



BALOCH IN IRAN: SOCIAL, CULTURAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMICAL SITUATION



Background

Balochistan is one of the most strategic areas in the Middle East, South and Central Asia. It has a large coast in the Makoran Sea, and Gulf, internationally known as Arab Sea and Persian Gulf; it also borders Pakistan and Afghanistan. It is the homeland of the Baloch people, who have a distinct national identity. The Baloch are discriminated against because of their nationality, because they speak a different language than the official language, and because they are not Shiite like the majority. The regime in practice treats Baloch people as third class citizens. Due to discrimination and the assimilation policy of Iranian regime, Baloch people struggle for cultural economical and political rights.

Instead of accepting the national, cultural and economical rights of the Baloch people the Iranian government has historically considered the Baloch demand for cultural, social, political and economical right as a national security problem and a threat to national integrity. It has therefore militarized Balochistan and pursues a policy of suppression and militarization. In the recent years the regime has transferred security and governance to Revolutionary Guards in Balochistan.



REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS TAKE CHARGE IN BALOCHISTAN

In 2009 regime 'gave' the Revolutionary Guards complete decision-making power, including security and governance authority in Balochistan. The Revolutionary Guards govern Balochistan like an occupied territory, and treat Baloch people as an occupied people and Balochistan as a colony

The Revolutionary Guard, in its endeavor to increase its political and economical power in Iran, has established more than 60 illegal unregistered ports in Iran. This fact was revealed by Mr. Karoubi, while he was head of Iranian Majlis during Khatami's presidency, later it was also revealed by Ahmadinezhad in his second term as, in height of quarrel with Revolutionary Gaurds¹. Large numbers of these ports are located on the coast of Balochistan, in the Makoran Sea (Arabian Sea) and Gulf. The Guard's economic interests make it very important for them to increase their presence and control over Balochistan.

Since unemployment is high in Balochistan. The regime takes advantage of this deplorable situation by recruiting unemployed young men and women into Baseej, a Paramilitary group. In addition Revolutionary Guards has created a new local Force named "Yegan Razmi Sepa", meaning Guards Combat Unit². This aims at confronting the national movement with a local force and to divide Baloch among themselves. Iran's regime pursues a colonial policy of "divide and rule" in Balochistan. In some areas it has outsourced the security to local people and has armed them to be used against each other.

With the Revolutionary Guard's increased control and governance in Balochistan, the Iranian government demonstrates that it does not consider the Baloch as Iranian citizens and regards Balochistan as colony of Iran. The regime's contempt is mirrored by its indiscriminate policy of killing Baloch.

Increased human rights violations in Balochistan since President Rouhani's Election

¹ <http://www.kaleme.com/1391/04/04/klm-104498/?theme=fast>, <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13911202000448>

² <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13911202000448>



The Iran human rights documentation Center has documented 529 executions in Iran until 27 November 2013. More than 370 of these executions have occurred since Rouhani has become president. About 100 of the executed are Baloch people.

According Human Right Democratic Activists for Iran, the latest surge in the execution of Baloch prisoners is an attempt of the regime to counter growing discontent among Baloch people against the regime's discriminatory policies, and stop more protests.³

In the early morning of 26 October 2013, 16 Baloch prisoners were hanged in a revenge act, only 8 hours after an armed clash between Sunni Rebels and Iranian border guards took place on the evening of 25 October 2013. The attorney general of the Sistan-Baluchistan province was quoted as saying that the rebels were "linked to groups hostile to the regime", and that they were executed for the killing of Iranian border guards. While they accused some of them of being supporters or members of armed groups, about 6 others had already been charged for smuggling. It is clear they were executed because they are Baloch.

The increased execution rate in Iran, particularly in Balochistan and other regions like Kurdistan and Ahwaz, shows a systematic use of capital punishment by the administration of President Rouhani, whose cabinet is dominated by people from security and intelligence backgrounds.

Amnesty International wrote in 2009 that the Iranian government "was increasingly using the death penalty as a way of stemming unrest in areas with large ethnic minorities. Bomb attacks in the predominantly Arab province of Khuzestan and ethnic Baluch areas of Sistan-Baluchistan province in recent years were followed by a wave of often public executions. Some of the condemned men were shown on state television making "confessions" that are believed to have been extracted from them under torture or other duress."⁴

Baloch people are at a very high risk of being victims of these executions, when looking at the statistics. One third of all people executed in Iran are Baloch.

