

# Iran's Elections, Wind of Change?

LTC René Berendsen, NLD Army (CSAG/CCJ5)

*The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of a number of international officers within the Combined Strategic Analysis Group (CSAG) and do not necessarily reflect the views of United States Central Command, nor of the nations represented within the CSAG or any other governmental agency.*

## **Key Points**

- The Iranian revolution laid the foundation for Iran's unique hybrid political system that is characterized by democratic (elected parliament and president) and theocratic (legal system based on Islamic Law, clerics, and the Supreme Leader) elements.
- The concept of velāyat-e faqīh establishes the Supreme Leader as the highest authority on all matters.
- The Guardian Council plays a crucial role in the elections by supervising elections, as well as approving or disqualifying candidates.
- Hardline Conservatives hold a vast majority in Parliament and political institutions.
- The Supreme Leader is the longest-serving head of state in the Middle East. With the Supreme Leader aging, upcoming elections may be crucial regarding his succession.
- Barring unforeseen changes in the political landscape, the prevailing overall hardline conservative dominance is likely to persist.

## **Introduction**

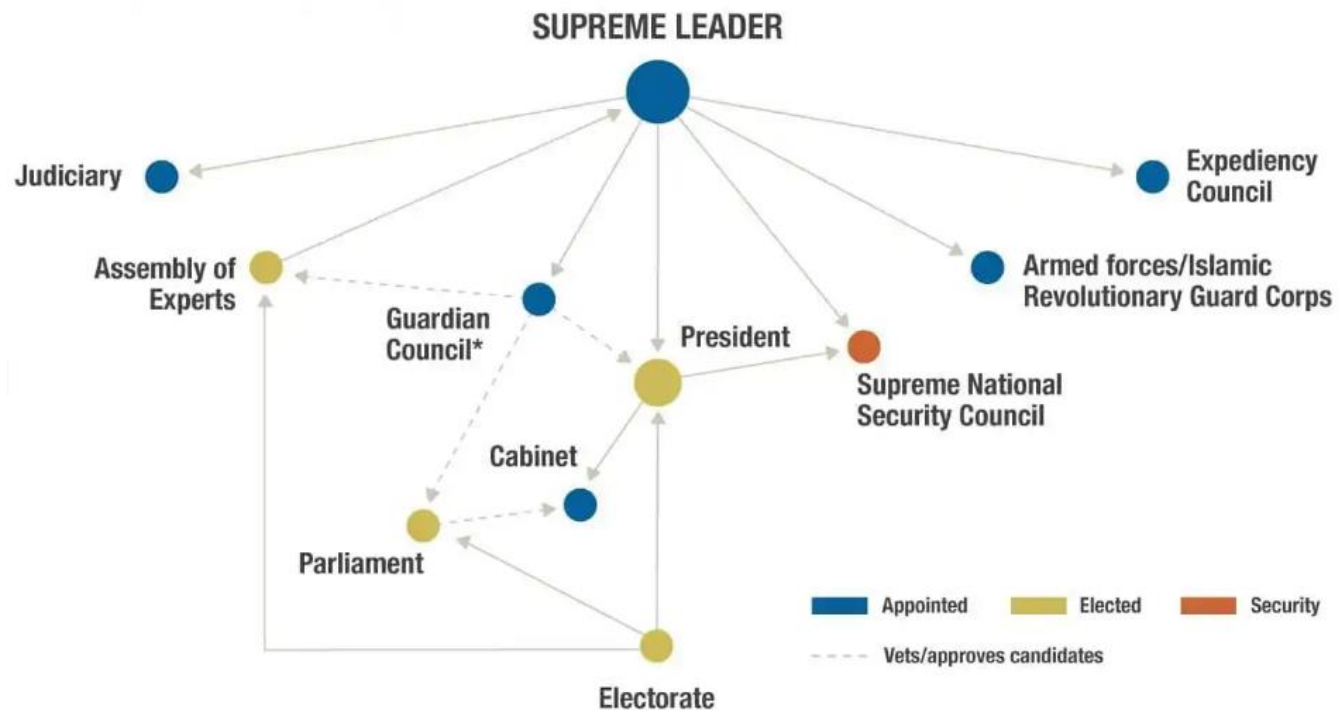
Shaped by the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the Iranian political landscape uniquely blends democratic and theocratic elements. The 12th parliamentary elections, the 6th Assembly of Experts elections on March 1, 2024, and the presidential elections in 2025 are playing pivotal roles in the future of Iran's governance and, ultimately, in the probable succession of the Supreme Leader. Understanding the electoral processes and the implications of these elections is crucial for comprehending the dynamics of Iran's political system and the potential consequences for the Middle East.

