



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Iran - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 22 April 2009

Is there any information as to how those who were found to have installed illegal satellite dishes, were treated by the government during the period 2000-2008?

The *US Department of State's* annual report on human rights in Iran states:

“Authorities entered homes to remove satellite TV dishes, although the majority of satellite dishes in individual homes reportedly continued to operate.” (US Department of State (25 February 2009) *Iran: "Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2008"*)

The report goes on to say

“Satellite dishes that received foreign television broadcasts were forbidden, and the government periodically confiscated them from homes. Private broadcasting was illegal” (Ibid)

Freedom House in its report on Iran from states:

“Freedom of expression is severely limited. The government directly controls all television and radio broadcasting. Satellite dishes are illegal, though generally tolerated. However, there have been increasing reports of satellite dish confiscation and steep fines. The authorities have had some success in jamming broadcasts by dissident overseas satellite stations, and cooperation with Persian-language satellite channels is banned. The government also began cracking down on unauthorized telecommunications lines in 2007, cutting them to halt “illegal international contacts.” Even the purchase of satellite images from abroad was deemed illegal.” (Freedom House (02 July 2008) *Iran: "Freedom in the World 2008"*)

A *Radio Free Europe* interview with an Iranian lawyer from 2007 states:

“This equipment belongs to her mother. Satellite dishes and receivers are widely distributed and used in Iran and many people own one. However, this is against the law and is normally punished with a fine of 100,000 to 300,000 toomans [\$120 to 360].” (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (28 August 2007) *Iran: "Lawyer Rejects Charges Against RFE/RL Journalist"*)

A 2006 report from *The Guardian* newspaper states:

“The clampdown coincides with a bill before Iran's conservative-dominated parliament proposing that fines for people with TV satellite dishes rise from £60

to more than £3,000. Millions of Iranians have illegal dishes, enabling them to watch western films and news channels." (Guardian (20 April 2006) *Iran: "Police in Tehran ordered to arrest women in 'un-Islamic' dress"*)

A 2006 query response from the *Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada* states:

"According to a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) article, "many Iranians watch satellite TV, despite the fact it is officially banned" (20 Oct. 2005). More recently, The Guardian reported that a bill before Iran's parliament is proposing that fines for people with TV satellite dishes rise from £60 (C\$121.63 [Bank of Canada 20 Apr. 2006a]) to £3,000 (C\$6,081.30 [Bank of Canada 20 Apr. 2006b]) (20 Apr. 2006). According to the same source, "millions of Iranians have illegal dishes" (The Guardian 20 Apr. 2006).

Freedom House reported that a man died in February 2004 "after receiving 80 lashes on charges including possession of a medicine containing alcohol, possession of a satellite dish, and aiding his sister's 'corruption'" (July 2005, 6). Freedom House also indicated that the Ayatollah Mahmoud Shahroudi, the head of the judiciary, announced in October 2004 that "anyone who disseminates information aimed at disturbing the public mind through computer systems' would be jailed" (ibid., 3). Country Reports 2005 noted that Iranian authorities entered private homes to remove television satellite dishes (ibid., Sec. 1.f)." (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (14 June 2006) *IRN101300.FE Iran: Sanctions for possession and distribution of banned books and video cassettes; convictions for such offences (2004-2006)*)

References

Freedom House (02 July 2008) *Iran "Freedom in the World 2008"*
http://www.freedomhouse.org/inc/content/pubs/fiw/inc_country_detail.cfm?year=2008&country=7413&pf
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http://www2.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=450348
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(Accessed 22 April 2009)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted:

Amnesty International

European Country of Origin Information Network

Human Rights Watch

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

Iran Focus

Lexis Nexis

Online newspapers

Refugee Documentation Centre Library

Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database

Reporters Without Borders

UNHCR Refworld

US Department of State