³ http://hrdai.blogspot.se/2013/12/blog-post_3929.html

⁴ Amnesty International Report, March 2010: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/iran-executions-send-chilling-message-2010-03-30>



Umar Farooq from the Wall Street Journal wrote in December 2013 that: "Baluchis, who are 2% of Iran's population, have accounted for at least 20% of executions since 2006⁵." Those numbers are based on figures gathered by the Abdorrahman Boroumand Foundation, a Washington D.C.-based group which monitors human rights abuses in Iran. "The actual number may be much higher, according to Roya Boroumand, head of the foundation, as it is becoming more difficult to track executions of Baluchis. Iranian authorities increasingly move Balochi prisoners outside the region, according to Ms. Boroumand"⁶.

Extra –judicial Killing

Extra-judicial killings have been a characteristic of Iranian state policy in national minority regions, especially in Balochistan. This was clearly stated by the head of Mersad, a paramilitary, who said: "We have not been given orders to arrest and hand over those who carry weapons. On the basis of a directive we have received, we will execute any bandits, wherever we capture them (Ettela'at, 25 February 1998)".⁷

Especially in recent years, extra-judicial and target killing of Baloch people have increased in Balochistan, by Iranian regimes security forces. Zahedanpress, an online news portal close to Iranian security forces in Balochistan on 2nd May 2012 the Iranian border Security police had information about the Knapsack Carrier entry point across the border, and ambushed them using heavy fire. Both were killed instantly. In this piece of news it is emphasized that Iranian security forces have the right training to be effective and deadly against the smugglers and rebels.⁸ The wording of this news is a clear indication of the regime's policy, which was described by the head of the Mersad group in Balochistan, as fire to kill above

LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL DISCRIMINATION IN THE MEDIA

Despite Article 15 of the Iranian constitution and Article 27 of the ICCPR, the Ahwaz, Baloch, Kurds and Southern Azerbaijanis face difficulties in exercising their rights to use their own languages, in private and in public. For example, all state-schooling in these regions is conducted exclusively in Persian.

⁵ <http://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2013/12/05/the-battle-for-sistan-baluchistan/>

⁶ ibid

⁷ United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Fiftieth session, 24 August 1998, quote of a Mersad commander in its declaration on Iran in August 1998 (Ettela'at, 25 February 1998), link to United Nations Report:

<http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/TestFrame/e8fd3e68a3e4b563802566880051d10e?Opendocument>

⁸ <http://zahedanpress.com/content/view/9396/9/>



There are only few Baloch students at the University of Balochistan and Zahedan University of Medical Sciences. According to unofficial figures only 10% of the students are of Baloch ethnic origin. The only Iranian language taught at the department of literature and language studies at Universities in Balochistan is Farsi.

Baloch children face several problems when they start school. First of all, the medium of education is not in their mother language. The majority of the children does not speak the medium of instruction or do not have a good command of Farsi when they start school. Unable to understand medium of instruction makes students less enthusiastic learners from beginning. Baloch students are thus prevented from experiencing a successful start in the early years of their school. The result is low confidence that makes them less ready to compete for national exams to enter the higher education and admission to universities.

According to Mr Alireza Sarafi, an educational researcher, non-Farsi speaker admission to education institutions drops from 42 percent in college to 10 percent in post-graduate education. His research is based on the result of admission to Iranian education centers following attendance of intermediate schools from 1997 to 1998 (1376 – 1377 in Iranian years). Below is his table of his findings translated from Farsi to English. It clearly demonstrates the disproportional decrease of non-Farsi speakers with increasing level of education. Furthermore, the representation of minorities within the education system is not in proportion with the general population quota in Iran.

Non-Farsi Speakers	Farsi-Speaker	Enrolment in higher education
42%	58%	College Degree
36%	64%	Under-Graduate
12%	88%	Post-Graduate
10%	90%	PhD and doctorate

The United Nations Committee on Racial Discrimination recommends the State party to continue its efforts to implement measures to enable persons belonging to minorities to have adequate



opportunities to learn their mother tongue and to have it used as a medium of instruction. It requests the State party to provide more information on the literacy levels of ethnic minorities”.