## **Iran's Political System**

After being forcibly exiled from Iran in 1964, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini began formulating and communicating his theories of velāyat-e faqīh ("guardianship of the jurist") that would lay the foundations of an Islamic Republic in Iran and Iran's political system. Iran's system is a "political system as seen in most traditional Western model branches of government (the executive, the judiciary, and the legislature branch) and an elected parliament and

president, mixed with Islamic institutions as a check and balance on the secular branches of government” guided by the principles of Islamic law in its constitution and the overarching concept of velāyat-e faqīh.<sup>1</sup>

The concept of velāyat-e faqīh establishes the Supreme Leader as the highest authority in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Supreme Leader is a senior Shia cleric with significant political and religious authority. He is seen as the ultimate source of authority and guidance in all matters, including politics, military, and cultural affairs. The Supreme Leader has control over various government institutions, and appoints critical government, military, and judiciary figures. Velāyat-e faqīh asserts that the Islamic jurist must protect and guide the people, ensuring that the state operates by Islamic principles. Velāyat-e faqīh establishes a theocratic system in which religious and political authority are closely intertwined.<sup>2</sup>



Iran's Government Structure.

Source: Fatemeh Aman, Alex Vatanka, IFES. <https://www.cfr.org/expert-brief/how-powerful-irans-revolutionary-guard-corps>.

### **The Parliament (The Islamic Consultative Assembly, Majlis)**

Iran's Parliament consists of 290 members elected by popular vote every four years. Iran's 31 provinces make up 207 electoral districts. Voters contribute a number of votes equivalent to the allocated seats in the electoral district. The three provinces with the most significant number of seats are Tehran (35), Esfahan (19), and East-Azerbaijan

<sup>1</sup> Robin Wright, "Iran's Pivotal Presidential Elections," *WoodrowWilsonCenter*, YouTube, June 22, 2021, 28:47 to 30:00, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIIZN\\_Q-9yw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIIZN_Q-9yw).

<sup>2</sup> Janet Afary, "Velāyat-e faqīh," *Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Iran/Government-and-society#ref783951> (accessed December 20, 2023); *Eyclopedia.com*, "Velayat-E Faqih," <https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/velayat-e-faqih> (accessed December 20, 2023).

(19). Five seats are reserved for religious minorities: the Jewish, Zoroastrian, Northern Armenian Christian, Southern Armenian Christian, and combined Assyrian/Chaldean Christian communities.<sup>3</sup> According to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran:<sup>4</sup>

- The annual budget must be submitted to the Parliament for discussion and approval (The National Accounting Agency is directly under the supervision of the Parliament).
- The Parliament can establish laws on all matters.
- The Parliament has the right to investigate and examine all the country's affairs.
- The Parliament must approve international treaties, protocols, contracts, and agreements.
- The taking and giving of loans or grants-in-aid, domestic and foreign, by the government must be approved by the Parliament.
- All legislation passed by the Parliament must be sent to the Guardian Council.

