

## :: Iran

page last updated on September 3, 2009



### Introduction ::Iran

#### Background:

Known as Persia until 1935, Iran became an Islamic republic in 1979 after the ruling monarchy was overthrown and Shah Mohammad Reza PAHLAVI was forced into exile. Conservative clerical forces established a theocratic system of government with ultimate political authority vested in a learned religious scholar referred to commonly as the Supreme Leader who, according to the constitution, is accountable only to the Assembly of Experts. US-Iranian relations have been strained since a group of Iranian students seized the US Embassy in Tehran on 4 November 1979 and held it until 20 January 1981. During 1980-88, Iran fought a bloody, indecisive war with Iraq that eventually expanded into the Persian Gulf and led to clashes between US Navy and Iranian military forces between 1987 and 1988. Iran has been designated a state sponsor of terrorism for its activities in Lebanon and elsewhere in the world and remains subject to US, UN, and EU economic sanctions and export controls because of its continued involvement in terrorism and its nuclear weapons ambitions. Following the election of reformer Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad KHATAMI as president in 1997 and similarly a reformer Majles (parliament) in 2000, a campaign to foster political reform in response to popular dissatisfaction was initiated. The movement floundered as conservative politicians, through the control of unelected institutions, prevented reform measures from being enacted and increased repressive measures. Starting with nationwide municipal elections in 2003 and continuing through Majles elections in 2004, conservatives reestablished control over Iran's elected government institutions, which culminated with the August 2005 inauguration of hardliner Mahmud AHMADI-NEJAD as president. The UN Security Council has passed a number of resolutions (1696 in July 2006, 1737 in December 2006, 1747 in March 2007, 1803 in March 2008, and 1835 in September 2008) calling for Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities and comply with its IAEA obligations and responsibilities. Resolutions 1737, 1477, and 1803 subject a number of Iranian individuals and entities involved in Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs to sanctions. Additionally, several Iranian entities are subject to US sanctions under Executive Order 13382 designations for proliferation activities and EO 13224 designations for support of terrorism.

### Geography ::Iran

#### Location:

Middle East, bordering the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, and the Caspian Sea, between Iraq and Pakistan

**Geographic coordinates:**

32 00 N, 53 00 E

**Map references:**

Middle East

**Area:**

total: 1,648,195 sq km

country comparison to the world: 25

land: 1,531,595 sq km

water: 116,600 sq km

**Area - comparative:**

slightly smaller than Alaska

**Land boundaries:**

total: 5,440 km

border countries: Afghanistan 936 km, Armenia 35 km, Azerbaijan-proper 432 km, Azerbaijan-Naxcivan exclave 179 km, Iraq 1,458 km, Pakistan 909 km, Turkey 499 km, Turkmenistan 992 km

**Coastline:**

2,440 km; note - Iran also borders the Caspian Sea (740 km)

**Maritime claims:**

territorial sea: 12 nm

contiguous zone: 24 nm

exclusive economic zone: bilateral agreements or median lines in the Persian Gulf

continental shelf: natural prolongation

**Climate:**

mostly arid or semiarid, subtropical along Caspian coast

**Terrain:**

rugged, mountainous rim; high, central basin with deserts, mountains; small, discontinuous plains along both coasts

**Elevation extremes:**

lowest point: Caspian Sea -28 m

highest point: Kuh-e Damavand 5,671 m

**Natural resources:**

petroleum, natural gas, coal, chromium, copper, iron ore, lead, manganese, zinc, sulfur

**Land use:**

arable land: 9.78%

permanent crops: 1.29%

other: 88.93% (2005)

**Irrigated land:**

76,500 sq km (2003)

**Total renewable water resources:**

137.5 cu km (1997)

**Freshwater withdrawal (domestic/industrial/agricultural):**

total: 72.88 cu km/yr (7%/2%/91%)

per capita: 1,048 cu m/yr (2000)

**Natural hazards:**

periodic droughts, floods; dust storms, sandstorms; earthquakes

**Environment - current issues:**

air pollution, especially in urban areas, from vehicle emissions, refinery operations, and industrial effluents; deforestation; overgrazing; desertification; oil pollution in the Persian Gulf; wetland losses from drought; soil degradation (salination); inadequate supplies of potable water; water pollution from raw sewage and industrial waste; urbanization

