

Observations on the Islamic State in Iran

by [Mehdi Khalaji \(/experts/mehdi-khalaji\)](#)

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The institutionalization of revolutionary Islamism in Iranian governance and law means there is almost no chance the current regime will pursue reform of its own volition.

The following is an excerpt from a paper originally published *on the Hudson Institute website* (<https://www.hudson.org/research/preview/16219-observations-on-the-islamic-state-in-iran>).

Download the PDF to read the full text.

Why has the Islamic State that controls Iran endured for so long? How has it managed to hold on to power in the face of one debilitating problem after another? Today, the regime faces a rolling crisis of legitimacy rooted in its structural governing deficiencies, incurable mismanagement, and massive official corruption. All of this has been made worse by international isolation, crippling sanctions, and the coronavirus pandemic. Taken together, these challenges might be devastating enough to bring down any unpopular government. And yet, for over four decades, the Iranian regime has survived on the basis of revolutionary Islamism, with its delusions of religious superiority, narcissistic cravings for grandiosity, and imperialist ambitions to lead the whole of Islam... ❖

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