

# Strategic Document Of Azerbaijan National Resistance Organization

••• Second Edition •••



## ■ **Table of Contents**

■ <b>Introduction</b>	4
■ <b>Part One</b>	
Ideological Foundations and History of the Organization	10
Organizational System and Leadership	17
■ <b>Part Two</b>	
Analysis of the Current Situation of the Country and Oppressed Nations	21
Identification of Challenges and Opportunities	30
■ <b>Part Three</b>	
Federalism as a Solution	38
Political Structure of the Federal Republic of Iran	40
State Governments	42
Transition Period from the Islamic Republic	44

## ■ Part Four

Values and Standards	48
Secularism	49
Language	51
National Geography	53
Flag	54
Religion and Sect	55
Culture and National Identity	56
Economy	58
Separation and Independence of Powers	64
Sustainable Development and Environment	65
Social Justice	68
Rights of Minorities, Individuals, and Society	70
Women's and Children's Rights	73
Labor and Syndicate Rights	76
Security	77
Pluralistic and Participatory Democracy	78
Education	80
Freedom of Information and Media	81
Sexual Minorities	83
Animal Rights	84

## Introduction

Throughout history, humanity has longed for freedom and justice in the pursuit of restoring human dignity. This struggle reached a pinnacle when humans linked the pursuit of dignity to the concept of rationality. Humanity realized that freedom and justice, when united at the intersection of rationality, bring prosperity to human society. Modern civilization has come to accept individuals as they are, embracing all differences, including race, belief, religion, sect, nationality, language, and gender, without filtering through any rigid ideology. Through common sense, it proposed the idea of human equality before rights and law.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, is considered one of humanity's great milestones in the realm of human dignity. This international document, drafted in the aftermath of two world wars and the bitter experiences of that era, emphasizes fundamental rights and human freedoms for all individuals and is grounded on the principle of legal equality. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights serves as a foundation for comprehensively defining human rights in all aspects and has become a reference point for advocates of freedom and justice worldwide.

Today, despite significant progress, the realization of human

dignity still faces challenges, and awakened consciences around the world seek solutions to address issues such as discrimination, inequality, violence, and violations of human rights in various societies. Iran, unfortunately, is one of the countries where the ruling mindset stands in stark contrast to modern human values, subjecting its people to major challenges, including various forms of discrimination against different social groups, classes, sects, and professions. Additionally, the nation faces internal discrimination and oppression against marginalized communities, a lack of rule of law, and inequality between citizens and rulers. This situation is compounded by the injustices of a reactionary, fascist, and totalitarian regime.

As the Azerbaijan National Resistance Organization – Diranish (ANRO) with a humanistic and rational approach grounded in the achievements of modern civilization, and with a steadfast commitment to nonviolence, we aim to realize the broad and fundamental concept of human dignity for the Turkic people of South Azerbaijan, other regions of Iran, and all oppressed peoples in Iran. From our perspective, governance is solely a mechanism and structure intended to serve humanity by relying on laws rooted in human reason to enhance societal welfare, uphold fundamental rights, and promote justice and equality for all citizens without exception.

In essence, government is an instrument to protect individual rights and freedoms and maintain social order. Ideologically driven governments that deprioritize individuals and citizens have each, one by one, ended up in the trash heap of history. Modern humanity, increasingly aware of its democratic rights and freedoms, is moving from the collective identity of masses toward individual and citizen rights, seeking a governance structure based on civil rights, limited in scope and mandated to protect freedoms. To break free from the endless cycle of clashes between utopian and dogmatic ideologies, we advocate for prioritizing individual and social freedoms, strengthening civil society, establishing the rule of law, and upholding human rights based on rationality.

In other words, government should be free from any unyielding, non-criticizable ideology, whether religious or non-religious, and

should remain neutral. This approach ensures equal treatment of all citizens regardless of beliefs, religions, languages, and cultures, and guarantees that no group, as long as they act within the boundaries of rights and laws, will be marginalized or have their freedoms restricted based on their activities or views. A judiciary system rooted in reason and the experiences of modern humanity—not in religious, traditional, or rigid ideological laws—must operate independently, based on the principle of separation of powers, to become a system dedicated to protecting citizens' rights and freedoms.

Human rights and the emphasis on people's right to live in freedom and justice, the rule of law, and the independence and impartiality of the judiciary system; democratic participation and the right to self-determination through fair and free elections; freedom for parties and non-governmental organizations to operate within the framework of a strong civil society; environmental protection with a focus on conserving natural resources, combating climate change, and promoting a green economy; an education system based on modern science, free from ideological or religious views; high-quality and equitable healthcare services; and economic development aimed at reducing social class inequalities.

A true free-market economy, based on inclusive institutions and reliant on a democratic and transparent environment; foreign policy rooted in engagement and national interests, along with principles of peaceful international cooperation; and, in domestic policy, adherence to the principle of government neutrality toward individual differences—such as religious beliefs, sexual orientation and gender, social class and profession, language, dialect and accent, political and ideological leanings, clothing style, ethnicity, race, culture, lifestyle, and social and family differences—are essential principles.

These values can expand the culture of tolerance among different communities and social groups in Iran and play a vital role in the long-term struggle against the systemic discrimination of past decades, providing a foundation for the peaceful coexistence of the country's people with their cultural and social diversity.

Since the Constitutional Revolution (Mashruta / 1905-7) and even before, in the encounter of the people of this land with the manifestations and influences of Western civilization, the South Azerbaijani Turkic nation and other Turkic peoples in different parts of Iran, along with other oppressed nations and communities within the country, have traveled a long and challenging path toward achieving prosperity, progress, welfare, freedom, justice, and human dignity. Throughout various periods in history, Azerbaijan has often been at the forefront of freedom movements, leading the nations of Iran.

The Azerbaijani Turkic nation, just as it played a significant role in the Constitutional Revolution (Mashruta / 1905-7) alongside other peoples of Iran to limit the absolute power of the Shah, has also persistently advocated throughout history for the right to sovereignty over its own affairs. During the Constitutional Revolution (Mashruta / 1905-7), Azerbaijani fighters insisted on the inclusion of the Supplementary Constitutional Law and the establishment of provincial and regional councils. Similarly, in the Freedom Movement led by Sheikh Mohammad Khiabani, they pursued both freedom and autonomy for Azerbaijan. However, when the Pahlavi regime came to power, the Democratic Movement of Azerbaijan, led by Mir Jafar Pischevari, placed even greater emphasis on autonomy and the right to self-determination for the Azerbaijani nation.

Azerbaijani freedom fighters, whether during the late Qajar period—when fascism had not yet cast its shadow over the country—or during the reigns of the first and second Pahlavi rulers, or during the dark era of the Islamic Republic, have never abandoned their struggle for two fundamental goals: democracy and sovereignty over their own destiny.

Now, after nearly half a century of the totalitarian and colonial rule of the Islamic Republic over the oppressed nations within Iran, the national movement of Azerbaijan continues to raise the banner of the struggles of Azerbaijani fighters in the Constitutional Revolution, the Freedom Movement of Sheikh Muhammad Khiabani, the national government, and, of course, the Muslim People's Movement of 1979. This struggle persists to this day.

In contemporary history, Azerbaijan has consistently hoped for two key principles for the multiethnic fabric of Iran: democracy and sovereignty over its own affairs.



# Part One



## **Intellectual Foundations, History, and Structure of the Organization**

**A**zerbaijan National Resistance Organization – Diranish (ANRO) officially announced its establishment on March 19, 2006, in Southern Azerbaijan, with a declaration emphasizing the need for organized efforts within the framework of the Azerbaijan National Movement to coordinate national and civil struggles in Southern Azerbaijan. The founders, operating within the country, initiated discussions and consultations with like-minded individuals, veterans, experts, and well-known activists to promote the idea of creating a structured and cohesive organization.

Before the founding of ANRO, political activists from Southern Azerbaijan had already begun establishing political organizations nearly a decade earlier, recognizing the need for organized, dynamic, and coherent political activities within the national movement. However, over time and due to the evolving needs of the Azerbaijan National Movement, influenced by the country's domestic and regional conditions, the necessity for forming an organization with distinct characteristics from other political entities became clear to the founding members and was ultimately realized.

In the early 1990s, the Azerbaijan National Movement—owing to its distinctly cultural characteristics—adopted a demand-driven

approach, focusing on civil and cultural activities within the legal framework of the country. However, the authoritarian approach of the Islamic Republic regime in dealing with Southern Azerbaijan's civil society and its repression of national and civil activists gradually shifted the movement's focus from demands-based and reformist strategies toward political struggle.

Although the Azerbaijan National Movement has embraced a diverse range of ideological and intellectual perspectives—demonstrating the pluralistic strength of the movement—at that time, the approach of the Islamic Republic regime, as well as that of reformist and opposition political currents, toward Azerbaijani activists and their demands ignited a new idea among the elite activists: the necessity for political action and professional struggle to achieve the rights of the South Azerbaijani Turkic nation.

ANRO, recognizing the need for professional organization and political action—clearly stated in its manifesto—defines itself as part of the Azerbaijan National Movement and emphasizes the necessity of a comprehensive cultural and political struggle.

The multiple restrictions and repressions imposed by the regime's security apparatus against national activists and their peaceful civil activities became most evident in the regime's approach toward the mass gatherings at Babek Castle. Additionally, the boycott and exclusion policies pursued by both opposition political factions and reformist currents within the country—particularly during events like the Tabriz University dormitory protests—led Azerbaijani national activists to reflect deeply. Ultimately, these experiences fostered a new perspective on the conditions in Iran and the region, promoting the idea of revising the methods of activism and struggle to secure Azerbaijan's national rights within the framework of universal human rights principles.

The founders of the Azerbaijan National Resistance Organization (ANRO), analyzing the nature of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its totalitarian and authoritarian characteristics at the time, decided to adopt a strategy of secret political struggle. This decision was influenced by their experiences during the 1990s, marked by political assassinations—such as the assassination of Professor

Mohammad-Taqi Zehtabi—and the suffocating atmosphere of the country. This clandestine approach aimed to reduce security risks and minimize the organization’s vulnerability to attacks, laying the groundwork for a long-term, marathon-like struggle.

Although this covert method of ANRO appeared unconventional within the Azerbaijan National Movement—whose activities had previously focused more on transparent cultural struggles and non-systematic efforts—ANRO has continued its activities for nearly two decades. Whether inside or outside the country, the organization has persisted by adapting to current circumstances and maintaining its efforts based on two fundamental principles: “Azerbaijan as the Homeland” and “Turkic National Identity.”

The Azerbaijan National Resistance Organization – Diranish (ANRO), in its founding declaration, emphasized national struggles for achieving the right to national self-determination. Considering the regional and global circumstances and the regime’s repressions, the organization stressed from the outset the importance of modernity and a science-based approach in national struggles. It regarded the transition to political struggle, systematic and organized activities—achievable through party and organizational work—as essential.

“In such a critical moment in history, engaging in national struggles without using modern and scientific infrastructure will not be possible. Achieving this goal depends on the establishment of well-structured and cohesive parties and organizations to theorize nationalist ideas and organize popular struggles.”

As stated in the founding declaration, the founders of ANRO believed that the existence of “well-structured and cohesive parties and organizations” was essential for “channeling national struggles.” They argued that in the absence of such parties and organizations, the regime would have an open path to “suppress and derail the struggles.”

In 2006, the founding board of ANRO outlined the organization’s goals, strategies, and tactics in six points. Analyzing these points reveals two primary objectives: “the struggle for securing the right

to national self-determination” and “the struggle to protect the territorial integrity of Southern Azerbaijan.” The founders defined the organization as part of the Azerbaijan National Movement, explicitly affirming its commitment to the movement’s national values.

The organization identified “covert and semi-public struggle” and “adherence to democratic and peaceful principles” as the fundamental pillars of its strategy. As part of the broader strategic framework, ANRO focused on “recruiting, developing, and training young forces within Southern Azerbaijan” and “creating dynamic coordination across different layers of society to foster national resistance and comprehensive struggle,” based on the principle of “empowerment from the bottom up.”

The covert struggle was considered both a strategy and a tactic, adaptable to changing regional and national circumstances. To achieve its objectives, and in line with its non-violent strategy aimed at fostering a comprehensive social movement, the organization identified “publishing analytical, educational, and strategic booklets, as well as news bulletins” as key methods for communicating with supporters and the broader public.

The manifesto or ideological foundations of the organization present a historical narrative from the Qajar period—when the Turkic people of Azerbaijan directly encountered the Western world and began to understand or strive to comprehend modernism—up to the present era. It also includes an analysis of the current situation, emphasizing the “right to legitimate defense” and the importance of securing the “right to national self-determination” for the South Azerbaijani Turkic nation.

By studying the ideological foundations of the ANRO organization, we understand that, from the perspective of the founding members, the beginning of the Pahlavi era, followed by the Islamic Republic, marked a period of national oppression for Azerbaijan and non-Farsi nations. This period was characterized by the distortion of Azerbaijan’s Turkic identity into an “Azeri identity and language,” the dominance of a reactionary and racist system based on Farsi identity, and the assimilation and erasure of non-Farsi identities.