**Environment - international agreements:**

party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Marine Dumping, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands

signed, but not ratified: Environmental Modification, Law of the Sea, Marine Life Conservation

**Geography - note:**

strategic location on the Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz, which are vital maritime pathways for crude oil transport

**People ::Iran**

**Population:**

66,429,284 (July 2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: [20](#)

**Age structure:**

0-14 years: 21.7% (male 7,394,841/female 7,022,076)

15-64 years: 72.9% (male 24,501,544/female 23,914,172)

65 years and over: 5.4% (male 1,725,828/female 1,870,823) (2009 est.)

**Median age:**

total: 27 years

male: 26.8 years

female: 27.2 years (2009 est.)

**Population growth rate:**

0.883% (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: [135](#)

**Birth rate:**

17.17 births/1,000 population (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: [119](#)

**Death rate:**

5.72 deaths/1,000 population (July 2009 est.)  
country comparison to the world: [172](#)

**Net migration rate:**  
-2.62 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2009 est.)  
country comparison to the world: [148](#)

**Urbanization:**  
urban population: 68% of total population (2008)  
rate of urbanization: 2.1% annual rate of change (2005-10 est.)

**Sex ratio:**  
at birth: 1.05 male(s)/female  
under 15 years: 1.05 male(s)/female  
15-64 years: 1.02 male(s)/female  
65 years and over: 0.92 male(s)/female  
total population: 1.02 male(s)/female (2009 est.)

**Infant mortality rate:**  
total: 35.78 deaths/1,000 live births  
country comparison to the world: [70](#)  
male: 35.98 deaths/1,000 live births  
female: 35.56 deaths/1,000 live births (2009 est.)

**Life expectancy at birth:**  
total population: 71.14 years  
country comparison to the world: [132](#)  
male: 69.65 years  
female: 72.72 years (2009 est.)

**Total fertility rate:**  
1.71 children born/woman (2009 est.)  
country comparison to the world: [169](#)

**HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:**  
0.2% (2007 est.)  
country comparison to the world: [98](#)

**HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:**  
86,000 (2007 est.)  
country comparison to the world: [49](#)

**HIV/AIDS - deaths:**  
4,300 (2007 est.)  
country comparison to the world: [47](#)

**Major infectious diseases:**  
degree of risk: intermediate  
food or waterborne diseases: bacterial diarrhea  
vectorborne diseases: Crimean Congo hemorrhagic fever and malaria  
*note:* highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza has been identified in this country; it poses a negligible risk with extremely rare cases possible among US citizens who have close contact with birds (2009)

### Nationality:

noun: Iranian(s)

adjective: Iranian

### Ethnic groups:

Persian 51%, Azeri 24%, Gilaki and Mazandarani 8%, Kurd 7%, Arab 3%, Lur 2%, Baloch 2%, Turkmen 2%, other 1%

### Religions:

Muslim 98% (Shia 89%, Sunni 9%), other (includes Zoroastrian, Jewish, Christian, and Baha'i) 2%

### Languages:

Persian and Persian dialects 58%, Turkic and Turkic dialects 26%, Kurdish 9%, Luri 2%, Balochi 1%, Arabic 1%, Turkish 1%, other 2%

### Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 77%

male: 83.5%

female: 70.4% (2002 est.)

### School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):

total: 13 years

male: 13 years

female: 13 years (2005)

### Education expenditures:

5.1% of GDP (2006)

country comparison to the world: [67](#)

Government ::Iran

### Country name:

conventional long form: Islamic Republic of Iran

conventional short form: Iran

local long form: Jomhuri-ye Eslami-ye Iran

local short form: Iran

former: Persia

### Government type:

theocratic republic

### Capital:

name: Tehran

geographic coordinates: 35 40 N, 51 25 E

time difference: UTC+3.5 (8.5 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

