

Ethnic Divisions in Iran



17.523 Ethnic Conflict In World
Politics

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Iranian Ethnic Divisions Matter

Iran Is Found To Be a
Lair of Al Qaeda



Bush's 'Evil' Label Rejected By Angry Iranian Leaders

TEHRAN, Jan. 31— The country's supreme religious leader reacted angrily today to President Bush's characterization of Iran as part of an "axis of evil," and called Mr. Bush's tone in his State of the Union speech that of a man "thirsty for human blood." "The United States president is threatening and accusing other countries of evil involvement while America has opposed popular movements, supported undemocratic regimes, sold lethal weapons and looted the wealth of other nations more than any other country."

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Iran Boasts of Capacity to Make Bomb Fuel

The Numbers

The Iranian Census does not collect information regarding ethnicity

United States Government estimates
Library of Congress Country Profiles
CIA World Fact Book
Iran's Ethnic Groups
vary significantly

■ Persian ■ Azeri ■ Gilaki & Mazandarani ■ Kurd ■ Arab ■ Other ■ Lur

Persians

Persians form a majority in Iran

The official language of Iran is Persian (Farsi) and areas populated predominantly by Persians tend to be more



Photo by Asana Mashouf

An ancient Persian Monument

Azeri

Sources agree that the Azeri are Iran's largest ethnic minority

The Azeri have ties to Azerbaijan and their native language is in the Turkic family

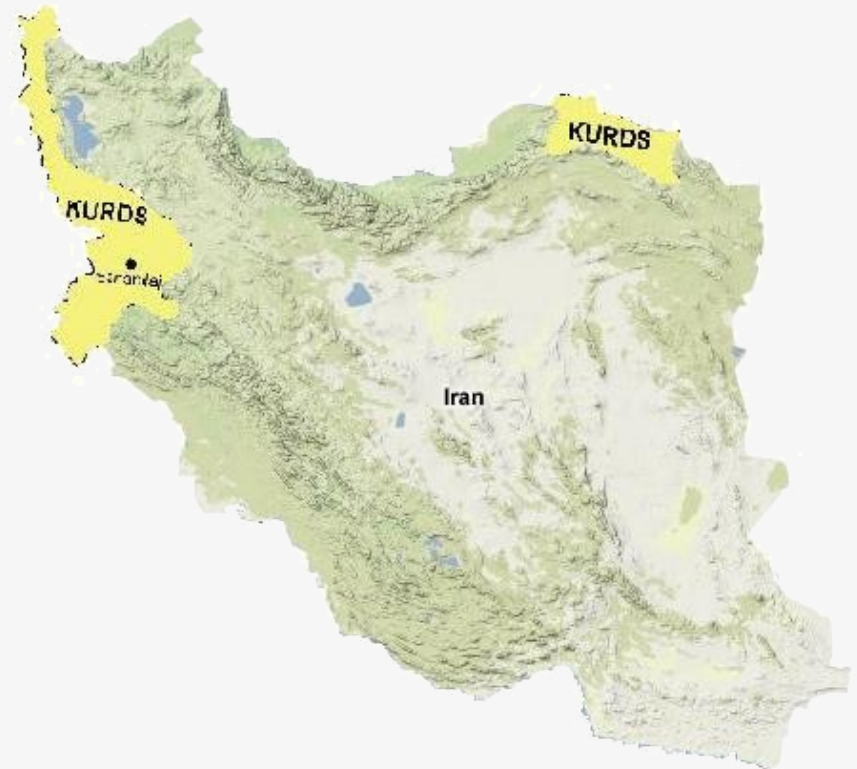
Azeri are not



Kurds

Iranian Kurds live mainly in the mountains of Northern Iran

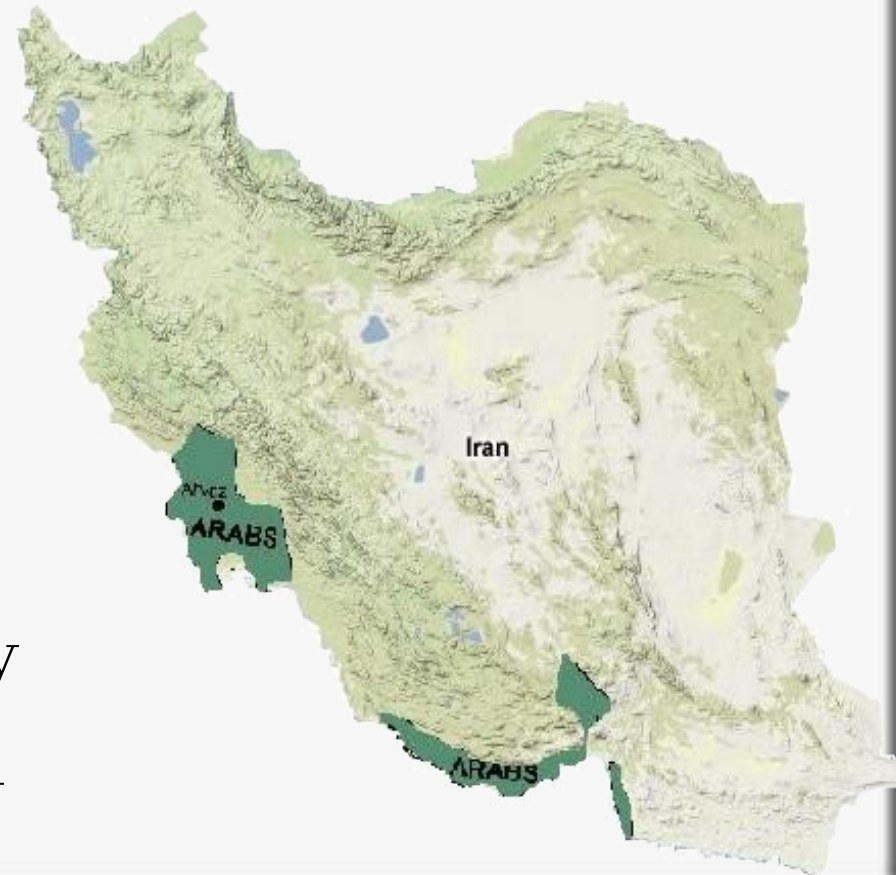
The Kurds are unique because unlike other ethnic groups in Iran they have a separatist movement



