

Abortion and Reproductive Rights in Iran

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- ❖ Before 1973, abortion was illegal in Iran on all grounds except if childbirth posed a threat to the mother. In 1973, abortion was decriminalized.¹
- ❖ In 1976, abortion became unrestrictive, to all women regardless of marital status, if performed before 12 weeks of gestation and justified by a physician.¹
- ❖ As of 1979, abortion is technically illegal in Iran. Married women ages 15-49 have an estimated 73,000 abortions per year, legal and illegal. That is an estimated 0.26 lifetime abortions per woman.²
- ❖ The rate of abortions in Iran is a point of concern due to the unsafe circumstances under which they are often performed.²
- ❖ Abortion is categorized as a lesser crime, under the Penal Code of 199. It is punishable by the payment of compensation (diyah), the amount of which depends on the gestational stage of the fetus.³
- ❖ In 2005, abortion became legal if child birth poses serious harm to the mother or if the infant may be born disabled. As of 2014, the conditions of harm and disability are not legally defined⁴.
- ❖ Abortion must be performed within the first trimester and the validation of two physicians and a clergy member is required. These legal abortions are provided to married women; a husband's consent is not required. Under these conditions, abortion is free in state⁵
- ❖ From 1988-2006. In an effort to reduce population growth, the government of Iran provided free contraceptives, family planning, and education on fertility.⁵
- ❖ The fertility rate has decreased from 6.6 births per woman in the 1970's to about 1.9 as of 2014.⁶
- ❖ The average marriage age for women has risen to 23 year, an effect of the increased family planning. This has delayed reproduction and kept larger percentages of girls in school. As a result, there are currently more females than males in Iranian universities.⁷

¹ Abbasi, M., Gooshki, E. S., & Allahbedashti, N. (January 01, 2014). Abortion in Iranian legal system. *Iranian Journal of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology*, 13, 1, 71-84.

² January 8, 2015 <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/3414708a.html>

⁴ January 8, 2015 <http://www.asap-asia.org/country-profile-iran.html>

^{3,5} Joseph, S., & Najmabadi, A. (2003). *Encyclopedia of women & Islamic cultures*. Leiden: Brill.

⁶ January 8, 2015 <https://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=Iran%20%28Islamic%20Republic%20of%29>

⁷ January 8. 2015 <http://www.prb.org/Publications/Articles/2009/iranyouth.aspx>