### Administrative divisions:

30 provinces (ostanha, singular - ostan); Ardabil, Azarbayjan-e Gharbi, Azarbayjan-e Sharqi, Bushehr, Chahar Mahall va Bakhtiari, Esfahan, Fars, Gilan, Golestan, Hamadan, Hormozgan, Ilam, Kerman, Kermanshah, Khorasan-e Jonubi, Khorasan-e Razavi, Khorasan-e Shomali, Khuzestan, Kohgiluyeh va Buyer Ahmad, Kordestan, Lorestan, Markazi, Mazandaran, Qazvin, Qom, Semnan, Sistan va Baluchestan, Tehran, Yazd, Zanzan

### Independence:

1 April 1979 (Islamic Republic of Iran proclaimed)

### National holiday:

Republic Day, 1 April (1979)

### Constitution:

2-3 December 1979; revised in 1989

*note:* the revision in 1989 expanded powers of the presidency and eliminated the prime ministership

### Legal system:

based on Sharia law system; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

### Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

### Executive branch:

chief of state: Supreme Leader Ali Hoseini-KHAMENEI (since 4 June 1989)

head of government: President Mahmud AHMADI-NEJAD (since 3 August 2005); First Vice President Parviz DAVUDI (since 11 September 2005)

cabinet: Council of Ministers selected by the president with legislative approval; the Supreme Leader has some control over appointments to the more sensitive ministries

*note:* also considered part of the Executive branch of government are three oversight bodies: 1) Assembly of Experts (Majles-Khebragan), a popularly elected body charged with determining the succession of the Supreme Leader, reviewing his performance, and deposing him if deemed necessary; 2) Expediency Council or the Council for the Discernment of Expediency (Majma-e-Tashkise-Maslahat-e-Nezam) exerts supervisory authority over the executive, judicial, and legislative branches and resolves legislative issues on which the Majles and the Council of Guardians disagree and since 1989 has been used to advise national religious leaders on matters of national policy; in 2005 the Council's powers were expanded to act as a supervisory body for the government; 3) Council of Guardians of the Constitution or Council of Guardians or Guardians Council (Shora-ye Negaban-e Qanun-e Assasi) determines whether proposed legislation is both constitutional and faithful to Islamic law, vets candidates for suitability, and supervises national elections

elections: Supreme Leader is appointed for life by the Assembly of Experts; president is elected by popular vote for a four-year term (eligible for a second term and third nonconsecutive term); last held 12 June 2009;(next presidential election slated for June 2013)

election results: Mahmud AHMADI-NEJAD reelected president; percent of vote - Mahmud AHMADI-NEJAD 62.6%, Mir-Hosein MUSAVI-Khamenei 33.8%, other 3.6%; voter turnout 85%

### Legislative branch:

unicameral Islamic Consultative Assembly or Majles-e-Shura-ye-Eslami or Majles (290 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms)

elections: last held 14 March 2008 with a runoff held 25 April 2008 (next to be held in 2012)

election results: percent of vote - NA; seats by party - conservatives/Islamists 167, reformers 39, independents 74, religious minorities 5, other 5

### Judicial branch:

The Supreme Court (Qeveh Qazaieh) and the four-member High Council of the Judiciary have a single head and overlapping responsibilities; together they supervise the enforcement of all laws and establish judicial and legal policies; lower courts include a special clerical court, a revolutionary court, and a special administrative court

#### Political parties and leaders:

formal political parties are a relatively new phenomenon in Iran and most conservatives still prefer to work through political pressure groups rather than parties; often political parties or coalitions are formed prior to elections and disbanded soon thereafter; a loose pro-reform coalition called the 2nd Khordad Front, which includes political parties as well as less formal groups and organizations, achieved considerable success in elections for the sixth Majles in early 2000; groups in the coalition included the Islamic Iran Participation Front (IIPF), Executives of Construction Party (Kargozaran), Solidarity Party, Islamic Labor Party, Mardom Salari, Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution Organization (MIRO), and Militant Clerics Society (Ruhaniyun); the coalition participated in the seventh Majles elections in early 2004; following his defeat in the 2005 presidential elections, former MCS Secretary General and sixth Majles Speaker Mehdi KARUBI formed the National Trust Party; a new conservative group, Islamic Iran Developers Coalition (Abadgaran), took a leading position in the new Majles after winning a majority of the seats in February 2004; following the 2004 Majles elections, traditional and hardline conservatives have attempted to close ranks under the United Front of Principlists and the Broad Popular Coalition of Principlists; several reformist groups, such as the Islamic Revolution, came together as a reformist coalition in advance of the 2008 Majles elections; the IIPF has repeatedly complained that the overwhelming majority of its candidates have been unfairly disqualified from the 2008 elections

