



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Iran: Military service

Version 1.0

October 2016

Preface

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and policy guidance to Home Office decision makers on handling particular types of protection and human rights claims. This includes whether claims are likely to justify the granting of asylum, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave and whether – in the event of a claim being refused – it is likely to be certifiable as ‘clearly unfounded’ under s94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers must consider claims on an individual basis, taking into account the case specific facts and all relevant evidence, including: the policy guidance contained with this note; the available COI; any applicable caselaw; and the Home Office casework guidance in relation to relevant policies.

Country Information

The COI within this note has been compiled from a wide range of external information sources (usually) published in English. Consideration has been given to the relevance, reliability, accuracy, objectivity, currency, transparency and traceability of the information and wherever possible attempts have been made to corroborate the information used across independent sources, to ensure accuracy. All sources cited have been referenced in footnotes. It has been researched and presented with reference to the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the [European Asylum Support Office’s research guidelines, Country of Origin Information report methodology](#), dated July 2012.

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve the guidance and information we provide. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this note, please email [the Country Policy and Information Team](#).

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to make recommendations to him about the content of the Home Office’s COI material. The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office’s COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI’s work and a list of the COI documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector’s website at <http://icinspector.independent.gov.uk/country-information-reviews/>

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Policy Guidance

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1. Introduction

1.1 Basis of claim

1.1.1 Fear of persecution or serious harm by the state because of:

(a) the treatment and/or conditions likely to be faced by the person during compulsory military service duties; and/or

(b) the penalties likely to be faced by the person's refusal to undertake, or their desertion from, military service duties.

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2. Consideration of issues

2.1 Credibility

2.1.1 For further information and guidance on assessing credibility, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).

2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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2.2 Convention ground

2.2.1 Where a person is considered to be at risk of persecution or serious harm, decision makers must consider whether this is for a Refugee Convention (or other) reason.

2.2.2 The [Asylum Instruction on Military Service and Conscientious Objection](#) and paragraph 22 of the House of Lords judgment in the case of [Sepet & Another v. SSHD \[2003\] UKHL 15](#) explains that it is necessary to carefully examine the real reason for the persecution, looking at the real reason in the mind of the persecutor rather than the reason which the victim believes to be the reason for the persecution.

2.2.3 There is no evidence to suggest that the Iranian government views a person's refusal to partake in military service as an act of political disobedience.

2.2.4 If persons are punished on return, it is likely to be for the criminal offence of evading or deserting national service. The nature and duration of punishment will depend on the person's circumstances.

2.2.5 Persons who have evaded or absconded from national service do not form a particular social group (PSG) within the meaning of the 1951 UN Refugee

Convention. This is because they do not share an immutable (or innate) characteristic and have a distinct identity in their home society.

- 2.2.6 For further guidance on particular social groups, see [the Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.3 Exclusion

- 2.3.1 Whilst there is no evidence that those completing their military service have been deployed to Syria, it is important to note that members of Iran's armed forces have been deployed in Syria in support of President Bashar al-Assad. The Assad regime and its allies have carried out indiscriminate attacks that directly targeted civilians and have been accused of perpetrating war crimes (see the country policy and information note on [Syria: the Syrian civil war](#)).
- 2.3.2 If accepted that the person has been involved with such actions, decision makers must consider whether one of the exclusion clauses is applicable.
- 2.3.3 For further information and guidance on the exclusion clauses, discretionary leave and restricted leave, see the [Asylum Instruction on Exclusion: Article 1F of the Refugee Convention](#), the [Asylum Instruction on Discretionary Leave](#) and the [Asylum Instruction on Restricted Leave](#).

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2.4 Assessment of risk

i. General Approach

- 2.4.1 Military service, which can last up to 24 months, is compulsory for Iranian males aged between 18 and 40, although conscripts can start from the age of 16. There are limited exemptions available but the option to 'buy out' of military service has been reintroduced for some people. To date, applications have only been registered (see [Exemptions or alternatives](#)).
- 2.4.2 However, compulsory national service is a prerogative of sovereign states. It is therefore reasonable that draft evasion and desertion are criminal offences and punishable by law – points provided for in the [UNHCR Handbook and Guidelines on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status](#) ('The Handbook') (paras 167-174) and confirmed by the House of Lords in the case of [Sepet & Another v. SSHD \[2003\] UKHL 15](#).
- 2.4.3 Therefore, a requirement to undergo compulsory military service – or punishment for failing to complete this duty – does not, in itself, constitute persecution. It will only do so where:
- (a) military service would involve acts, with which the person may be associated, which are contrary to the basic rules of human conduct;
 - (b) the conditions of military service would be so harsh as to amount to persecution; or
 - (c) the punishment for draft evasion or desertion is disproportionately harsh or severe.
- 2.4.4 See also the [Asylum Instruction on Military Service and Conscientious Objection](#).

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ii. Acts which are contrary to the basic rules of human conduct

- 2.4.5 'Acts ... which are contrary to the basic rules of human conduct' is taken to mean being required to act in a way that would bring that person within the scope of Article 1F of the Refugee Convention and/or Article 12 of Council Directive 2004/83/EC ('the Qualification Directive').
- 2.4.6 For further information see the [Asylum Instruction on Exclusion: Article 1F of the Refugee Convention](#).
- 2.4.7 There is no evidence to suggest that those performing military service in Iran would be required to engage in any military acts which are contrary to the basic rules of human conduct (see [Treatment](#)).

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iii. Conditions of military service in Iran

- 2.4.8 Conditions for conscripts in Iran are reported to be poor with poor pay, low morale, poor living conditions and malnutrition. There have been reports of harassment and abuse of conscripts due to their faith, leading to self-harm and suicide, including in suspicious circumstances. However, in general, the conditions and/or treatment likely to be faced by a person required to undertake compulsory military service would not be so harsh as to amount to a real risk of serious harm (see [Treatment](#)).

