After the Iranian revolution, one of the main focuses of the Iranian government has been the religious purification of the country. The solution has always been to remove the so called "alien" or "pagan" laws and casting aside anyone who abides by those laws. During the past 30 years, Farsi-speaking Christians have been a target of [religious persecutions](http://myengproject.weebly.com/religious-persecutions-translated-reports.html) in Iran but that has not stopped large numbers of people from converting into Christianity. These persistent conversions have concerned the Iranian government to the point where 3 years ago they started closing down all Farsi-speaking churches and only authorizing church services in [other languages](http://myengproject.weebly.com/foreign-languages.html). Also, another strategy that has been used in the recent years has been to imprison the more evangelical Christians, leaving them no choice but to [seek refuge](http://myengproject.weebly.com/christian-refugees.html) in other countries.  Nowadays, most Farsi-speaking Christians meet in house churches and get [foreign support](http://myengproject.weebly.com/foreign-support-to-iranian-churches.html) from several European countries and America.

Foreign Languages in Iran
Armenians and [Assyrians](http://myengproject.weebly.com/assyrians-in-iran.html)form a great population of racial minorities in Iran. They have lived in different parts of Iran for hundreds of years and have enriched Iran’s culture in many ways. There were no united Armenian communities in Iran until Shah Abbas relocated a huge number of Armenians from Armenia to an area of Isfahan called [New Julfa](http://myengproject.weebly.com/new-julfa.html) in the 17th century. After that time, [Iranian Armenians](http://myengproject.weebly.com/armenians-in-iran.html) have learned Farsi and have contributed vastly in the development of Iran. Assyrians have a much longer history in Iran. It is stated that Assyrians in Iran have existed in the north-western Iran for thousands of years. The Assyrian population in Iran used to be over 200,000 prior to the Iranian revolution but that number had shrunk immensely to about 32,000 by 1996. Many Assyrians have fled to foreign countries after the revolution since they saw threat to their existence in the Middle East region.

Christian Refugees
There are a few different ways that religious minorities use to flee the country. Many of them first flee to turkey and seek refuge from the [United Nations](http://myengproject.weebly.com/the-united-nations.html). After having to live under very hard circumstances for many years they are then allowed and sponsored to go to a third country which in many cases is either America or Canada. Another way of seeking refuge for the religious minorities is by applying to an organization called [HIAS](http://myengproject.weebly.com/hebrew-immigrant-aid-society.html)(Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) which is very selective in terms of accepting applicants, and living in Austria for a few months which then allows them to move and [get settled in America](http://myengproject.weebly.com/settlement-in-america.html). Either way, religious minorities face many difficulties after leaving their mother land having to leave behind most of their money and properties and being disconnected from their families and friends.

Foreign Support for Iranian Churches
There are various organizations that support—or at least used to support—the churches inside of Iran. These supports were both [financially](http://myengproject.weebly.com/financial-support.html) and [spiritually](http://myengproject.weebly.com/spiritual-support.html)which were provided in different forms including yearly payments to the churches or holding conferences throughout the year in other neighboring countries to equip the leaders spiritually. Without their support, Iranian churches would have never been able to flourish the way they did until 3 years ago. One of the Christian ministries outside of Iran which has played a significant role in this support is currently in England and they have been providing copies of the [bible](http://myengproject.weebly.com/farsi-translations-of-the-bible.html) as well as financial support to the Iranian Christians. These helps are cut back due to the fact that all the official Farsi-speaking churches are now closed and many Christians have left the country but it is important to note that these foreign organizations are the only hope for the restoration of Christianity in Iran.

Financial Support
In Iran, there are many restrictions regarding financial support from other countries; hence, many factors have to be taken into account when donating money to a church inside of Iran. During the past few years, all the financial support was provided only by certain organizations that were recognized by the government and were directly affiliated with the churches in Iran. Therefore, the survival of each Iranian church was to a great extent dependent on the financial support from 1 or 2 organizations outside the country. Also, a great portion of the revenue of the Iranian churches came from the donations of their members. At this point, since the Farsi-speaking churches are not open, the foreign support has stopped.

Spiritual Support
There have been two main ways through which spiritual support has been provided to Iranian churches. One way of support is through teaching theology lessons to certain leaders of the Iranian church and equipping them to go and hold classes for those who are interested. This type of support allowed the Iranian churches to start a Christian seminary which was always very well attended. Other type of spiritual support has been through holding conferences in other countries. Those conferences helped unify members of different churches and allowed them to get a better view of theology taught in other countries. I personally attended 3 of those conferences and was able to experience this first-hand. Most of these conferences used to be in Cyprus, Lebanon, Turkey and Armenia.

Persian Translations of the Bible
During the past 3 decades many different attempts have been made to make Farsi translations of the bible. These attempts have resulted in 4 main translations which are the Old Persian Version, the Contemporary Translation, Today’s Persian Version and the New Millennium Version. The problem with most of these translations is that they are translations of the English bibles which are themselves translations of the original bible. The New Millennium Version which is translated by Elam Ministries, is the most accurate translation of the Bible. In the New Millennium Version, they used many different English translations of the bible and compared them to the original Greek and Hebrew texts in order to use make the text more comprehensible for a Farsi reader.

New Julfa

New Julfa is the Armenian quarter of Isfahan located near Zayandeh River. This district was established by the command of Shah Abbas from the Safavid Dynasty. Near 150,000 Armenians from Julfa—a district in Armenia—in an attempt to flee the Ottoman Empire’s persecutions. At the same time, many European and Armenian accounts state that this population was actually moved by forced in 1604 after Shah Abbas destroyed Julfa in Armenia. But all accounts agree that Shah Abbas treated the Armenian population with respect and hoping their settlement in that region would be beneficial to Persia. Some scholars argue that the foundation of handful of churches in both Iran and India was started in New Julfa by the work of the immigrant Armenians which was made possible by their great networking system.

