



Item 1: Challenges to inclusion and equality: barriers to the social and economic participation of persons belonging to minority groups

**Statement on the deliberate policy of discrimination and unequal distribution of income in the Azerbaijani provinces and adjacent areas of the Islamic Republic of Iran by the Association for the Human Rights of the Azerbaijani People in Iran (AHRAZ).**

Despite the abundance of energy and underground resources in Iran, the income gap between provinces in development programmes and welfare/social policies has led to the emergence and formation of new classes between the centre and the periphery.

Iran exemplifies a clear case of wealth and income inequality propagating the expansion of lower classes in the periphery and upper classes in the centre.

The regions on the periphery that suffer from inequality, covering a significant portion of Iran's territory, are, without a doubt, a result of an unbalanced and unequal state policy stemming from the unfair division of income.

Unequal income distribution creates a significant gap between the areas where Turks reside and the central provinces, which prompts Turks to migrate towards central regions. The privileges that the centre holds in the political system, both materially and morally, compared to peripheral regions result in considerable polarisation within the country's regional structure. This, in turn, exacerbates existing inequalities and deprives those living in peripheral regions.

According to the Statistical Institute of Iran's income distribution report for 2021, after Sistan and Baluchistan province, the provinces with the highest Gini coefficient in Iran are Gulistan, East Azerbaijan and West Azerbaijan provinces. Analysis of previous years' reports shows that unequal income distribution in the peripheral regions, including the provinces of Azerbaijan and the Turkic regions, has a long history.

Although the Azerbaijani provinces and other Turkic regions are rich in mineral and agricultural resources, discriminatory policies force their inhabitants to migrate to the central provinces. The migration of Turks to these central areas leads to assimilation, marginalisation and alienation.

AHRAZ, the Association for the Human Rights of the Azerbaijani People in Iran, condemns the deliberate discrimination and unequal distribution of income in the outlying areas of the Islamic Republic of Iran, especially in the Azerbaijani and Turkic regions, and calls for an end to this deliberate discrimination.

Thank You

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