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iv. Penalties for draft evasion or desertion

- 2.4.9 The [Asylum Instruction on Military Service and Conscientious Objection](#) explains, as the House of Lords held in [Sepet & Another v. SSHD \[2003\] UKHL 15](#), that it is legitimate for countries to require their citizens to perform compulsory military service and therefore punishment for failing to complete this duty will not automatically be regarded as persecution. It is also reasonable that draft evasion and desertion are criminal offences and punishable by law and that this punishment will not amount to persecution unless it is disproportionately harsh or severe.
- 2.4.10 There is no alternative to military service in Iran and conscientious objection is not recognised. Decision makers must establish and determine the nature, reasons and extent/conviction of the person's reason for objecting to military service. The onus is on the person to demonstrate that they have deeply-held convictions and as a direct result they would be reasonably likely to face a disproportionate penalty/punishment for draft evasion/desertion.
- 2.4.11 Draft evaders are liable for prosecution. A person who deserts from the army will have to continue military service upon return if he is under the age of 40. Evading military service for up to a year during peace time or 2 months during war can result in between 3 and 6 months added to a person's military service. Longer draft evasion (more than 1 year in peacetime or 2 or more months during war) may result in criminal prosecution.

- 2.4.12 The penalties are provided in law and there is no evidence to suggest that these penalties are being disproportionately applied. It is not known how active the Iranian authorities are in pursuing a policy of tracking down and prosecuting draft evaders, although a recent report suggested that due to increasing numbers of draft evaders the process of tracking them down may be intensified (see [Consequence of evasion/desertion](#)).
- 2.4.13 Decision makers must therefore consider if there is reason to believe that the draft evader will be imprisoned on return to Iran. Prison conditions in Iran are, in individual cases, likely to create a real risk of torture and/or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (see the country policy and information note on [Iran: Prison Conditions](#)).
- 2.4.14 It is unlikely that in the majority of cases the consequence of a person's general unwillingness to serve in the armed forces or objection to enter a 'combat zone' will be such that they can make out a claim for protection. However, longer draft evasion may result in criminal prosecution and draft evaders are being arrested in increasing numbers. Decision makers should consider whether those claiming to be unwilling to serve in the armed forces can 'buy out' of compulsory service.
- 2.4.15 Under Iranian law, a designation as a 'homosexual' or transsexual/transgender is considered to constitute a medical and psychological condition that warrants an exemption from compulsory military service. Evidence suggests that those wishing to obtain an exemption on the grounds of their sexuality/gender identity have to undergo numerous humiliating physical and psychological tests and exams and provide intimate information regarding their life. Furthermore, their sexual orientation will be documented in an exemption card which could later become a basis for further discrimination. A person who has been granted exemption on the grounds of their sexuality/gender identity may be able to show that this places them at risk of persecution as a result (see the country policy and information note on [Iran: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#)).
- 2.4.16 For further information and guidance on assessing risk, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.5 Protection

- 2.5.1 As the person's fear is of ill treatment/persecution at the hands of the state, they will not be able to avail themselves of the protection of the authorities.
- 2.5.2 For further information and guidance on assessing the availability of state protection, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.6 Internal relocation

- 2.6.1 As the person's fear is of ill treatment/persecution at the hands of the state, they will not be able to relocate to escape that risk.
- 2.6.2 For further information on considering internal relocation and the factors to be taken into account, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.7 Certification

- 2.7.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.
- 2.7.2 For further information and guidance on certification, see the [Asylum Instruction on Non-Suspensive Appeals: Certification Under Section 94 of the NIA Act 2002](#).

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3. Policy summary

- 3.1.1 Military service of up to 24 months is compulsory for Iranian males aged between 18 and 40. There are limited exemptions – but not for conscientious objection – and also the option for some persons to 'buy out' their military service, but to date applications have been only registered.
- 3.1.2 It is legitimate for countries to require their citizens to perform compulsory military service and punishment for failing to complete it does not, in itself, constitute persecution or give rise to a grant of humanitarian protection.
- 3.1.3 There is no evidence to suggest that military service in Iran would involve acts, with which the person may be associated, which are contrary to the basic rules of human conduct; the conditions of military service are not in general so harsh as to amount to persecution; nor is the punishment for draft evasion or desertion in general disproportionately harsh or severe.
- 3.1.4 Decision makers should consider whether the draft evader will be imprisoned on return to Iran as prison conditions are, in individual cases, likely to create a real risk of torture and/or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
- 3.1.5 Gay men and transsexual or transgender persons can obtain an exemption from military service in Iran but as a result may face discrimination and/or persecution on the grounds of their sexuality/gender identity in Iran.

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Country information

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4. Legal context

4.1 General requirements

4.1.1 According to Child Soldiers International in their global report dated 2008:

'The constitution stated that "the government is obliged to provide a programme of military training, with all requisite facilities for all its citizens, in accordance with the Islamic criteria, in such a way that all citizens will be able to engage in the armed defence of the Islamic Republic of Iran" (Article 151). The government stated in 1998 that "according to article 2 of the Public Conscription Act, every Iranian citizen is eligible for military service as of 21 March of the year he reaches 19", and that "the minimum employment age for the armed forces for the purpose of receiving military training is 16 and the minimum age for employment for the Police Forces is 17".¹

'The voluntary recruitment age was 16. Military service was carried out in the Iranian Armed Forces and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, the latter established shortly after the 1979 revolution and with its own air and naval services. Most of the armed forces were reportedly made up of conscripts who received minimal training and served for 18 months. There was also a large army reserve, who received "negligible" training. There was a military academy in Teheran, and a signals training centre and special forces and airborne training facility in Shiraz. The number of under-18s in government armed forces was unknown.²

4.1.2 A May 2016 article on Jane's considered that 'At present, there are no indications that conscription will be abandoned or curtailed because of the army's reliance on the conscript model to fulfil its manpower requirements (conscripts are estimated at over 60% of the total strength of the army). Up to 220,000 of the 350,000 in active strength as the large percentage of the army.'³

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¹ Child Soldiers International, Global report 2008- Iran, 2008
<http://www.refworld.org/publisher,CSCOAL,ANNUALREPORT,IRN,486cb109c,0.html>. Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

² Child Soldiers International, Global report 2008- Iran, 2008
<http://www.refworld.org/publisher,CSCOAL,ANNUALREPORT,IRN,486cb109c,0.html>. Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

³ Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, Iran- Army, 16 May 2016, subscription source. Date accessed: 14 June 2016.