The manifesto of the ANRO emphasizes that “Azerbaijan is a divided homeland,” and, naturally, the Azerbaijani Turkic nation has the right to decide in the future how to rectify this historical injustice.

The document outlining the ideological foundations of the ANRO organization provides a much more detailed explanation of the organization’s strategies and tactics than what was included in the declaration of its establishment. Among the primary strategic objectives listed are “promoting national awakening among the Turkic nation in South Azerbaijan” and “fostering national pride and unity across different social layers of the Turkic nation in South Azerbaijan.”

Naturally, for decades, the Turkic people of Azerbaijan and those living across various regions of Iran have been subjected to racist insults and humiliation, aimed at forcing them to abandon their identity and assimilate into a “homogeneous Aryan nation.” These decades of humiliation, insult, suppression, and bans have systematically targeted their national self-confidence, seeking to erode individuals’ pride in their society, culture, and homeland. As a result, an alienated and fragmented population would emerge, ready for subjugation and exploitation.

Understanding this nature and agenda of fascism, the founders of the ANRO prioritized national activists’ efforts to raise awareness and promote national consciousness. Various committees within the ANRO have taken steps—despite limited resources—to publish and distribute pamphlets, books, and CDs on topics related to Azerbaijani culture and history. Through such efforts, the organization aims to create discourse, lay the foundation for restoring national pride based on authentic Turkic identity, and contribute to the revival of the nation.

The organization was fully founded and structured inside the country, but the founders and political leadership were well aware that without establishing a branch abroad, the organization would be incomplete. Therefore, from the very first years of its establishment, the leaders and political cadres focused on forming an external committee. In 2011, the first secretary of the organization was

introduced to the public, and since then, the organization has regularly announced its leadership abroad transparently. Members abroad have actively organized conferences and meetings and engaged in lobbying activities in Turkic countries, Europe, and the United States to secure the right to self-determination for South Azerbaijan, and they continue to pursue these activities.

From its inception, the organization's introduction of a council-based leadership structure attracted the attention of political activists in Azerbaijan. Emphasizing collective decision-making has been a significant feature of the organization. The roles of spokesperson and secretary, like other organizational positions, are rotated periodically through internal elections among members, given the oppressive atmosphere that prevents holding a congress. This system reflects the organization's dynamic, democratic, and flexible structure. Members at all levels have the right to vote on major decisions, and the organization's leadership gathers members' opinions, suggestions, and criticisms, conveying them to the central council.

Within the country, the ANRO operates secretly, considering the political and social circumstances. Members of the organization's core cells are strictly prohibited from revealing their membership. From the beginning, the organization has considered itself a part of the national movement of Azerbaijan, as stated in its manifesto, particularly in the tactics section. It declares its intent to "coordinate and unify the various groups and layers of the national movement." The organization's track record confirms this claim, as it has never sought to represent the entire national movement. Instead, it has consistently worked to create a mechanism that brings together ideologically and strategically aligned factions and, in some cases, has taken the lead in these efforts.

The organization has always pursued the core objectives of the national movement pragmatically, never deviating from the national ideology. Pragmatism has remained a consistent approach within the organization, both domestically and internationally, adapting to the political atmosphere of the time. This approach permeates all organizational levels.

In this vein, the organization has contributed to expanding and promoting the discourse of the national movement through activities such as publishing analytical statements, producing programs on the Araz News internet TV channel, and issuing publications like “Dirəniş Səsi” (Voice of Resistance), “Dirəniş Gəncliyi” (Youth of Resistance), “Topraq” (Soil), and the “Strategic Document for the Future of South Azerbaijan-2018”. A review of the organization’s theoretical activities reveals its realistic and pragmatic stance in responding to changes in regional, international, and domestic dynamics.

It should be noted that the first version of the Strategic Document was published in the summer of 2018 as a roadmap and framework for the activities of the National Resistance Organization of Azerbaijan, and it reflected the comprehensive beliefs of the Direnish Organization for a free and democratic Azerbaijan. After more than 6 years since the publication of the first version of the “Strategic Document,” considering the political and social developments in the region and taking into account the national interests and changes in Azerbaijani society, updating and reviewing the “Strategic Document of the National Resistance Organization of Azerbaijan” became inevitable.



## **Organizational System and Leadership**

The intellectual and ideological foundations of the ANRO were established through a historical necessity perceived by some activists of the Azerbaijani national movement, marking a transition into a political phase. This organizational framework was developed through a gradual evolutionary process. Recognizing the need for a political organization to achieve the movement's goals, the founders held multiple clandestine meetings in various cities across Southern Azerbaijan. Through collaboration, consultation, and both scientific and fieldwork-based efforts, they laid the groundwork for creating a political organization with specific characteristics.

This process evolved naturally over time, so much so that even before officially announcing its existence, the organization's structure and members were already systematically involved in intellectual activities and practical actions across Azerbaijani cities. Following a period of complete secrecy, the founding committee decided to officially declare the organization's existence, which was achieved in March 2006.

As mentioned earlier, the organization was founded on a process of consultation and dialogue among political activists. From the outset, it was not centered around the personal charisma of any

individual political or cultural figure. This non-personal structure has continued to guide the organization, with the principle of collective leadership becoming a core element of its framework. The absence of personality cults and the rooted tradition of consultation and voting have fostered a dynamic, adaptable, and flexible organizational structure.

Therefore, the organization's leadership operates on the principle of consultation, with decision-making centered on collective leadership. However, as is natural in any group activity, certain individuals may play more prominent roles due to their personal characteristics or history of political struggle.

Throughout nearly two decades of activity, the National Resistance Organization of Azerbaijan has organized committees focused on urban affairs, publishing, students, youth, labor, and women. One of its most influential committees is the "People's Defense Committee of Western Azerbaijan", which has made significant contributions in combating terrorism and raising public awareness about the threats it poses in Western Azerbaijan. This committee, composed of members from various urban subcommittees and linked to the organization's central council, has actively engaged in both field operations and online efforts. Through the publication of news reports and magazines, such as "Topraq" (Soil), the organization has played a critical role in educating the public about the dangers of terrorism.

The publishing committee, despite facing significant risks, has diligently printed and distributed works produced by the research committee and other divisions over the years. By disseminating books, magazines, and pamphlets throughout the cities of Southern Azerbaijan, this committee has ensured the organization maintains a tangible presence on the ground.

Representatives of the organization in various countries—including the Republic of Azerbaijan, Turkey, Europe, and the United States—have taken responsibility for raising global awareness about Southern Azerbaijan. They organize conferences, participate in protests, and meet with representatives of political parties and public figures to highlight the discrimination and injustices faced

by the Azerbaijani Turks in Southern Azerbaijan.

The National Resistance Organization firmly believes in transparency and accountability to the citizens of Southern Azerbaijan. However, the repressive policies and harsh censorship imposed by the totalitarian regime of the Islamic Republic make it impossible to publish the organization's internal structure or fully disclose the identities of its members for security reasons.

## **Part Two**



## **Analysis of the Current Situation**

In modern history, Azerbaijan has been at the forefront of Iran's pursuit of freedom, justice, the rule of law, and development. Azerbaijani freedom-seekers, by initiating the Constitutional Revolution, aimed to achieve the broad and comprehensive goal of abolishing absolute rule and establishing the rule of law. This goal, with its inclusive concept, placed human dignity at the core of its intellectual and civilizational evolution. From 1906 to 1911, Azerbaijan demonstrated its capacity for self-governance in modern history by establishing the Azerbaijan Provincial Council in Tabriz and successfully managing its own affairs for five years.

The Azerbaijan Provincial Council, along with its subsidiary local councils, was formed in accordance with the progressive Law on Provincial and Local Councils, and its members were elected by the people. These councils not only reflected the ability of the Azerbaijani Turks to govern their own destiny but also exemplified a democratic method of self-administration. The formation of this significant event in Azerbaijan's history was undoubtedly influenced by the exceptional political leadership and organizational skills of Ali Monsieur and the Markaz-e Gheybi (the Secret Center of Tabriz), who maintained direct connections with revolutionaries in Northern Azerbaijan. Moreover, the military leadership of Sattar Khan, the national commander, was an undeniable force, underscoring the importance and impact of cohesive organizational efforts.

Throughout the Constitutional Revolution (Mashruta), those aligned with the power structures of reactionary central governments and opposed to the movement—or more broadly, opposed to the wave of freedom-seeking—consistently stood against the people’s movements for liberty and justice at various points in modern Azerbaijani history. These individuals and institutions, benefiting from rent-based and power-centered relationships, always prioritized personal interests over popular movements. They sided with tyranny and dictatorship, forming a united front against the advocates of freedom.

The Azerbaijan Provincial Council and its subordinate local councils in cities such as Ardabil, Urmia, Savuj Bulagh (now Mahabad), Khoy, Maragheh, Sarab, and others, along with the constitutional fighters who strived for a new order based on democratic values, found themselves in opposition to the coalition of local reactionaries and central despotism.

During the transformations of World War I, a short-lived government known as the Union of Islam was established in Azerbaijan, centered in Tabriz, under the leadership of Jamshid Khan Majd al-Saltaneh Afshar Urumi in 1918. This government paid special attention to Azerbaijani Turkic identity, but it was dissolved due to the outcomes of World War I. Subsequently, in 1920, the Sheikh Mohammad Khiabani movement emerged. Khiabani, a prominent leader of the Constitutional Movement, sought to revive the achievements of that earlier movement, but his efforts were also defeated by authoritarian forces.

After the February 22, 1921 led by Reza Khan and Seyyed Zia’eddin Tabatabai, with the backing of a foreign power, a wave of arrests, torture, censorship, and suppression of political activists and journalists began under the pretext of restoring order and law. Around this time, as the Constitutional Movement failed and the country plunged into disorder, militarist ideas, extreme Persian nationalism, and the homogenization of nations within Iran gained momentum. Hostility toward Turks and Arabs became widespread among the intellectuals of that era. For instance, the poet Aref Qazvini openly advocated the eradication of the Turkish language in his verse:

“The Turkish language must be cut off from back of the head / The solution is to cut this language out of the country.”

The dissemination of Aryanist and racist ideas, linguistic and ethnic homogenization, and the scapegoating of ethnic groups such as Turks and Arabs as the cause of Iran’s problems bore striking similarities to the antisemitic ideologies that emerged in Germany prior to World War II. Among the regrettable policies of the Pahlavi regime was not only the discrimination and suppression of the identity, culture, and political presence of Azerbaijanis and other Turkic peoples but also the systematic destruction of historical sites related to Turkic dynasties that preceded the Pahlavis. Numerous historical monuments in Tehran, Azerbaijan, and especially Tabriz, belonging to the Aq Qoyunlu, Qara Qoyunlu, Afshar, Safavid, and particularly Qajar dynasties, were demolished. Similar policies were implemented in Arab-majority regions in the south.

The goal of these policies was to erase the historical memory of the Turkic and Arab peoples living in Iran. Unfortunately, elements of these policies persisted during the Islamic Republic era, albeit in modified forms.

Although the first Pahlavi regime came to power with undeniable support from Britain, it gradually implemented a fascist single-nation policy across the remaining territories of the former Turkic empires, drawing inspiration from German Nazism. The goal was to eliminate differences, homogenize the various nations within these territories, and artificially construct a nation modeled after the totalitarian ideologies that were popular in the West at the time.

After World War I, totalitarian ideas took root like a cancer in Germany and Italy due to the destruction and instability left by the war. In the same spirit, Aryanism, influenced by Adolf Hitler’s ideology, was implemented within the territories of Iran. While the Pahlavi regime’s ideology was extremely authoritarian and uncompromising, Iran’s technological limitations in the Middle East prevented it from achieving the same level of control and propaganda as the totalitarian regimes of Europe or the Soviet Union.

With major global and regional changes, the spread of mass media, and the acceleration of modernization in Middle Eastern countries, the rise of Aryanist, totalitarian, and revivalist ideologies further solidified the erasure of regions like Azerbaijan. The regime embarked on policies of cultural homogenization and forced assimilation, establishing the hegemony of a singular cultural identity over all others. This represented a stark departure from the traditional mosaic of nations that had existed under the Qajar Empire. Modernization in Iran thus followed an unjust, oppressive, and colonial path.

Had Reza Khan's coup not occurred, and Aryanism not taken hold of political power, modernization might have followed a more natural course. The country would likely not have experienced the dominance of one nation over others within the territories left from the conquests of Turkic empires. The borders of these lands were, after all, shaped through the victories and defeats of Turkic kings and rulers over past centuries.

The Soviet occupation of northern Iran, driven by the first Pahlavi regime's support for Nazi ideology, led to Reza Shah's flight and the lack of resistance against the Allied invasion. However, the replacement of Reza Shah with Mohammad Reza Pahlavi did not result in significant changes in the country's governance. The core policies of the first Pahlavi regime were continued under new tactics. The Pahlavi regime, which had entered Iran's political stage through a coup, remained indifferent to the Constitutional Revolution and its democratic achievements, refusing to recognize them.