Arabs

Arabs have an extremely strong family based culture based around male patriarchs.

In the past there has been relatively little discrimination against Arabs



Notes on Religion

The official Iranian religion is Islam

The Iranian constitution offers religious protection to Christians and Jews, but not members of the Baha'i faith.

Religious discrimination is a factor in most human rights complaints with discrimination against the Baha'i being extremely common

Tension between Iran's government

A Brief History of Modern Iran

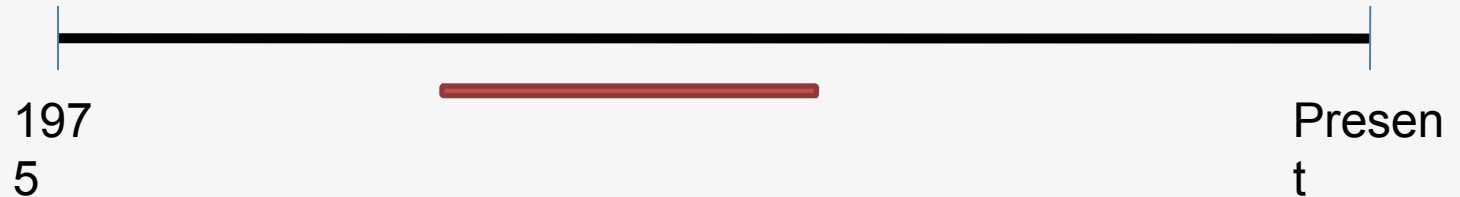
1975–1985

- 1979 – Protests force the Shah to leave Iran, despite US support and Ayatollah Khomeini comes to power. A new constitution which significantly restricts the rights of women and religious minorities is ratified.
- Summer 1979 – Ethnic groups Present
violently protest the lack of autonomy under the Islamic State

A Brief History of Modern Iran

1985–1995

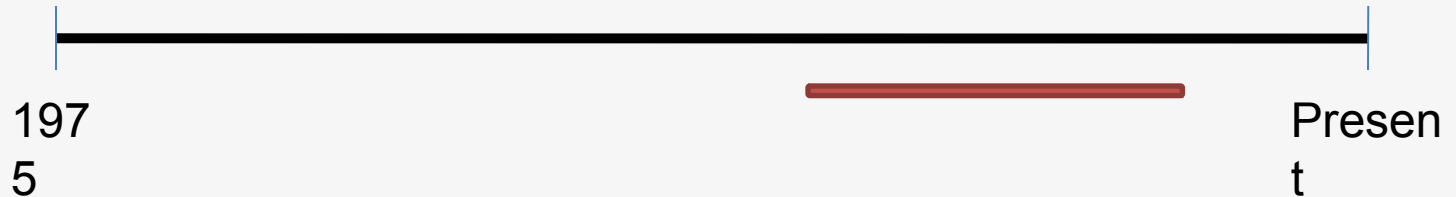
- 1988 – The Iran-Iraq war ends
- 1993–1998 – 5 Jews are accused of spying for Israel and executed
- The political climate remains relatively constant



A Brief History of Modern Iran

1995–2005

- 1995 – President Clinton imposes sanctions on Iran
- 1999 – Turkey's arrest of Abdullah Ocalan sparks separatist violence among Iran's Kurdish population
- 2002–President Bush labels Iran, Iraq, and North Korea, “The Axis of Evil”
- 2005–A Kurdish boy is shot leading to clashes between Kurds and Iranian security forces.



A Brief History of Modern Iran

2005–Present

- 2006 – A political cartoon comparing Azeris to cockroaches causes violent protests.
- 2006 – Iranian Arabs clash with the police over demands for independence.
- 2007 – Iranian security forces arrest Azeri activists.

1975

Present

Questions
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