According to the Law for Parliamentary Elections, voters must have citizenship in the Islamic Republic of Iran, be at least 15 years old, and be of sound mind. The following criteria are applicable for candidates:<sup>5</sup>

- Belief in and practical obligation to Islam and the holy system of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
- Citizenship in the Islamic Republic of Iran.
- Expressed loyalty to the Constitution and progressive principle of the Absolute Guardianship of the Jurisprudent.
- A document proving possessing at least an Associate's degree or equivalent.
- Not having a bad reputation in the electoral district.
- Physical health such that they at least enjoy the blessings of vision, hearing, and speaking.
- At least thirty years of age and at most seventy-five.

### **The President**

The President is elected for a four-year term and is eligible for re-election for one consecutive term. As the highest-ranking official directly elected by the people, the President serves as the head of the executive branch and holds the second-highest position in the country, following the Supreme Leader. The President is assisted by 10 Vice Presidents and a Cabinet of 18 Ministers.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Assembly of Experts**

The concept of the Assembly of Experts traces its origins to the 1979 Iranian Revolution when a constituent assembly was needed to draft a new constitution. The assembly has a leadership council and six committees. The leadership

---

<sup>3</sup> Patrick Schmidt, "Iran's Election Procedures," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, February 24, 2016, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/irans-election-procedures> (accessed December 20, 2023); Gulf International Forum, "Iran Parliamentary Election," <https://gulif.org/new-infograph-2/> (accessed December 20, 2023).

<sup>4</sup> Constitutional Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran, "Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran," June 02, 2021, <https://www.shora-gc.ir/en/news/87/constitution-of-the-islamic-republic-of-iran-full-text> (accessed December 20, 2023).

<sup>5</sup> Iran Data Portal, "The Electoral Law for Parliamentary Elections," <https://irandataportal.syr.edu/the-electoral-law-for-parliamentary-elections> (accessed January 15, 2024).

<sup>6</sup> Lidiya Parkhomchik, "Iran's Political System: The Case of Parliamentary Elections," Eurasian Research Institute, <https://www.eurasian-research.org/publication/irans-political-system-the-case-of-parliamentary-elections/> (accessed January 11, 2024).

is elected by secret ballot for two years and consists of the assembly's chair, two vice-chairs, two secretaries, and two assistants.<sup>7</sup>

The Assembly of Experts comprises 88 members from the 30 electoral districts (provinces) who are popularly elected for eight-year terms. Candidates should pass an exam before qualifying for the elections and be approved by the Guardian Council. Members of the Assembly of Experts are all mujtahids.<sup>8</sup> According to the Iranian Constitution the Assembly of Experts is tasked to:<sup>9</sup>

- Select the Supreme Leader.
- Dismiss him if he cannot perform his constitutional duties, or it becomes known that he did not possess some of the initial qualifications such as “social and political wisdom, prudence, courage, administrative facilities and adequate capability for leadership.”
- Supervise the Supreme Leader's capabilities to determine whether he can perform his duties.

### **The Guardian Council (The Constitutional Council)**

The Guardian Council comprises twelve members, of which 6 cleric experts in Islamic Law are appointed by the Supreme Leader, and six jurist experts in constitutional law are nominated by the Head of the Judiciary Branch and elected by the parliament. The six clerics are also members of the Assembly of Experts. Members serve for six years. The Council's constitutional mandates include interpretation of the Constitution and the vetting of legislation passed by the Parliament. Furthermore, it plays a crucial role in the electoral process by supervising elections, approving, and disqualifying candidates seeking to run in local, parliamentary, presidential, and Assembly of Experts elections.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Judiciary**

The head of the judiciary is appointed for five-year terms by the Supreme Leader. The head of the judiciary appoints the head of the Supreme Court and the chief public prosecutor. The judiciary consists of the traditional criminal and civil courts. The judiciary also has separate courts to try people who undermine the Islamic Republic. Decisions rendered in these courts are final and cannot be appealed.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Expediency Council**

The Expediency Council is an advisory body for the Supreme Leader on domestic and foreign policies. The Council consists of the President, the Speaker of the Parliament, and the judiciary chief. The Supreme Leader appoints the other members. The Council may mediate and resolve disputes between the Parliament and the Guardian Council. Ultimately, the Council has the final say over legislative disputes.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Farideh Farhi, “The Assembly of Experts,” *The Iran Primer*, June 13, 2011, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/assembly-experts> (accessed December 20, 2023).

