

Contents

1 Introduction — 1

2 Demography and Geography — 11

Iran's Ethnic Groups — 13

Persians — 13

Azerbaijanis — 13

Gilaks and Mazanis — 15

Kurds — 15

Lurs — 16

Ahwazi Arabs — 16

Baluch — 17

Turkmen — 17

Qashqai Turks — 18

Talesh — 19

Iran—Numbers of Ethnic Groups — 19

Official Statements — 21

The Iranian Government's Values and Attitudes Survey — 22

Council of Public Culture Study — 27

Iranian Military Survey — 28

Estimated Numbers of Iran's Ethnic Minorities in 2020 — 30

Socioeconomic Indicators for Ethnic Groups — 31

Different Levels of Services, Infrastructure, Health Services, and Environmental Protection — 34

3 The Islamic Republic's Policies Toward Ethnic Minorities — 37

Ethnic Nationalism—A Twentieth-Century Issue — 37

Ethnic Minorities During the Islamic Revolution — 38

Khomeini Tricks the Ethnic Minorities by Appealing to Ethnic Sentiments — 42

Rebellions: Tehran Imposes its Rule on the Provinces — 43

Approach of the Islamic Republic Post-Revolution to Iran's Ethnic Minorities — 48

Tehran Knows — 53

Use of Ethnic Minority Languages in Schools and Official Settings — 54

Criminalizing Use of Minority Languages and Government Promotion of Persian — 58

Incarceration and Execution Rates — 59

Suppression of Protests and Other Political Activity — **61**
Assassinations of Leaders of Ethnic Movements Abroad — **62**
Province Gerrymandering, Settler Programs, and Place Names — **64**
Gubernatorial Appointments and Their Language Policies — **65**
Electoral Appeals to Ethnic Minorities — **68**
Ethnic Minority Activity in Iran's Parliament — **69**
Portrayal of Ethnic Minorities by Iranian State Media — **74**
Instigation of Conflict Between Ethnic Groups — **81**

4 Ethnic Activity — 83

Sports — **85**
Environmental Activity — **89**
 Ahwazis — **90**
 Caspian Groups' Activities — **91**
 Kurdish Activities — **92**
 Azerbaijani Environmental Activity: Focus on Lake Urmia — **93**
Militias and Violent Ethnic Organizations — **95**
Threat to Iranian Oil and Natural Gas Production — **97**
Local Council Elections — **98**
University Student Groups — **98**
Iran's Ethnic Minorities Prefer Foreign Television — **100**
Cultural Activity — **102**

5 The Mainstream Opposition's View on Ethnic Minority Rights — 107

Increased Persian Nationalism Increases Minority Distinct
Identification — **114**

6 Iran's Foreign Policy: The Domestic Ethnic Factor — 118

Case Study: Iran's Relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan and Policy Toward
the Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict — **120**
 Iran's Direct Involvement in the Armenia-Azerbaijan Wars — **125**
 Iranian-Azerbaijani Mobilization in the Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict — **129**
Case Study: The Kurds and Iran, Turkey, and Iraq — **136**
Case Study: The Baluch in Iran and Pakistan — **139**

7 The Future: Impact on Regime Stability — 143

Appendix: Notes on Transliteration and Terms — 152