#### Political pressure groups and leaders:

groups that generally support the Islamic Republic: Ansar-e Hizballah-Islamic Coalition Party (Motalefeh); Followers of the Line of the Imam and the Leader; Islamic Engineers Society; Tehran Militant Clergy Association (Ruhaniyat); active pro-reform student group: Office of Strengthening Unity (OSU); opposition groups: Baluchistan People's Party (BPP); Freedom Movement of Iran; Marz-e Por Gohar; National Front; and various ethnic and Monarchist organizations; armed political groups that have been repressed by the government: Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (KDPI); Jundallah; Komala; Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK or MKO); People's Fedayeen; People's Free Life Party of Kurdistan (PJAK)

#### International organization participation:

CP, ECO, FAO, G-15, G-24, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC, ICCT (signatory), ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRCs, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO, ITSO, ITU, MIGA, NAM, OIC, OPCW, OPEC, PCA, SAARC (observer), SCO (observer), UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNITAR, UNWTO, UPU, WCL, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO (observer)

#### Diplomatic representation in the US:

none; note - Iran has an Interests Section in the Pakistani Embassy; address: Iranian Interests Section, Pakistani Embassy, 2209 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20007; telephone: [1] (202) 965-4990; FAX [1] (202) 965-1073

#### Diplomatic representation from the US:

none; note - the US Interests Section is located in the Embassy of Switzerland No. 39 Shahid Mousavi (Golestan 5th), Pasdaran Ave., Tehran, Iran; telephone [98] 21 2254 2178/2256 5273; FAX [98] 21 2258 0432

#### Flag description:

three equal horizontal bands of green (top), white, and red; the national emblem (a stylized representation of the word Allah in the shape of a tulip, a symbol of martyrdom) in red is centered in the white band; ALLAH AKBAR (God is Great) in white Arabic script is repeated 11 times along the bottom edge of the green band and 11 times along the top edge of the red band

## Economy ::Iran

### [Economy - overview:](#)

Iran's economy is marked by an inefficient state sector, reliance on the oil sector, which provides the majority of government revenues, and statist policies, which create major distortions throughout the system. Most economic activity is controlled by the state. Private sector activity is typically limited to small-scale workshops, farming, and services. Price controls, subsidies, and other rigidities weigh down the economy, undermining the potential for private-sector-led growth. Significant informal market activity flourishes. Corruption and shortages of goods are widespread. President Mahmud AHMADI-NEJAD has proposed reforms to Iran's system of price controls and subsidies, particularly on food and energy. However, previous government-led efforts at reform - such as fuel rationing in July 2007 and the imposition of the Value-Added Tax (VAT) in October 2008 - were met with stiff resistance and violent protests. High oil prices in recent years allowed Iran to greatly increase its export earnings and amass nearly \$100 billion in foreign exchange reserves. But with oil prices currently below \$40 per barrel, the Iranian government is facing difficulties. Tehran has formulated a 2009 budget that anticipates lower oil prices. The government has drawn down the country's Oil Stabilization Fund, and may be dipping into foreign exchange reserves. Iran continues to suffer from double-digit unemployment and inflation - inflation climbed to a 28% annual rate in 2008. Underemployment among Iran's educated youth has convinced many to seek jobs overseas, resulting in a significant "brain drain."

### [GDP \(purchasing power parity\):](#)

\$841.7 billion (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: [18](#)

\$790.4 billion (2007 est.)

\$733 billion (2006 est.)

*note:* data are in 2008 US dollars

### [GDP \(official exchange rate\):](#)

\$344.8 billion (2008 est.)

