

# Indexes of “Freedom of Expression” in Iran (Religious minorities – ethnic)



The Institute for Protection of Women's Rights

## **A - Religious minorities in the constitution**

The most important indicators of freedom of expression in all societies is creating conditions for the expression of opinion and expression for ethnic and religious minorities. Despite the disagreement with the majority of society, these people can freely benefit from the civil rights and they do not have fear and anxiety because of having different ideas. In this regard, Islamic teachings ,do not let the inquisition and put anyone under pressure and pessimism and suspicion are not allowed in this area.

In the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, an independent chapter known as "The Rights of the Nation" . Within 24 principles, rights and legitimate of different social classes include linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic groups has been recognized. According to these principles, all citizens, both men and women enjoy the same civic, political, economic, social and cultural rights. In many constitutional principles, the title of "Everyone," "All ," "Every Iranian," and so on has been considered; Fundamental rights for all individuals and citizens of Iran and Iranian citizens is recognized and all the people of Iran can benefit from these rights without discrimination.

According to Article 14 of the Constitution, In accordance with the sacred verse ("God does not forbid you to deal kindly and justly with those who have not fought against you because of your religion and who have not expelled you from your homes"- , the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and all Muslims are duty-bound to treat non-Muslims in conformity with ethical norms and the principles of Islamic justice and equity, and to respect their human rights. This principle applies to all who refrain from engaging in conspiracy or activity against Islam and the Islamic Republic of Iran. According to Article 13 of the Constitution, Zoroastrian, Jewish, and Christian Iranians are the only recognized religious minorities, who, within the limits of the law, are free to perform their religious rites and ceremonies, and to act according to their own canon in matters of personal affairs and religious education.

## Population in Iran (2011)

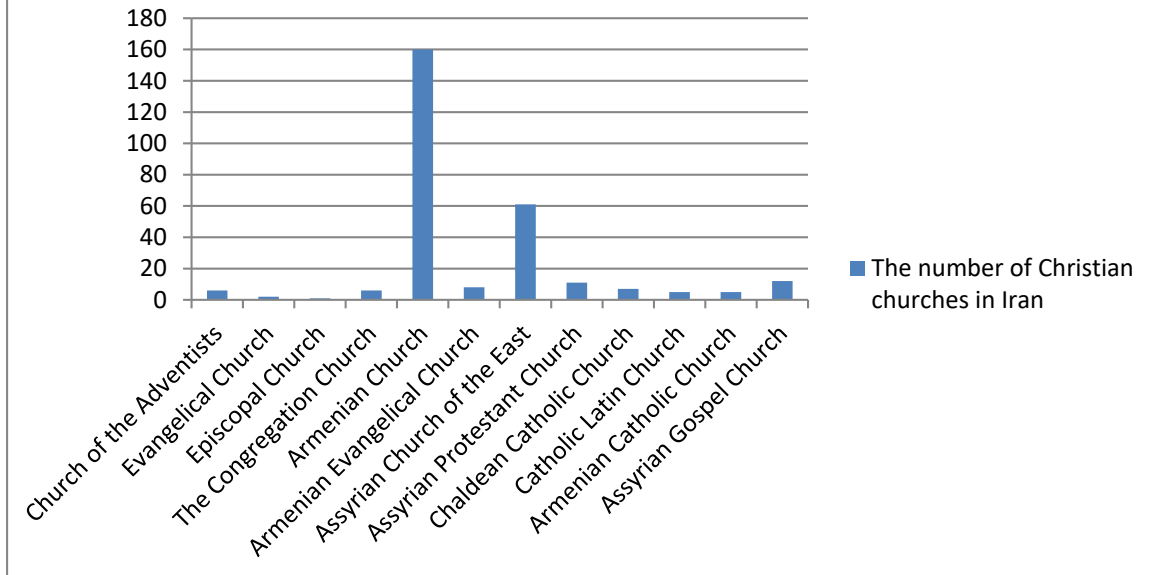
Details	Statistic	
	Percent	Number
Religion		
Muslims	39/99	74682938
Christians	16/0	117704
Zoroastrians	03/0	25271
Jewish	01/0	8756
Total	-	75149669