<sup>8</sup> Mujtahids (Shi'i jurist), someone who is trained and qualified as an expert in Islamic law.

<sup>9</sup> “The Assembly of Experts,” *The Iran Primer*.

<sup>10</sup> Iran Data Portal, “The Guardian Council,” <https://irandataportal.syr.edu/the-guardian-council> (accessed December 20, 2023).

<sup>11</sup> Frontline, “The Structure of Power in Iran,” *Public Broadcasting Service*, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/tehran/inside/govt.html> (accessed December 20, 2023).

<sup>12</sup> Lidiya Parkhomchik, “Iran's Political System.”

### **The Supreme Council for National Security**

According to the Iranian Constitution, the Supreme Council for National Security consists of heads of three branches of the government, chief of the Supreme Command Council of the Armed Forces, the officer in charge of the planning and budget affairs, two representatives nominated by the Supreme Leader, ministers of foreign affairs, interior, and information, a rotating minister with specific knowledge of the topic at hand, and the highest-ranking officials from the Armed Forces and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC). The President is the head of the Council. The decisions made by the Council need confirmation by the Supreme Leader. The Council has the following responsibilities:<sup>13</sup>

- Determining the defense and national security policies within the framework of general policies determined by the Supreme Leader.
- Coordination of activities relating to politics, intelligence, social, cultural, and economic fields regarding general defense and security policies.
- Exploitation of materialistic and intellectual resources of the country for facing internal and external threats.

### **The Armed Forces**

The Supreme Leader is the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. The Armed Forces consist of the regular Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the IRGC. The regular Army is responsible for guarding the independence and territorial integrity of the country, as well as the order of the Islamic Republic. The IRGC “guards the Revolution and its achievements.” Many ex-IRGC members have influential positions in Iran’s institutions.

The Iranian Constitution describes the importance of an ideological Army as follows:

“In the formation and equipping of the country's defence forces, due attention must be paid to faith and ideology as the basic criteria. Accordingly, the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps are to be organized in conformity with this goal, and they will be responsible not only for guarding and preserving the frontiers of the country, but also for fulfilling the ideological mission of jihad in God's way; that is, extending the sovereignty of God's law throughout the world.”<sup>14</sup>

### **Political Factions**

As per the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, “the formation of parties, societies, political or professional associations, as well as religious societies, whether Islamic or pertaining to one of the recognized religious minorities, is permitted provided they do not violate the principles of independence, freedom, national unity, the criteria of Islam, or the basis of the Islamic republic. No one may be prevented from participating in the aforementioned groups or be compelled to participate in them.”<sup>15</sup>

Iran has a complex political landscape with a variety of parties and factions. Political alliances and affiliations can be fluid. Based on changing political dynamics or strategic considerations, positions of representatives shift, or temporary coalitions are formed. Within this flexible political environment, the role of a firm spokesman who can

---

<sup>13</sup> Refworld, “Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran,” <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b56710.html> (accessed January 11, 2024).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Constitutional Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran, “Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

surround himself with followers is important. To simplify Iran's political landscape, lawmakers can be divided in the following camps:

