehdi Haj Mohammadi, head of Iran's prisons organisation, confirmed the veracity of the footage, timestamped 2020 and 2021, which showed inmates being beaten by prison guards and other mistreatment<sup>99</sup>.
- 9.1.5 Former political prisoners have accused the authorities of routine sexual, physical and psychological torture<sup>100 101</sup>. Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty (RFERL) noted that 'Regular detainees, as well as surviving political prisoners and other perceived enemies of Iran's postrevolutionary regime, have alleged torture and other abuse inside its concrete walls to extract coerced confessions, sometimes televised, that are then used to condemn them publicly.'<sup>102</sup>
- 9.1.6 In March 2022, RFERL reported on new footage provided by Edalat-e Ali, which showed '... prisoners lying wall to wall on floors and stacked three-high on metal bunk beds. As the camera moves from open cell to open cell, each equipped with beds for about 30 inmates, it reveals rooms filled with up to 50 inmates.' RFERL could not independently verify the film nor confirm when it was taken, but noted that it '... adds to the evidence of extreme overcrowding at Tehran's Evin prison.'<sup>103</sup>
- 9.1.7 A report by Amnesty International, following its investigation into the circumstances of 96 prisoners who died in custody in prisons across the

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<sup>95</sup> USSD, '[2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Iran](#)' (section 1c), 12 April 2022

<sup>96</sup> USSD, '[2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Iran](#)' (section 1c), 12 April 2022

<sup>97</sup> Freedom House, '[Freedom in the World 2022 – Iran](#)' (section F3), 24 February 2022

<sup>98</sup> RFERL, '[Hacked Videos Force The Unthinkable In Iran: Official Admission...](#)', 26 August 2021

<sup>99</sup> Al Jazeera, '[Iran confirms leaked footage of harsh conditions in Evin Prison](#)', 24 August 2021

<sup>100</sup> Iran International, '[Iran Prisoners Say Rights Groups Must Look Into...](#)', 27 August 2021

<sup>101</sup> BBC News, '[Iran prisons chief apologises over leaked videos of Evin abuse](#)', 24 August 2021

<sup>102</sup> RFERL, '[Hacked Videos Force The Unthinkable In Iran: Official Admission...](#)', 26 August 2021

<sup>103</sup> RFERL, '[New Video Leak Keeps Spotlight On Inhumane Prison Conditions In Iran](#)', 18 March 2022

country since 2010, noted that the authorities were ‘... deliberately denying vital healthcare to ailing prisoners and refusing to investigate deaths in custody.’<sup>104</sup> Amnesty International noted that ‘The cases of 20 prisoners were of a political nature. The remainder had been convicted of or charged with non-political offences.’ It was also noted that ‘... the list of the 96 cases compiled and reviewed for this research is not exhaustive and the real number of deaths in custody involving denial of medical care is likely far higher.’<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Amnesty International, ‘[Iran: In death’s waiting room: Deaths in custody following...](#)’, 12 April 2022

<sup>105</sup> Amnesty International, ‘[Iran: In death’s waiting room: Deaths in custody following...](#)’, 12 April 2022

# 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 ToR, 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
  - Constitution
  - Other relevant legislation
- Conscription
  - Eligibility – age, gender
  - Call-up process
  - Duration and type of service
  - Service cards
  - Buy-out
- Exemptions
  - Non-medical
  - Medical
  - SOGIE
- Evasion and desertion
  - Penalties and convictions
- Treatment
  - Conditions of service
- Prison conditions

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# Version control

## Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **3.0**
- valid from **21 November 2022**

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### **Official – sensitive: Start of section**

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

### **Official – sensitive: End of section**

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## Changes from last version of this note

Updated country information and assessment

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