4.2 Gender

- 4.2.1 Sources cited in a March 2014 Canadian IRB response to information request on military service in Iran reported that military service is compulsory for males⁴ while the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD), citing information from the June 2015 update to the CIA World Factbook, indicated that women are exempt from military service.⁵ Women may become professional soldiers in non-arms-bearing roles.⁶

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4.3 Age of Service

- 4.3.1 Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment in their chapter on the Iranian Army updated 16 May 2016 noted that 'Iranian males are liable for conscription from the age of 18, but may begin military service from 16.'⁷
- 4.3.2 An October 2014 Al-Monitor article reported that 'All Iranian males are required to report for military service at 18'⁸, while the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD), citing information from the June 2015 update to the CIA World Factbook, reported that 'the age of compulsory military service is 18 years.'⁹ This appears to have been confirmed via a December 2015 Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) article which reported that 'Iran has a mandatory military service for men starting at the age of 18.'¹⁰
- 4.3.3 However, sources cited in a March 2014 Canadian IRB response to information request on military service in Iran suggested that a person could begin service as early as 15 years of age but as late as 19¹¹, while the

⁴ Al-Monitor, 'Iran's new military policy could boost birthrates', 12 October 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/10/iran-military-conscription-service.html#>. Date accessed: 27 June 2016.

⁵ Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD), 'Iran: Political Opposition Groups, Security Forces, Selected Human Rights Issues, Rule of Law: COI Compilation' (§7.9.5: Military Service), July 2015, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/559baae44.html>. Date accessed: 27 June 2016.

⁶ Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD), 'Iran: Political Opposition Groups, Security Forces, Selected Human Rights Issues, Rule of Law: COI Compilation' (§7.9.5: Military Service), July 2015, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/559baae44.html>. Date accessed: 27 June 2016.

⁷ Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, Iran- Army, 16 May 2016, subscription source. Date accessed: 14 June 2016.

⁸ Al-Monitor, 'Iran's new military policy could boost birthrates', 12 October 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/10/iran-military-conscription-service.html#>. Date accessed: 27 June 2016.

⁹ Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD), 'Iran: Political Opposition Groups, Security Forces, Selected Human Rights Issues, Rule of Law: COI Compilation' (§7.9.5: Military Service), July 2015, available via UNHCR's RefWorld site at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/559baae44.html>. Date accessed: 27 June 2016.

¹⁰ Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), 'Shorter conscription for PhD holders', 31 December 2015, <http://www.irna.ir/en/News/81901060/>. Date accessed: 27 June 2016.

¹¹ Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa, 'Response to Information Request, Ref: IRN104809.E, Iran: Military service, including recruitment age, length of service, reasons for exemption, the possibility of performing a replacement service and the treatment

ACCORD COI compilation, citing other sources, qualifies the starting point for compulsory military service at 18 but also stated ‘...it is “16 years of age for volunteers”, “17 years of age for Law Enforcement Forces” (LEF) and “15 years of age for Basij Forces”¹².

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4.4 Religion

4.4.1 A Today’s Zaman report of 29 April 2012, ‘Is Iran engaging in sectarian discrimination against its Sunnis?’, noted: ‘Sunnis are allowed to serve in the military, but they are not permitted to become officers.’¹³

4.4.2 A Landinfo report of July 2011 on ‘Iran: Christians and Converts’, noted in a section on Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism in the country that ‘Young men of conscription age are called in for military service on an equal basis with other Iranians, but are barred from making a military career.’¹⁴

4.4.3 The US Department of State also noted in its 2014 International Religious Freedom report:

‘The constitution states the army must be Islamic, in the sense that it must be committed to Islamic ideals and must recruit individuals who are committed to the objectives of the Islamic Revolution. No members of religious minority groups are exempt from military service by law. The law forbids non-Muslims from holding positions of authority over Muslims in the armed forces. Members of constitutionally protected religious minorities with a college education may serve as officers during their mandatory military service but may not be career military officers..... Yarsani community representatives reported that in April Hekmat Safari, a Yarsani serving in the Iranian military, committed suicide at the military base in Bijar because of harassment for his faith.’¹⁵

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of people who refuse military service by authorities; whether there are sanctions against conscientious objectors’ (‘1. Background’), 28 March 2014, <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/Eng/ResRec/RirRdi/Pages/index.aspx?doc=455219&pls=1>. Date accessed: 27 June 2016.

¹² Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD), ‘Iran: Political Opposition Groups, Security Forces, Selected Human Rights Issues, Rule of Law: COI Compilation’ (§7.9.5: Military Service), July 2015, available via UNHCR’s RefWorld site at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/559baae44.html>. Date accessed: 27 June 2016.

¹³ Today’s Zaman - ‘Is Iran engaging in sectarian discrimination against its Sunnis?’, 29 April 2012 <http://newageislam.com/islam-and-sectarianism/ali-riza-gafuri/is-iran-engaging-in-sectarian-discrimination-against-its-sunnis/?d/7179> [date accessed 23 June 2016]

¹⁴ Landinfo – ‘Iran: Christians and Converts’ (§2.1 Religious Minorities and their position in Iranian Society), July 2011, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/1772/1/1772_1.pdf. [date accessed 23 June 2016]

¹⁵ US Department of State, International Religious Freedom report 2014, Iran, (§ II, Legal Framework) 14 October 2015 <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm?year=2014&dliid=238454> Date accessed: 14 June 2016.