The authoritarian nature of the Pahlavi regime was fundamentally at odds with the principles of constitutional monarchy and the concept of power-sharing. Although the regime used the ideals of constitutionalism for propaganda to gain legitimacy, it never implemented key elements, such as the separation of powers, limits on the Shah's authority, or the establishment of provincial and local councils. These values were incompatible with the regime's foundation and objectives.

During the Soviet occupation of northern Iran, Azerbaijan, angered



by the racist policies of the first Pahlavi regime, reignited a movement for autonomy and self-governance. In November 1945, shortly after Nazi Germany's defeat and the end of World War II, the Azerbaijan National Government was established. Historical documents reveal that the leaders of this government emphasized the importance of Azerbaijani Turkic culture and language. Azerbaijan had previously experienced self-governance during the Constitutional Revolution and Sheikh Mohammad Khiabani's movement, both of which reflected the enduring resistance of Azerbaijani freedom fighters against tyranny and oppression.

Throughout Iranian history, Azerbaijani autonomy has represented not just a struggle for local freedom but also an effort to extend liberty throughout Iran. Azerbaijan was envisioned as a bastion for spreading freedom across the entire nation. However, when confronted with entrenched reactionary forces, some activists even entertained the idea of an "Independent Ireland" scenario for Azerbaijan.

Tragically, on December 12, 1946 (21 Azer), a brutal massacre was inflicted upon Azerbaijan by fascist forces, plunging the region into years of silence and oppression. Around 20,000 patriotic and enlightened individuals were killed, and many more were exiled, all to the benefit of fascism and reactionary elements. This massacre dealt a devastating blow to Azerbaijan's progressive movements, with consequences that are still felt to this day.

In 1979, the Aryanist revivalism of the Pahlavi era gave way to a new form of reactionary ideology—\*Sha'ubism\*—which combined the same authoritarian nationalism and Persian (Tajik) hegemony with an extreme form of Shi'a religious fundamentalism. The 1979 Revolution, which was initially the product of struggles by a broad spectrum of ideologies against the absolute monarchy, was soon co-opted by a faction of these groups. This takeover not only triggered a wave of purges against centralist organizations and movements but also extended the suppression of pro-autonomy movements across Iran's peripheral regions.

Following nearly half a century of Pahlavi rule, the oppressed nations within Iran's territories renewed their demand for

autonomy. In Azerbaijan, this struggle reached its peak in the wake of the revolution under the leadership of the Muslim People's Party and the spiritual guidance of Ayatollah Kazem Shariatmadari. Notably, Azerbaijan once again placed the demand for autonomy at the forefront, this time standing against the new form of authoritarianism—the \*Velayat-e Faqih\* (Guardianship of the Jurist). The national aspect of the Muslim People's Party movement led Khomeini to view it as part of the broader regional autonomy movements in Iran, and it was among the first to be brutally suppressed before he turned his attention to political factions in Tehran.

Throughout modern history, Azerbaijan has continuously kept the flame of democracy, freedom, and the rule of law alive, never relenting in its fight against unlawful authoritarian rule. History bears witness to the fact that the nations within Iran's borders, both under the colonial rule of the Pahlavi dynasty and during the Islamic Republic, have persistently fought for their lost freedom and the right to self-determination. Resistance against oppression and discrimination has endured even at the height of central government power.

Although Azerbaijan's efforts to achieve self-determination have seen some successes over the years, these achievements have been repeatedly crushed by the central government. Yet, the resistance of the southern Azerbaijani Turks toward this ultimate goal remains unwavering. Today, four decades after the establishment of the Islamic Republic, the nations within Iran continue to resist both Aryan fascist hegemony and religious reactionary oppression, standing firm against the totalitarian religious system.

Two significant movements, one led by Mir Jafar Pischevari and the other by Ayatollah Kazem Shariatmadari, were brutally suppressed by the central government's authoritarian mindset. Notably, both of these movements took place in Azerbaijan after shifts in power in Tehran. The first occurred after the fall of the first Pahlavi regime, while the second followed the overthrow of the second Pahlavi regime. Although these movements differed in their worldviews, their core demands shared structural similarities: freedom, justice, and control over their own affairs—demands that were in line with

the earlier struggles of the Constitutional Revolution and street movements.

Today, much of Iran's centralist opposition either cautiously avoids addressing the issue of oppressed nations, particularly Azerbaijan, or aligns itself with the Islamic Republic on this matter. This trend reflects a continuity in the behavior of authoritarian centralist forces over the past century, with only superficial changes over time.

Under the Islamic Republic, economic discrimination against Azerbaijan not only continued but intensified compared to the Pahlavi era. The regime systematically exploited the natural and human resources of non-Persian regions for the benefit of Persian-dominated provinces in the center. Oil from Arab regions, water from the western mountainous provinces, and the minerals and labor force of Azerbaijan were plundered to support the development of central desert regions inhabited primarily by Persians. This exploitation created a stark economic divide between the center and the periphery.

Once the most advanced province in Iran, Azerbaijan experienced severe decline due to resource exploitation and a lack of government investment. Mismanagement—possibly intentional—of Azerbaijan's water resources culminated in an environmental disaster: the drying or deliberate draining of Lake Urmia. Despite the fact that this ecological crisis poses an existential threat to Azerbaijan, endangering the lives of tens of millions, the Islamic Republic has taken no effective steps to address the situation. This ongoing disaster highlights the regime's neglect and discriminatory policies toward Azerbaijan, making it a matter of life and death for the region's people.

We believe that internal colonialism in Iran is rooted in the interconnection and cooperation of various ideological forces. Therefore, the struggle for Azerbaijan's national liberation must advance on multiple fronts. This internal colonialism is shaped by the alliance of Aryanist, racist, and revivalist currents with reactionary religious forces, forming an intertwined system that mutually reinforces itself. Currently, this alliance manifests as the

totalitarian system of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The \*Azerbaijan National Resistance Organization – Dirnish\* views the strengthening of the democratic front of oppressed nations in Iran as a key strategy for bolstering resistance against the Islamic Republic and the ruling racist, colonial powers. Building solidarity among these oppressed nations based on shared principles of human rights and mutual interests can prevent the repetition of massacres and repression carried out by authoritarian and centralist forces against marginalized populations.

Additionally, it is essential to combat the fascist and supremacist mentality that justifies political and cultural domination over so-called “ethnic groups” in Iran. This struggle must proceed in parallel with other efforts, and we must clearly articulate that the movements of oppressed nations in Iran are fundamentally rooted in the pursuit of freedom and justice. Contrary to the accusations of ethnocentrism or racism made by the opposition, these movements are free of any ethnic conflict or animosity.

Our organization is committed to the values enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights treaties. We reject any form of extremism and radicalism. We are devoted to upholding the human rights of all individuals, regardless of race, language, gender, or social class, and ensuring the full implementation of all human rights conventions.

We believe that the precise implementation of human rights principles, including the right to self-determination for the nations within Iran, is essential for achieving peace and stability in the region. In our relations with the wider world, we adhere to principles that promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the Middle East. We support policies that foster cooperation, resolve conflicts, and advance peace among countries in the region.

As mentioned above, the organization does not view the realization of the right to self-determination for Southern Azerbaijan and the establishment of a national government as separate from the strengthening of the democratic front of oppressed nations in Iran and the pursuit of freedom for all nations within the country. The

organization also supports any democratic and justice-seeking effort, including those related to freedom of expression, women's rights, and the demands of workers, teachers, and students, to strengthen the freedom-seeking movement against authoritarian forces in Iran.

## **Identifying Challenges and Opportunities**

To develop an effective roadmap, the current situation must be analyzed from multiple perspectives, and the challenges and opportunities facing social movements must be thoroughly studied and assessed.

The current regime in Iran, the Islamic Republic, exhibits many characteristics of a totalitarian government. These include:

- A strong desire to control social and political life
- Emphasizing the central role of the Supreme Leader in governance
- Pursuing an immutable and rigid ideology
- Cultural homogenization
- Unrestricted power-seeking both domestically and abroad
- Large-scale investments in ideological propaganda
- The suppression and assassination of opponents

These characteristics align with those of other totalitarian regimes and are certainly applicable to the Islamic Republic.

The Islamic Republic is known internationally as a state that supports terrorist activities worldwide, particularly in the Middle East. As an unconventional regime, it lacks the features necessary to engage in economic competition or establish normal relations with other countries in the region and the world. Instead, it seeks regional hegemony and secures its interests by creating instability and weakening its rivals through financial and military support for terrorist organizations.

The countries harmed by the actions of the Islamic Republic—especially Western nations—pursue diplomatic isolation as a response to Iran’s terrorist activities, while also increasing international sanctions against the regime. These sanctions aim to limit Iran’s financial and logistical support for terrorist organizations. Western countries, in cooperation with local actors in the region, are working to develop a joint strategy to counter Iran’s terrorist activities. These efforts are intended to coordinate regional actors to improve security and ensure stability throughout the region.

However, the complex political dynamics of the region, along with the influence of the Islamic Republic, make this struggle particularly challenging. As a result, Western and regional countries must devise comprehensive, long-term strategies to reduce tensions, limit conflict, and curb the influence of the regime’s proxy terrorist groups.

In the governing system of the country, the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches generally follow the orders of the Supreme Leader, with no independent oversight mechanisms in place. Media outlets and educational institutions are controlled by the government and used to propagate the ruling ideology, manipulate society, and steer public opinion. Like all totalitarian regimes, the Islamic Republic of Iran seeks to suppress cultural and ethnic/national diversity and promotes a specific national identity or ideology, encouraging unity around that identity.

The regime employs methods such as violent actions, arbitrary arrests, torture, kidnappings, the imprisonment of cultural and political activists, and mass executions as common tools of

repression and terror. Control is exercised with the utmost severity in areas such as the press, media, education, arts, and culture. A vast censorship apparatus operates to suppress individual expression, even though all media outlets are already monopolized by the government. Moreover, the Supreme Leader—regardless of the title or appearance with which he is portrayed—holds control over all governmental decision-making processes and is shielded from criticism or accountability, becoming a key instrument for suppressing dissent.

Iran, as a territory with defined borders inherited from former Turkic empires and now under the control of a totalitarian regime, must be assessed both independently from the ruling system and as a fusion of the government and society. This dual perspective helps identify the landscape of struggle and the opportunities available for political movements and organizations.

In a society ruled by a totalitarian government, civil society becomes severely weakened due to the atmosphere of repression and fear. People are afraid to unite under the umbrella of organizations, political parties, and associations, resulting in the formation of a mass society. Individuals are forced to operate within the boundaries set by the state. Educational institutions, media outlets, and cultural events are employed to mold the population according to the state's ideology. Without even realizing it, people are subjected to the regime's propaganda daily, and elements of their social behavior are shaped by this constant exposure.

Since every aspect of social life is tightly controlled by the totalitarian regime and public opinion is relentlessly bombarded with propaganda, the ability to think freely and comprehensively is effectively stripped away. Intellectuals and civil activists who can maintain independent thinking, resist the regime's propaganda, or perceive the larger picture become targets of the state's repressive forces, further tightening the government's control over this segment of society.

Thus, the regime does not rely solely on brute force to maintain its dominance. Political, cultural, economic, and other dimensions play essential roles in sustaining the totalitarian system. If a



significant portion of society can grasp the bigger picture in some form and chooses to engage in civil disobedience, rejecting the roles imposed by the government, the regime faces a real risk of collapse.

Iranian society has lacked a democratic environment for the past century, leaving civil society fragile and vulnerable. A robust civil society composed of grassroots institutions with diverse goals and ideologies is essential in preventing a mass society from paving the way for a totalitarian system. Therefore, the role of intellectuals and social and cultural activists in creating organizations, associations, and groups across various fields is critical. Efforts to organize society will enhance its ability to resist authoritarian ideologies.

The ANRO believes that organization, regardless of scale or format, can significantly contribute to strengthening civil society and fortifying the freedom-seeking front against authoritarian forces. Even small-scale efforts at organizing can play a crucial role in reinforcing civil resistance and bolstering the struggle for liberty.

We also believe that Iran is a multi-national state where, over the past century, the will of its nations has been subjugated by authoritarian forces with the support of global powers. We assert that there is a close and direct connection between authoritarian systems in Iran and the colonial domination of oppressed nations. In other words, democracy throughout Iran will only be possible when an authoritarian regime is no longer in power, and the policies of homogenization and internal colonialism are permanently abolished. Freedom and democracy for all of Iran cannot be achieved without recognizing the rights and liberties of the oppressed nations within the country.

It goes without saying that restricting freedom of expression, political organization, and similar liberties not only harms the non-Persian populations but ultimately affects Persian society as well. If Persian intellectuals fail to fully understand this issue in all its dimensions, it could result in bitter and irreversible consequences for all communities living in Iran.