Article Twenty-three of the Constitution states: The investigation of individuals' beliefs is forbidden, and no one may be molested or taken to task simply for holding a certain belief. Also, the twenty-sixth principle states: The formation of parties, societies, political or professional associations, as well as religious societies, whether Islamic or pertaining to one of the recognized religious minorities, is permitted provided they do not violate the principles of independence, freedom, national unity, the criteria of Islam, or the basis of the Islamic Republic. No one may be prevented from participating in the aforementioned groups, or be compelled to participate in them. Article Twenty-three of the Constitution states: Zoroastrian, Jewish, and Christian Iranians are the only recognized religious minorities, who, within the limits of the law, are free to perform their religious rites and ceremonies, and to act according to their own canon in matters of personal affairs and religious education.

### The number of minority places of worship in Iran

Details	Statistic
Religion	Number
Christians	284
Jewish	16
Zoroastrians	78

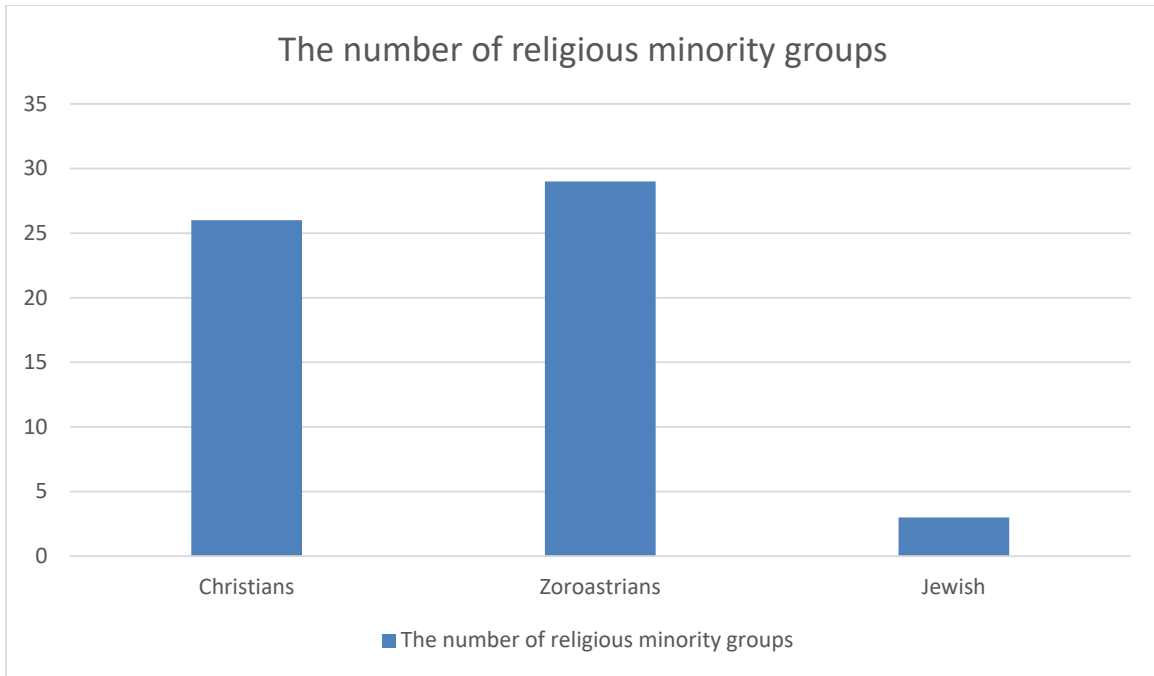
## The number of Christian churches in Iran



## The number of religious minority groups( Until December 2016)

Details		Statistic
Religion		Number
Christians	Armenians	17
	Assyrian	9
Zoroastrians		29
Jewish		3

