



The building of Iran's National Elites Foundation in Tehran

Iran Tries To Stem Brain Drain By Police Control

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Iranian authorities have taken new measures involving the passport and immigration authority to prevent the ever-increasing emigration of experts from the country as the country's brightest minds flee the regime.

Salman Seyed Afghahi, the deputy head of the National Elites Foundation **told the semi-official Mehr news agency** Monday that the foundation has made arrangements to report the entry and exit of all high level professional migrants to the police-run authority as many seek better work in areas such as teaching and medicine.

Afghahi alleged that emigration facilitation businesses were charging too little, between \$1,000 or \$2,000 for services that should normally cost \$10,000 and claimed that "there is definitely a system that funds them".

The foundation is an organization under the presidency formed to identify and support experts, innovators, and gifted students including those in religious seminaries.

In a statement Tuesday, the foundation responded to the media uproar about involving the authorities, which fall under police control, claiming that this was a service "to prevent the profit-seekers' abuse and

protect the intellectual and material rights of the elites” and to “facilitate entry and exit” of the elite and their visa issues as ordered by the President.



Salman Seyed Afghahi, the deputy head of the National Elites Foundation

Denying any crisis as suggested by some medical officials, Afghahi also claimed that the rate of emigration of medical professionals from Iran has been falling and is lower than many developed countries such as Germany. However, just this month, the secretary-general of the Iranian Medical Society, Mohammed-Reza Zafarqandi, warned the medical sector was heading for a deep crisis.

He is not alone. Saeid Moidfar, chairman of the Iranian Sociological Association, recently **warned that Iran is on the threshold of a very intense wave of emigration**, Iranians feeling there is no future in the country with economic and social conditions only worsening and corruption and crime on the rise.

Echoing his sentiments, Mohammad-Reza Zafarghandi, secretary general of the non-profit **Iran Medical Council**, has repeatedly warned about the **high interest in emigration** among medical students and professionals.

He said last week that around 80 percent of medical students were thinking of leaving the country. According to Zafarghandi, medical professionals' application to the Council for good standing certificates, required by many employers abroad, has grown by several fold compared to before.

Ali Akbar Salehi, Iran's former top nuclear official, **claimed** a few weeks ago that every elite's emigration costs the country \$5m in human capital. According to Salehi, 60,000 elite Iranians left the country in 2019

and the emigration of the elite in a one-year period between 2014-2015 cost the country over \$38b in human capital.

In September, **Dr. Saeid Moidfar, chairman of the Iranian Sociological Association**, told the reformist Jamaran news website that in the wake of the Women, Life, Freedom movement, Iranians feel the future is bleak. State crackdowns on dissent, on women's rights and an ever deepening financial depression have left many Iranians living in fear and poverty.

"You reach the point where you think this is no longer a good place to live, and you should leave as soon as you can when you feel you are in a country where you are not involved in the decision making system, the country is not being run based on sound principles, your overall economic misery is increasing by the day, and social values are being sullied," Moidfar said in a bold stand against the government.

Iran's economy has suffered years of mismanagement and international sanctions, which emanated from its foreign policy and ongoing nuclear program. Iran's currency has fallen 12-fold since 2018 and more than 6000-fold since the 1979 revolution. In 1978, one US dollar would buy 70 rials and now the exchange rate is close to 500,000.

"Since 2017 the country has been in deep crisis. All prospects of change have been lost and there is no hope for the future of this country any longer," he added.

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