These discriminatory acts from the government clearly violate international treaties which Iran is a signatory of (such as convention on discrimination) and leaves the Baloch people in a position of third class citizens.

Another problem in the Balochistan province and Baloch areas compared to other provinces and regions is the lack of schools or the poor condition of schools in the villages. Baloch children in the villages have to travel or walk for miles to get to a school, the government does not provide transportation from home to school or accommodation near school. The majority of the families cannot afford to provide for transportation and accommodation. This lack of schools in villages makes it especially difficult for girls to continue their studies, according to "Ati News Network" that has quoted a member of provincial Supreme Council who has said that because of difficulties of communication and accommodation 60% of the girls drop out of school. They are only able to continue their studies until fifth grade. He has emphasized that family from small villages' can not send their girl to boarding school because of their financial situation.⁹

Further he has said, that the school that exist are often hut and mud constructions. This construction does not have good protection against earthquakes or other natural disasters. These schools' construction does not stimulate children leanings ability.

Human Rights Watch has documented that “the repression of Balochi language and Baloch culture out of fear that movement for greater Balochistan would endanger the territorial integrity of the Iran predates the Islamic republic. Mohammad Reza Shah had banned the use of the Balochi language and prohibited the wearing of Balochi National dress in schools. The publication of Baloch books and magazines and newspapers was a criminal offense”. Human Rights Watch further emphasizes that “the Islamic Republic has done nothing to reverse these trends.”¹⁰

⁹ <http://www.atynews.com/fa/print/54717>

¹⁰ Human Right Watch, Iran Religious and Ethnic Minorities Discrimination in Law and Practice, September 1997 Vol. 9, No 7(E)



Balochistan has the lowest cultural development in Iran, according to a research by Salihe Amiri. In 1996, Balochistan was number 24 from the 24 provinces in Iran concerning cultural development. The situation has not been changed since then.¹¹

ECONOMIC DISCRIMINATION

Mahmud Khalatbary, who served as Director General of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), in a discussion with Selig S. Harrison recalled that: "In CENTO, we always assumed that the Baloch would attempt to create their own independent state some day, with Soviet support, so it was desirable to keep them as politically weak, disunited, and backward as possible."¹²

This policy was implemented in practice so that in the last years of the Shah's regime Balochistan was the poorest province "with an estimated annual per capita income of \$975, less than half of the \$2,2000 national average for rural areas and less than one-fifth of the overall national average."¹³ Balochistan is still the poorest province in Iran.

Even though Sistan-Balochistan is a region rich in resources, still 76 percent of the Baloch population lives in extreme poverty. The national figure is 11 percent.¹⁴ According to the Governor General of the Provincial Social Department in Balochistan in June 2005, the "Sistan-Balochistan province despite of its richness and geographical advantages is the least developed area of the country."¹⁵

According to Takrah website unemployment in Balochistan officially is 13 percent. However, Mr Hossien Ali Shariyari, a member of Parliament, on the 5th of March 2012 said that unemployment is 30%. Still other experts, according to Takrah website, are certain that unemployment is much higher than 30%. Mr Hossien Ali Shahriayri also said that because of large unemployment people in Balochistan are so poor that, today majority of people's in Balochistan do not have any income beside the subsidy they get from the government, which is almost 25 dollar (45 000 Iranian

¹¹ <http://www.ganjamin.blogfa.com/post-74.aspx>

¹² Selig S. Harrison 1981, pp 159.

¹³ Selig S. Harrison 1981, pp 99.

¹⁴ Baloch 'Appeal for international help to stop executions in Baluchistan' accessed:
<http://www.unpo.org/content/view/7462/236/>

¹⁵ http://www.irna.ir/index2.php?option=com_news&task=print&code=84042301999102



Tuman) per month per person.¹⁶ Sarawan's representative in the parliament in March 2011 said that the unemployment in Balochistan is much higher than in any other part of the country.

