



## Iran

Official Name: Islamic Republic of Iran

Location: Middle East

Population: 78,868,711 (#18)

Population Growth Rate: 1.247 (#93)

Birth Rate: 18.52 per 1,000 (#104)

Death Rate: 5.94 per 1,000 (#166)

Infant Mortality: 41.11 per 1,000 (#58)

Life Expectancy:

Male= 68.84

Female= 71.93

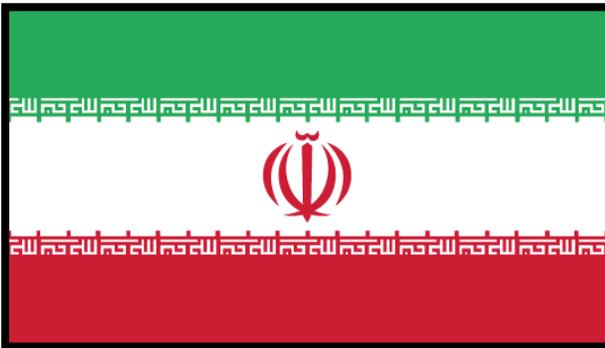
Language: Persian (Official)

Literacy: 77%

Net Migration: -.11 per 1,000 (#120)

Urbanization: 71%

Capitol: Tehran (7.9 million)



Ethnic Information: Persian 61%, Azeri 16%, Kurd 10%, Lur 6%, Baloch 2%, Arab 2%, Turkmen and Turkic tribes 2%, other 1%.

Religious Information: Muslim (official) 98% (Shia 89%, Sunni 9%), other (includes Zoroastrian, Jewish, Christian, and Baha'i) 2%

### Critical Junctures

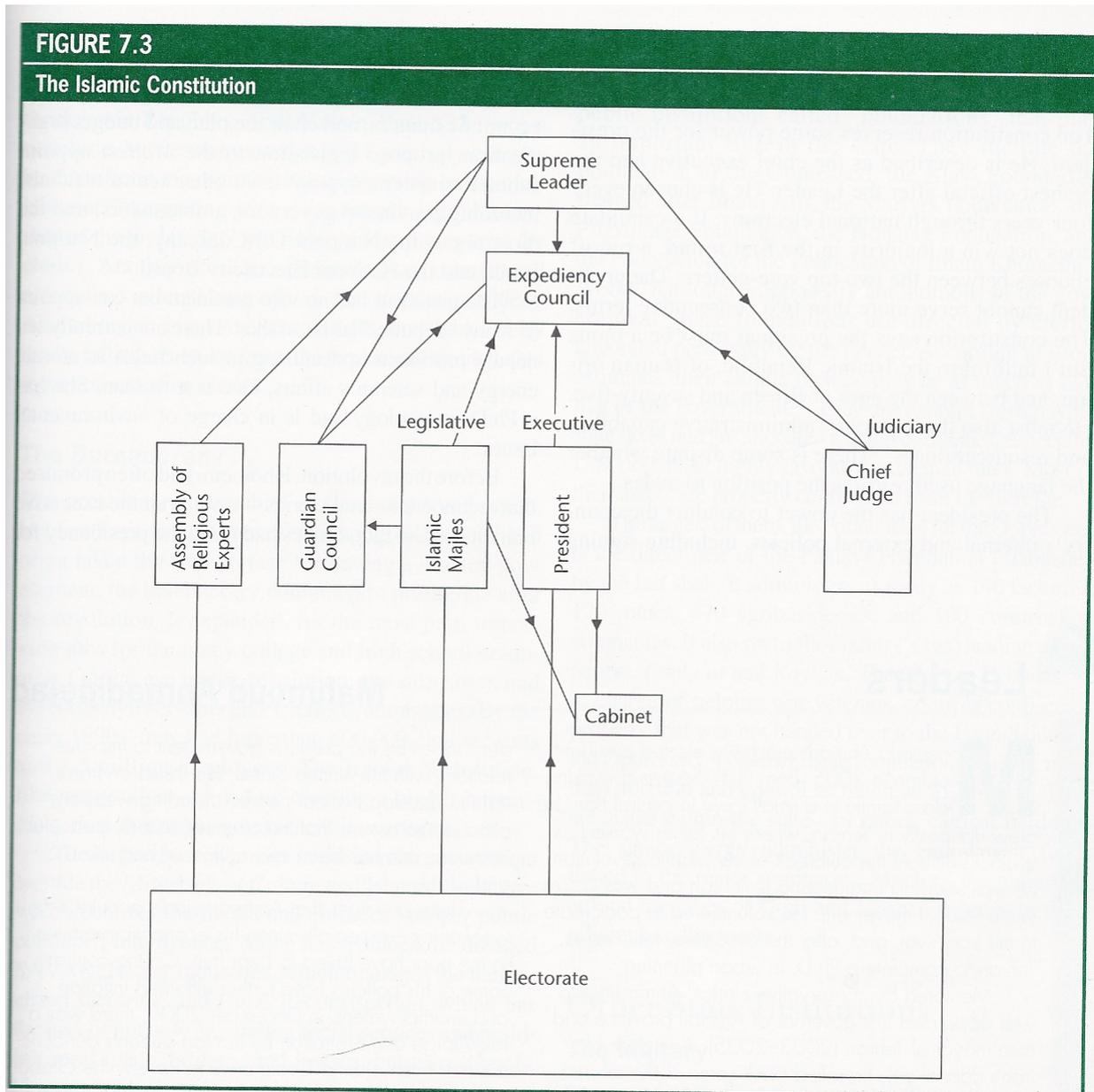
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1. The Safavids (1501-1722)
2. The Qajars (1794-1925)
3. The Pahlavis (1925-1979)
4. Islamic Revolution (1977-1979)
5. Islamic Republic (1979-2001)