To further explain the relationship between democracy and the rights of nations, ethnic groups, and religious minorities in a multinational state, several key points must be highlighted.

The protection of the rights and freedoms of nations and ethnic groups within a country fundamentally depends on freedom of speech, freedom of thought, and the rule of law—principles that form the essential foundation for establishing a democratic society. In a democratic state, respect for freedom of expression and thought, adherence to the rule of law, and the independence of the judiciary ensure equal protection for national and ethnic groups.

The participation and representation of national and ethnic groups in democratic processes are essential for the health of democracy. In a democratic environment, these groups must have the right to establish their own political parties, participate in elections, and express themselves freely. The emphasis placed on pluralism and tolerance in democratic societies encourages peaceful coexistence among various nations and ethnic groups. Thus, pluralism serves as a core principle of democratic societies, playing a crucial role in safeguarding the rights and freedoms of national and ethnic groups.

Additionally, in democratic countries, media and freedom of expression are essential tools for national and ethnic groups to make their voices heard and defend their rights. Restrictions on these freedoms can lead to violations of the rights of these groups.

The principles mentioned above are just a few examples of the core values of democracy, the realization of which benefits not only marginalized groups but also enriches the dominant culture and society at large. In other words, moving toward democracy requires abandoning hegemonic practices and majoritarian dominance in Iran. Adhering to democratic principles such as pluralism, freedom of expression, free press, elections, and political organization will amplify the voices of oppressed nations.

However, democracy alone does not automatically guarantee the rights of national and ethnic groups. To enhance the effectiveness

of democracy in protecting these rights, it is necessary to strengthen democratic systems in multi-national countries. As a first step, recognizing national pluralism and the multi-national nature of the country, as well as formally acknowledging the national characteristics of these groups in the constitution, would serve as a vital defensive measure for the oppressed nations of today in the democratic Iran of tomorrow.

A century of propaganda by authoritarian and fascist regimes in Iran has caused significant damage to mutual understanding among national groups and dealt a severe blow to social tolerance. The educational system must incorporate curricula that reflect the diversity of national identities, as well as the history and cultures of the different peoples in the country. This approach would help reduce intergroup tensions and xenophobia while fostering mutual recognition among the various nations in Iran, ultimately promoting tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

Political participation and representation of nations must increase. The rights of national and ethnic groups to establish political parties and engage in political processes with their national and ethnic identities must be ensured and protected within fair electoral systems. Furthermore, conditions must be created for dialogue among national groups, using democratic mechanisms to resolve conflicts peacefully and constructively.

Although strengthened democracy can help secure the rights of national and ethnic groups in Iran, democracy alone cannot guarantee these rights fully. This is a recognized reality in modern societies. We will first explore the reasons for this limitation and then present common solutions adopted by democratic countries to protect the rights of national and ethnic groups.

In some cases, democracy can take on a majoritarian character, where policies and decisions made by the majority may overlook or harm the rights of minorities. Without specific measures to safeguard the rights of national and ethnic minorities, such oversight can lead to violations of their rights.

Additionally, democratic processes—such as elections—may suffer

from flaws, including political manipulation, strategies aimed at maximizing votes, or lobbying during parliamentary decision-making. In such scenarios, political leaders might exploit the rights of national groups to secure votes for their own interests or pit these groups against each other.

Even within democratic systems, the rule of law may not always be upheld, and the judiciary may be subject to political interference. This can prevent the enactment of necessary legal protections for national and ethnic groups, leading to injustice. Moreover, in democratic societies, certain social groups might exhibit intolerance toward national or minority identities. In such cases, even democratic processes can be misused to violate the rights of national groups or promote discrimination.

For these reasons, alongside efforts to strengthen democracy, special measures and continuous efforts are needed to protect the rights of national, ethnic, and religious minorities. Democratic institutions serve as tools for building a peaceful, just, and egalitarian society that embraces national diversity, but they are not sufficient on their own.

A federal system can provide an effective framework for a multinational country to safeguard the rights and freedoms of national groups while also reinforcing democracy. Federalism is a system in which the central government, through a constitution, delegates certain powers to regional governments, dividing authority between them. This arrangement allows national and ethnic groups to maintain their cultural identities and manage their material and spiritual resources under the principle of autonomy.

## **Part Three**



## **Federalism as a Solution**

**J**ust as classical democracy shares political power equally among individuals, offering all citizens the right to be elected, the opportunity to determine their future, and the right to progress, welfare, freedom, justice, free speech, and political organization, federalism distributes political power vertically among communities with different cultures, languages, religions, and ethnicities. This system fosters peace among different national groups by encouraging dialogue, negotiation, and the resolution of conflicts through political processes. Therefore, democracy and federalism work as complementary systems to establish long-term political and social stability in Iran.

Federalism has historically been used to govern large, multi-ethnic countries, with its roots dating back to the city-states of ancient Greece and the Roman Republic. Over time, it has evolved into a mature system, now employed by several modern and developed countries. The benefits of federalism make it a valuable model for the governance of Middle Eastern countries, including Iran.

The nations residing in different regions of Iran have distinct cultural, linguistic, religious, economic, and social needs. Federalism allows these diverse regions to preserve and strengthen their unique identities and address their specific needs. By granting

local governments greater decision-making authority, the system enables them to better understand and meet the needs of their communities.

Democracy and federalism complement each other, with federalism reinforcing democracy within a country. Rather than centralizing all decisions within the national government, a federal system delegates more authority to local governments. This arrangement promotes greater citizen participation, not only at the national level but also at the regional level, giving individuals more influence over matters that directly affect their regions. It empowers citizens to engage meaningfully in both regional and national governance, fostering a sense of agency and representation across multiple levels of decision-making.

In addition, federalism prevents the over-centralization of power within the central government. When a central authority tries to control and oversee all aspects of the country, it often leads to bureaucratic inefficiency and widespread corruption. This is evident in the Islamic Republic today, where the government's mismanagement of the provinces has become so severe that some officials and institutions have intermittently proposed dividing the country into several economic zones or implementing decentralization reforms—though these plans are incomplete and flawed. A federal system, by empowering state governments, reduces centralization, curtails authoritarianism and administrative corruption, and allows for more efficient governance through faster and more localized decision-making.

Ultimately, federalism can provide greater freedoms, enhanced democratic participation, and more effective governance for communities and nations within Iran. We believe that democratic forces in the country, through political alliances based on democratic values and cooperation rooted in systematic organization, can form a significant force capable of countering authoritarianism. This collective effort would take a major step toward achieving national prosperity and breaking free from totalitarianism and internal colonialism.

Historically, Iran has operated in a federal-like manner since the

foundations of the state were laid during the Safavid era and up until the Pahlavi period. The administrative system of “Mamalik-e Mahrouseh” (the “Guarded Domains”), which existed under the Safavid and Qajar dynasties, was essentially a traditional form of federalism. Iran was naturally composed of provinces such as Azerbaijan, Khorasan, Fars, Kerman, and Arabistan, among others. The centralized system imposed by Reza Khan—under European influence—was not aligned with Iran’s historical and geographical realities, and it ultimately failed in practice. Therefore, a return to federalism would not only align with modern governance needs but also represent a restoration of Iran’s historical foundation.

## Political Structure of the Federal Republic of Iran

The goal of the Azerbaijan National Resistance Organization – Diranish (ANRO) is the national well-being of the Southern Azerbaijani Turks and other Turkic regions in Iran and the other parts of the country. The organization believes that this goal can only be achieved by fulfilling the historical demand for the establishment of a national and democratic government in Azerbaijan, based on the principle of self-determination.

From the perspective of the organization, the national interests of the Turks and other ethnic/national groups will be safeguarded through the formation of a national government for Southern Azerbaijan within the framework of the Federal Republic of Iran. This government, structured as a republic, must be established through the exercise of the right to self-determination. The political division of the country under the federal structure should align with the country’s historical realities and be based on its traditional provinces and regions. Historical provinces such as Azerbaijan, Iraq-e Ajam, Gilan, Mazandaran (or Tabaristan), Arabistan, Kurdistan, Balochistan, Fars, Kerman, Khorasan, and Turkmen Sahra can serve as the basis for federal divisions.

The organization envisions the governance of Iran to be founded on the principles of republicanism and federalism. This structure would ensure the separation of powers, prevent the imbalance



of centralized authority, and distribute political power among the different nations in Iran, creating the foundation for democracy and sustainable development.

Tehran can remain the capital of the federal government, given the diverse and pluralistic nature of the federation. All states must be represented proportionally in the federal government based on their populations.

According to international human rights standards and documents, the right to self-determination of the constituent nations within Iran must be recognized in the laws of the federal government.

The organization advocates for a presidential system as the most suitable governance model for Southern Azerbaijan, given its democratic nature and the system's capacity for rapid decision-making and efficient implementation. To maintain balance and prevent the concentration of power, the organization also proposes a parliamentary system at the federal level. This would ensure a democratic administrative and legal framework at the national level while preserving the stability, efficiency, and swift decision-making characteristic of presidential governance at the state level.

In the proposed parliamentary system, the Prime Minister—elected by the Federal Parliament—holds primary responsibility for executive affairs and the governance of the country. The Prime Minister, supported by the parliamentary majority, forms a cabinet to implement the government's policies. On the other hand, the President plays a symbolic or ceremonial role and is typically elected directly by the people. The President's duties are limited to overseeing the constitution, signing laws, and representing the country at official ceremonies.

This dual structure creates a balance between the executive and legislative branches at the federal level. The central role of the Prime Minister in running the government, under the supervision of parliament, ensures that power does not become excessively concentrated in a single institution. At the same time, the President, acting as a symbol of national unity, can mediate during political crises if necessary.

This model—combining a presidential system at the state level with a parliamentary system at the federal level—ensures both political stability and effective governance. It also provides for more diverse representation of different social groups, nations, and religions in the multi-national society of Iran. This structure promotes inclusive governance, ensuring that various communities and interests within the federation have a voice in the political process at both the regional and federal levels.

## **State Governments in the Federal Republic of Iran**

The state governments within the federal structure will operate as republics. The distribution of powers and responsibilities between the state governments and the federal government must be carefully outlined and approved by both state and federal legislatures.

Each state government will have its own executive (cabinet), judiciary, and legislative bodies, including local, urban, and rural councils. The state legislature, comprised of representatives elected by the people, will play a key role in enacting policies related to internal governance. The division of authority between the state and federal levels, as well as among the branches of state government, must be defined with precision. States will have political, economic, and security autonomy within the framework of the federal system, enabling them to manage and govern their internal affairs independently.

This autonomy includes decision-making authority over economic management, official languages, culture, education, infrastructure, and the establishment of local law enforcement and security forces, which will operate under the authority of the state government.

The state governments will be responsible for implementing their internal policies, coordinating with the federal government of Iran, and managing public services and administrative affairs. States will also have the authority to pass and enforce laws, provided they do not conflict with the Federal Constitution. As long as there is no

constitutional conflict, states may enact laws that differ from one another to meet local needs.

Matters under federal jurisdiction will include issues that affect the entire country, such as foreign policy, national defense, international trade, immigration, and constitutional law. However, states will manage areas such as education, local security, criminal law, civil rights, healthcare, environmental protection, and internal trade.

Each state within the federal republic will have its independent judiciary, responsible for enforcing laws and adjudicating cases within its jurisdiction. The state judiciary will include local courts, independent bar associations, and relevant judicial bodies. Court rulings at the state level may align with federal law or, in certain cases, differ from it, provided they remain consistent with the Federal Constitution.

The Federal Supreme Court and other federal judicial institutions will have supervisory authority over state courts, ensuring justice and constitutional compliance at both the state and federal levels.

The ANRO proposes that the governance of the states follow a presidential model. In this system, the head of the state government will be elected directly by the people in free and competitive elections among political parties. The elected president will be responsible for forming a cabinet of ministers and overseeing the executive branch within the state.

While states will not have foreign ministries, in accordance with the principles of federal governance, they will have the authority to engage in cultural, political, and economic cooperation with other countries. State officials will be able to establish connections, sign agreements, and coordinate efforts within the scope of their autonomy and responsibilities.

Political parties in each state will have the right to participate not only in state elections but also in federal parliamentary and presidential elections. This ensures that political participation extends across both the state and federal levels, fostering inclusive governance and representation throughout the entire federal system.

## The Transition Period from the Islamic Republic Regime

In the aftermath of the collapse of the Islamic Republic, political forces in Azerbaijan will aim to establish a national government in the region. Therefore, a comprehensive and well-organized transition plan must be developed, detailing the stages and responsibilities of temporary institutions to ensure a smooth and successful shift to democratic governance in Southern Azerbaijan and across Iran.

Parallel to transition efforts at the state level, transition management at the national level will also need to take place with the participation of legitimate representatives from all regions.