A religious selection process called "Gozinesh" in Farsi process, which requires persons to demonstrate allegiance to the Islamic Republic in order to get a job as a civil servant, is one of the reasons that unemployment among the Baloch youth is very high. While they are competent for the vacant jobs locally in Balochistan, the government uses Gozinesh to exclude Baloch from jobs and fill the vacancy by non-Baloch from other parts, who can pass the Gozinesh. The United Nations Committee on racial discrimination expressed "concern over reports that the application of the "gozinesh" criterion, a selection procedure that requires prospective state officials and employees to demonstrate allegiance to the Islamic Republic of Iran and the State religion may limit employment opportunities and political participation for, inter alios, persons of Arab, Azeri, Balochi, Jewish, Armenian and Kurdish communities. (Art. 5)¹⁷"

According to a research by Salihe Amiri, in 1996, Balochistan economically was number 21 from the 24 provinces in Iran. The situation since then has not been changed.¹⁸ Human Rights Watch also reported that the Baloch "constitute one of the poorest and least developed communities in Iran."¹⁹

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Iran has a systematic system of discrimination against non-Persian ethnic groups, which is institutionalized within the constitution. As the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination stated in August 2010, "the information furnished by the State party on the definition of racial discrimination in article 19 of the Iranian Constitution and reiterates its concern that this definition does not explicitly cover the forms of racial and ethnic discrimination prohibited under the Convention (Art. 1). The United Nations Committee further urges the State party to consider reviewing the definition of racial discrimination contained in its Constitution and

¹⁶ <http://www.nikshahr.com/post/1186>

¹⁷ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Seventy-seventh session 2 –27 August 2010, Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 9 of the convention available online on the link:
http://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=http%3A%2F%2Fwww2.ohchr.org%2Fenglish%2Fbodies%2Fcerd%2Fdocs%2Fco%2FCERD-C-IRN-CO-18_19.doc

¹⁸ <http://www.ganjamin.blogfa.com/post-74.aspx>

¹⁹ Human Rights Watch: Religious and Ethnic Minorities Discrimination in Law and Practice, September 1997 Vol. 9, No 7(E)



domestic law in order to bring it into full conformity with article 1, paragraph 1, of the Convention.”

RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION

Article 12 of the constitution states: “The official religion of Iran is Islam and the Twelve Ja’fari School of Thought and this principle shall remain eternally immutable”. This explicit endorsement of a school of Shia Islam alienates the Majority of Kurds, Turkmen, Baloch, and a large number of Ahwazi Arab, who practice Sunni Islam. Tehran has a population of more than 1 million Sunni Muslims, but planning permission for a Sunni mosque has yet not been granted; all applications for building a Sunni place of worship have been rejected and/or ridiculed. Article 115 excludes non-Shias from holding the office of the republic’s president.

Regime in its effort to suppress all kind of challenge to its rule, assassinate one activist and arrest other blaming them on false ground for committed a crime which they have not been involved and arrested activated are forced to confession under torture and their confession is broadcasted on TV. Mulavi Mustafa Junguzahi a Sunni Baloch religious sermon had criticized Iranian security forces harsh method, in dealing with small traders crossing border between Iran and Pakistan in Balochistan. Mr Junguzahi was assassinated on 22 December 2011, and assailant escaped from crime scene. From early March 2012 until 14 May Iranian security forces arrested from Sarbaaz district more than 10 people.

According to online Kayhannews newspaper which is political organ of the conservative function of the establishment two persons referred as J. A. and M. A. have confessed being involved in the assassination of Molavi Janguzahi's.²⁰ Their confession were broadcasted on TV and the link to confession is: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUYLnA0QmSo>. In this broadcast they have forced the sons of Mulavi Naghshbandi to blame his own father for planning assassination.

Of the people arrested in this case On Tuesday 24 December 2013, Mulavi Naghshbandi, was convicted to 15 years imprisonment, and exile to Khalkhal far away from his birthplace in Balochistan, Mulavi Abdul Ghafar Naghshbandi was convicted to 13 years and exile to unspecified place. Malek Mohammad Abadian and his two sons Jaber Abadian, and Jawad

²⁰ <http://khabarfarsi.com/ext/2591153>



Abadian were sentenced to death. Nezamulding Mulazadeh was also sentenced to death. The sentence of two of the prisoners, Faghir Mohammad Raisi and Gul Mohammad Boladai, has not been specified yet.²¹

According to report by Baloch Activists campaign, Malik Mohammad Abadian is under pressure to confess once again on television and to admit to crimes and his connection to external links that have supported them financially to assassinate Mulavi Jangazahi. According to the same rapport Mr. Malik Mohammad's youngest son that has been arrested with his Father and two other brothers has not been convicted to any crime and has been given right to be released on bill, but is still kept in prison to pressurize his father to cooperate with prison authorities and confess on TV.²²

To put more pressure on Mr Malik Mohammad Abadian, his son in law Sedek Daleri was arrested on 28 May blamed for assassination of Mr. Javad Nourizi a teacher in Rask, on 15 April 2014²³.

