

Subj:	Al-Ahram, "Readers Corner"
Date:	12/26/2002 12:15:50 PM Eastern Standard Time
From:	KABDIAN
To:	aabdiannia@sprint.ca , sawsanhamidi@hotmail.com , ahwazimansour@hotmail.com , aaltaie@shawu.edu , ahwazifdusa@hotmail.com , abed11590@yahoo.com , mjaveaherkalam@hotmail.com , Hadaf1@aol.com , yasminaai@hotmail.com

This was published in Al-Ahram English Weekly in Cairo on 25 Dec 2002 with a cartoon. Try to send to other English publications.....

2002

Issue No. 617

Letters Current issue

Previous issue

Site map

Published in Cairo by AL-AHRAM established in 1875

- NAVIGATION - Front page Egypt Region International Economy Opinion Letters

Culture Features Living Heritage Sports Profile People Chronicles Cartoons Crossword

Listings/Timeout BOOKS SITE MAP ARCHIVES Text menu

Comment Recommend Printer-friendly

Arab-Iranian rights

Click to view caption

Illustration by Ossama Qasim

Sir-- This is an open letter from the Ahwazi- Arabs for Freedom and Democracy in Iran to Mr Maurice Copithorne, the special representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR).

It has come to our attention that in your report to the UNHCHR on the situation of human rights in Iran, while mentioning the Azeri-Turks, Kurds and others, you did not make any reference to the Arab national minority population.

The Iranian-Arab minority population is over five million, the majority of which live in the southwestern province of Khuzistan (Arabistan or Al-Ahwaz) bordering Iraq. We, the Ahwazi Arabs in Iran are an oppressed and ill-treated national minority. We are being denied our basic human rights, namely the ability to study and speak our native Arabic language, the right to exercise our culture and customs, and we are even being denied the rights to choose Arabic names for our newborn babies.

Demands for our basic human rights, including education in our mother tongue, have often been labelled as "nationalistic", "separatist", and "secessionist" by the Iranian regime. They see our calls for cultural rights as "disintegration tendencies" and as "threatening Iran's national security".

While slight progress has been made in the realm of minority rights in recent years in Iran, these minor freedoms have not been afforded to the Iranian Arabs.

The Islamic Republic continues the policy of "Persianisation", however this time in the guise of Islamic brotherhood and national unity. The Iranian government authorities in the Khuzistan province refuse to register and issue birth identity cards to Arab newborn babies who do not assume Persian names. Despite being at the heart of economic prosperity in the country, the Iranian-Arab population is kept severely backwards, with extremely high illiteracy rates, unemployment, abject poverty, and drug usage among the youth.

Karim Al-Saeedawi
Ahwazi-Arabs for Freedom and Democracy in Iran
New York, NY
USA

Arab-Iranian rights

Sir-- This is an open letter from the Ahwazi- Arabs for Freedom and Democracy in Iran to Mr Maurice Copithorne, the special representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR).

It has come to our attention that in your report to the UNHCHR on the situation of human rights in Iran, while mentioning the Azeri-Turks, Kurds and others, you did not make any reference to the Arab national minority population.

The Iranian-Arab minority population is over five million, the majority of which live in the southwestern province of Khuzistan (Arabistan or Al-Ahwaz) bordering Iraq. We, the Ahwazi Arabs in Iran are an oppressed and ill-treated national minority. We are being denied our basic human rights, namely the ability to study and speak our native Arabic language, the right to exercise our culture and customs, and we are even being denied the rights to choose Arabic names for our newborn babies.

Demands for our basic human rights, including education in our mother tongue, have often been labelled as "nationalistic", "separatist", and "secessionist" by the Iranian regime. They see our calls for cultural rights as "disintegration tendencies" and as "threatening Iran's national security".

While slight progress has been made in the realm of minority rights in recent years in Iran, these minor freedoms have not been afforded to the Iranian Arabs.

The Islamic Republic continues the policy of "Persianisation", however this time in the guise of Islamic brotherhood and national unity. The Iranian government authorities in the Khuzistan province refuse to register and issue birth identity cards to Arab newborn babies who do not assume Persian names. Despite being at the heart of economic prosperity in the country, the Iranian-Arab population is kept severely backwards, with extremely high illiteracy rates, unemployment, abject poverty, and drug usage among the youth.

Karim Al-Saeedawi

Ahwazi-Arabs for Freedom and Democracy in Iran

New York, NY

USA