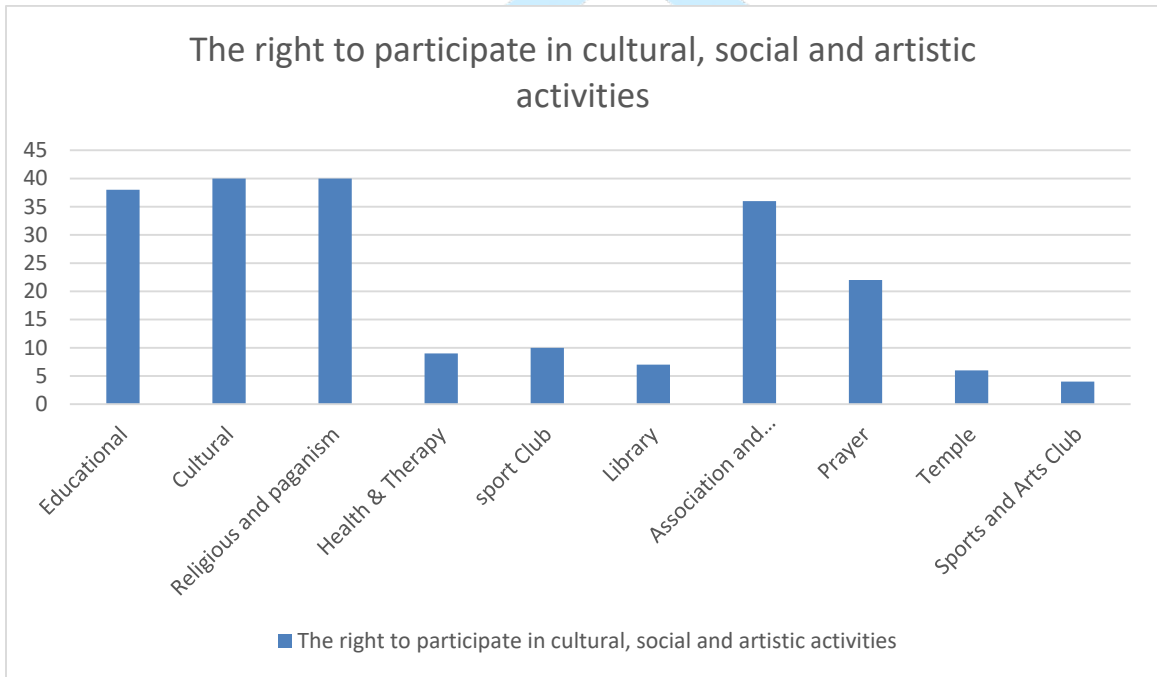
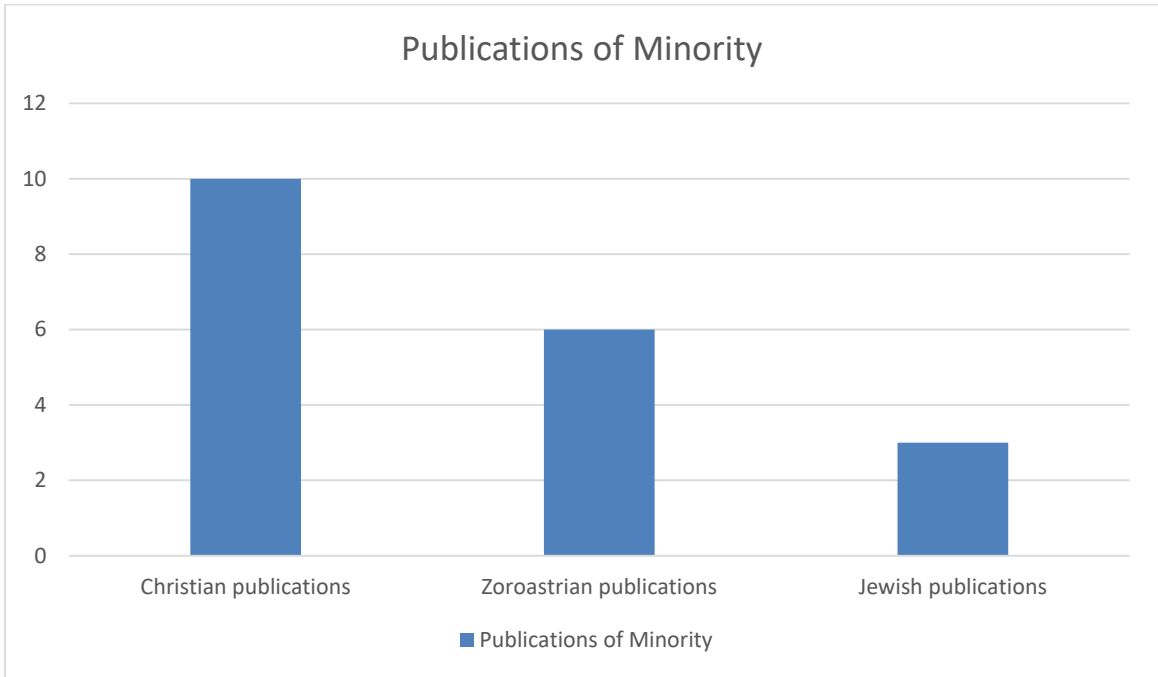