Conversion to Shiite religion is encouraged, and to Sunni is punished. The central government in Tehran has historically used all means to convert none Shiite to Shiite religion using methods as, intimidation, incentives like giving them job, and providing them other social privileges.²⁴

Persons that convert to Shiite are hailed as heroes that have taken the right path and are brought to state TV to tell their story; how the Shiite Imam have appeared to them, but also to condemn

²¹ <http://farsi.alarabiya.net/fa/iran/2013/12/24/%D8%B5%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D8%AD%DA%A9%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%B3%D9%86%DA%AF%DB%8C%D9%86-%D8%B2%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%8C-%D8%AA%D8%A8%D8%B9%DB%8C%D8%AF-%D9%88-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D9%85%D9%88%D9%84%D9%88%DB%8C-%D9%86%D9%82%D8%B4%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%AF%DB%8C-%D9%88-%D9%87%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%88%DB%8C.html>

²² <http://balochcampaign.com/index.php/news/balochestan-news/item/1252-%D9%81%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D8%B7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A8%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%84%DA%A9-%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%A2%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AF%DB%8C%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%A8%DB%8C%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B3%D8%AE%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AF%DB%8C%DA%A9%D8%AA%D9%87-%D8%B4%D8%AF%D9%87-%D8%B9%D9%84%DB%8C%D9%87-%D8%B4%D8%A8%DA%A9%D9%87-%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D9%87%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%86%D8%AA-%D9%88-%D9%86%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82%DB%8C>

²³ <http://balochcampaign.com/index.php/news/balochestan-news/item/1305-%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%85%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D8%8C-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B2%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B4%D8%AA-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%B2%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%DB%8C-%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%B3%DB%8C-%D9%85%D9%84%DA%A9-%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%A2%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AF%DB%8C%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%88-%D9%BE%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%87-%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%B2%DB%8C-%D8%AC%D8%AF%DB%8C%D8%AF-%D8%B9%D9%84%DB%8C%D9%87-%D9%88%DB%8C>

²⁴ Hamid Shirani that has converted to shiite is given attention in national TV's and in press, hailed as speaker in different masque. <http://zahedanpress.com/21346/%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%B4%DB%8C%D8%B9%D9%87-%D8%B4%D8%AF%D9%86-%DB%8C%DA%A9-%D8%AC%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%88%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%A8%DB%8C-%D9%81%DB%8C%D9%84%D9%85/>



Sunnis. On the other hand, people that convert to Sunni from Shiite are arrested and treated as “Murtad”, meaning rejectionist and is punishable with death or imprisonment until repentance of.25

POLITICAL REPRESENTATION OF MINORITIES

No Baloch has ever served as a minister of cabinet or as an ambassador. The number of the Baloch in the provincial administration of Balochistan is no more than five percent of the total civil servants.²⁶ The United Nations Committee on Racial Discrimination “expresses concern at the low level of participation of persons from, Arab, Azeri, Balochi, Kurdish, Baha’i, and certain other communities in public life. This is reflected in, for example, the scant information provided about them in the national report, in the national census and in public policies. (Art. 5) The Committee urges the State party to carry out a study of members of all such communities that would enable the State party to identify their particular needs and draw up effective plans of action, programs and public policies to combat racial discrimination and disadvantage relating to all areas of the public life of these communities”²⁷.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Investment in job and education in national minorities areas have led to a lack of social and cultural development of the population and especially of women. National minorities face multiple forms of discrimination and their female populations even faces triple discrimination.

