

- questioning about one's conversion, which could be accompanied by a ban on attending church services
- possibility of attack by civilian groups such as Hezbollah if a convert comes to their notice in any way.

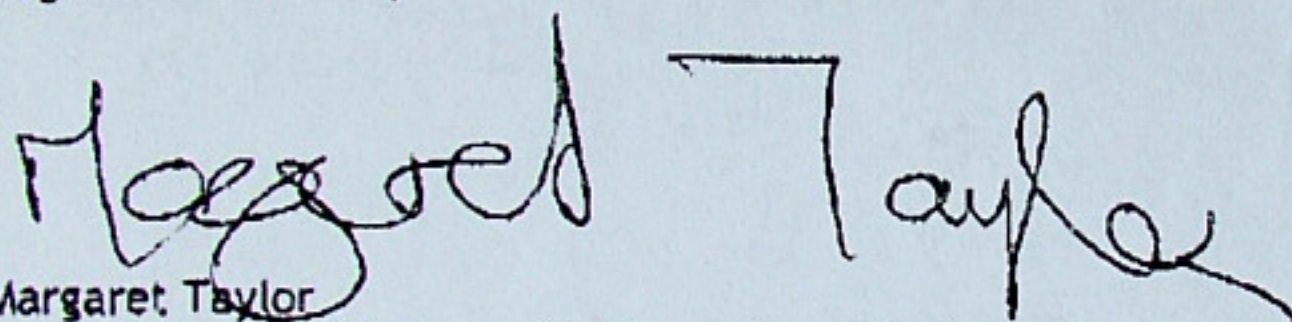
In a February 2006 report "MDE 13/010/2006 Amnesty International described the human rights situation as "dire", and it has deteriorated since.

It commented that "Since President Ahmadinejad's election, members of Iran's religious minorities have also been killed, detained or harassed solely in connection with their faith. Even the recognized religious minorities of Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians face discrimination in law and practice with respect to employment, marriage, and criminal sanctions. Unrecognized religions such as the Baha'is, Ahl-e Haq and Sabeaens (Mandaeans) are at particular risk of discrimination. Converts from Islam can risk arrest, attack or the death penalty."

Amnesty International does acknowledge however that for some 10 years there is no known use of the death penalty for "apostasy" or conversion and such a risk is likely to be low.

That report also advised that, "Official statements from time to time create an atmosphere in which human rights abuses by non-state actors against minorities may be encouraged. For example, on 20 November 2005, Ayatollah Jannati, the Secretary General of the Council of Guardians which vets legislation passed by the *Majles* to ensure its conformity with Islamic Law, stated in a speech at a commemoration of those killed in the 1980-1988 war with Iraq that "human beings, apart from Muslims, are animals who roam the earth and engage in corruption".

Regards and thanks,



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Activism Support Manager/Refugee Co-ordinator

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The *gozinesh*, which is currently overseen by the *Heyat-e Akl-ye Gozinesh*, or Supreme Selection Council, specifically accords to itself the role of investigation of a given job applicant's beliefs; and to the Ministry of Intelligence the role of investigating the individual's previous political opinion, affiliation or his/her "repentance (*towbeh*)" with respect to his/her former affiliation or opinion. The *gozinesh* has, therefore, the effect of according to secret officials and unaccountable bodies effective control over access to employment.

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