

# **Iran Faces Growing Strain on Clean Water Access**

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Millions of people in Iran face declining access to safe drinking water as drought, overuse and pollution strain supplies across the country.

Iran ranks among the most water-stressed nations in the world (World Resources Institute). Low rainfall and rising temperatures have reduced renewable water resources, while decades of heavy groundwater extraction have depleted aquifers. Many regions now struggle to meet basic drinking water needs.

The country relies heavily on groundwater. More than half of Iran's water supply comes from underground sources (Iran Ministry of Energy). Excessive pumping has caused water tables to drop sharply in recent years. In some areas, land subsidence has damaged infrastructure and reduced the ability to store water naturally.

Access to clean water varies widely across the country. Urban areas generally maintain better infrastructure, but aging systems and population growth strain supply. Rural communities often face greater difficulties. In southeastern provinces such as Sistan and Baluchestan, residents rely on water deliveries or unsafe local sources during shortages.

## **Several key factors drive Iran's water crisis:**

- Climate change reduces rainfall and extends drought periods

- Agriculture uses about 90% of the country's water (Food and Agriculture Organization). Inefficient irrigation wastes large amounts.
- Population growth increases demand for drinking water and sanitation.
- Aging infrastructure leads to leaks and poor water treatment.

Government efforts aim to address the problem. Authorities have invested in dam construction, desalination projects and water transfer systems. Iran has also promoted conservation measures and modern irrigation techniques. However, experts say these efforts have not kept pace with rising demand and environmental pressures.

International organizations continue to monitor the situation. Access to safely managed drinking water has improved overall in Iran, but regional disparities remain (World Health Organization). Continued investment in infrastructure, pollution control and sustainable water management will play a key role in future access.

Water remains a critical issue for Iran's environment, economy and public health. Reliable access to clean water depends on how effectively the country balances limited resources with growing demand.

## Sources:

- World Resources Institute - <https://www.wri.org/data/aqueduct-water-risk-atlas>
- Iran Ministry of Energy - <https://www.moe.gov.ir>
- Food and Agriculture Organization - <https://www.fao.org/aquastat/en/countries-and-basins/country-profiles/country/IRN>

- World Health Organization - <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/drinking-water>