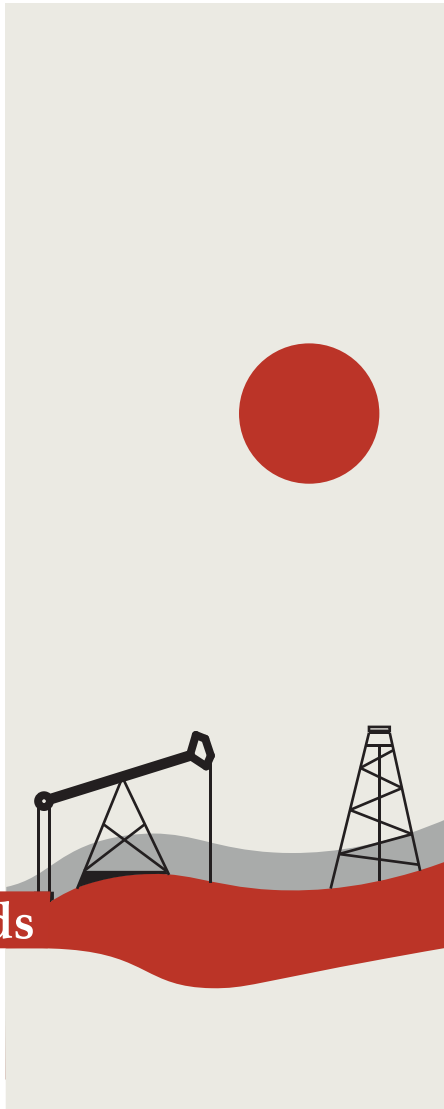


# Identify the Facts

# IRAN

## Weigh In

- 1 While rug making is a common trade that many Iranians learn, it consists of different styles – depending on the region. One Persian rug can take years to complete, making it extremely valuable. Many families intentionally save up to purchase a rug as a legacy piece that can be passed down to following generations of their family.
- 2 In Iranian culture, most marriages are arranged by parents for the purpose of gaining social standing. Love is rarely a factor that's taken into consideration.
- 3 In Iran, Christians are not highly regarded in society. They have a difficult time finding jobs, being accepted into schools, and are at risk of being separated from their families if their faith is discovered.
- 4 Christian churches are not officially allowed in Iran. Still, Christians gather at great risk, meeting in homes to avoid being detected by governmental authorities. Despite the danger, Iran has one of the fastest growing Christian populations in the world – an underground church movement that's been expanding over the past two decades and continues to thrive today.



The carpets made in Iran are called Persian rugs. Research some of the reasons why families value these rugs. Is there anything in Canadian culture that is highly regarded and, therefore, passed down for generations? Do you have any specific items or heirlooms that were passed down from your ancestors?

Arranged marriages are rare in Canada; yet, in other countries of the world (including Iran), it is the expected norm. What are some pros and cons of arranged marriages? In what ways would your life change if your parents chose the person to whom you should marry?

Think about a situation where someone lied about you, bullied you, rejected you, or took something meaningful away from you that was clearly yours. What emotions and reactions did you have? Compare that situation and those feelings with Iranian Christians and what they're personally experiencing. How does that help you to pray more effectively? What are some things Canadians can learn from these believers?

Despite severe persecution (Iran is rated the 8<sup>th</sup> most hostile country in which to be a Christian), the Iranian church is still growing. What factors contribute to the church's growth in the midst of persecution? Hint: Muslims have 99 names for Allah, but "love" is not one of them.

## Recommended Reads

- *Cell 58: Imprisoned in Iran* by Dan Baumann, Floyd McClung
- *Iran's Great Awakening: How God is Using a Muslim Convert to Spark Revival* by Hormoz Shariat

## One Way

The fourth pillar of the Muslim faith is *saum*, the month-long feast of Ramadan. Devout followers of Islam are required to refrain from eating or drinking from sunup to sundown throughout this time. Exceptions are made for those who are sick, elderly or pregnant. Muslims celebrate Ramadan in hopes that Allah will forgive their sins, believing they must fulfill it perfectly to receive atonement. This is a continual practice for Muslims, and there is no assurance that their good works outweigh their bad, nor that they have secured a place in heaven.

Although Christians are encouraged to fast and pray, it is not a requirement for receiving God's forgiveness of sins. When His Son Jesus died on the cross, this sacrificial death became the final atonement – covering our sins once and for all. Therefore, Christians don't need to continually perform rituals to keep in good standing with God. When followers of Christ do choose to fast and pray, however, it is for the purpose of drawing close to God, rather than a means of working out our salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9).

## Way Out

Since Iranian Christians must gather secretly, they have limited access to resources, worship with other believers, and Bible training. To assist these believers, VOMC has several ongoing ministry projects, one of which involves partnering with Iran Alive Ministries. This partnering organization delivers weekly church services into people's homes through satellite TV – providing times of worship, sermons, and opportunities for listeners to contact the Iran Alive ministry team directly. Despite the governments' opposition to Christianity, our project partners are providing followers of Jesus in Iran with the resources and encouragement they need to be triumphant in their faith. To see the full scope of VOMC's international projects, visit [vomcanada.com](http://vomcanada.com).

Sources:  
<https://www.everyculture.com/Ge-It/Iran.html>  
<https://operationworld.org/locations/iran/>  
<https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/persecution/countries/iran/>  
<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/introduction-cultures-religions-apah/islam-apah/a/the-five-pillars-of-islam>

Word Game Solutions: 1. Muslim 2. Persia 3. Bazaar 4. Chador 5. Apostasy 6. Euphrates  
7. Rug 8. Lion 9. Honour Bonus Word: Christian