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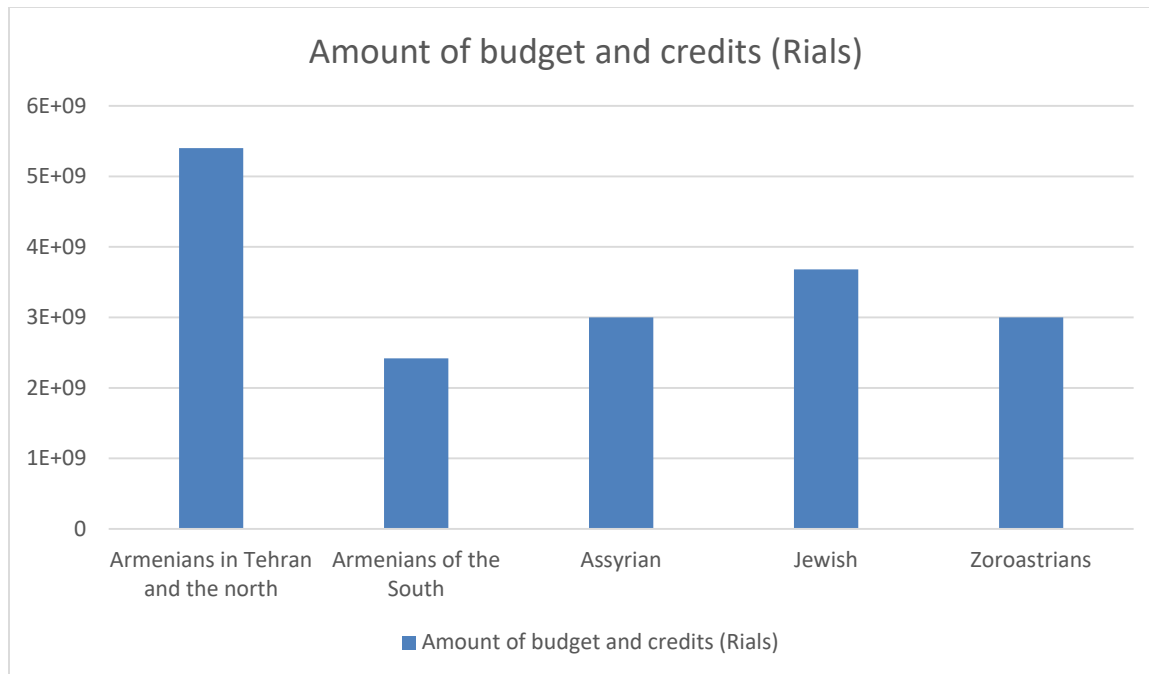


