



RIJ

国際難民支援会

Building a
Future for
Refugees

Iran



Reasons for Displacement:

The majority of the refugees come from Afghanistan,

many of whom are unregistered. Many of the refugees fled in response to the first Soviet invasion in 1979 and the subsequent occupation of the Taliban after the Soviets were defeated. More Afghans fled in the wake of the US invasion in 2001 in response to the September 11 attack. Refugees from other countries, like Iraq, have also been coming to Iran over long periods of time due to political strife and war. Although Afghanistan remains dangerous and unstable in parts, UNHCR has helped with the voluntary repatriation of over 900,000 Afghani refugees since 2002.

Refugee Communities:

Despite a return of 900,000 Afghani refugees since 2002, many have opted to stay due to

continuing instability in Afghanistan. Whilst there are a few permanent refugee camps in Iran, the majority reside in urban settings amongst the host communities.

Originally, Afghan refugees were well received in Iran. However, since the 1990's, attitudes have shifted, resulting in discrimination. Although various factors are attributed to the rise in discrimination, economic downturn due to the crippling international sanctions is partly responsible. Despite these challenges, the Iran government allows child refugees access to education and has created working permits for refugees. The many unregistered refugees, however, are not so fortunate: they are restricted basic rights and services including access to education and health care.

Assistance:

- RIJ funded a project providing medical assistance to older Iraqi refugees in Iran
- UNHCR, other NGOs and government agencies focus on education. The goal is to provide vocational and professional courses for Afghan refugees so that they will have a trade or skill when they eventually return. NGOs supporting refugees include Chain of Hope and Society for Recovery Support, and others

Number of refugees:

982,027 registered in Iran;
82,170 originating from Iran
[source: UNHCR]

Number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): 0

[source: UNHCR]

History:

- 1935** – Iran is adopted as the country's official name
- 1951** – The oil industry is nationalized and the UK imposes an embargo and a blockade on oil exports
- 1953** – A coup is engineered by the American and UK intelligence services; the Shah returns to power after having previously been forced into exile
- 1978** – Years of oppressive rule from the Shah's regime leads to riots, strikes and mass demonstrations. The Shah responds by imposing martial law
- 1979** – The Shah and his family are forced into exile after which the Shah seeks medical treatment in the US. The US embassy is attacked and 52 American people are taken hostage with the demand that the US extradite the Shah; the Islamic Republic of Iran is established
- 1980** – War breaks out between Iran and Iraq
- 1988** – A ceasefire is negotiated between Iran and Iraq
- 2002 to Present** - Development of nuclear energy leads to years of political strife with UN member nations
- 2013** – Hassan Rouhani becomes president
- 2014** – since 2002/03, UNHCR has assisted almost 920,000 Afghan refugees and over 30,000 Iraqi refugees to return home