The Iranian constitution and government policy have led to marginalization of women in the economic, cultural, social and political life. Any attempts by NGOs to campaign for women’s rights and for their empowerment have been suppressed by the state apparatus. Small efforts that

²⁵ <https://hra-news.org/fa/religious-minorities/%D8%AA%D8%A7%DB%8C%DB%8C%D8%AF-%D8%AD%DA%A9%D9%85-%D9%88-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B2%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B4%D8%AA-%DA%86%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%86%D9%88%DA%A9%DB%8C%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D9%87%D9%84%E2%80%8C%D8%B3%D9%86%D8%AA-%D8%AF%DB%8C%DA%AF%D8%B1-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%87%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B2%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B4>

- <https://hra-news.org/fa/religious-minorities/%D8%8C%DA%A9-%D9%86%D9%88%DA%A9%DB%8C%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D9%87%D9%84%E2%80%8C%D8%B3%D9%86%D8%AA-%D8%AF%DB%8C%DA%AF%D8%B1-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%87%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B2%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B4>

²⁶ Dr Hosseinbor presenting to US Congress, March 2008, “Oppression of Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Iran: The Case of Baloch and Balochistan”

²⁷ http://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=http%3A%2F%2Fwww2.ohchr.org%2Fenglish%2Fbodies%2Fcerd%2Fdocs%2Fco%2FCERD-C-IRN-CO-18_19.doc



have been made by women activists in those regions have always led to harassment and arrest, and many activists have been forced to go underground or leave the country.

Chronic unemployment has forced many Baloch men to migrate to neighboring Arab countries in search of a job. The income of these migrant workers is not sufficient to permit their family to join them abroad. Separation from family has the side effect that many of them come back with AIDS so that known cases among Baloch women is twice the average of cases in other parts of Iran.²⁸

According to Iranian national statistics Isfahan and Balochistan province have the highest number of child (girl) marriage in Iran.

WALL TO SEPARATE BALOCH PEOPLE

In late 2007, Iran started construction of a concrete wall, which will be 3 feet wide and ten feet high. Wide ditches have been dug along the border that will physically separate families. The concrete wall, fortified with steel rods, will span the 700 km frontier stretching from Taftan to Mand. According to the Fars News Agency, the Iranian government has invested one hundred billion Iranian Tumans to build a wall in border areas in Balochistan²⁹. The purpose is allegedly to control smuggling across the borders with Pakistan and Afghanistan. However, this is to control the activities of the opponents across the borders and to further divide Baloch families living in border areas. If this money were used for the welfare of the people, it could have changed the fate of the province.

The main intention of constructing this wall is to further divide the Baloch people under the pretext of bringing an end to the drugs trade. Colonial borders established in the early 20th Century divided the Baloch nation into three parts.

Balochistan is contained largely within the borders of Iran and Pakistan, with a smaller portion in Afghanistan. Since the division of the territory, the basic human rights of the Baloch people on the Iranian and Pakistani sides of the borders have been systematically violated. Balochistan is rich in natural resources; has an abundance of rich minerals; has fertile lands; and has a strategic coastline

²⁸ <http://www.irangreenvoice.com/article/2011/nov/27/17003>

²⁹ <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=8603010175>



on the Makoran Sea (= Arab Sea) that stretches 1000 kilometers. Despite this, the Baloch people have the lowest socio-economic indicators in the whole of Iran and Pakistan. In recent years, both Iran and Pakistan have used funds provided by Western countries to suppress the Baloch people under the pretext of combating the Taliban and other extremist forces and reducing drug trafficking.

THE REALITIES OF THE BALOCH NATIONAL QUESTION

The Baloch are discontent because they have not been allowed the right to use their native language. The Baloch are disenchanted because they do not receive any benefits from the resources found in their homeland. They are disillusioned because they are exploited economically and in the process are kept away from the power structure of the state. The Baloch are disappointed because religion³⁰ is manifestly used as a means to assimilate Baloch nationality into Persian national identity in Iran. These basic realities have reinforced the Baloch's general feeling of frustration and on the other hand the Iranian government policies have led to different political and socio-economic situations, in the different parts of country.

RESOLVING THE BALOCH NATIONAL QUESTION

The Baloch National question cannot be taken as bits and pieces. The Baloch nation must be recognized within its boundaries as a people distinct from others, equal in collective rights and duties. In the new millennium a new scenario of national governance should prevail. The attributes of the new system of governance should be harmonious partnership in a republican liberal democratic system with a federal structure and national autonomous provincial governing mechanisms. This may appropriately address the problem and offer prospects of a pleasant new partnership of trust and coexistence. A mechanism based on the acceptance of genuine demands of the constituent nations should generate participation, share responsibilities, and offer opportunities to all nations providing a foundation for stronger, civilized, prosperous and proud peoples in a multinational state with a new vision and a civilized image.

