



History

Known internationally as Persia until 1935, modern day Iran has an average population of 66 million. One of the first areas to be occupied by Islamic armies in the 6th and 7th centuries, Iran maintains much of its religious history in its present-day culture, in the form of architecture, art and literature, which continue to draw inspiration from aspects of traditional Shiite Islam. The official language is Persian, which is considered by many in the area to be the language of intellectuals.

Government

Iran became an Islamic Republic in 1979, following the Iranian Revolution, when Ayatollah Khomeini overthrew the monarchy and established a very conservative, theocratic regime, relying on religious scholars to create and implement new laws. Presidents are elected by popular vote, but the heads of judiciary, media, police and military are appointed by the Supreme Leader, a religious scholar and Ayatollah, who is the only person in Iran with the authority to declare war or peace. The president is the second highest ranking official in Iran. The legal system operates under Sharia Law.

Social Issues

Iran is home to hundreds of thousands of Iraqi and Afghan refugees. An estimated third of these are illegal migrants. There have been increased reports in recent years of child and woman trafficking from refugee camps across Iran for forced marriages, cheap labour and for the settling of debts. Due to its proximity to Afghanistan's poppy fields and inefficient border control, Iran has one of the world's highest opiate addiction rates. 1.

The Way TV Viewership

Surveys conducted in 2011 indicate that around 1.7 million people over 2 years of age watch The Way TV. In addition around 1 million Iranians admit to being aware THE WAY TV Arabic language channel.

Religion

The majority of Iran's population, 89%, are Shiite Muslims, with another 9% Sunni Muslims, and a minority Zoroastrian, Jewish and Christian population. Shiite Islam is the official religion. Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism are all officially recognised in Iran and the constitution grants freedom of religion. However, the reality for many Christians is one of opposition, discrimination and detainment.

Prayer Points

Pray for increased tolerance and understanding of Christianity.

Praise God for an increasing hunger for spiritual truth within Iran's general population.

"I am calling on behalf of our house group; we are 10–15 Christians altogether. We were recently caught by the authorities and cannot fellowship anymore. Please pray for us to be able to meet again. At the moment your programmes are the only fellowship we have." A man from Tehran