### [GDP - real growth rate:](#)

6.5% (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: [47](#)

7.8% (2007 est.)

5.8% (2006 est.)

### [GDP - per capita \(PPP\):](#)

\$12,800 (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: [87](#)

\$12,100 (2007 est.)

\$11,300 (2006 est.)

*note:* data are in 2008 US dollars

### [GDP - composition by sector:](#)

agriculture: 10.2%  
industry: 41.9%  
services: 47.8% (2008 est.)

**Labor force:**  
24.35 million  
country comparison to the world: [23](#)  
*note:* shortage of skilled labor (2008 est.)

**Labor force - by occupation:**  
agriculture: 25%  
industry: 31%  
services: 45% (June 2007)

**Unemployment rate:**  
12.5% (2008 est.)  
country comparison to the world: [140](#)  
12% (2007 est.)  
*note:* data are according to the Iranian Government

**Population below poverty line:**  
18% (2007 est.)

**Household income or consumption by percentage share:**  
lowest 10%: 2.6%  
highest 10%: 29.6% (2005)

**Distribution of family income - Gini index:**  
44.5 (2006)  
country comparison to the world: [47](#)

**Investment (gross fixed):**  
26.3% of GDP (2008 est.)  
country comparison to the world: [42](#)

**Budget:**  
revenues: \$51 billion  
expenditures: \$103 billion (FY09/10 est.)

**Public debt:**  
19.7% of GDP (2008 est.)  
country comparison to the world: [95](#)

**Inflation rate (consumer prices):**  
25.6% (2008 est.)  
country comparison to the world: [215](#)  
17.1% (2007 est.)  
*note:* official Iranian estimate

**Commercial bank prime lending rate:**  
NA% (31 December 2008)  
country comparison to the world: [69](#)  
12% (31 December 2007)

#### Stock of money:

\$NA (31 December 2008)

country comparison to the world: [28](#)

\$46.13 billion (31 December 2007)

#### Stock of quasi money:

\$NA (31 December 2008)

country comparison to the world: [28](#)

\$68.71 billion (31 December 2007)

#### Stock of domestic credit:

\$NA (31 December 2008)

country comparison to the world: [41](#)

\$109.7 billion (31 December 2007)

#### Market value of publicly traded shares:

\$45.57 billion (31 December 2007)

country comparison to the world: [57](#)

#### Agriculture - products:

wheat, rice, other grains, sugar beets, sugar cane, fruits, nuts, cotton; dairy products, wool; caviar

#### Industries:

petroleum, petrochemicals, fertilizers, caustic soda, textiles, cement and other construction materials, food processing (particularly sugar refining and vegetable oil production), ferrous and non-ferrous metal fabrication, armaments

#### Industrial production growth rate:

4.5% excluding oil (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: [57](#)

#### Electricity - production:

193 billion kWh (2006 est.)

country comparison to the world: [19](#)

#### Electricity - consumption:

145 billion kWh (2006 est.)

country comparison to the world: [21](#)

#### Electricity - exports:

2.775 billion kWh (2006 est.)

#### Electricity - imports:

2.54 billion kWh (2006 est.)

#### Oil - production:

4.7 million bbl/day (2007 est.)

country comparison to the world: [4](#)

#### Oil - consumption:

1.6 million bbl/day (2007 est.)

country comparison to the world: [16](#)

#### Oil - exports:

2.8 million bbl/day (2007 est.)

country comparison to the world: [3](#)

#### Oil - imports:

210,000 bbl/day (2007)

country comparison to the world: [48](#)

#### Oil - proved reserves:

136.2 billion bbl based on Iranian claims (1 January 2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: [3](#)

#### Natural gas - production:

111.9 billion cu m (2007 est.)

country comparison to the world: [5](#)

#### Natural gas - consumption:

111.8 billion cu m (2007 est.)

country comparison to the world: [4](#)

#### Natural gas - exports:

6.2 billion cu m (2007 est.)

country comparison to the world: [25](#)

#### Natural gas - imports:

6.1 billion cu m (2007 est.)

country comparison to the world: [28](#)

#### Natural gas - proved reserves:

26.85 trillion cu m (1 January 2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: [2](#)

#### Current account balance:

\$16.66 billion (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: [22](#)

\$34.08 billion (2007 est.)

