



Presbyterian Mission

Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations



The United Nations in the Islamic Republic of Iran

UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF): UNICEF works with government partners in Iran on a broad array of issues related to the wellbeing of children. This includes working to increase school access for refugee children, girls, and children with special needs as well as lowering the neonatal mortality rate.¹

UN Development Programme (UNDP): UNDP coordinates a variety of development initiatives with a focus on health and wellbeing. UNDP has been working to reduce or eliminate HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria in Iran. Because of these efforts, Iran may be malaria-free as soon as 2025. UNDP has started a ‘Rapid Socio-Economic Response’ to provide vulnerable households with income relief and COVID-19-sensitive social protections in response to the pandemic.²

UN Human Rights (OHCHR): OHCHR monitors the human rights situation in Iran. They issue periodic reports and statements based on their reviews and regularly contact UN agencies about the human rights situation through a special rapporteur that follows the situation there.³

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA): OCHA is responsible for coordinating humanitarian responses to various crises. In 2019, the UN supported thousands of Iranians affected by massive floods, and conducted the first ever Post Disaster Needs Assessment in July and August of 2019 in coordination with the Iranian government. Iran is at high risk for floods, earthquakes, and locust infestations, as well as severe droughts caused by climate change. OCHA works to prevent future destruction where possible.⁴

UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR): Iran has one of the largest urban refugee populations worldwide. Almost 4 million Afghans live in the country as refugees alone. UNHCR supports the Iranian government in allowing refugees to attend school, having access to healthcare, and providing emergency services for new asylum-seekers.⁵

UN Security Council: The UN Security Council has been responsible in the past for imposing multilateral sanctions on Iran in response to its increasing nuclear activities. As of August 2020, the Council decided to extend existing arms-related restrictions set to expire in October 2020 “until the Security Council decides otherwise.”⁶

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) & Iran

Presbyterian Mission: The first mission co-worker from the PC(USA) was sent in 1834 to what was then known as Persia. For a hundred years, the Church supported the construction of hospitals, schools, and the first college for women in Iran before the church became independent. Currently, the Church does not have mission co-workers in Iran but does support our partners, like the Evangelical (Presbyterian) Church of Iran.⁷

PC(USA) Policy on Iran: For over a decade, General Assemblies of the PC(USA) have affirmed actions that would strengthen diplomatic ties and deescalate tension between the U.S. and Iran. In 2008, the 218th General Assembly specifically called for a diplomatic agreement with Iran regarding its nuclear program.⁸ Since then, the U.S. has created and then unilaterally withdrawn from such an agreement. The 223rd General Assembly in St. Louis (2018) has urged the U.S. to return to the agreement and take part in other actions designed for encouraging peace.⁹

Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations (PMUN)

Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations is called to act on an issue when it meets three criteria: the PC(USA) has a policy regarding the topic, partner churches are in favor of action, and it appears on the UN agenda. In the case of Iran, PMUN has interpreted their ministry by monitoring the ongoing situation in Iranian relations, supporting peace and reconciliation efforts, and providing support in prayer, study, and the witness of the Church.

¹ <https://www.unicef.org/iran/en/what-we-do>

² <http://www.ir.undp.org/content/iran/en/home.html>

³ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/AsiaRegion/Pages/IRIndex.aspx>

⁴ <https://www.unocha.org/middle-east-and-north-africa-romena/iran>

⁵ <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/islamic-republic-of-iran.html>

⁶ <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/chronology/iran.php>

⁷ <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/global/iran/>

⁸ <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/2133>

⁹ <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000490>