



Fellowship of Reconciliation's Fact-Finding and Friendship Delegations to Iran (FDI)

Join F.O.R.'s Historic First Delegation to Iran: December 2005

August 2005

The Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) is pleased to announce the official launch of the Iran initiative, a project to discover alternatives to the current political standoff between the U.S. and Iranian governments.

As part of this initiative, FOR, in partnership with Peace Action and the Muslim Peace Fellowship, is planning a series of peace missions to reaffirm friendship and solidarity between the people of the United States and the people of Iran.

The first group of prominent American religious leaders, academics, and peace activists - including the Fellowship of Reconciliation's Executive Director Pat Clark- will travel to Iran in December 2005.

These delegations will allow a diverse and representative group of Americans to see firsthand the realities of life in today's Iran. At the same time, it will allow a range of ordinary Iranians to encounter citizens of the US as we really are, beyond the stereotypes that define many views of the West. Your participation will provide you with the opportunity to experience the rich and ancient history of Persian culture and art, meet with members of Iranian civil society, and get a feel for the current climate in Iran. And it will allow Iranians to get to know you.

The Fellowship of Reconciliation has a distinguished history of successful "behind the scenes" friendship and solidarity delegations to sites of political conflict. The organization coordinated multiple trips to the former USSR during the Cold War and to Vietnam during the 1960s; it currently manages long-term programs of delegations to Colombia and Palestine/Israel. We are proud to offer this rare opportunity for leaders of U.S. civil society to meet leaders and citizens of Iran.

When:

FOR will send two delegations during the coming year: one in Early December 2005 (Dec 1- Dec 14), and a second in mid to late April 2006. Each delegation will spend ten days in Iran. As part of their preparation for the trip, all delegates must attend a day-long orientation at FOR's headquarters in Nyack before departure.

Where:

Participants will visit Teheran (the contemporary capital), Qom (world center of Shi'i theology), Esfahan (legendary capital of medieval Persia), and Shiraz (jewel of classical Islamic culture as well as the seat of Iran's ancient pre-Islamic civilization). The delegations will begin and end in Nyack, New York.

Who:

We strongly urge all interested individuals, particularly those active in education or community work, to apply for this exceptional opportunity. Our objective is to send delegations that reflect all segments of the United States in its ethnic, religious, and social diversity. This will not only ensure that delegates explore Iranian issues that are relevant to a broad spectrum of home audiences, but will also enable the delegations to portray themselves truthfully as representative of U.S. civil society.

How:

To participate, or for further information, contact FOR's Iran Program by e-mail at Iran@forusa.org or by telephone at 845-358-4601, ext. 27. We will send you an application form and instructions. Upon receipt of your application and its supporting documents, we will begin the selection process. Due to limited availability of seats for this trip, as well as organizational agreements with our sponsors, we are obliged to select only the most qualified candidates. Successful applicants will be contacted with further information about travel to Iran and the visa application process.

Cost: US\$3,300 per person covers all related expenses, including round-trip airfare from New York to Teheran, full room and board, all domestic transit and coordination in Iran, visa fees, and the cost of the orientation in Nyack. (Participants will also need to cover the cost of getting to and from New York.)

Why:

As a pacifist organization committed to nonviolent social change, the Fellowship of Reconciliation strongly believes in global peace and reconciliation. One way to accomplish this goal is through facilitating direct dialogue, promoting people-to-people diplomacy among citizens of countries whose governments are in conflict.

Our Iran initiative will allow U.S. delegates and their Iranian hosts to learn firsthand about each other. It will also offer them a chance to come up with ways to de-escalate larger-scale tensions. Participants will reach out to fellow human beings from the "other side" and find techniques to build trust between their two nations. People of the United States and people of Iran will exchange ideas on the creation and maintenance of a democratic and independent society.

We hope these delegations will assist citizens of two countries to form a deeper understanding of the roots of their governments' conflict. Ultimately, we hope they will generate new processes for ending the animosity without resorting to violence.

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