4.5 Call-Up Procedures

4.5.1 ACCORD's COI July 2015 compilation on Iran, citing the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, BZ) December 2013 'General Official Report on Iran', reported that

'...all men, upon reaching the age of 18, are called up as part of their military service duties. They must report to the military authorities within one month after the start of the Iranian calendar year in which they turn 18. Announcements are made via the media (including newspapers, radio and television) calling upon men born in a given year to report to the local conscription bureau.'¹⁶

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5. Exemptions or alternatives

5.1 Exemptions

5.1.1 The IHRDC report Denied Identity: Human Rights Abuses Against Iran's LGBT Community, dated 7 November 2013 noted that:

'All males of the required age are subject to the draft in Iran, however there are exceptions for those who cannot serve on account of physical or mental health problems or disabilities. While typically conditions such as schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, manic-depressive tendencies and other serious mental illnesses would warrant an exception from service on psychological grounds, the regulatory code that governs medical exemptions also states that "moral and sexual deviancy, such as transsexuality" can be grounds for a medical exemption.'

'It should be noted that exceptions can also made for non-health related reasons including, inter alia: a man who has demonstrated exceptional scholastic achievement; a man who is the only child in a family (on the grounds that the parents require the assistance of their only child); a man who is the only male in the family and his father is over 65 years old; a man who is the sole caretaker of a parent, a minor or ill sibling or ill grandparents. Additionally, students in secondary school or university are exempt as long as they are attending classes.'¹⁷

5.1.2 Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment in their chapter on the Iranian Army updated 16 May 2016 noted that:

'Young men enrolling in university may defer their military service until after graduation. Those drafted can request exemption for medical reasons or on social grounds (such as a necessity to care for elderly parents).'

¹⁶ Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD), 'Iran: Political Opposition Groups, Security Forces, Selected Human Rights Issues, Rule of Law: COI Compilation' (§7.9.5: Military Service), July 2015, available via UNHCR's RefWorld site at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/559baae44.html>. Date accessed: 27 June 2016.

¹⁷ Iran Human Rights Documentation Centre, Denied Identity: Human Rights Abuses Against Iran's LGBT Community, (§ 5.7.1 Military exemption and note 205), 7 November 2013, <http://www.iranhrdc.org/english/publications/reports/1000000398-denied-identity-human-rights-abuses-against-irans-lgbt-community.html#5.7.1>. Date accessed: 14 June 2016.

5.1.3 The undated website of the Iranian Embassy in The Hague states that: 'According to regulations of Medical Exemption of Military Service, those liable to the duty of service can be generally categorized into 4 main groups in terms of their conditions:

- Individuals being in a state of complete physical and mental Health and hence entirely capable of being drafted to the mandatory service period.
- Individuals who have a handicap or suffer from a certain illness and are thus not in a complete state of health, however yet well capable of carrying out non-combat/military-related services in offices
- Those who due to weak disposition, growth deficiency or suffering from physical or mental illnesses are temporarily not capable of serving for the mandatory period.
- Those who due to handicaps or mental and/or physical illnesses are permanently unable to be drafted for mandatory service period.¹⁸

5.1.4 The same source also notes that a medical examination is compulsory for those notifying the Medical Council of a medical/health condition:

'Determining the patient's illness is up to the Medical Council. If the Medical Council determines the applicant is in fact eligible for being drafted to service, then they will be drafted to service, and if due to the process they had been late for attending their service, their absence during that period will be registered. Applicants may only use the Medical exemption, given that they had not been in the course of studying during the investigation of their case by the Medical Council.'¹⁹

5.1.5 Iran Pulse also noted that exemptions may be possible for 'those who work in industries vital to the government or military.'²⁰

5.1.6 The US State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs Iran Reciprocity Schedule noted that 'There are many reasons a man could be exempted, including, but not limited to, payment in lieu of service, medical reasons, being the only son in his family, having elderly parents, and having a brother currently serving in the military.'²¹

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¹⁸ Iranian Embassy in The Hague, Medical & Health-Related Exemptions, undated <http://iranianembassy.nl/en/consular.php?content=2103>. Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

¹⁹ Iranian Embassy in The Hague, Medical & Health-Related Exemptions, undated <http://iranianembassy.nl/en/consular.php?content=2103>. Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

²⁰ Iran Pulse- Al Monitor, Iran may increase compulsory military service by three months, 19 December 2013, <http://iranpulse.al-monitor.com/index.php/2013/12/3506/iran-may-increase-compulsory-military-service-by-three-months/>. Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

²¹ US State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs Iran Reciprocity Schedule (Military Records), undated <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/fees/reciprocity-by-country/IR.html#militaryrecords-5>

5.2 Buy out

- 5.2.1 Iran Pulse cited the chief conscription officer of the armed forces, Gen. Moussa Kamali as stating in a December 2013 article with regard to those who pay high fees for exemption from military service ‘Because of its discriminatory nature, paying off military service was never desired by the armed forces, and that option has been closed.’ He added that for those who live outside of the country, the option of paying off military service had been cancelled earlier this year. For those who live in the country, paying to avoid military service has not always been offered.²²
- 5.2.2 A February 2015 EA World View report on selling exemptions from military service noted:
‘The latest state budget reintroduces a controversial program to sell exemptions from mandatory military service [...] ‘Military exemptions haven’t been sold in more than a decade, and critics say the policy risks deepening a social divide in Iran between haves and have-nots [...]’In the past, the fee was the equivalent of several hundred dollars. Today it starts at roughly \$6,500, and can run to more than double that.’²³
- 5.2.3 Radio Zamaneh reported in March 2015 that:
‘Iran’s Conscription Organization reports that 280,000 people have registered to make a fine payment in lieu of serving their obligatory military service. The officials state, however, that the option is not available to all men, but those who meet the requirements will be given the opportunity to obtain an exemption by paying a fine. Iranian men must serve a two-year compulsory military service. In the latest budget, the administration proposed that those who have defaulted on their service for more than eight years can pay a fine to buy out their military service. The fines differ based on level of education, with a higher education demanding higher fines.’²⁴
- 5.2.4 Middle East Eye reported that on 20 June 2016 ‘General Moussa Kamali, chief conscription officer for the Iranian armed forces, told local newspaper Tasnim on Sunday that, since the start of the current Iranian month of Khordad in late May, more than 10,000 people have applied to pay absence fines rather than serve in the military.’²⁵

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²² Iran Pulse- Al Monitor, Iran may increase compulsory military service by three months, 19 December 2013, <http://iranpulse.al-monitor.com/index.php/2013/12/3506/iran-may-increase-compulsory-military-service-by-three-months/>. Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

²³ EA WorldView - ‘Iran Feature: How to Spot an Economic Crisis – When Tehran Sells Exemptions from Military Service’, 1 February 2015 <http://eaworldview.com/2015/02/iran-feature-spot-economic-crisis-tehran-sells-exemptions-military-service/> Date accessed: 23 June 2016.