### A. Formation of the Provisional National Council

The Provisional National Council will be established as the first step toward forming a national government in Azerbaijan. This council will comprise representatives from political parties, prominent figures, and experts involved in the national struggle. The main tasks of the council include:

- Managing political, security, and social affairs during the transition period,
- Establishing and supervising temporary committees to handle societal affairs,
- Ensuring security and maintaining public order,
- Creating the conditions for the transfer of power to permanent democratic institutions,
- Taking on all executive and governmental responsibilities until elections are held and a permanent government and national assembly are established,
- Facilitating a smooth transfer of power with the support of international organizations and overseeing elections,
- Preparing for elections and the establishment of the state parliament.

The first task of the state parliament will be to draft a new

constitution for the state. This constitution must guarantee the rights and freedoms of all citizens based on universal human rights values and clearly define the governance structure. The transition period will conclude once the new constitution, aligned with the Federal Constitution of Iran, is adopted.

## **B. Formation of the Temporary Election Committee**

The Temporary Election Committee will operate under the supervision of the Provisional National Council. The responsibilities of this committee include:

- Creating the necessary conditions for conducting free, fair, and transparent elections,
- Monitoring all stages of the electoral process, including the registration of candidates and voters, campaign activities, and the voting process,
- Ensuring equal representation for all social groups and communities,
- Collaborating with international organizations to oversee referendums and guarantee transparency.

## **C. Formation of the Committee for Organizing the Armed Forces**

The Committee for Organizing the Armed Forces will manage the military, police, and other security services under the supervision of the Provisional National Council. This committee will oversee:

- Maintaining unity and discipline within the armed forces,
- Preventing fragmentation or internal rebellion within security forces,
- Ensuring the smooth transfer and integration of military and security forces into democratically elected institutions,
- Safeguarding public order and security,
- Countering internal and external security threats,
- Protecting human rights and ensuring justice during the transition period.

The Provisional National Council will also organize a state police force to protect citizens, public infrastructure, political offices, transportation routes, and foreign missions.

#### **D. Cooperation with International Organizations**

Collaboration with international organizations will play a crucial role during the transition period. This cooperation may include:

- Monitoring elections to ensure fairness and transparency,
- Receiving advisory, technical, and financial assistance for rebuilding and developing infrastructure,
- Securing international support for political sovereignty and recognition of the territorial integrity of Southern Azerbaijan.

This transition framework aims to establish democratic institutions, maintain public order, and ensure human rights while preventing power vacuums or instability. It emphasizes coordination with national and international partners to achieve a peaceful transfer of power and successful governance in both Southern Azerbaijan and the Federal Republic of Iran.

## **Part Four**



## Values and Principles

Azerbaijan, a land with a rich history and a culture rooted in respect for diversity and coexistence, has long pursued a path toward freedom and justice. The struggle of its people for the right to self-determination not only reflects a firm resolve but also embodies an ongoing effort to build a society grounded in human dignity and equality.

These efforts have consistently upheld the fundamental rights of individuals, regardless of ethnicity, language, or religion. At their core, these struggles aim to establish a system where freedom, justice, and equality serve as the foundation of society. Azerbaijan's aspiration is to create a modern society in which every individual, irrespective of cultural or religious differences, has the opportunity to participate in collective decision-making processes and enjoys full protection of their rights in all aspects of life.

Faced with numerous challenges, Azerbaijan seeks to build a society where peaceful coexistence and mutual respect for individual rights are unwavering principles. Achieving this vision requires strengthening the social and economic infrastructure necessary to ensure social justice and foster sustainable development. The envisioned future is one where no one is marginalized, and everyone can thrive in an environment that guarantees freedom



and equality.

A key priority in this vision is the protection of vulnerable groups, including women, children, workers, and sexual and religious minorities. Supporting these groups is not only essential for maintaining social justice but also demonstrates a profound commitment to ethical and human principles.

Azerbaijan acknowledges that respect for diversity and the guarantee of equal rights for all are the cornerstones of a stable and prosperous society. With this understanding, Azerbaijan moves toward a future where every member of society can fully realize their potential, contributing to a collective environment of progress, inclusivity, and shared success.

## Secularism

The ANRO believes that the national government of Southern Azerbaijan, and more broadly the Federal Republic of Iran, must be founded on the principle of separating religion from politics. It advocates for the establishment of a secular government in which none of the executive, legislative, or judicial branches are influenced by religious laws. The judicial system of the national government of Southern Azerbaijan will be based on modern, rational criminal laws. Both the legislative assembly and the executive cabinet will carry out their responsibilities in strict adherence to the constitution, operating within the framework of secularism. Religion will not interfere in political processes or government decision-making, although the state will oversee and regulate religious activities through institutions such as the Office of Religious Affairs, as detailed in the section on religion and beliefs.

## Secular Government

**(a)** The national government of Azerbaijan will be a secular government, committed to secularism as the foundation for policymaking and legislation. Secularism ensures the complete separation of religion from state affairs while guaranteeing freedom of religion and belief for all citizens.

**(b)** The government will maintain equal respect and neutrality toward all religious and non-religious beliefs. It will enact policies and laws to ensure that no citizen in Southern Azerbaijan faces discrimination, pressure, or threats based on their belief, religion, lack of religious faith, or non-compliance with religious practices.

The state will remain neutral in religious matters and maintain an equal distance from all religions, recognizing none officially while respecting individual religious beliefs. Religious practices and symbols will be allowed in public spaces, but no branch of the government will adopt a religious stance. Religion and governance will remain separate, although citizens will be free to practice their religious beliefs.

In this envisioned system, the principles of secularism are paramount. The state will neither promote nor oppose any specific religious belief or practice. However, the role of religion in society and the presence of religious institutions will not be denied.

For example, religious education may be offered in public schools, but it will be provided impartially and scientifically rather than promoting the ideology of any particular faith. The use of religious symbols in public spaces will also be permitted, but the state will not endorse or ban any particular symbol.

This secular framework aims to foster an inclusive public sphere that supports freedom and diversity among followers of different faiths. At the same time, it ensures that religion remains separate from the state's legislative, executive, and judicial powers. The goal is to strike a balance in which religious and secular activities peacefully coexist without any group experiencing discrimination or marginalization.

By adhering to these principles, the government and society will promote mutual respect, ensuring that all citizens—regardless of their beliefs—enjoy equal opportunities and protections within a just and inclusive system.

## Language Policy

In each state of the Federal Republic of Iran, the common language(s) spoken within that state will serve as the official language for education and administration. At the national level, all widely spoken languages—such as Azerbaijani Turkish, Farsi, Kurdish, Arabic, and Balochi—will also be recognized as official languages. The federal government will be responsible for providing equal resources and support to all official languages across the country.

The ANRO believes that Azerbaijani Turkish has suffered systematic suppression and damage under the internal colonial policies of the ruling fascist regime since 1925. Therefore, the official language of education in Southern Azerbaijan will be Azerbaijani Turkish at the primary level. In secondary education, students will be required to learn at least one other official language of Iran and one international language.

The national government of Azerbaijan will take on the responsibility of preserving and promoting the Azerbaijani Turkish language by establishing an Azerbaijani Turkish Language Academy, which will be funded by the government. Protecting all languages within Iran will remain a shared responsibility between the federal and state governments.

### Responsibilities of the Azerbaijani Turkish Language Academy

- Promoting Azerbaijani Turkish as a language of science, culture, literature, and education.
- Ensuring the correct, effective, and artistic use of Azerbaijani Turkish in all public and private institutions.
- Restoring the integrity of the language and addressing the damages inflicted in the past.
- Learning from the experiences of successful Turkic-speaking countries and promoting linguistic cooperation in the broader Turkic world.

### Equality Among Languages in the Federal Republic

In the Federal Republic of Iran, there will be no linguistic or cultural superiority or discrimination. All major languages will have official status nationwide. Less widely spoken languages will also be granted official status at the regional level, where they are used by local communities.

The ANRO opposes any form of language imposition on non-Turkic citizens, as such practices contradict modern democratic principles. Therefore:

### **Language Rights in Southern Azerbaijan**

**(a)** Azerbaijani Turkish will be the primary and official language of Southern Azerbaijan. However, the government will ensure the protection of all languages spoken in the region and prevent linguistic discrimination.

**(b)** Every individual will have the right to use their mother tongue in all aspects of personal, cultural, and social life. The government will provide the necessary facilities for the education and preservation of different languages in Southern Azerbaijan in accordance with the values of cultural pluralism.

**(c)** The national government will enact laws to guarantee that no citizen faces discrimination for using their mother tongue and that equal rights and opportunities are upheld.

**(d)** Southern Azerbaijan will embrace multilingualism not as a threat but as an opportunity. In addition to Azerbaijani Turkish, the government will implement policies to preserve and develop other languages in the region. Promoting multilingualism will foster dialogue and cultural enrichment among various communities.

**(e)** In areas where specific groups of Azerbaijani citizens speak a particular language, the government will provide the necessary funding and resources to preserve their cultural and linguistic identity. This will include support for language development, education, and cultural initiatives tailored to the needs of those communities.

The overarching goal is to create a society where linguistic

diversity is celebrated, and every language and culture is protected and allowed to flourish. This approach ensures that all citizens, regardless of their linguistic background, can participate fully in public life and benefit from equal rights and opportunities.

## National Geography

From the perspective of the ANRO, the territory of Southern Azerbaijan State will encompass the following regions: West Azerbaijan, East Azerbaijan, Ardabil, Zanjan, Qazvin, Alborz, and Turkic-speaking areas within the provinces of Gilan, Hamedan, Markazi, Kurdistan, and Kermanshah. The divisions of Southern Azerbaijan are outlined as follows:

- ***East Azerbaijan Province, with Tabriz as its capital,***
- ***West Azerbaijan Province, with Urmia as its capital,***
- ***Ardabil Province, with Ardabil as its capital,***
- ***Zanjan Province, with Zanjan as its capital,***
- ***Qazvin Province, with Qazvin as its capital,***
- ***Alborz Province, with Karaj as its capital,***
- ***Astara and other Turkic-speaking areas along the Caspian Sea,***
- ***Saveh and Turkic-speaking areas of Markazi Province,***
- ***Turkic-speaking areas in Tehran and Qom,***
- ***Turkic-speaking areas of Hamedan Province, with Hamedan as its capital,***
- ***The cities of Bijar, Qorveh, Sonqor, and Sahneh.***

This proposed territorial structure reflects the cultural and linguistic realities of the Turkic-speaking population in these regions and aims to ensure that the governance and administration of these areas align with their historical, cultural, and demographic characteristics.

## Flag

Alongside the flag of the Federal Republic of Iran, each state will have the right to adopt its own state flag. The design of the flag of the Federal Republic must be created and approved by the Federal Parliament with input from representatives of all states and provinces.

The ANRO proposes the “Flag of the Southern Azerbaijan National Struggle” as the state flag for Southern Azerbaijan. This flag features a red background with a crescent moon and an eight-pointed star, with the upper-left corner in blue and the lower-left corner in green. This flag is widely recognized among political movements, both inside and outside the country, as the symbol of the national struggle of Southern Azerbaijan.



## Religion and Beliefs

The ANRO believes that tolerance and respect for religions and beliefs are essential pillars of democracy and individual freedom in Southern Azerbaijan. In a diverse society, it is important to ensure that all citizens can freely practice their religious rituals, provided that these practices respect the rights of others.

A Department of Religious Affairs will be established under the supervision of the head of the national government of Southern Azerbaijan. This institution will be responsible for organizing, managing, and overseeing places of worship and religious officials. The department's budget will be provided by the national government.

Operating within the framework of secularism, this department will foster a culture of tolerance and mutual respect among all religions, beliefs, and ideologies.

Religious officials will be trained at theological faculties or religious schools under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education. Graduates will be appointed by the Department of Religious Affairs to serve in mosques and other places of worship across Southern Azerbaijan. The department's responsibilities and objectives will be defined in detail in its charter, based on constitutional principles.

Alongside theological faculties, religious schools will also be allowed to operate under the supervision of the Department of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education to train religious leaders. Religious endowment institutions (endowment -waqf-schools and universities) will be permitted to establish educational centers to train clergy for mosques and other religious institutions under the supervision of the national government.

We believe that religion is a personal matter and that no one has the right to impose or prohibit religious beliefs on others. Individuals are free to experience their faith without discrimination or prejudice, and no one has the right to infringe on others' freedoms by imposing their own beliefs.

Our vision emphasizes free thought and encourages individuals to

explore their beliefs independently, without coercion. We believe that respecting religious diversity fosters social cohesion and cultural interaction, promoting peace and solidarity within society. Whether believers, atheists, or followers of other ideologies, all individuals will have the right to practice their rituals and engage in civil activities freely, as long as they do not impose their beliefs on others.

Recognizing the importance of dialogue and cooperation among religions and beliefs, the government will actively promote understanding and engagement between different religious and non-religious groups. This could include organizing interfaith dialogues, joint religious forums, and exchanges of perspectives, as well as incorporating the history of religions—instead of religious doctrines—into school curricula to foster mutual understanding and empathy among various segments of society.

We place great importance on freedom, civil rights, and religious tolerance. Our belief is that abandoning religious prejudice and discrimination will pave the way toward a better and more dynamic future. The majority of Southern Azerbaijan’s population adheres to values rooted in compassion and kindness rather than fear or hatred, which strengthens our hope for building a society free from extremism and intolerance.

