An essay prepared under the supervision of Leon Buskens for the paper on ‘Islamic Family Law’ at the University of Leiden, the Netherlands, in the 2000-2001 academic year.

The Iranian diaspora is one of the largest such populations in the world. Along with their baggage, migrants and refugees bring with them marriages and divorces, inheritance rights and custody disputes. This naturally means that immigration staff, employers, social welfare bodies and others may need to know something about Iranian law, and not only in a narrowly legal sense. The law is part of the legal system, which in turn is part of the system of government, and how it functions is in part determined by cultures and customs. This paper will attempt to convey something of what Iranian family law is and how it functions in Iran, without claiming to provide the detailed and authoritative information that would be required to give advice on a particular case. Far more detailed, current and authoritative information is available from legal professionals within Iran.

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