²⁴ Radio zamaneh, Hundreds of thousands choose fine over military service, 28 March 2015 <https://en.radiozamaneh.com/featured/hundreds-of-thousands-choose-fine-over-military-service/>. Date accessed: 21 June 2016.

²⁵ Middle East Eye, Iran to crack down on evaders of military service, 20 June 2016. <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/iran-arrest-more-dodgers-compulsory-military-service-1073666426>. Date accessed: 20 June 2016.

5.3 Sexual orientation/gender identity

5.3.1 The US State Department's Human rights report for 2015 notes that: 'Those dismissed from mandatory military service due to their sexual orientation received special exemption cards indicating the reason for their dismissal, which became the basis for later discrimination.'²⁶

5.3.2 IHRDC noted that: 'Classified as a mental disorder, homosexuality can be grounds for exemption from military service, which is compulsory in Iran. ... Under Iranian law, a designation as a transsexual is considered to constitute a medical and psychological condition that warrants an exemption from compulsory military service.

'It should be noted that the Iranian government—and to an extent, the medical profession in Iran—does not distinguish between “transgender” and “transsexual” individuals.'²⁷

5.3.3 6Rang, the Iranian Lesbian and Transgender Network noted in May 2016 that:

'[...] the Iranian State under the pretence of implementing new regulations pertaining to medical exemption from military service, has engaged in an unprecedented information gathering operation by the police and the General Military Service Organisation.'

'[...]The new law also allows gay individuals to be identified by the police, judicial authorities, employers and those responsible for educational centres who can simply look at their military exemption cards, which functions as one of the few forms of acceptable IDs in Iran.

[...] Asad, one of the applicants who was able to obtain their permanent military exemption status after two years told 6Rang: “After a while you would have been told in no uncertain terms that if you don't confess to your sexual relations; they'd probably draft you. It is not enough to be only a homosexual; you need to report that you have had same sexual relationships which is an illegal act.”²⁸

5.3.4 The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada cites a 2010 Human Rights Watch report which indicated that “in order to “prove” their sexual orientation or gender identity, men must undergo “numerous” “humiliating” physical and psychological tests and exams, which may be costly, and they may also encounter administrative barriers, such as “few doctors” to perform such

²⁶ US Department of State, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015, Iran, 13 April 2016, section 6 <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252923>. Date accessed: 14 June 2016.

²⁷ Iran Human Rights Documentation Centre, Denied Identity: Human Rights Abuses Against Iran's LGBT Community, Introduction, 5.7.1. Military exemption and note 209, 7 November 2013, <http://www.iranhrdc.org/english/publications/reports/1000000398-denied-identity-human-rights-abuses-against-irans-lgbt-community.html#5.7.1>. Date accessed: 14 June 2016.

²⁸ 6Rang- Iranian Lesbian and Transgender Network, Confessing to having same-sex relations is the new norm for military service exemptions in Iran, 20 May 2016 <http://6rang.org/english/2261>. Date accessed: 20 June 2016.

tests and doctors that refuse to perform them without parental accompaniment”.²⁹

5.3.5 6Rang continued: ‘The new regulation which was passed in 2014 and has been gradually implemented in the past two years, has two new features.’

‘First, it separates homosexuality from transsexuality and no longer categorizes transsexuality as a form of sexual perversion, and transsexuals are thus afforded the right to permanent military exemption. Meanwhile, the new categorization still identifies both homosexuality and transsexuality as a form of mental disorder and therefore gay and trans people face many difficulties in finding jobs and seeking education. Even getting married for transsexuals is exceedingly difficult.’

‘Secondly, all the officials involved in the process of issuing military service exemption IDs have an intimate knowledge of the applicants’ life and sexual desires. Also, whenever gay individuals are required to provide their ID in an overwhelmingly homophobic society, they would be at the risk of being chastised and their human rights being violated (because of their sexual identity).’

‘[...] All of the above evidence indicates that Iranian gay persons have no choice but to submit to the current laws in order to obtain military service exemption based on their sexuality, which is being considered a mental disorder. Obtaining this ID for many homosexuals is a necessity since the military environment is violent, homophobic and filled with degrading behaviour and even very real threats of rape. Those who wish to legally travel out of the country also need to either obtain their exemption card for the so-called medical reasons or pay 150 million Rial on bail. As a result of the new regulations, a vast number of gay individuals are forced to cooperate with the police and ‘voluntarily’ submit their intimate information to the authorities.’³⁰

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5.4 Required documentation for exemption

5.4.1 The Iranian Embassy in The Hague report that the following documents are required when applying for a Medical Exemption:

- Original copy of Birth Certificate (that includes an ID photo), as well as 3 photocopies of all the pages of the document.

²⁹ Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa, ‘Response to Information Request, Ref: IRN104809.E, Iran: Military service, including recruitment age, length of service, reasons for exemption, the possibility of performing a replacement service and the treatment of people who refuse military service by authorities; whether there are sanctions against conscientious objectors’ (‘1.1 Duration of Service’), 28 March 2014, <http://www.irb-cjsr.gc.ca/Eng/ResRec/RirRdi/Pages/index.aspx?doc=455219&pls=1>. Date accessed: 27 June 2016

³⁰ 6Rang- Iranian Lesbian and Transgender Network, Confessing to having same-sex relations is the new norm for military service exemptions in Iran, 20 May 2016 <http://6rang.org/english/2261>. Date accessed: 20 June 2016.