By embracing these values, we can take steady steps toward progress and sustainable development, creating a society where all individuals—regardless of their beliefs—can coexist peacefully and contribute to a shared future.

## **Culture and National Identity**

Over the past century, the concepts of culture and national identity have been among the most contentious issues in Iran, laying the foundation for significant disputes among the country’s diverse communities. It is widely acknowledged that the hegemony of a singular ideological narrative and the imposition of one dominant culture upon the rest of the population has caused deep



misunderstandings and conflicts. This top-down imposition of political power has gradually turned into serious tensions, fostering distrust across different groups in society. Even supporters of the centralized system fear a power vacuum, recognizing the historical precedent of instability whenever centralized control weakens.

The centralized and authoritarian system in Iran, built on repression and power consolidation, fiercely resists any form of power-sharing or democratization. The concentration of power naturally reinforces cultural dominance, making it difficult to achieve democracy or allow freedoms for others. The result is that not only does the dominant system fail to achieve its own freedom and democracy, but it also prevents other communities from realizing their aspirations. This is comparable to a prison guard who not only confines prisoners but also traps himself within the prison walls.

It is essential to redefine culture and national identity in Iran with a pluralistic and inclusive approach. Acknowledging diversity and mutual acceptance, despite differences, will help dismantle the cultural hegemony that has prevailed in the country. This will foster equal rights for all communities. The first step in this process is recognizing the various nations and religions within Iran.

The dominant narrative over the past century has promoted the concept of a unified “Iranian nation” based primarily on Persian cultural characteristics, while referring to other nations with the demeaning label of “Iranian ethnic groups.” This approach has institutionalized internal colonialism, creating marginalized and underdeveloped peripheries alongside a relatively prosperous center, enjoying advantages in science, art, economics, and welfare.

Following this critical step of recognizing diversity, mechanisms must be established to guarantee the participation of all nations in decision-making processes. To prevent the continuation of existing discriminatory policies, legal frameworks should be drafted and implemented with the participation of representatives from all communities in Iran.

The state must adopt policies that preserve and encourage the

cultural identities and languages of Iran's various communities. The use of different languages and cultures should be encouraged in education, media, cultural events, and economic activities.

A century of promoting a single dominant national culture has caused severe human rights violations and eroded the spirit of coexistence. Hate speech and cultural intolerance have spread widely, further dividing society. To heal these wounds, educational programs and awareness campaigns must be organized to enhance mutual understanding and celebrate cultural diversity. Efforts should focus on fostering a culture of tolerance, respect, and cooperation within society.

These efforts must be supported by a political system anchored in constitutional guarantees. A Federal Parliament, with representatives from different nations, will ensure that the voices of all communities are heard and that their rights are defended through binding legal actions in accordance with the constitution.

By enabling citizen participation, political party involvement, and civil society engagement, Iran can begin to address the legacy of racism and internal colonialism. Over time, these efforts will pave the way for a society where people of diverse cultures, languages, and ethnicities can live together peacefully in a truly multi-national state.

With these reforms, the damages caused by a century of cultural hegemony can gradually be mitigated. Iran can foster peaceful coexistence by embracing inclusivity and diversity, ensuring that no group is marginalized or left behind in the shared journey toward progress and development.

## Economy

The ANRO believes that the economy of the Federal Republic of Iran and the State Government of South Azerbaijan must be built on the principles of economic freedom, social justice, competition, and property rights. Protecting the economic rights of individuals and safeguarding property ownership through a free-market system is

essential.

Economic rights must be guaranteed for everyone, without discrimination based on ethnicity, race, gender, or political beliefs. Every individual must have equal access to economic opportunities, education, and resources. Furthermore, social justice in wealth distribution and fair access to economic opportunities is a key principle in creating inclusive economic institutions.

Economic institutions should operate in a free, transparent, and competitive environment. We believe that promoting competition among economic institutions and preventing exploitative and rent-seeking entities must be non-negotiable priorities in the future policies of both the federal and state governments. While the government may assume a regulatory role in specific cases, overall state interference in the economy should be minimized.

Property rights are a fundamental principle of a free-market economy. These rights must be protected by law, allowing individuals and entities to fully utilize their assets. Government policies must not interfere with individuals' economic participation, ensuring the prevention of rent-seeking practices.

We believe that a free-market system is the best way to achieve economic development and improve the well-being of citizens. This system promotes expertise and innovation, driving economic dynamism and enhancing living standards. However, we also emphasize the importance of the government's role in balancing market dynamics with public interests by providing public services, ensuring environmental sustainability, and supporting vulnerable groups.

## The Economic Principles of the ANRO

**1. Economic Freedom:** The desired economic system emphasizes individual economic freedom. This means creating an environment where both individuals and legal entities can make their own economic decisions within the framework of specific laws and regulations, based on their capabilities. In a free-market economy, choices related to employment, investment, trade, production, and other economic activities should be governed by the rule of law,

preventing political authorities from exercising undue influence.

**2. Free Market Economy:** The economic system must be based on a free, competitive market. This involves allowing market principles and the laws of supply and demand to determine prices and allocate resources. In this system, economic forces are regulated through competition and transparent interactions between institutions, while minimizing excessive government intervention.

**3. Protection of Property Rights:** The ANRO places high importance on safeguarding the property rights of individuals and legal entities. Property rights are upheld as a fundamental principle under the law, and any encroachment on them—whether by state or non-state actors—must be halted by independent courts. This ensures lawful ownership and utilization of resources, assets, or properties by those who possess them.

**4. Government as a Regulator:** The government's role in the envisioned economic system is that of a regulator. Its responsibilities include creating laws that improve market mechanisms, maintaining competition, protecting economic rights, providing public services, and supporting vulnerable groups. While unnecessary state interference in economic activities is discouraged, the government must take action to ensure economic balance and justice. It may allocate resources to encourage investments in critical sectors, but democratic institutions must ensure fair and transparent policies, preventing rent-seeking entities from gaining power.

**5. Social Justice:** The economic system emphasizes social justice in the distribution of wealth and economic opportunities. It promotes equal opportunities for all individuals to participate in economic activities and benefit from economic development. This principle aims to address poverty and inequality, with a focus on supporting underprivileged and vulnerable groups.

**6. Fair Tax System:** The organization advocates for a fair tax system, meaning individuals should pay taxes proportionate to their purchasing power and income. Those with higher incomes are expected to bear greater responsibility for funding public services

and supporting disadvantaged groups. A logical correlation between income and tax liability ensures fairness.

**7. Environmental Protection:** Environmental sustainability is a core priority. Economic development should go hand-in-hand with environmental conservation, including efforts to protect natural resources, reduce pollution, and preserve biodiversity. A healthy environment is essential for sustainable development.

**8. Trade Freedom:** Trade freedom and international economic cooperation are fundamental principles. The organization believes that free trade expands economic opportunities, strengthens international relations, and promotes prosperity. Regardless of political ideologies, individuals and entities should have the right to engage in domestic and international trade, with limitations on government interference enforced through legal frameworks.

**9. Support for Entrepreneurship and Innovation:** The economic system encourages entrepreneurship, innovation, and the growth of small and medium-sized businesses. It promotes technological advancement, research and development, and the creation of favorable conditions for creativity. A market-driven economy, underpinned by clear property rights, intellectual property protection, access to finance, and transparent regulatory frameworks, offers a conducive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators.

**10. Fair Competition:** Maintaining market competition and preventing monopolies are essential goals. Encouraging healthy competition and consumer choice among products and services helps foster better quality and fair prices.

**11. Worker Rights Protection:** The proposed economic system emphasizes protecting workers' rights and ensuring fair working conditions. It supports labor rights, such as the right to form unions and engage in collective bargaining, which can reduce workplace dissatisfaction and promote safe, healthy working environments. Effective labor policies also enhance productivity and societal well-being, contributing to overall economic development.

**12. Elimination of Discrimination:** The organization opposes any form of discrimination based on gender, race, religion, nationality, or other factors. Everyone should enjoy equal rights and opportunities, and any form of institutional bias undermines fair competition and erodes public trust. Discrimination leads to inequality and corruption, which hinder economic growth and prosperity.

**13. Transparency:** Transparency is vital for sustainable economic development. The organization stresses the need for transparent governance and public participation in economic decision-making. Transparency ensures that relevant information about economic activities is accessible, and it holds public institutions accountable. This helps prevent corruption and increases public trust.

**14. Governance with Citizen Participation:** The organization believes that citizen participation and transparency are interconnected. All citizens should have access to accurate economic data to engage meaningfully in democratic decision-making processes regarding economic issues.

**15. Taxation:** The organization advocates for a tax system based on fairness, efficiency, transparency, and accountability. Higher-income individuals should contribute a larger share of their earnings as taxes, aiming to reduce economic inequality and fund public services. The tax system should also incentivize investment and avoid discouraging economic activity. For example, some countries offer tax breaks for startups or high-tech companies. Additionally, the government must be transparent about how taxes are collected and spent.

**16. Budget Allocation:** The organization argues that, following the collapse of the Qajar Empire, internal colonial policies imposed an unjust system on the country, leading to the underdevelopment of various regions. To end this inequality, a democratic budget allocation system between states and the federal government must be established and agreed upon to ensure fair distribution of resources.

Budget and Financial Principles of the ANRO

***Government and States: Funding for both the federal government and individual states should be established through a mutually agreed-upon system.***

***2. Criteria for Budget Allocation to States: The share of each state's budget must consider factors such as population, level of economic development, specific regional needs, and other relevant indicators.***

***3. Autonomy in Budget Management for States: Each state should have the authority to determine and manage its programs independently in areas such as education, healthcare, law enforcement, security, and infrastructure. The budget for these areas must be formulated and approved without reliance on the federal government.***

***4. Coordination and Cooperation Between States and the Federal Government: All states are required to facilitate coordination and collaboration with the federal government, based on the principle of "negotiation and agreement," especially in securing financial resources and executing joint programs related to defense, foreign affairs, and regional development.***

***5. Federal Parliament's Oversight Role: The federal parliament will be responsible for overseeing the fair and appropriate distribution and utilization of financial resources between the federal government and states to ensure balanced budget allocations.***

***6. Consensus-Based Tax Revenue Distribution: Decisions regarding the division of tax revenues between the federal government and states will be made through a consensus-based approach. A council comprising representatives from both the federal government and the states will collaborate and consult with one another to determine revenue-sharing arrangements.***

This framework reflects the organization's commitment to a balanced, decentralized financial system, promoting both regional autonomy and effective federal cooperation.

## Separation and Independence of Powers

In the Federal Republic of Iran, the separation of powers in the governance system is carried out through the distribution of authority and responsibilities among various governmental institutions horizontally and vertically.

Horizontal separation means the division of power among the three branches of government: executive, legislative, and judiciary. These three branches interact with each other but operate independently to prevent the concentration of power in the hands of a single institution or individual. The separation of powers is a fundamental principle of governance in federal systems and other forms of democratic governments.

Vertical separation refers to the division of power between the central government and state governments. In federal systems, the central government and state governments each have specific responsibilities and authorities.

Unlike centralized governments, where nearly all power and authority are concentrated in the hands of the central government, the central government in a federal system is responsible for national and international affairs, such as national defense, foreign policy, and international trade. In centralized governments, provinces and cities merely execute the orders of the central government, and citizens' ability to make decisions about their own destiny and place of residence is very limited. In contrast, in federal systems, political power is vertically divided, and local governments have greater independence to make decisions in certain areas independently. These authorities and responsibilities are usually defined in the constitution or in agreements between the central and local governments. Different levels of national and state governments each have authority in specific areas and work in parallel without one having complete dominance over the other.

Thus, the distribution of power through the federal constitution, both horizontally and vertically, in a multi-ethnic country like Iran, prevents the concentration of power, ensures efficiency and accountability, protects individual rights and freedoms through



mutual oversight, and enhances flexibility and the ability to adapt to the cultural, ethnic, and economic diversity of various regions in the country. Vertical distribution of power ensures that no governmental institution—whether central or local—can monopolize power, thus reducing centralization and minimizing the potential for abuse of power and authoritarianism. Local governments can monitor the performance of the central government and vice versa. This mutual oversight helps prevent excessive power-seeking and guarantees individual freedoms. Therefore, this system of governance will have positive effects on the country's transition to democracy for all residents, including those living in central regions of Iran.

In general, federal systems that apply both horizontal and vertical separation of powers seek to establish a balance between centralization and decentralization to enhance the efficiency of governance while preserving individual rights and freedoms

## **Sustainable Development and the Environment**

In today's developed countries, the direct connection between sustainable development and a healthy environment is well-established. We believe that without serious attention to environmental issues, it is impossible to leave behind a robust economy for future generations. Colonial policies have inflicted significant harm on Azerbaijan's environment. As the ANRO, we consider policies aimed at natural resource conservation, combating climate change, and energy efficiency as essential principles for environmental protection and prerequisites for achieving sustainable development. We believe that the government can attract public participation by introducing incentive laws, enabling many projects to succeed through the collaboration of the private sector, cooperatives, and non-governmental organizations.