#### Exports:

\$95.09 billion (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: [38](#)

\$97.4 billion (2007 est.)

#### Exports - commodities:

petroleum 80%, chemical and petrochemical products, fruits and nuts, carpets

#### Exports - partners:

China 18.5%, Japan 15.4%, Turkey 6.9%, South Korea 6.8%, Italy 4.9% (2008)

#### Imports:

\$67.25 billion (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: [45](#)

\$56.58 billion (2007 est.)

#### Imports - commodities:

industrial raw materials and intermediate goods, capital goods, foodstuffs and other consumer goods, technical services

**Imports - partners:**

China 13.5%, UAE 9.8%, Germany 9.1%, South Korea 6.1%, Russia 5.6%, Italy 5.1%, France 4.2% (2008)

**Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:**

\$96.56 billion (31 December 2008 est.)  
country comparison to the world: [15](#)  
\$82.06 billion (31 December 2007 est.)

**Debt - external:**

\$21.92 billion (31 December 2008 est.)  
country comparison to the world: [68](#)

**Stock of direct foreign investment - at home:**

\$6.954 billion (31 December 2008 est.)  
country comparison to the world: [84](#)  
\$6.054 billion (31 December 2007 est.)

**Stock of direct foreign investment - abroad:**

\$993 million (31 December 2008 est.)  
country comparison to the world: [71](#)  
\$903 million (31 December 2007 est.)

**Exchange rates:**

Iranian rials (IRR) per US dollar - 9,142.8 (2008 est.), 9,407.5 (2007), 9,227.1 (2006), 8,964 (2005), 8,614 (2004)

*note:* Iran has been using a managed floating exchange rate regime since unifying multiple exchange rates in March 2002

Communications ::Iran

**Telephones - main lines in use:**

23.835 million (2007)  
country comparison to the world: [13](#)

**Telephones - mobile cellular:**

29.77 million (2007)  
country comparison to the world: [29](#)

**Telephone system:**

general assessment: currently being modernized and expanded with the goal of not only improving the efficiency and increasing the volume of the urban service but also bringing telephone service to several thousand villages, not presently connected

domestic: the addition of new fiber cables and modern switching and exchange systems installed by Iran's state-owned telecom company have improved and expanded the main line network greatly; main line availability has more than doubled to nearly 24 million lines since 2000; additionally, mobile service has increased dramatically serving nearly 30 million subscribers in 2007

international: country code - 98; submarine fiber-optic cable to UAE with access to Fiber-Optic Link Around the Globe (FLAG); Trans-Asia-Europe (TAE) fiber-optic line runs from Azerbaijan through the northern portion of Iran to Turkmenistan with expansion to Georgia and Azerbaijan; HF radio and microwave radio relay to Turkey, Azerbaijan, Pakistan,

Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Syria, Kuwait, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan; satellite earth stations - 13 (9 Intelsat and 4 Inmarsat) (2007)

**Radio broadcast stations:**

AM 72, FM 6, shortwave 5 (1998)

**Television broadcast stations:**

29 (plus 450 repeaters) (1997)

**Internet country code:**

.ir

**Internet hosts:**

2,860 (2008)  
country comparison to the world: [133](#)

**Internet users:**

23 million (2007)  
country comparison to the world: [14](#)

Transportation ::Iran

**Airports:**

317 (2008)  
country comparison to the world: [24](#)

**Airports - with paved runways:**

total: 130  
over 3,047 m: 40  
2,438 to 3,047 m: 29  
1,524 to 2,437 m: 23  
914 to 1,523 m: 32  
under 914 m: 6 (2008)

**Airports - with unpaved runways:**

total: 187  
over 3,047 m: 1  
2,438 to 3,047 m: 1  
1,524 to 2,437 m: 10  
914 to 1,523 m: 144  
under 914 m: 31 (2008)

**Heliports:**

14 (2007)

