

Human Right Developments in Iran

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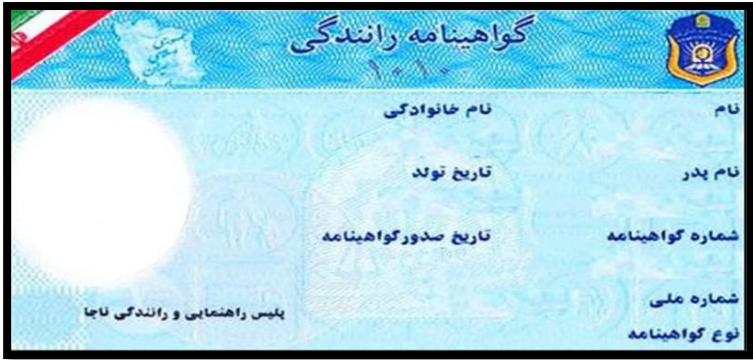
ORGANIZATION FOR DEFENDING VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

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The Human Rights Development of Iran Newsletter, stresses on the promotion of human rights through monitoring positive actions and developments that have occurred with regards to human rights and raising the awareness of the audience in this regard. This newsletter, compiles measures taken for the promotion and realisation of human rights for the transparency of the human rights situation in Iran.

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1- Refugees Rights

1-1 Refugees Amayesh Card Holders in Iran Can Get Driving License

According to the Iranian Traffic Police, passport holders with valid residence permits on the condition of marriage, presentation of a certificate of no criminal record, a notarized commitment not to use the car for work, and a letter of recommendation can obtain or renew their driving licenses. Foreign nationals who have Amayesh cards can obtain a driving license on the condition of having a family member in need of intensive health care such as dialysis. They would require a letter from Behzisti and should refer to the closest BAFIA office to receive a second letter and then refer to the Migration Police. A driving license for foreign nationals is the same as the one issued for Iranians, only with one-year validity. Afghans with a student visa must get an introductory letter from

the consulate office at their university and obtain to driving license; this letter is issued considering the distance from the place of residence to the university and the student's marital status.

It should be noted that before this regulation, refugees were not allowed to obtain a driving license.

1-2 Foreign Nationals are Eligible for Bread Subsidies

According to the Director General of Economic Information Management at the Ministry of Economics, individuals must have a bank account to receive subsidies or coupons. However, since some foreign nationals do not have bank accounts, the Ministry of Economics is planning to give them certain cards so that they can benefit from subsidized bread.

Due to the problems of US unilateral sanctions against Iran, high inflation rate as well as the cessation of some subsidies, the prices of a number of food items in Iran have increased. To reduce the pressure on households, especially vulnerable ones, the Iranian government provides cash assistance to most households

1-3 Vaccination of 230,000 Foreign Nationals against Measles

Since the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, a significant number of Afghans have left the country and fled to Iran. According to the released reports in the past year 1 million Afghans have entered Iran illegally and 1 million have entered the country after obtaining visa. Based on these reports, now 5 million Afghans live in Iran and each day 5,000 Afghans enter Iran through official borders. These people sometimes have various diseases that require treatment and medical intervention. This country is currently facing measles outbreaks which has led to increase in the number of cases in Iran. Therefore, the Ministry of Health of Iran has vaccinated people aged 9 months to 30 years to control the disease.

According to the Head of the Immunization and Vaccine-Preventable Diseases department of the Ministry of Health so far more than 230,000 foreign nationals have been vaccinated against measles in Iran free of charge.

1-4 Opening of a Comprehensive Health Center in Qom Province

A comprehensive health center opened in Qom, Iran with the contribution of the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants

Affairs (BAFIA), and Ministry of Health who were present in the opening ceremony. The center is located in a refugee hosting area of the city where both refugees and host community can benefit from the services. During the ceremony, UNHCR thanked Iran's hospitality towards the refugees for the past four decades.

1-5 Over Half Million Refugees and Migrants Students Attend Iranian Schools

According to the official released reports, over 527,000 refugee and migrant children study at Iranian schools, most of whom are from Afghanistan and the rest are from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Iraq, and some other countries.

Iran's Ministry of Education has adopted appropriate policies for foreign national students, with 22 schools exclusively established for them.

In addition to that the special schools were established in cooperation with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and other international organizations in the main refugees and migrants populated areas like Tehran, Qom, Kashan, and Mashhad. About 10,000 foreign national children study in these special schools. However, there is still a need to expand the educational spaces, so the Iranian Education Ministry would welcome private investment in such areas.

According to the Leader's Decree, released in 2015, no immigrant child, no matter legal or illegal, is deprived of

education in Iran in line with official guidelines, regardless of their residence status.

Iranian universities, research institutes, and scientific centers have established broad academic cooperation with counterparts from different countries, especially the neighboring States.

In 2020, Iran and Afghanistan decided to further increase academic exchanges in the field of medical sciences, after universities from the two neighboring countries signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU).



2- Women's Rights

Creating Mother and Child Parks

In order to support promotion of women's rights, the municipality of Tehran created special parks for mothers and their children. Although these parks have existed in the past, the speed of the creation of women's special parks has expanded in the current year. So far, 27 parks have been allocated for the use of mothers and their children. It is planned to create these parks in 354 districts with the same specifications.

The important thing to note is that if there is only one park in a neighborhood, part of that park will be allocated to mothers and children. The whole park is not dedicated to mothers and children so that single men, middle-aged men, and others can use the green outdoors too, that is,

there are no restriction for other people to enter the parks in these areas.

Finally, up to 353 parks will be dedicated to women and their children. While, in Tehran there are 2200 parks. Some of these parks are for all people and only part of the large parks is dedicated to mothers and children. Some civil society activists have recently criticized the initiative, but officials say that women are not limited to enter the dedicated parks only, and they are free to go to all parks. Only in their special parks they have more freedoms, especially in the new parks the municipality will try to provide free sports facilities for women.