### Publications of Minority

Details	Statistic
Title	Number
Number of publications	20
Number of publishing centers	5
Book	500

Details		Statistic
Religion		Number
Christian publications	Armenians	9
	Assyrian	1
Zoroastrian publications		6
Jewish publications		3

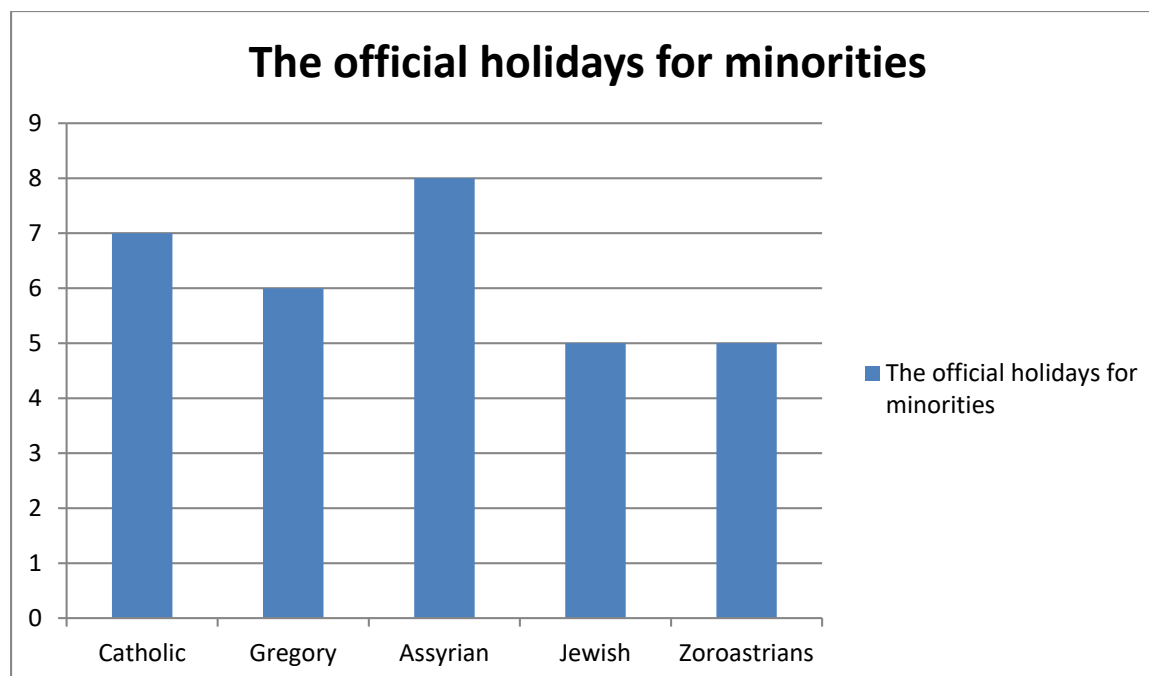




In addition to the official budget for minorities, government and other sovereign institutions provide different donations in the form of different designs including the construction of a stadium for Armenians with a budget of 22 billion riyals (Equivalent to \$ 628,000) by the municipality of Tehran in 2016. Religious minorities in Iran , in addition to the possibility of studying in ordinary schools, they have their own special schools.

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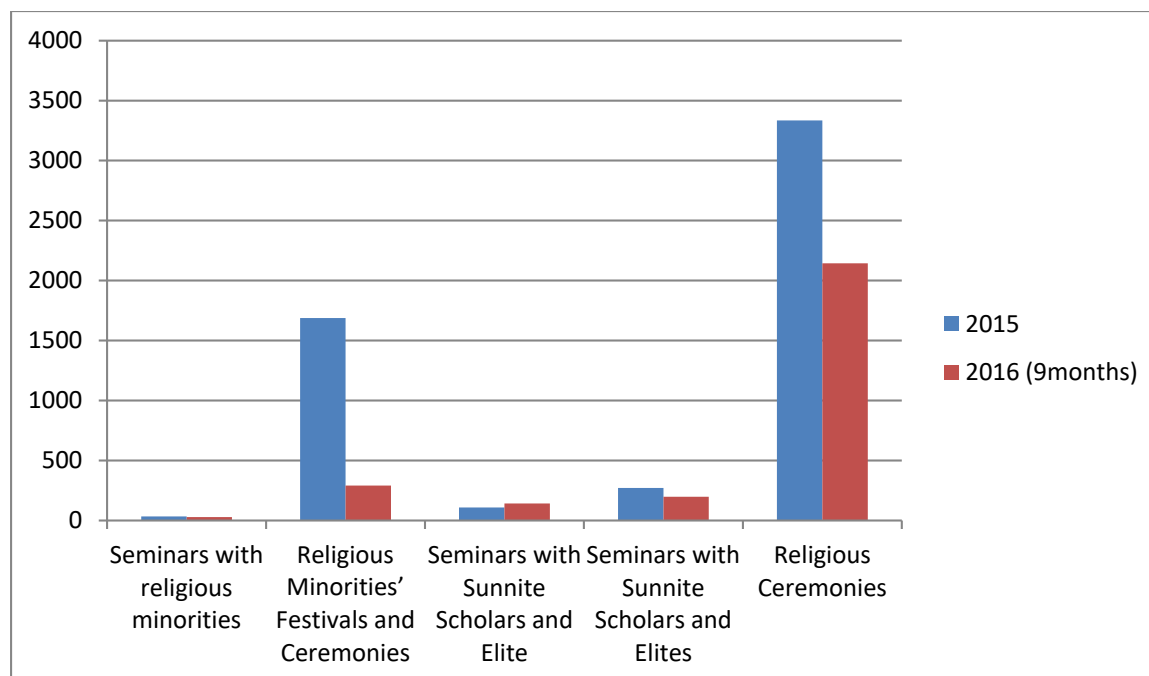
#### **-Cooperation and dialogue between religions**