**Pipelines:**

condensate 7 km; condensate/gas 12 km; gas 19,246 km; liquid petroleum gas 570 km; oil 7,018 km; refined products 7,936 km (2008)

**Railways:**

total: 8,442 km  
country comparison to the world: [27](#)  
broad gauge: 94 km 1.676-m gauge

standard gauge: 8,348 km 1.435-m gauge (148 km electrified) (2008)

#### Roadways:

total: 172,927 km

country comparison to the world: [30](#)

paved: 125,908 km (includes 1,429 km of expressways)

unpaved: 47,019 km (2006)

#### Waterways:

850 km (on Karun River; additional service on Lake Urmia) (2008)

country comparison to the world: [71](#)

#### Merchant marine:

total: 74

country comparison to the world: [60](#)

by type: bulk carrier 18, cargo 34, chemical tanker 4, container 6, liquefied gas 1, passenger/cargo 4, petroleum tanker 2, refrigerated cargo 2, roll on/roll off 3

foreign-owned: 1 (UAE 1)

registered in other countries: 115 (Barbados 2, Bolivia 1, Cyprus 10, Hong Kong 15, Malta 79, Panama 7, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines 1) (2008)

#### Ports and terminals:

Assaluyeh, Bandar Abbas, Bandar-e-Eman Khomeyni

### Military ::Iran

#### Military branches:

Islamic Republic of Iran Regular Forces (Artesh): Ground Forces, Navy, Air Force of the Military of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Niru-ye Hava'i-ye Artesh-e Jomhuri-ye Eslami-ye Iran, IRIAF; Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (Sepah-e Pasdaran-e Enqelab-e Eslami, IRGC): Ground Forces, Navy, Air Force, Qods Force (special operations), Basij Force (Popular Mobilization Army); Law Enforcement Forces (2008)

#### Military service age and obligation:

19 years of age for compulsory military service; 16 years of age for volunteers; 17 years of age for Law Enforcement Forces; 15 years of age for Basij Forces (Popular Mobilization Army); conscript military service obligation - 18 months; women exempt from military service (2008)

#### Manpower available for military service:

males age 16-49: 20,212,275

females age 16-49: 19,638,751 (2008 est.)

#### Manpower fit for military service:

males age 16-49: 17,658,573

females age 16-49: 17,148,290 (2009 est.)

#### Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:

male: 700,213

female: 664,846 (2009 est.)

#### Military expenditures:

2.5% of GDP (2006)

country comparison to the world: [67](#)

## Transnational Issues ::Iran

### Disputes - international:

Iran protests Afghanistan's limiting flow of dammed tributaries to the Helmand River in periods of drought; Iraq's lack of a maritime boundary with Iran prompts jurisdiction disputes beyond the mouth of the Shatt al Arab in the Persian Gulf; Iran and UAE dispute Tunb Islands and Abu Musa Island, which are occupied by Iran; Iran stands alone among littoral states in insisting upon a division of the Caspian Sea into five equal sectors

### Refugees and internally displaced persons:

refugees (country of origin): 914,268 (Afghanistan); 54,024 (Iraq) (2007)

### Trafficking in persons:

current situation: Iran is a source, transit, and destination country for women trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation and involuntary servitude; Iranian women are trafficked internally for the purpose of forced prostitution and for forced marriages to settle debts; Iranian children are trafficked internally and Afghan children are trafficked into Iran for the purpose of forced marriages, commercial sexual exploitation, and involuntary servitude as beggars or laborers

tier rating: Tier 3 - Iran did not provide evidence of law enforcement activities against trafficking, and credible reports indicate that Iranian authorities punish victims of trafficking with beatings, imprisonment, and execution; Iran has not ratified the 2000 UN TIP Protocol (2008)

### Illicit drugs:

despite substantial interdiction efforts and considerable control measures along the border with Afghanistan, Iran remains one of the primary transshipment routes for Southwest Asian heroin to Europe; suffers one of the highest opiate addiction rates in the world, and has an increasing problem with synthetic drugs; lacks anti-money laundering laws; has reached out to neighboring countries to share counter-drug intelligence