3- Rights to Education

Opening of 150 schools in deprived areas across the country

According to official reports, for promotion and protection of the right to education of children, 150 *Barakat* schools with 665 classrooms with an investment of 773 billion Rials were inaugurated, in May 2022 across the country.

One of the education challenges is limitation of education space, especially due to the presence of a significant number of immigrant and refugee students in the country. Therefore, it is necessary to construct 2700 new schools in the country to meet educational standards. Of these, 1700 schools have been constructed and opened in the last year. This year, the *Barekat* Foundation is constructing

200 new schools with 1,000 classrooms. The foundation is setting priority for replacement of prefabricated Conex schools and has allocated 2 trillion Rials of credit for this purpose.

With the opening of these 200 new schools, the number of schools ready to be opened by the end of 1401 (20 March 2023) will reach 2,000 schools with 11,000 classrooms.

Currently, 3,750 villages throughout the country are covered by the *Barekat* Foundation and 250,000 students are studying in *Barekat* Schools.

The foundation has also been actively involved in helping students to get vaccinated in order to promote the right to education.



4- Right to Health

4-1 Over 5m people in Iran covered by free health insurance

According to the official reports, over five million people in Iran are covered by free health insurance. Iran Health Insurance Organization (IHIO) has provided near six million people from three low-income deciles with free health insurance.

5,792,000 people have been covered by free health insurance and only 500,000 people from the three low-income deciles are yet to be covered.

Iran's 1401 Budget Act (for the fiscal year ending in March 2023) required the organization to provide all the people in the three low-income deciles with free health insurance.

The IHIO is a governmental organization in Iran tasked with expansion and development of basic universal health insurance.

Meanwhile, Iran's Health Ministry is considering providing all foreign national in Iran with basic health services.

4-2 Number of COVID Patients Hospitalized in Iran Down to less than 50 on Daily Basis

The number of coronavirus patients admitted to the hospital across Iran dropped to 55, on a daily basis, according to the released reports by the Ministry of Health Officials.

According to the statement by Iran's Chamber of Guilds, the closure of businesses is not relevant anymore. This is in line with the new scheme of "the smart management of COVID-19," which requires all business owners to get vaccinated and register at asnaf.moi.ir, along with observing health protocols, to get permission to operate.

Due to the possibility of vaccinating all people, the infection and mortality rate in the country has been drastically reduced and many restrictions have been lifted.

4-3 Expansion of the Use Ankle Monitors by 2.5 Times

According to a report published by the Iranian Prisons Organization, the number of prisoners released from prison using ankle monitors has increased two and a half times in the last three months. There are currently 3,200 ankle monitors in the prisons of all provinces, and no province has a shortage of the device. Another 12,500 ankle monitors will be added to the existing soon.

The use of ankle monitors has increased in the country and will speedily be further expanded so that while reducing the prison population and furthering their enjoyment of their rights, individuals who have committed lighter crimes can continue to live with and support their families. The device allows judges to use alternative sentences rather than imprisonment.



5- Introducing of Human Rights Activists

Toloo Bi-neshanha Society

In 2006, a number of generous people, believing in rehabilitation and with the intention of supporting and trusting Socially disadvantaged and homeless people, and finally helping the recovery process started distributing a limited number of foodstuff among them, and established a ritual that has been followed non-stop for nearly ten years, every week on Tuesday nights and by the name “*Aieen Mehrvarzi*”. Today, “Toloo Bi-neshanha Society” as the only specialist supporter of the cardboard sleepers, seeks to change social attitude towards addiction and cardboard sleeping by preserving and disseminating “*Aieen Mehrvarzi*” and helping more affected people in the process of treatment and recovery. Food distribution is, in fact, an opportunity and an excuse to effectively communicate with people who are simultaneously suffering from homelessness and drug addiction. The result of the continues presence of Toloo’s generous people on Tuesday nights is the remarkable number of “clean” and recovered volunteers returning each week to

Toloo's food distribution team with reliance on their will, courtesy and respect, to take the first step in changing the path of their lives.

Mission Statement

During a decade of loving and sincere service to homeless people, *Toloo* has become a solid base today and a safe shelter for homeless people and the drug addicts. *Toloo* hopes that in the shadow of the social awareness and with the full support of this organization, no one would spend the night in the insecurity of streets.

The mission of the organization is to support people affected by social harm, especially homelessness and addiction, and to expand the social sensitivity of community members to each other, as well as to change society's view of such harm -which can be the most important factor in interrupting the cycle of harm production.

Current Projects and Activities:

- *Mehrabe* Project: Water supply to 19 villages of Sistan and Baluchestan province,
- Zero Point Border Project: Providing bags and stationery for low-income children living in deprived areas, especially near the borders,

- Tehran-no hunger Project: Supporting vulnerable groups with the help of food factories and other charity organizations.

Vision Statement

Toloo Bi-neshanha Society strives to be a solid center of support for the homeless and those in the cycle of social harm whose number are increasing due to the indifference of society and social crises.

With discipline and continuity on Kindness ritual and Presence in vulnerable areas, every Tuesday, they distribute warm food. Also *Toloo* encourages these people and remind them that any victim with strong intention can return to social life. The organization assures to support them and stay by their side till recovery and returning to normal life.

Toloo Bi-neshanha Society is working on launching and promoting preventive projects to help the homeless and their families, also to prevent people from entering into the cycle of homelessness and addiction by dynamic and effective presence in vulnerable areas to empower and educate children and adolescents at risk.

For further information on the Institute and its activities visit: <https://toloo.org/>