³⁰ Historically, the Baloch never incorporated either Zoroastrianism or Islam as such into their social or political life. Instead they have been guided by centuries-old cultural and traditional values in their national behavior. A liberal and tolerant mindset has evolved among the Baloch masses over the centuries.



An Introduction to the Balochistan Peoples Party (BPP)

After the incorporation of Western Balochistan into Iran in 1928, there has always been Baloch resistance, either organized or unorganized. With the demise of the Shah in 1979, various Baloch organizations emerged and re-launched their political activities.

The new regime opposed the rise of a national-democratic movement in Balochistan, and therefore outlawed all political organizations. Consequently, all political organizations carried the torch of the national movement underground, with the majority of Baloch political activists eventually forced into exile.

On the 30th and 31st of March 1997 in Stockholm - Sweden, a gathering of Baloch people met and discussed the situation, agreeing to lay the foundations that would lead to the establishment of a new political party to achieve Baloch people's rights through democratic and peaceful means. It elected a committee to encourage political discourse and dialogue by publishing a periodical called TRAAN. Its efforts resulted in the establishment of the Balochistan People's Party (BPP) on 21st September 2003.

The Baloch people in Western Balochistan are represented by Balochistan People's Party (BPP) in the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO). BPP is a democratic party struggling to achieve sovereignty for the Baloch people within a secular, federal and democratic republic in Iran. More than four million Baloch living in Iran are being treated as third class citizens because they are not ethnically Persian and do not belong to the Shi'a sect of Islam.

While open political opposition is not possible in theocratic Iran, the Baloch resistance movement has increasingly organized itself underground and for the first time enjoys the leadership of a political party, the Balochistan People's Party. The Party is representing for the first time the Baloch national struggle both in national and international forums.



Thanks to the efforts of the BPP, Balochistan has become a member of the UNPO. By using the UNPO's office, BPP has succeeded increasingly to highlight Baloch grievances internationally. BPP has participated on symposiums and conferences, in different European countries. BPP also have succeeded in meeting European Member of Parliament and commission to inform them about human right abuses by Iranian government in Balochistan.

BPP is one of the founding and one of the most active members of "The Congress of Nationalities for a Federal Iran" (CNFI). The CNFI consists of parties and organizations belonging to different nationalities (Arab, Azerbaijani Turk, Baloch, Kurds and Turkmen) in Iran. All of CNFI's political organizations struggle to establish a secular, democratic republic in Iran.

Balochistan People's Party is a Democratic Party. It struggles to achieve the Baloch people's sovereignty within the federal Democratic Republic in Iran. It has formulated a federal democratic framework which envisages a system based on parity of constituent parts. In which constituents borders within Iran will be redrawn according to the language, history and people's wishes. The new republics will have equal rights in all spheres of power. According to the parties program, the relationship between a republic and the federal government must include five basic principles:

National sovereignty: Principal authority rests with the republic, with the federal government having exclusive authority in 'foreign affairs', 'defense', 'international financial relationships and financial relationships between republics within Iran' and 'communication. The republics will retain power and sovereignty over the remaining state departments.

Democracy: Parliamentary democracy should be enforced in all levels of power, both at the federal and republic level.

Participation: National republics will have equal participation in all government bodies: the legislative, executive and judicial branches. For equal participation, the population and geographic size of the republic would not be taken into consideration.

Distribution of Power: Both the federal government and the republics should have written Constitutions, and unambiguous laws, regulations and memorandum that both in federal and



republics level divides power horizontally between legislative, executive and judicial branches; and vertically divides power between federal and national republics governments.

Financial autonomy: To guarantee financial autonomy, tax collection power should be divided between the federal government and the national republics in a way that makes the national republics financially autonomous of federal government.

A permanent appropriate and lasting solution should be in line with internationally recognized principles of the right to self-determination and sovereign equality of nations. The federal government shall incorporate republics in its decision procedure on some constitutionally entrenched basis.

