

## CHAPTER 18

### WHERE ARE PERSIANS LIVING TODAY?

It is hard to give an accurate figure of how many Iranians live outside of Iran. Some are in other countries illegally, and are not counted. Some are included with other ethnic groups. However, let me give you the best statistics I have.

The following are statistics reported by Iranian Christians International:

#### IRANIAN DIASPORA IN THE U.S. (1998)

Los Angeles and Southern California	550,000
Bay Area and Northern California	200,000
Washington, D.C. Area (including Maryland and Virginia)	120,000
Texas	100,000
Houston	35,000
Dallas	20,000
Other Texas locations	45,000
New York City and vicinity	80,000
Chicago	20,000
Scattered elsewhere*	280,000
Total	<u>1,350,000</u>

Iranians residing in the U.S. hold a variety of white and blue collar jobs. It is fairly well known that many Iranians in northern California are involved in the computer industry and many in southern California are involved in retailing and consumer services. Also, there are many Iranian professionals such as lawyers, doctors, dentists, and engineers. There are no statistics given according to occupations.

\*Cities in this group with more than 4,000 Iranians are Denver, Seattle, Portland (Oregon), Atlanta, Detroit and Oklahoma City.

#### DEMOGRAPHIC ESTIMATES OF IRANIANS LIVING IN THE U.S.

	<u>U.S. Breakdown By Visa Status</u>	
	<u>Before 1979 Iran Revolution</u>	<u>After 1979 Iranian Revolution</u>
Students	75,000	5,000
Immigrants and Their Families	175,000	1,280,000
Refugees*	(Immigrants and Visitors)	50,000
Out of Status		10,000

Visitors Visa		5,000
Total	<u>250,000</u>	<u>1,350,000</u>

\*The U.S. government's official count of Iranian refugees admitted annually is 3,000-4,000.

### U.S. BREAKDOWN BY RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Armenian & Assyrian	135,000	10
Baha'i	135,000	10
Jewish	67,500	5
Muslim	1,012,500	75

There seem to be pockets of Iranians from particular religious backgrounds in certain areas of the country:

Armenian	Southern California
Assyrian	Chicago and San Jose areas
Baha'i	Unsubstantiated, but possibly in Illinois, where there is a Baha'i mosque, and New York, where there is a Baha'i refugee organization.
Jewish	Southern California and New York areas
Muslim	Southern and Northern California, Texas and Washington, D.C.

### IRANIAN DIASPORA WORLDWIDE (1999)

Afghanistan	20,000	Norway	6,000
Australia	53,500	Pakistan	140,000
Austria	15,000	Philippines, Korea & Japan	30,000
Belgium	8,000	South Africa	10,000
Canada	120,000	Spain & Portugal	15,000
China	10,000	Sweden	20,000
Cyprus	5,000	Switzerland	6,000
Denmark	10,000	Syria	50,000
Eastern Europe	30,000	The Netherlands	10,000
Egypt & N. Africa	20,000	The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)	60,000
Finland	2,000	Turkey	800,000
France	62,000	United Arab Emirates, Bahrain & Other Gulf States	350,000
Germany	110,000	United Kingdom	80,000
Greece	20,000	United States of America	1,350,000
India	60,000	Central & South America & Other Parts of the world	30,000
Iraq	250,000		
Israel	30,000		
Kuwait	100,000		
Lebanon	30,000		
		Total	<u>3,912,500</u>

Although we have been talking about Muslim background believers, there are people with other religions who have fled from Iran because of religious persecution, too. The estimate of those having diaspora due to religious persecutions are noted below:

### **IRANIAN DIASPORA DUE TO RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION**

Bahai's	200,000
Armenians (Nominal & Evangelical Christians)	100,000
Assyrians (Nominal & Evangelical Christians)	30,000
Jews	30,000
Zoroastrians and other Non- Muslim Minorities	10,000
Muslim Converts to Christianity	13,000
Sunni Muslims, Sufis & Other Muslims	25,000
 Total	 408,000
	persons

If we compare the total estimated Iranian Diaspora of 3,912,500 in 1999 with the figure 408,000, we see that about 10% left because of religious persecution while living in Iran or fear of being persecuted if they would return.

#### Interesting Facts About Iran:

According to World Christian Encyclopedia, the population of Iran in the year 2000 was 67,702,000. Those under 15 years of age made up 36% of the population and 62% were urban dwellers. The adult literacy for males was listed as 78% and 65% for females. There are over 2,000,000 refugees from other countries living in Iran, particularly from Afghanistan.

This encyclopedia lists 96% of the population in Iran as Muslim, 3% Zoroastrian, 0.5% Bahai, and 0.5% Christian. Of the Christian population of 363,000, 87% are Armenian or Syrian in background and the remaining 47,000 include both Protestants and Roman Catholics.

The cities with estimated populations over 500,000 are:

Abadan	643,000
Ahwaz (Ahvaz)	1,018,000
Bakhtaran (Kermanshah)	949,000
Esfahan (Isfahan)	2,644,000
Mashhad (Meshed)	2,378,000
Q.M. (Qum, Ghom)	795,000
Shiraz	1,113,000
Tabriz	1,624,000
Tehran (Teheran)	7,380,000