Armenians in Iran:
One can find great numbers of Armenians in almost all major cities in Iran. Nowadays the majority of Iranian Armenians—66% of them—live in Tehran. The majority of the Armenian Christians in Iran follow the Gregorian church of Armenia. Most of the Iranian Armenians are Catholic, Presbyterian, Sabbatarians. Since mid-19th century, Armenian schools were established in Iran where Armenian was the only language spoken and Farsi and French were taught as foreign languages. Armenians are the most powerful religious minority in Iran and are appointed 5 seats in the Iranian Parliament. Armenians have a well-known soccer team in Iran called F.C. Ararat Tehran and have players in Iran’s National Soccer team—soccer is the national sport in Iran.

Assyrians in Iran:
Assyrians are an ethnic minority in Iran which share a common identity with the Assyrians in Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East. Iran had a great Assyrian community in Iran—up to 200,000—prior to the Iranian revolution but many of them left after the revolution. A great portion of Iranian Assyrians live in one of the major cities in the northwestern region of the country called Urmia. Iran’s constitution recognized Iranian Assyrians as a religious minority which allows them to have a seat in the Iranian Parliament. One of the most well-known Iranian Assyrians is Andre Agassi, a nationally ranked tennis player who lived in the U.S. during his tennis career.

HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society)
HIAS is an organization founded in response to the exodus of Jewish emigrants from Russia in the late 19th and early 20th-century. This charitable organization has helped relocate 4.5 million people from many different countries. HIAS offices are in United States, Israel, Russia, Ukraine, Austria, Argentina, Exuador, Venezuela, Kenya, Panama and Chad. The office which helps religious refugees from Iran is located in Austria, Vienna. Other than Christians who come from a Muslim background, HIAS helps all other religious minorities in Iran by first allowing them to stay in Austria in order to do the needed paperwork and then helps them get a refugee status and travel to the United States. This is by far the safest/most reliable way of relocating religious minorities from Iran.

The United Nations:
This intergovernmental organization was established following the Second World War in order to prevent the re-occurrence of a similar conflict in the future. The main offices of U.N. are in New York, Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna. The U.N. office in Turkey is mostly in charge of religious refugees from the Middle East—including Iran, meaning that Turkey hosts hundreds of those immigrants on its soil. Most of the Iranian asylums/refugees who go to turkey leave their countries illegally and therefore, do not have their passports. The U.N. is fully responsible for their stay in Turkey and sends them to different countries based on their eligibility. The application process for the U.N. takes an average of 2 years which can result in the deportation or acceptance of the applicants. Those who are rejected, are immediately deported to their original country and those who are accepted are eligible to go and live in their assigned country. Almost all of the political/religious refugees who come from an Islamic background escape Iran through this route which is very difficult and at times, humiliating. They have to work illegally as manual laborers during their stay in Turkey and most of them lose all their savings during the process.

Refugee Resettlement Agencies
The process of resettlement though might seem like the end of the long path of immigration, is probably the mid-point of it. For many, being settled in the U.S. encompasses many disappointments which causes depression in many immigrants. Especially for those who have lived in a third country like Turkey for years expecting for their day to come, after they arrive in the U.S., they realize this is not the land of milk and honey. Many of them have a hard time finding houses or jobs and end up losing a lot of hope in the process. But, in most cases the resettlement agencies are there to help the refugees with all the things needed during the first few years of their arrival. They assist the refugees with finding jobs and homes which eases the initial pressure upon their arrival.

Religious persecutions
The best way to look at the reasons behind Christian persecutions in Iran is by looking at the documents and reports presented in the Farsi language. There are two types of reports one might stumble upon, some that are for persecution of Christians and some that come from outside the country and are against it. Nowadays, most people in Iran are connected to outside sources through satellite news channels and get both the inside and outside sources of news. My attempt is to help my non-Farsi speaking readers to get a taste of what a Farsi-speaking Iranian who lives in Iran experiences in terms of fearing the threat of imprisonment and the reasons why many of them decide to escape the country and leave their friends and families behind. The office of intelligence service in Iran, has many high tech, well developed, and strategized plans that it utilized in monitoring the lives of Christians in Iran. Their strategies that are actually very effective allows them to have a clear idea of what is happening in the country and enables them to prevent any potential causes of threat from happening to the national security. One of the highest priorities of the Iranian Government after the Iranian revolution has been the unification of the country towards a cohesive Islamic state. They have therefore identified the different ways that Christianity is introduced to the public and are trying to alert the general public of the evilness of [mischievous Christianity](http://myengproject.weebly.com/tebyan-reports-on-mischievous-christianity.html) (. On the other hand, satellite channels such as [VOA Persian](http://myengproject.weebly.com/voa-news-report-on-christianity-in-iran.html) and BBC Persian, are two of the only outside news sources in Farsi that the Iranian Christians have access to. Therefore, they expect these channels to express their needs to the west. During the past 35 years, there have been many Christians who have been put in jail because of their faith. Some of them were killed, some lost their money, and most were forced to leave the country. [Youcef Nadarkhani](http://myengproject.weebly.com/youcef-nadarkkhani-bbc-persia.html%22%20%5Co%20%22) is one of those Christians who was sentenced to death but with the help of news coverage and satellite programs, his family was able to ask for support from the UN which prevented the Iranian government from executing his death sentence.