### Key Terms:

Muslim, Islamic, Shia, Sunni, Khomeini, Bazargan, Majles, Assembly of Religious Experts, Guardian Council, Theocracy, Ayatollah, Shari'a Law.

# Government Structure



Written Constitution. Federal, unitary system. Little power at the local level, considerable power at the national level. Nation divided into 31 provinces.

**Supreme Leader:**

Elected for life by the Assembly of Religious Experts. Directly controls Military, Security & religious apparatus. Can overrule any action taken by any department or branch of the government.

### **Executive Branch:**

**President** is directly elected by popular vote to a four year term, also considered part of the Executive branch of government are three oversight bodies: 1) **Assembly of Experts** (Majles-e Khoebregan), a popularly elected body charged with determining the succession of the Supreme Leader, reviewing his performance, and deposing him if deemed necessary; 2) **Expediency Council** or the Council for the Discernment of Expediency (Majma-ye- Tashkhis-e -Maslahat-e- Nezam) exerts supervisory authority over the executive, judicial, and legislative branches and resolves legislative issues when the Majles and the Council of Guardians disagree and since 1989 has been used to advise national religious leaders on matters of national policy; in 2005 the Council's powers were expanded to act as a supervisory body for the government; 3) **Council of Guardians** of the Constitution or Council of Guardians or Guardians Council (Shora-ye Negban-e Qanon-e Asasi) determines whether proposed legislation is both constitutional and faithful to Islamic law, vets candidates in popular elections for suitability, and supervises national elections

### **Legislative:**

Unicameral Islamic Consultative Assembly or Majles-e Shura-ye Eslami or **Majles** (290 seats; members elected by popular vote from single and multimember districts to serve four-year terms)

### **Judicial:**

The Supreme Court (Qevah Qazaieh) and the four-member High Council of the Judiciary have a single head and overlapping responsibilities; together they supervise the enforcement of all laws and establish judicial and legal policies; lower courts include a special clerical court, a revolutionary court, and a special administrative court. Legal system uses Shari'a law.

## Political Information



**Current President:** Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005 & 2009)

**Term in Office:** Four Years

**Next Election:** 2013

**Party Affiliation:** None



**Supreme Leader:** Ali Khamenei

**Term in Office:** Life

**Party Affiliation:** None

**Political parties:** Traditional political parties don't exist. Like minded people form or join coalitions for the purpose of winning elections, influencing government policy or passing legislation. Two most important such groups: The Society of the Militant Clergy (populist) who believe in using the power of the state to effect social change (aid to unemployment, social programs, rationing, subsidizing essential goods etc.). The Association of Militant Clergy (laissez-faire, free market capitalists) who believe in low taxes, small government and pro-business policies.

## Economic Information

GDP by Economic Sector:

Agriculture= 11.2%

Industrial= 40.6%

Service= 48.2%

Per Capita GDP= \$12,200 (#99)

GDP Growth Rate= 2.5% (#138)

Labor Force= 26.37 million (#24)

Unemployment Rate= 15.3% (#151)

Population living below Poverty Line=18.7%

Important Economic Activity:

petroleum, petrochemicals, fertilizers, caustic soda, textiles, cement and other construction materials, food processing (particularly sugar refining and vegetable oil production), ferrous and non-ferrous metal fabrication, armaments

## Current Issues

1. During the revolution Ayatollah Khomeini was recognized by all groups as the father of the Islamic Republic. After his death the constitution called for the creation of a leadership council to supervise the government and guarantee an Islamic country. Middle level clerics distrustful of the Ayatollahs never created the council, but appointed Khamenei, **Supreme Leader**.
2. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has angered many in the west with his continuing denial of the Holocaust and his calls for the elimination of Israel.
3. Iran continues to support Hezbollah (Party of God) an Shi'a militant group based in Lebanon which interferes with the Lebanese government and conducts attacks against Israel.
4. While proclaiming that it's nuclear research program is for purely peaceful power generation purposes, most in the west believe that Iran is working on nuclear weapons and will at best destabilize the region or at worst attack Israel.
5. Iran has threatened to close the Straights of Hormuz, a vital waterway at the mouth of the Persian Gulf through which 60% of the world's oil passes.