- 8 2x3cm color ID photos (with personal details on the back, light background and a full face)
- Certification of graduation or dropping out of an academic program issued in the year of the individual's application will be submitted.
- NOTE: The most recent academic status of the applicant will be the determining factor, therefore it is necessary to obtain certifications of your academic progress and status (i.e. Graduated, studying, dropping out ...), including their dates of issuance, from the respective academic institutions, and to submit them.
- Filled out application form for obtaining a Medical Exemption from service.
- Filled out application form of primary medical examinations and diagnosis of the applicant for a Medical Exemption.
- NOTE: Diagnosis form must be filled out, undersigned and stamped by a Physician (Practicing inside the country) and who possesses reference code from The I.R. of Iran's Medical Council.
- Original copy of Doctor's Medical Statements and documents regarding the draftee's illness.³¹

5.4.2 The Iranian Ministry of Interior, National Organisation for Civil Registration state that the following documents are required for guardianship exemption from military service:

- An affidavit, about the applicant, by three relatives. At least one of the 3 relatives must present his/her passport to the consular section and sign the affidavit in the presence of an official therewith.
- Prepare a power of attorney.
- Prepare a warranty.
- Present a written application for guardianship military service.
- Prepare power of attorney for pursuing matters at the higher education and military service institutions.
- Photocopies of Pages 2-9 Passport and the page holding the visa and photocopy of birth certificate.
- 6 photograph.
- Photocopies of parents' birth certificates.³²

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³¹ Iranian Embassy in The Hague, Medical & Health-Related Exemptions, undated <http://iranianembassy.nl/en/consular.php?content=2103>. Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

³² Islamic Republic of Iran. Ministry of Interior. National Organisation for Civil Registration, undated <http://www.sabteahval.ir/en/Default.aspx?tabid=4140>. Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

5.5 Exemption cards

5.5.1 The US State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs Iran Reciprocity Schedule noted that:

'Because military service is mandatory, Iranian men over 18 who were exempt from military service will have exemption cards issued by the General Conscription Department of the Police Force (Niroo-e Intizami Jumhoori-e Islami). These cards will include basic biographical information, such as name and date of birth. Some indicate why the cardholder was exempted from military service. There are many reasons a man could be exempted, including, but not limited to, payment in lieu of service, medical reasons, being the only son in his family, having elderly parents, and having a brother currently serving in the military. Men who were exempted before 1990 may not have been issued a card explaining why they were exempt.'³³

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6. Length of service

6.1 Standard length

6.1.1 AI Monitor reported in September 2014 that: 'In 2009, the army shortened military service to 18 months. Service time was further shortened for men with bachelor's, master's or doctoral degrees to one to three months. In 2012, however, military service was set at 21 months for all citizens. Now, from 2015, it will increase to 24 months.'³⁴

6.1.2 Sources cited in a March 2014 Canadian IRB response to information request on military service in Iran reported that military service lasts for between 18 to 24 months³⁵. It cited a 2013 BBC report which indicated that according to Iranian Students' News Agency (ISNA), General Musa Kamali, the Vice Commander of the Headquarters for Human Resources of the Iranian Armed Forces, was quoted as saying that "the duration of military service is 18 months in combat and in insecure regions, 19 months in the regions which are deprived of facilities and have bad weather conditions, 21 months in other places, and 24 months in government offices".³⁶ An April

³³ US State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs Iran Reciprocity Schedule (Military Records), undated <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/fees/reciprocity-by-country/IR.html#militaryrecords-5>

³⁴ AI Monitor, Iran's new military policy could boost birthrates, 30 September 2014 <http://www.ai-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/10/iran-military-conscription-service.html>. Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

³⁵ Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa, 'Response to Information Request, Ref: IRN104809.E, Iran: Military service, including recruitment age, length of service, reasons for exemption, the possibility of performing a replacement service and the treatment of people who refuse military service by authorities; whether there are sanctions against conscientious objectors' ('1.1 Duration of Service'), 28 March 2014, <http://www.irb-cjsr.gc.ca/Eng/ResRec/RirRdi/Pages/index.aspx?doc=455219&pls=1>. Date accessed: 27 June 2016.

³⁶ Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa, 'Response to Information Request, Ref: IRN104809.E, Iran: Military service, including recruitment age, length of service, reasons for exemption, the possibility of performing a replacement service and the treatment of people who refuse military service by authorities; whether there are sanctions against

2015 article in the Trend News Agency in Baku suggests compulsory military service typically lasting 21 months is still the case³⁷ as does a July 2015 article in the Guardian newspaper, which reported that 'All eligible Iranian men are required to do 21 months of military service in one of the three branches of the military: the police, the Revolutionary Guard, or the army.'³⁸

- 6.1.3 Despite reports of a September 2014 announcement that military service would be increased from 21 to 24 months³⁹, an April 2015 article in the Trend News Agency in Baku reported that this had been postponed.⁴⁰
- 6.1.4 Despite this, a December 2015 Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) article reported that 'There is a 24-month military service for general, 22 months for destitute areas and 20 months in the border regions. The first two months are normally for military education and training in the barracks.'⁴¹
- 6.1.5 A YouTube video, commenting on 100 years of conscription in Iran, also refers to a 24-month length of service⁴².
- 6.1.6 Jane's reported that the increase in military service to 24 months was 'a result of difficulties in securing a sufficient number of recruits as a result of decreasing birth rates.'⁴³

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6.2 Variations

- 6.2.1 IRNA cited Mohammad Kazem Bahrami, deputy head of the Judicial Organization of the Armed Forces as stating 'Under a new scheme, mandatory military service will be reduced by 6 to 10 months for draftees who present their doctoral dissertation in judicial and legal areas pertaining to the armed forces'.⁴⁴
- 6.2.2 It was also announced in September 2014 that "Married soldiers will have their service time shortened by three months. Also, for each child, another

conscientious objectors' ('1.1 Duration of Service'), 28 March 2014, <http://www.irb-cjsr.gc.ca/Eng/ResRec/RirRdi/Pages/index.aspx?doc=455219&pls=1>. Date accessed: 27 June 2016.

³⁷ Trend News Agency, 'Iran postpones increasing compulsory military service', 11 April 2015, <http://en.trend.az/iran/society/2382726.html>. Date accessed: 27 June 2016.