Sustainable development and environmental conservation are closely linked and are essential for the health and well-being of our society. Implementing these policies will not only promote economic growth but also ensure the sustainability of our economy by protecting natural resources.

## 1. Encouraging the Transition to Renewable Energy

- *Incentives and investments will be provided to diversify energy sources.*
- *Emphasis will be placed on the importance of renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar, and hydroelectric power.*
- *Laws will be passed to improve energy efficiency and reduce dependence on fossil fuels.*

## 2. Natural Resource Management

- *New regulations will promote the sustainable use of forests, water resources, and agricultural land. Although overexploitation of soil and water may be profitable in the short term, it will result in irreversible consequences for future generations.*
- *Programs for forest conservation and reforestation will be supported, and tree-planting campaigns will be encouraged by both the government and non-governmental organizations.*

## 3. Waste Management

- *Policies promoting waste reduction and recycling will be implemented. The private sector will receive incentives to establish recycling plants and energy production from waste.*
- *The use of hazardous chemicals and the waste generated by industrial and medical centers will be strictly controlled.*
- *Waste segregation at the household level will be promoted through educational programs, starting in schools, to raise environmentally aware and responsible citizens.*

## Environmental Pollution and Fighting Climate Change

Carbon emission reduction policies will be implemented to achieve cleaner and healthier air. Air pollution resulting from burning fossil fuels in power plants in major cities, especially in Tabriz, has become a serious problem for citizens' health. Poor quality vehicles, substandard fuels, and the lack of a modern, fully integrated public transportation system are the main causes of air

pollution problems in South Azerbaijan's cities.

Incentives for building energy-efficient and environmentally friendly "green houses" and improving existing residences will be among the key priorities of our clean and healthy environment programs for South Azerbaijan.

Adaptation strategies will be developed and preparations will be made to combat the effects of climate change. South Azerbaijan particularly needs serious adaptation measures in the areas of water resources and agriculture. For example, programs will be developed to monitor and regulate water efficiency for agricultural, industrial, and domestic use in the water resources sector. Traditional irrigation methods should be eliminated, and high-productivity irrigation methods should be promoted. Within the framework of agricultural adaptation strategy, investments will be made to strengthen infrastructure for storage, transportation, and marketing of products. Farmers will be encouraged to create various income sources rather than relying on a single crop. At the same time, farmers will be educated and supported regarding modern agricultural techniques and climate-appropriate agricultural products.

Conservation zones will be expanded to protect natural areas and biodiversity. Investments will be provided for improving public transportation systems and promoting green transportation. Legislators should prepare laws and regulations that provide incentives for using electric vehicles and clean technologies.

Extensive awareness campaigns will be organized to educate the public about environmental issues, and environmental education programs in schools will be strengthened in textbooks and training activities.

The measures mentioned above are just a few examples of the Azerbaijan National Resistance Organization's general approach towards sustainable development and environmental protection in South Azerbaijan. Using the experiences of various countries, especially Western countries, in the field of sustainable development and environmental protection should be one of the

main priorities of the government located in South Azerbaijan.

## Social Justice

The ANRO believes that economic and social disparities among different social groups are a reality and, to some extent, unavoidable. However, these disparities must be managed in a way that maximizes benefits for the most vulnerable members of society. Our approach is based on the principle of fair difference—or equitable equality of opportunity—where differences are acknowledged, but the goal remains to improve overall living standards without allowing these differences to create unjust discrimination or infringement on rights.

For instance, differences in income and wealth may exist in a society, but they must be structured in a way that ensures those in weaker economic positions still have access to basic rights and equal opportunities. A progressive tax system must be in place to achieve social justice.

In this tax system, individuals with higher incomes will pay a relatively larger share of their earnings as taxes, while those with lower incomes will contribute a smaller percentage. This system can foster social justice while recognizing differences within society.

Another example of how the National Resistance Organization of Azerbaijan envisions social justice is in higher education. Students should be eligible for low-interest loans or government scholarships based on their financial circumstances. The government could offer low-interest loans to accepted students, taking into account the social class of their families. For students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, the state could provide scholarships to support their education.

We believe in the principles of distributive justice, which account for the natural and social differences within society. While recognizing the importance of competition in the economy and society, we insist that these differences must be managed so that vulnerable

members of society benefit as much as possible. Our focus lies in the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities while preserving freedom and fostering mutual agreements among individuals. Equal access to opportunities and a fair allocation of resources are central to this vision.

At the same time, we view the free-market economy as the best means to achieve economic and social well-being. The government's role should be limited to regulating and overseeing the market, ensuring fundamental rights, upholding the rule of law, and safeguarding personal and economic freedom. We believe that market economies, through the mechanism of supply and demand and fair laws, naturally and optimally distribute resources and opportunities.

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the unfair distribution of wealth and economic resources, unemployment, and regional inequalities in employment, along with gender inequality and the resulting lack of equal access to job opportunities and success, are significant challenges to social justice. Insufficient support for vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, and people with disabilities further exacerbates these disparities. These groups face significant barriers in accessing opportunities and social resources. The National Resistance Organization of Azerbaijan's program on free-market economics and social justice offers comprehensive solutions to improve the well-being and quality of life for people.

Social justice is directly linked to government and political transparency. Transparency—especially in financial and administrative affairs—is crucial in preventing corruption and abuse of power, both of which negatively impact the fair distribution of resources and undermine social justice. Transparency in the allocation and use of financial and national resources plays a vital role in achieving social justice.

Therefore, to enhance social justice, we need to increase financial transparency to prevent corruption in Azerbaijan and across the country. The ANRO's programs include using the experiences of leading countries in this area, such as web-based technologies, international cooperation, and regulatory oversight. Our initiatives

also emphasize strengthening internal laws and regulations, publishing budgets and financial reports, and encouraging public participation in the economy. These measures aim to prevent corruption, ensure the fair distribution of financial resources, and improve social justice throughout society.

## Rights of Minorities, Individuals, and Society

From our perspective, participatory democracy without considering individual rights can lead to the tyranny of the majority. Laws that do not guarantee individual freedoms, the rule of law, and minority rights result in mob rule and eventually lead to totalitarianism, where populists hold power. Only the integration of democracy with individual freedoms can ensure a harmonious balance between the rights of individuals and society. In other words, voting alone does not guarantee a just and democratic government; both individual and group rights must also be secured.

History shows that in some cases, voting alone can lead to the adoption of dictatorial or even totalitarian policies, especially when basic individual and collective rights are ignored.

The main challenge for many countries and societies is finding a balance between protecting individual rights and the responsibilities of the state. This balance can only be ensured by cultivating a strong political and social culture that fully implements both human rights and democracy. When democracy and human rights are combined, human values such as human dignity cannot be subject to a vote. For instance, fundamental rights and freedoms in a democratic society are not put to public referendum. Voting on human rights or fundamental freedoms may jeopardize individual rights.

The fundamental rights and freedoms—such as freedom of speech, belief, protest, education, life, and property ownership—are essential human rights that cannot be subjected to public vote or altered by majority opinion.

In democratic societies, minority rights are also among the rights that cannot be subjected to a vote or referendum. The rights of

minorities must not be endangered by the majority's vote. These rights are crucial for safeguarding democratic values and ensuring the supremacy of fundamental rights. The freedoms and rights of national, ethnic, racial, gender, religious, and faith-based minorities are among these fundamental rights, and subjecting them to referenda risks strengthening the tyranny of the majority.

In this type of democracy, not only are minority rights inviolable, but mechanisms must also be established to guarantee their active participation in political, economic, and cultural affairs. These mechanisms must be legally protected. In democratic societies—where democracy is a fusion of classical democracy and human rights—fundamental human rights cannot be debated or voted upon.

As the ANRO, we are committed to a form of democracy that safeguards individual rights and guarantees personal and social freedoms by strengthening the rule of law.

From our point of view, economic, cultural, artistic, individual, and social freedoms, as well as freedom of thought and its dissemination, are fundamentally opposed to statism and an expansive state apparatus.

We believe that humans are the focal point of all governance, and that individuals exist not for the state, but the state for individuals. This means that the government and its constitution should not be based on dogmatic ideologies. Governance must be limited to commitments to the rule of law, democracy, fundamental rights, internal and external security, transparency, and economic development. Furthermore, the state must be devoid of any legitimacy rooted in religious, mystical, or unchallengeable ideologies.

Throughout history, modern citizens have evolved beyond traditional governments built on mythical foundations, and established governments centered on individuals and their rights. Therefore, while recognizing the importance of government for national survival, we believe that the constitution should limit the government's power to intervene in personal, social, and economic

freedoms. Additionally, the government's responsibilities and limits toward its citizens must be clearly defined. One of the simplest and most fundamental characteristics of a limited government is the separation of powers. When separation of powers is genuinely implemented, and the judiciary operates independently, citizens' rights are protected from other branches of government, and authoritarian mechanisms are curbed.

Totalitarian regimes, such as the Islamic Republic of Iran, seek legitimacy by appealing to majoritarian discourse and portraying minorities as naturally subordinate to the majority. This belief—that minorities must follow the majority—can only be acceptable in the context of elections, not in the realm of rights. From our perspective, minorities—including ideological, religious, linguistic, ethnic, national, and sexual minorities—must fully enjoy their rights and freedoms. The legal framework must ensure that the state, through its police forces and other tools, protects minority rights against majoritarian dominance, thereby guaranteeing the rights of all segments of society.

A democratic government must be transparent and accountable in all its affairs. Citizens have the right to be continually informed about the actions of government institutions and to evaluate them. Government decisions in economic policy, foreign affairs, and the activities of various agencies related to citizens' welfare must be accessible to the public.

Active citizen participation in decision-making processes and public affairs reflects the level of democratic culture in a society. Therefore, responsible citizen oversight over the performance of elected governments requires education and cultural development. Establishing a robust democracy depends heavily on educational and cultural efforts based on democratic principles.



## Women's and Children's Rights

Some regressive traditional views regard women as confined to household roles, subject them to social restrictions, such as limitations on certain professions, and enforce traditional obligations within families. They also impose beauty standards and stereotypical behavior defined by cultural norms. As the ANRO, we reject these outdated perspectives. We believe that women, as individuals, possess equal freedom of will as men, and no law should be based on regressive cultural traditions. If a woman freely chooses a traditional role, that decision must be respected as an act of her own will. However, laws governing women and families must not be based on outdated traditions.

Guaranteeing women's autonomy over their bodies is the first and most crucial step toward achieving gender equality and human rights in society.

The right to make decisions about one's own body is a fundamental human right. For women, this includes decisions regarding medical care, reproductive rights, sexual choices, clothing, and other personal preferences. This right grants women complete control over their bodies, enabling them to live their lives according to their own free will.

This includes the freedom to make health-related decisions, such as choosing contraception, family planning, and abortion.

In terms of employment and financial independence, laws must ensure equal rights. Similarly, laws regarding education, travel, and property ownership must be based on the principle of equal rights for all.

Educational and cultural efforts should begin at the earliest stages of schooling. Any curriculum reinforcing traditional stereotypes about women's roles must be monitored and removed.

Over the past century, Iran has experienced a continuous crisis regarding women's issues, particularly the hijab. The hijab has become a polarizing topic in Iranian society. This division began under Reza Shah Pahlavi with an authoritarian approach to

modernization that involved forcibly banning the hijab, turning it into a political issue that persists to this day.

Our position on the hijab lies outside the polarized political discourse in Iran. We believe that fundamental steps must be taken to modernize society and strengthen women's participation in public affairs.

Key initiatives include:

- Education and awareness campaigns.
- Implementing incentive policies to encourage women's active participation in the economy.
- Taking essential legal steps to increase women's political participation and involvement in national decision-making.
- Supporting women's rights at the international level through joint projects with other countries.
- Promoting positive and egalitarian portrayals of women in the media and cultural spaces.
- Enacting and enforcing anti-discrimination and anti-violence laws to protect women.

Combatting violence against women and child marriage requires strategic, long-term plans involving government and civil society cooperation. Prevention and education programs are essential, including comprehensive training sessions to raise societal awareness and promote prevention efforts. Additionally, legal protections and deterrent penalties are necessary for all forms of violence against women. Governments should also promote cultural change by supporting civil society initiatives and using state media to foster awareness.

We maintain a non-ideological stance on the hijab and women's issues, asserting that the government must not adopt an ideological approach toward women by using either coercive or soft power tools. Such directed policies only deepen the crisis and societal polarization.

By strengthening legislative frameworks, education systems, and collaborating with civil society, the government can enhance women's political, scientific, cultural, artistic, and economic participation. One of our primary goals is to ensure that women play prominent roles in economic and political affairs, regardless of their clothing choices.

Children, as the most vulnerable members of society, require special protections to grow up in safe and healthy environments. Every child must have access to free, quality education, which should promote equality, respect for human rights, and the elimination of gender and ethnic discrimination.