Islamic Republic of Iran has taken serious and effective steps to encourage understanding and mutual respect between majority and religious minority. By inviting cultural figures and scholars, it has held several meetings on religious minorities. Including: Several inter-religious dialogues with an emphasis on peaceful coexistence of Muslims, Conversation with Catholic Christians, Conversation with Protestant and Orthodox Christians and conversation with Iranian Armenians about "The peaceful coexistence of Muslims and Armenian Christians."

**Promoting tolerance, cooperation and dialogue among religions (In 2015 and the first nine months of 2016)**

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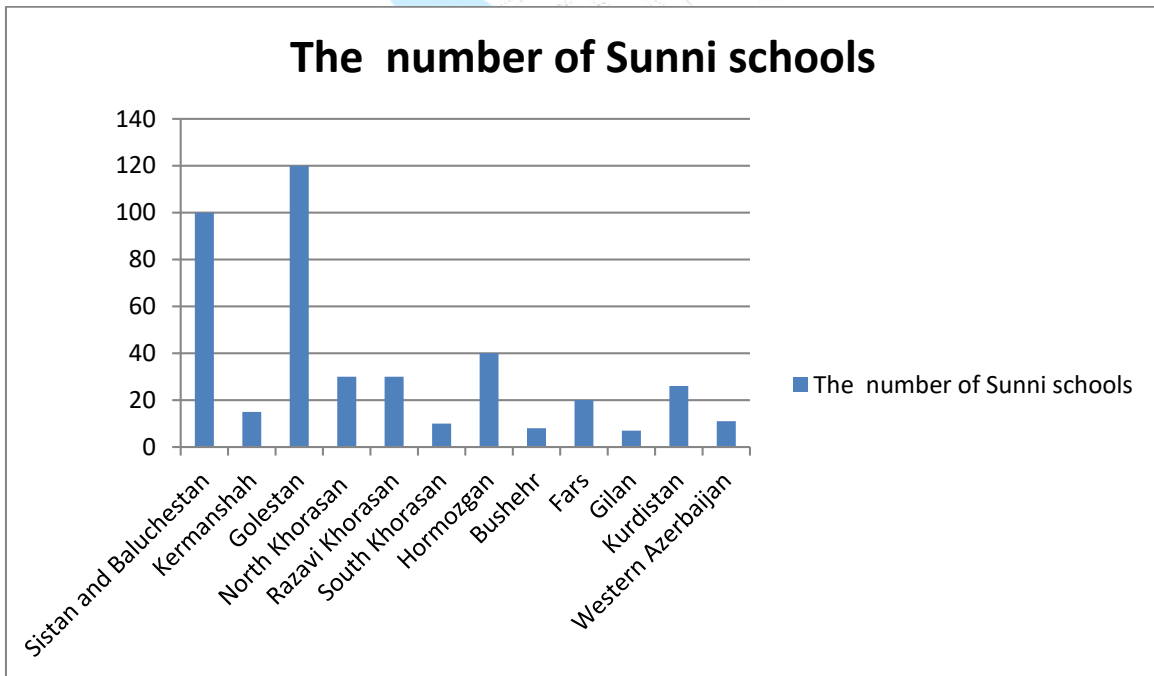