³⁸ The Guardian, 'How I learned to stop worrying and love the Iranian army', 23 July 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/iran-blog/2015/jul/22/iran-military-uniform-gomrok-shopping-spree>. Date accessed: 27 June 2016.

³⁹ Al-Monitor, 'Iran's new military policy could boost birthrates', 12 October 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/10/iran-military-conscription-service.html#>. Date accessed: 27 June 2016.

⁴⁰ Trend News Agency, 'Iran postpones increasing compulsory military service', 11 April 2015, <http://en.trend.az/iran/society/2382726.html>. Date accessed: 27 June 2016.

⁴¹ Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), 'Shorter conscription for PhD holders', 31 December 2015, <http://www.irna.ir/en/News/81901060/>. Date accessed: 27 June 2016.

⁴² YouTube, 'One Century of Military Service in Iran', 10 January 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AjZ5udFI>. Date accessed: 27 June 2016.

⁴³ Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, Iran- Army, 16 May 2016, subscription source. Date accessed: 14 June 2016.

⁴⁴ Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), 'Shorter conscription for PhD holders', 31 December 2015, <http://www.irna.ir/en/News/81901060/>. Date accessed: 27 June 2016.

three months is subtracted. In other words, if a soldier is married and has one child, his service time will be shortened by six months”.⁴⁵

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6.3 Completion cards

6.3.1 The US State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs Iran Reciprocity Schedule noted that:

‘Military service completion cards and reliable translations in English are readily available in Iran. The entity that issued the card will usually be indicated in the heading of the translation. Although translations tend to be accurate, it is recommended that both the translation and the copy of the original card be reviewed.’

‘For military service completed in 1980 or later, the Armed Forces of Iran and the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) issue military service completion cards. The IRGC issues military service completion cards to men who have served in the IRGC and in the Basij Forces; the Armed Forces of Iran issues military service completion cards to men who served in the Air Force, Navy, Army, or police forces. Prior to 1980, military cards were issued by the Imperial Armed Forces. The cards include detailed biographical information such as blood type, hair color, weight, height, eye color, and physical defects. Cards also indicate the dates of service according to the Persian calendar. The card will also show the rank of the cardholder (if he had one) and sometimes his education level.’

‘The major Iranian-processing posts have seen a small number of new military cards, which do not indicate the branch of service on the card.’⁴⁶

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7. Evasion and desertion

7.1 Alternatives to service

7.1.1 According to the December 2013 General Official Report of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

‘Students are eligible for deferment of military service. They are expected to enter military service within six months after finishing their studies. In practice, this period can be extended due to administrative delays. If a person does not report to the authorities within this timeframe, he is considered a draft evader or objector. There is no alternative civilian service in Iran. Conscientious objection is not accepted under Iranian law. The evasion of military service is punishable under Article 40 of the Armed

⁴⁵ Al-Monitor, ‘Iran’s new military policy could boost birthrates’, 12 October 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/10/iran-military-conscription-service.html#>. Date accessed: 27 June 2016.

⁴⁶ US State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs Iran Reciprocity Schedule (Military Records), undated <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/fees/reciprocity-by-country/IR.html#militaryrecords-5>

Forces Penal Law by imprisonment of six months to two years, or an extension of the service.⁴⁷

- 7.1.2 Conscience and Peace Tax International (CPTI), a non-profit group registered in Belgium that works, amongst others, in support of conscientious objectors, stated in a December 2010 report submitted to the UN Human Rights Committee:

“It is not recorded that any provision exists in Iran to accommodate conscientious objectors to military service. Although there have been no reports of individual cases, this does not prove that such objections are unknown; it could well be that any potential conscientious objector might have felt unsafe in expressing these, particularly to the recruitment authorities.”⁴⁸

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7.2 Consequence of evasion/desertion

- 7.2.1 An April 2009 joint fact-finding mission report of the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) states:

‘A person who deserts from the army will have to continue the military service upon return, if he is under the age of 40. Individuals who are over the age of 40 will not be asked to do military service. If a person has deserted or evaded the military service and returns to Iran after the age of 40, he will receive a financial punishment and possibly imprisonment. This is subject to arbitrary ruling. However, if the person has been subject to a pardon he will not face punishment on return to Iran. According to the Attorney at Law, a person who evades military service may be punished. According to Military Law, if a person had to serve 20 months of military service and evades, the length of the service will increase to 24 or 26 months. The Attorney at Law added that according to “previous legislation” a person may also be fined a few thousand US Dollars instead of serving extended military service. However, the Attorney at Law stated that it is still to be seen how recent changes in law are used in practice, i.e. whether a person will be fined or must serve extra time.’⁴⁹

- 7.2.2 The December 2013 General Official Report of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that:

⁴⁷ Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD), Iran: Political Opposition Groups, Security Forces, Selected Human Rights Issues, Rule of Law: COI Compilation, (§7.9.5: Military Service), July 2015, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/559baae44.html>. Date accessed: 14 June 2016.

⁴⁸ Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD), Iran: Political Opposition Groups, Security Forces, Selected Human Rights Issues, Rule of Law: COI Compilation, (§7.9.5: Military Service), July 2015, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/559baae44.html>. Date accessed: 14 June 2016.

⁴⁹ Danish Immigration Service/Danish Refugee Council: Fact finding mission to Iran- Human Rights Situation for Minorities, Women and Converts, and Entry and Exit Procedures, ID Cards, Summons and Reporting, etc. 24 August - 2 September 2008, April 2009 http://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/90D772D5-F2DA-45BE-9DBB-87E00CD0EB83/0/iran_report_final.pdf. Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

'Young men from the age of 18 who are called for military service but do not present themselves to the authorities are considered as draft evaders. There is no alternative military service in Iran and conscientious objection is not recognized. Draft evasion is liable for prosecution. Persons who evade military service for up to three months during peace time (or up to 15 days during war) must serve three months in addition to the regular term. If the draftee is absent for longer than three months during peace time (or 15 days during war), the military service will be extended by six months. Longer draft evasion (one year during peace or two months during war) may result in criminal proceedings before a military court. Draft evaders risk losing social benefits and civic rights including their right to work, to education or the right to set up a business. If a draft evader evaded reports for military service voluntarily, the duration of service will be extended by three months, whereas if a draft evader is arrested, he is obliged to serve for an extra six months.'⁵⁰

7.2.3 The same source went on to note that:

'It is not known whether, in practice, the Iranian authorities pursue a policy of actively tracking down and prosecuting draft evaders and deserters.'