Every child in Azerbaijan must have the right to legal identity documents, without any gender, cultural, linguistic, or religious restrictions.

Children must not be forced into work that harms their physical or mental development. Strict laws and monitoring mechanisms should prevent child labor and economic exploitation.

Access to quality healthcare services must be guaranteed for all children, including preventive care, vaccinations, and treatments for both physical and mental health.

The state government of Azerbaijan, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, must actively combat any form of physical, psychological, or sexual abuse against children. Legislators should establish deterrent penalties and work with civil society to implement prevention and support programs for children at risk.

Children must also have opportunities for play and recreation in safe, appropriate environments, which are essential for their healthy physical and mental development as the future of Azerbaijan.

## Labor Rights and Trade Unions

Labor rights are fundamental to ensuring social justice and preserving human dignity. These rights include the freedom to establish and join trade unions, participate in collective bargaining, and defend working conditions. Independent unions, as genuine representatives of workers, play a critical role not only in improving working conditions and wages but also in promoting democracy in the workplace.

In Azerbaijan's society, trade unions are expected to play a key role in promoting democracy and advocating for human rights. By representing workers in negotiations with employers and state institutions, unions will help secure the fundamental rights and freedoms of workers. Additionally, unions contribute to the flourishing of democratic values and human rights in society by raising public awareness about legal and human rights.

Currently, unjust labor laws and state-affiliated unions have created widespread injustice against workers. Frequent and widespread protests by this group reflect the dire economic conditions and poor working environments they endure.

To guarantee labor rights and trade union freedoms, national legislation must align with international standards, particularly the conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Such alignment ensures the protection and strengthening of workers' rights and prevents exploitation and discrimination in the workplace.

Supporting the establishment and development of trade unions should be a top priority in labor and employment policies. This includes:

- *Providing specialized training for union members.*
- *Offering legal consultations to unions.*
- *Providing financial and moral support to unions so they can carry out their activities effectively.*

The legislative system in Azerbaijan must ensure that laws and

regulations guarantee the freedom to form and operate unions. There should be no obstacles preventing workers from freely organizing and participating in unions without fear of discrimination or repression.

## Security

From the perspective of the ANRO, the states in a federal Iran should have the authority and responsibility to organize their own local police and security forces. States should be responsible for securing financial resources for these forces and determining their internal security policies.

The defense of the country against external threats lies solely with the federal armed forces. The use of federal military power to suppress internal matters within the states is unacceptable and contradicts democratic values. The principle of non-intervention by military forces in the internal affairs of states should be enshrined in the federal constitution of Iran. If decisions contrary to the constitution are made by the states, they retain the right to command their state armies for defense.

Each state can organize its own security and police forces to maintain public order and manage internal crises. These forces must operate within the framework of federal laws and in coordination with the federal government. The structure of armed and police forces will operate at two levels:

**1. Federal Armed Forces:** Responsible for defending the country against external threats, these forces will operate under the direct control of the federal government and will benefit from federal financial resources. The federal government, particularly the Prime Minister and Parliament, will direct and utilize these forces. Troops stationed in the states will be considered part of the federal army, and military training will be supervised by state governments. In other words, the combined state armies will form the federal army. Federal forces will have no right to intervene in internal state matters unless in critical situations and upon a formal request

from the state's parliament and government.

**2. State Police and Security Forces:** Each state is allowed to establish its own police and security forces based on federal laws. These forces are responsible for maintaining public order and internal security within the geographical borders of the state. If states share borders with foreign countries, these police forces may also manage border security matters, including customs and border patrol.

Federal armed forces and state police must cooperate to maintain national security and public order. Oversight of their operations should be conducted through transparent mechanisms and both state and federal councils to ensure that human rights, international laws, and the constitution are upheld in all circumstances.

Intervention by federal armed forces in internal state matters should only occur when public order is severely threatened and the state cannot manage the crisis alone. Even in such cases, intervention must be approved by the state government and conducted within the framework of the federal constitution.

The federal army will operate under the supervision of the federal government, which is itself accountable to the federal parliament and representatives of the states based on a parliamentary system. Therefore, any significant decisions regarding defense or overseas operations must be approved by the parliament.

## Pluralistic and Participatory Democracy

Democracy is a system of governance where a society is managed by representatives elected by the people, and political participation refers to the active involvement of citizens in political processes. This participation can take various forms, such as voting in elections, joining political parties and associations, and participating in protests and demonstrations.

Democracy and political participation are complementary concepts. The effectiveness of democracy is strengthened by the

involvement of individuals in political processes. However, not everyone has equal ability to participate and influence political processes. Therefore, for democracy to function effectively, all citizens—regardless of nationality, race, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or social class—must have equal political participation rights. This principle is a core element of democracy.

In some cases, low political participation can hinder democracy's performance and lead to social injustice. Thus, encouraging and supporting political participation is essential in a democratic society. When certain groups are marginalized, unrecognized, or have their identities denied, it results in reduced political participation, weakening democracy and increasing inequity and discrimination. This in turn leads to social dissatisfaction, division, and decreased tolerance.

Multinational countries striving to build democratic societies must recognize and support the participation of diverse cultural and linguistic groups in political processes. Thus, there is a direct relationship between recognizing national and ethnic diversity and strengthening democracy.

The first step toward this goal in Iran is acknowledging the existence of different nations within the country. This must be followed by creating space for NGOs and civil society organizations to operate and enabling political parties to function, as these institutions play crucial roles in promoting democracy and increasing political participation.

The right to form political parties for oppressed nations, while preserving their cultural identity, ensures that the voices of marginalized groups are heard in the political sphere and that they participate in decision-making processes.

As noted, there is a close relationship between democracy, political participation, and cultural diversity—both in Iran and in other multinational states. In a multicultural and multilingual society, the protection of cultural and linguistic rights is essential for democracy to function effectively. Without freedom and recognition of diverse cultures and languages, the vision of a

democratic society becomes unattainable.

In a pluralistic and participatory democracy, the tyranny of the majority is prevented through legal mechanisms, ensuring that the rights of all groups and minorities are protected by law. The participation of all groups and minorities must be guaranteed through legal safeguards.

A democracy that aligns with the diverse structure of Iran must be a pluralistic and participatory democracy, where every segment of society has the opportunity to participate and be represented. This is the type of democracy that can respond to the complex realities of the country.

## Education

From the perspective of the ANRO, education is considered a fundamental right for every individual, essential for realizing their potential. Ensuring equal opportunities in education and training that align with individuals' needs and talents is a human rights principle for citizens. Creating a supportive environment and providing equal opportunities from an early age for students is crucial not only for upholding each citizen's rights and dignity but also for laying the foundation for a progressive, creative, and advancing society.

A modern educational system adopts innovative and flexible teaching approaches, avoiding the imposition of specific doctrines and knowledge on students. Diverse educational models can be tailored to suit different learning styles and needs. For instance, in the future educational system of the Azerbaijani state, a student-centered learning method based on trial and error can be implemented to enhance students' critical thinking and creativity.

The quality of education in any educational system is deeply reliant on teachers. Educational policies should focus on the ongoing development and continuous training of teachers. This means that continuous education should benefit both teachers and students. Therefore, improving working conditions and the



well-being of teachers can significantly enhance their skills and motivation. If there are no clear prospects for teachers' welfare and career advancement, expecting growth and development from the educational system is futile.

Educational systems in developed countries provide more effective education to students by effectively utilizing technology. The organization supports policies that improve students' digital literacy and enhance their access to information through technology in education.

In an increasingly diverse and multicultural world, the educational system must support cultural and linguistic diversity. The organization advocates for policies that promote multicultural educational environments and teach respect for cultural differences among students, fostering social harmony and coexistence.

From the organization's viewpoint, a centralized educational system in a multinational country like Iran constitutes a clear violation of human rights and is an injustice to children. State governments in the Federal Republic of Iran should have the authority to develop their curricula and educational systems based on the language, culture, and lifestyles of their communities, in coordination with the federal government.

## Freedom of Information and Media

Freedom of information is a concept rooted in individuals' rights to access, produce, share, and transmit information. The modern discourse on freedom of information began in the eighteenth century, influenced by the Enlightenment. Thinkers of this era emphasized the importance of freedom of thought and expression as a means of sharing and disseminating information freely. Since the early twentieth century, the freedom of information has been addressed in a broader context, particularly after World War II, when it was emphasized in human rights documents and international conventions.

In recent decades, the expansion of the internet and the development

of digital communication technologies have heightened the significance of freedom of information. The internet facilitates rapid sharing and access to information, thereby strengthening individuals' rights to information and freedom of expression.

Today, freedom of information is considered a cornerstone of a democratic society. Efforts are made in democratic societies to facilitate access to information and prevent censorship. The Islamic Republic of Iran has historically viewed communication technologies, such as satellite television, video devices, social media platforms, and the internet, as threats, leading to censorship and restrictions that impede citizens' access to communication tools.

Generally, totalitarian regimes exhibit a strong tendency to control the flow of information, resulting in a monopolization of television, radio, and press by those in power. However, the user-centric nature of the internet and particularly social media platforms has hindered the Iranian government's attempts to monopolize this free flow of information. Consequently, they resort to censorship, filtering, and monitoring content on these platforms.

The rapid advancement of information technology and digitization in the age of globalization is making the monopolization of communication devices increasingly impractical and ineffective. The user-driven aspect of social media allows diverse voices from society to be heard. The internet era has provided non-Persian nations in Iran with a platform to share their demands for freedom and justice at minimal cost. These groups, who face compounded discrimination, are not only deprived of the freedom of expression to protest and criticize the government but also lack the means to promote their culture and language due to the media monopoly favoring a specific culture.

Thus, the internet age has somewhat enabled marginalized groups, including women, workers, sexual minorities, and others, to voice their concerns, albeit limitedly.

On the other hand, democratic systems have no fear of the free flow of information and, therefore, encourage it. In democratic

countries, radio and television are not monopolized by political powers, and private television and radio networks, including those affiliated with political parties, can operate. To support media freedom, media organizations and journalists must enjoy independence and freedom of expression. This independence ensures that society can access diverse and varied opinions and information freely.

The first step towards achieving free information flow in a country is ensuring freedom of expression and safeguarding post-expression freedoms. Through legal reforms, individuals must be able to express their opinions freely without fear of repercussions for their thoughts in the media. The second step involves removing obstacles to censorship, filtering, and scrutiny, allowing individuals to access information freely and disseminate their views. The internet, currently the most important and popular medium and likely to remain so in the future, must have enhanced access, and improvements in infrastructure and internet speed should be prioritized by the Federal Republic of Iran.

## Sexual Minorities

The ANRO believes in the rights of sexual minorities and the need to ensure their equality in a post-Islamic Republic era. We affirm that every individual, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, has the right to live freely without facing discrimination. Human rights-based laws must not be designed to favor the majority, and mechanisms must be established to guarantee the rights of all minorities, including sexual minorities.

Sexual minorities have the right to enjoy equal rights and opportunities as other citizens, including the right to pursue employment without discrimination. They should be able to live in a just and equal society, free from prejudice based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

One key approach to improving the lives of sexual minorities is collaborating with the international community. Accession

to international conventions on the rights of sexual minorities helps implement global norms and standards, providing a crucial safeguard against human rights violations.

When the Azerbaijani state government and the Federal Republic of Iran join these international conventions, a legal foundation will be established, paving the way for adopting similar legislation within the Southern Azerbaijan State Assembly and the federal parliament.

Currently, non-heteronormative identities and orientations are not recognized under Iranian law. Legal frameworks reflect heteronormative norms, effectively denying the existence and rights of LGBTQ+ individuals. The Islamic Republic of Iran enforces harsh criminal laws against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity, resulting in severe penalties.

In Southern Azerbaijan and across the Federal Republic of Iran, legal reforms are necessary to protect the rights of sexual minorities. In addition to effective legal mechanisms, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a crucial role in raising public awareness and advocating for LGBTQ+ rights.

## Animal Rights

Raising awareness and sensitivity toward animal rights is essential for social progress. A compassionate and responsible attitude toward animals contributes to building a just and humane society. The well-being of animals is directly linked to human health and quality of life. Mistreatment or neglect of animals can negatively impact the physical and mental health of society.

Malnourished, injured, or sick stray animals can pose public health risks, and their dependence on waste can pollute the environment and create health hazards for humans and ecosystems. Abuse or neglect may lead to aggressive behavior in animals, posing risks to public safety.

Uncontrolled reproduction of stray animals can result in population

management problems, negatively affecting environmental health and becoming a social issue in urban areas.

Therefore, protecting animal rights and ensuring their well-being is not only essential to preventing animal suffering but also crucial for public welfare.

Educational campaigns on animal rights help foster a sense of responsibility and empathy toward animals, contributing to a more humane and just society. In addition to health and environmental concerns, animal cruelty violates the ethical values of our society. Respecting animal rights strengthens moral foundations and promotes compassion and altruism among individuals.

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