## **-Sunni**

According to the twelfth principle of the constitution, the official religion of Iran is Islam and the Twelver Ja'fari school, and this principle will remain eternally immutable. Other Islamic schools, including the Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki, Hanbali, and Zaydi, are to be accorded full respect, and their followers are free to act in accordance with their own jurisprudence in performing their religious rites. These schools enjoy official status in matters pertaining to religious education, affairs of personal status (marriage, divorce, inheritance, and wills) and related litigation in courts of law. In regions of the country where Muslims following any one of these schools of fiqh constitute the majority, local regulations, within the bounds of the jurisdiction of local councils, are to be in accordance with the respective school of fiqh, without infringing upon the rights of the followers of other schools. Sunnis have more than 15,000 mosques in Iran, which is much more statistics than the Shi'a population. In terms of employment in government agencies and institutions, there is no limit for Sunnis. Many of the city and provincial responsibilities in the Sunni areas are at the disposal of the Sunni brothers. Currently, more than 5,000 Sunni brothers are only members of the Kurdistan Army. According to some statistics, more than

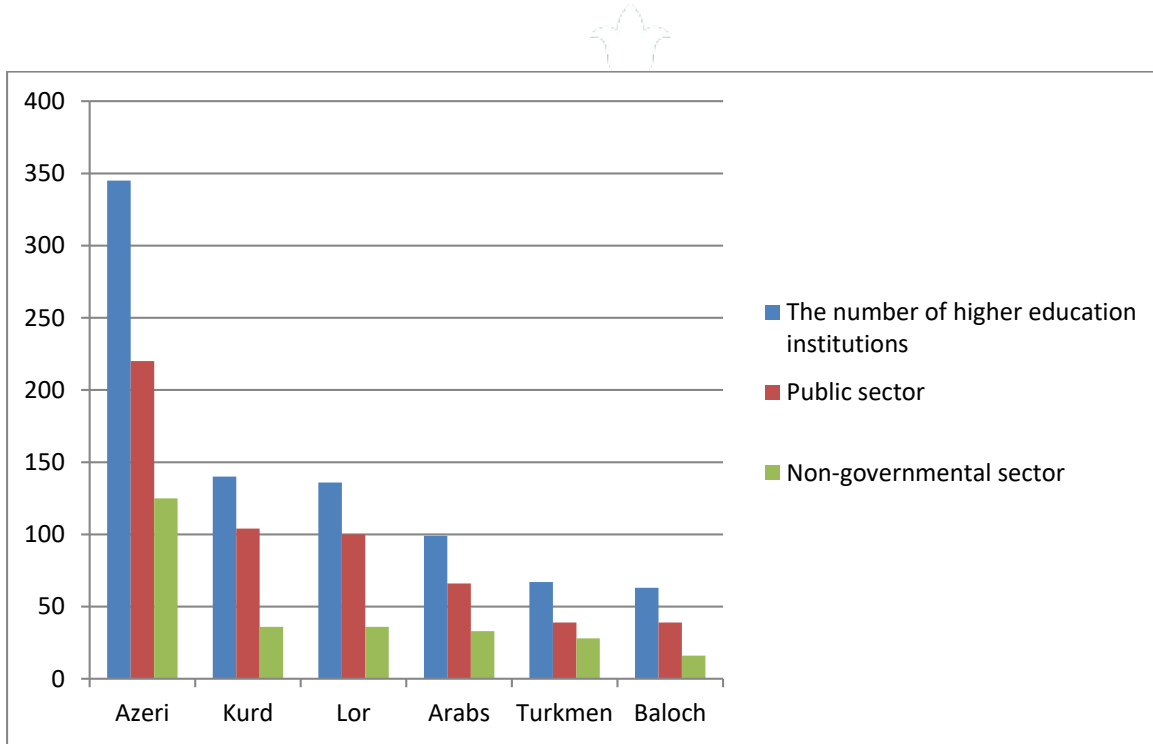
60% of villages and 98% of the members of city and village councils are Sunni in Sistan and Baluchestan province and 90% of the members of the dissolution councils have been selected from Sunni Muslims in Sunni areas and has been issued by the provincial judiciary.