'Draft evaders may also be divested of social and civic rights including their right to work, to education or to set up their own business.'⁵¹

7.2.4 IHRDC noted that: 'A failure to serve without being granted an exemption can result in the government's refusal to grant a driver's license to that individual, revocation of their passport and a ban on them leaving the country without special permission.'⁵² According to Iran Pulse, 'Men who do not serve in the military or have not been exempted are ineligible for government jobs and typically are not hired for high-paying jobs.'⁵³

7.2.5 Middle East Eye reported that: 'Between 30,000 and 35,000 people have already been arrested this year for attempting to dodge military service, [General Moussa Kamali, chief conscription officer for the Iranian armed forces] said. "The process of identifying and arresting fugitives will be intensified this year," Kamali said.'⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD), Iran: Political Opposition Groups, Security Forces, Selected Human Rights Issues, Rule of Law: COI Compilation, (§7.9.5: Military Service), July 2015, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/559baae44.html> Date accessed: 14 June 2016.

⁵¹ Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD), Iran: Political Opposition Groups, Security Forces, Selected Human Rights Issues, Rule of Law: COI Compilation, (§7.9.5: Military Service), July 2015, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/559baae44.html>. Date accessed: 14 June 2016.

⁵² Iran Human Rights Documentation Centre, Denied Identity: Human Rights Abuses Against Iran's LGBT Community, 5.7.1. Military exemption, 7 November 2013, <http://www.iranhrdc.org/english/publications/reports/1000000398-denied-identity-human-rights-abuses-against-irans-lgbt-community.html#5.7.1>. Date accessed: 14 June 2016.

⁵³ Iran Pulse- Al Monitor, Iran may increase compulsory military service by three months, 19 December 2013, <http://iranpulse.al-monitor.com/index.php/2013/12/3506/iran-may-increase-compulsory-military-service-by-three-months/>. Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

⁵⁴ Middle East Eye, Iran to crack down on evaders of military service, 20 June 2016.

8. Treatment

8.1 Mistreatment of conscripts

8.1.1 Jane's sentinel security assessment noted that:

'As noted previously, enlisted personnel within the army are primarily conscripted, and as such likely suffer from flagging morale in comparison with other services and volunteer forces. However, despite reports of low quality of living, low pay (estimated at approximately USD30 per month), and few professional prospects coming from mandatory service, there is no indication that morale issues have lessened the overall capabilities of the Iranian Army, given its present role and remit.⁵⁵

8.1.2 Al Monitor reported that: 'According to officials in the Military Service Organization, soldiers' salaries range from 100,000 to 110,000 tomans per month (\$30 to \$35). Aside from this, soldiers do not have suitable living standards.⁵⁶

8.1.3 The same article also contained an interview with someone who had recently completed his military service. The article reported that: [...] 'soldiers faced malnutrition. "Vegetables, fruit, dairy products and other sources of calcium and vitamins were nonexistent. The quality of food was disastrous, but this was not the only problem. The other problem was the quantity of rice and meat. For example, they would put only 20 grams of meat in a stew. Everyone was constantly hungry."⁵⁷

8.1.4 In February 2014, Esmail Ahmadi Moghaddam, head of the Law Enforcement Forces, confirmed that soldiers faced malnutrition, saying, "Our low budget is preventing us from distributing protein-rich and vitamin-rich foods among the soldiers."⁵⁸

8.1.5 A Middle East Eye report of June 2016 noted that:

'Members of Iran's armed forces are currently deployed in Syria in support of President Bashar al-Assad. However, it is not known whether Iranian nationals completing their military service have been deployed there – the majority of low-ranking soldiers sent to Syria by Iran are alleged to be Afghan refugees living in Iran who are enticed to fight with by high wages

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/iran-arrest-more-dodgers-compulsory-military-service-1073666426>. Date accessed: 20 June 2016.

⁵⁵ Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, Iran- Army, 16 May 2016, subscription source. Date accessed: 14 June 2016.

⁵⁶ Al Monitor, Iran's new military policy could boost birthrates, 30 September 2014 <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/10/iran-military-conscription-service.html>. Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

⁵⁷ Al Monitor, Iran's new military policy could boost birthrates, 30 September 2014 <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/10/iran-military-conscription-service.html>. Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

⁵⁸ Al Monitor, Iran's new military policy could boost birthrates, 30 September 2014 <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/10/iran-military-conscription-service.html>. Date accessed: 20 June 2016.

and promises of Iranian citizenship once they complete their service. Last year a senior military officer, Mohammad Akbar Halvaei, told an audience at Tehran University that compulsory military service was harming the country's economy, and that the armed forces could operate with 200,000 personnel rather than the over 500,000 people currently employed.’⁵⁹

8.1.6 In April 2015 Iran Wire article reported:

‘According to a study by an Iranian medical journal, there is a direct correlation between suicides and reports of senior commanders psychologically and physically abusing conscripted soldiers. The report also says that “the geographic location of the base, the level of solidarity among soldiers and how much the soldiers have in common” also affect suicidal tendencies among soldiers. In addition to suicide, there are high numbers of incidents of self-mutilation. Many soldiers maim themselves as a way of being exempted from military service.” There are no accurate statistics about suicide and self-mutilation among Iranian soldiers,” a sociology student who has done research on the subject told me. “The military system currently in place prevents any information from being published. It prevents the distribution of reliable statistics that might actually be useful to produce sound studies on the subject. Even so, the small number of published reports that are available lead us to believe that ethnic and religious minorities represent a high percentage of the victims.”’

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⁵⁹ Middle East Eye, Iran to crack down on evaders of military service, 20 June 2016. <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/iran-arrest-more-dodgers-compulsory-military-service-1073666426>. Date accessed: 20 June 2016.

Version Control and Contacts

Contacts

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Clearance

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