MANIFESTO OF THE CONGRESS OF NATIONALITIES FOR A FEDERAL IRAN

Iran belongs to all its peoples and nationalities, a right that they have been denied. We understand and feel the national injustice that Iranian nationalities have been subjected to, and therefore, we dearly honor the sacrifices made and the hardships endured by the sons and daughters of Iran for freedom and justice. We believe that the legitimacy of any government is derived from its peoples; this should be the case in multinational Iran as well.

Without the participation of all its nationalities, without the peoples' opportunity to rule the country and the regions that they live in, the realization of freedom, development, and peace is impossible. We believe that a federalist system of government on the basis of nationality and geography is the only political mechanism that is enduring, and allows all Iranian nationalities to realize their aspirations and exercise self-rule in the framework of a free, united and democratic Iran.

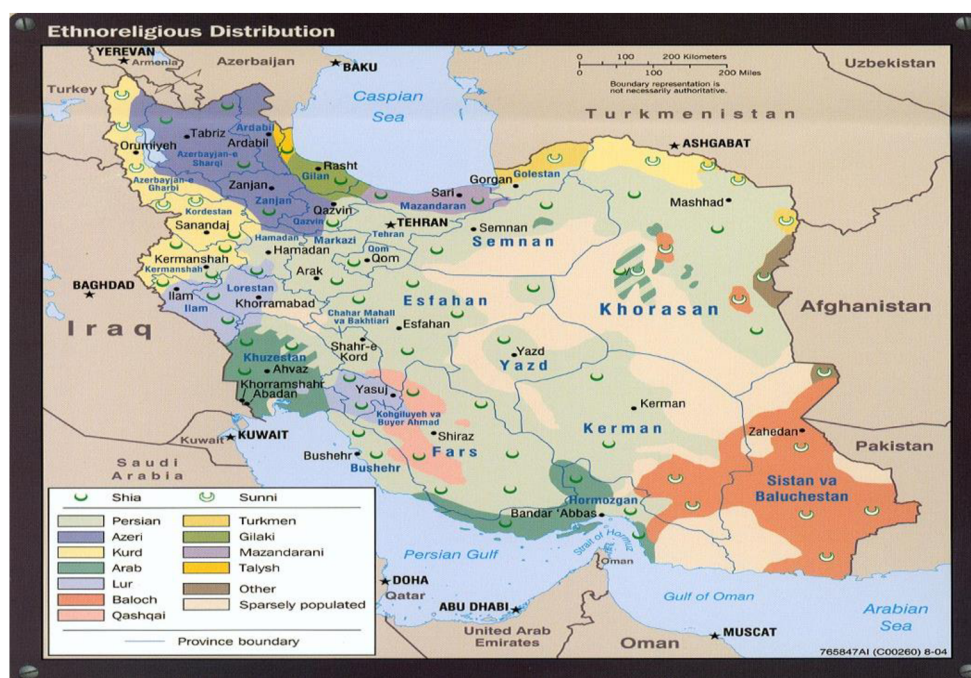
We, the undersigned organizations representing major Iranian nationalities, have gathered on the 20th of February 2005 to hold the "Congress of Iranian Nationalities for a Federal Iran". We have set the following principles as the basis for future activities and cooperation:

1. Removal of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a totalitarian, anti-democratic state, and violator of the rights of the Iranian peoples-and the primary condition for the establishment of a federal democratic government in Iran.
2. Exercise of the inalienable right to self- determination in accordance with the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and all pertinent international accords, under a federal system of government, on the basis of nationality and geography, in a united Iran.
3. Separation of religion and state.
4. Removal of any and all gender discrimination, and full equality of men and women in every sphere of life - social, political, economic, etc.
5. Guarantee of freedom of thought, speech and assembly, and freedom to organize social and political organizations to ensure and provide for the equal rights of all citizens in legal enjoyment of these freedoms.
6. Guarantee of social and political equality and justice, and enhancement of the quality of life of all citizens.



7. Establishment of peaceful relations with all countries on the basis of mutual respect and respect for international norms and accords, and resolution of conflicts employing peaceful means and international law.
8. Opposition to terrorism and weapons of mass destruction in the region and internationally; cooperation with international endeavours toward achievement of this objective, and support of peaceful resolution of regional and international conflicts.

We ask all political organizations and personalities who believe in these principles to join us in CNFI and assist us in fulfilment of our objectives here set forth.



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