## - Ethnicities

Principle nineteenth of the Constitution explicitly emphasizes on equality and equal rights of all people of Iran from any tribe, regardless of color, race, language, etc. Also, the principles of the fifteenth, twentieth, twenty four and twenty sixth constitutions are about cultural freedom and the possibility of maintaining ethnic identity. According to Article 15, language and official line of the country is Persian but the use of local and ethnic languages in the press and mass media and the teaching of their literature in schools is free along with Persian language. It should be noted that Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting Organization is for all people and it reflects the lives of all the different ethnic groups in the country. Along with the production of national television channels, it has established 31 provincial channels as well as a number of provincial radio channels

.Each of the channels expresses respect for the ethnic and native culture and characteristics of each province. It should be noted that now, many people from different tribes and Sunnis have responsibilities such as ministry, governor, deputy governor, , parliamentary representative, member of city and village councils, mayor, deputy minister, director general, etc.



### Performance of Programming Areas in the Media Regarding Ethnicities and Minorities (2015 and 9 months in 2016)

Details	Statistic
Channels	Duration
Sound channels	527
Video Channels	438
News sections	582
Provincial Channels	6100
Overseas Channels	186
Total	7833

## Sects

Freedom of expression means that every man, wherever and whenever, is entitled to their opinion about different issues and no one is allowed to prohibit him/her from expressing their views or molested; However, freedom of expression is considered in political debates and critique of governments but it is not unique in this field and it will be expanded in all fields of human thought. Therefore, the presence of sects with different ideas in society shows freedom of expression and opinion but the activities of these groups should not be in conflict with the ethical and legal values of society. Because can not be allowed on the pretext of freedom of expression, people hurt the reputation of others, health and safety of individuals and society. Most people and legal and political systems accept this. The most important sects in Iran are the Sai Baba, Ramallah, Osho, Akkunkar, Indian mysticism, Palo Kwilio, Sufism of the Ring, Shaikhis, Gonabadi, and others. Baha'ism is one the sects which is basically a political - not a religious. According to articles 4, 22 and 23 of the Islamic Republic of Iran's constitution. Followers of the sects benefit from all citizenship rights. Based on on Islamic religious teachings, faith inquisition is strictly forbidden and according to article 23 of the constitution "faith inquisition is forbidden and no one shall be reprimanded owing to his faith." In spite of the claims, Baha'is conditions in Iran is much better other countries concerned. The privileges assigned to this category represents a guarantee and observing their fundamental rights as citizens in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

### Bahai Sect's Set of Rights

Details	
Title	Indicator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Private Cemetery</li> <li>-Sectarian activities such as attending rituals every 19 days</li> <li>-Benefiting medical offices</li> <li>Education in Iranian Schools and Universities</li> <li>-Benefiting from medical insurance</li> <li>-Benefiting from national medical</li> </ul>

<p>Social and Cultural Rights</p>	<p>Insurance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Construction of Baha'is' nursing home</li> <li>-Production and distribution of Baha'i pamphlets for members</li> <li>-Passport issuance and permission to travel abroad</li> <li>-Sectarian training courses for children, teenagers and youth</li> </ul>
<p>Economic Rights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Work permit issuance</li> <li>-Principle Agreement Issuance</li> <li>-Company establishment permit issuance</li> <li>-Benefitting bank facilities</li> <li>-Loan allocation and other agricultural Services</li> <li>-Significant presence in economic activities, communications and public services; winning various tenders; benefitting the right to advertise products in the pervasive media</li> <li>-Construction and financial organizations permit issuance</li> <li>-Owning lands and natural resource for agricultural activities such as rangelands of stock</li> <li>-Owning tractors and agricultural equipment in Cooperative prices</li> <li>-Benefitting interest-free loans based on possible notes</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Being active in different professions such as trade, services, guilds, medical and even some guild being exclusive to them (such as optometry)</li> <li>-Living in upper areas of the cities</li> <li>-Benefitting from pensions</li> <li>-Benefitting from civil rights, amenities and services</li> </ul>
Legal Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Registration of marriage in their birth certificates</li> <li>-Real estate and properties trade</li> <li>-Baha'is marriage being official as well as recorded in registry offices</li> </ul>

Article 30 of the Constitution names free education and physical training education for everyone at all levels as well as facilitation and expansion of higher education a duty upon the government.



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