- Hardliners/Conservatives/Principlists are generally aligned with the principles of the Islamic Revolution, are close to the IRGC, and support the Supreme Leader and the Guardian Council. They tend to emphasize the importance of preserving Islamic values in governance. Furthermore, they want a closer relationship with China and Russia.<sup>16</sup> Prominent hardliners: Ali Khamenei (Supreme Leader), Mahmood Ahmadinejad (former president) and Ebrahim Raisi (current president).
- Traditional/Mainstream Conservatives have a more practical and less doctrinal approach and prefer a more robust private sector over a state-dominated economy. They are generally more inclined to create opportunities for political expression and dialogue. Furthermore, they are more receptive to interacting with other countries, including Europe.<sup>17</sup> Prominent mainstream conservative: Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf (former Mayor of Teheran and current Parliament Speaker).
- Reformists advocate for political and social reforms within the framework of the Islamic Republic. They seek a more open and democratic political system and are open to better relations with the international community.<sup>18</sup> Prominent reformist: Mohammad Khatami (former president) and Mir Hossein Mousavi (former prime-minister and presidential candidate).
- Moderates may share some common ground with conservatives and reformists but generally aim for a more pragmatic and centrist approach to governance. They "advocate employing diplomacy, using a softer tone on the international stage, and refraining from using harsh rhetoric."<sup>19</sup> Prominent figure: Hassan Rouhani (former president).

### **Historical Trends**

- Clerical seat dominance in Parliament has decreased from 61% (1980) to 6% (2016).<sup>20</sup>
- Parliament seats filled by women increased from 4 in 1980 to 16 in 2020.<sup>21</sup>
- Candidate registration significantly increased. Since 1980, 3,694 people registered to run for parliament. In 2020, 16,145 candidates registered.<sup>22</sup>
- Over the last three elections, voter turnout is in a decline, resulting in 42% in 2020 (parliamentary elections) and 48% in 2021 (presidential elections).

---

<sup>16</sup> Parkhomchik, "Iran's Political System: The Case of Parliamentary Elections; Hadi Semati, "Iran 2024: Political Challenges," The Iran Primer, November 17, 2023, <https://iranprimer.usip.org/index.php/blog/2023/nov/17/iran-2024-political-challenges> (accessed December 20, 2023).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> PressTV, "Partyism and political parties in Iran: A quick Look," April 12, 2021, <https://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2021/04/12/649330/Iran-presidential-election-2021-political-parties> (accessed December 20, 2023).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> The Iran Primer, "Trends in Parliamentary Elections 1980-2016," January 30, 2020, <https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2020/jan/30/trends-parliamentary-elections> (accessed January 15, 2024).

<sup>21</sup> IPU Parline, "Islamic Parliament of Iran," [https://data.ipu.org/node/79/elections?chamber\\_id=13421](https://data.ipu.org/node/79/elections?chamber_id=13421) (accessed January 15, 2024).

<sup>22</sup> The Iran Primer, "Trends in Parliamentary Elections 1980-2016."

Year	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016	2020	
<b>Parliamentary Elections Voter Turnout in %</b>	52.1	64.6	59.7	57.8	71.0	67.3	51.2	55.4	63.9	61.6	42.6	
Year	1980	1981 <sup>23</sup>	1985	1989	1993	1997 <sup>24</sup>	2001	2005	2009 <sup>25</sup>	2013	2017	2021
<b>Presidential Elections Voter Turnout in %</b>	77.4	64.2 74.2	54.8	54.6	50.7	79.9	66.8	62.8	85.2	72.9	73.3	48.8

Voter Turnout Iran Parliamentary and Presidential Elections in %.

Source: <https://irandataportal.syr.edu/>

- The laydown of factions in the 2016 parliamentary elections: Conservatives/principlists 95 seats, reformists/moderates 120 seats, and independents 75 seats.<sup>26</sup>
- In the run towards the 2021 presidential elections the Guardian Council approved 7 out of 590 candidates. A justification for the exclusion of candidates was never given by the Guardian Council.<sup>27</sup>
- Since 1981, all sitting presidents have completed the maximum of two terms.

<b>Supreme Leader</b>	Ruhollah Khomeini	Ali Khamenei				
<b>Term</b>	<b>1981-1989</b>	<b>1989-1997</b>	<b>1997-2005</b>	<b>2005-2013</b>	<b>2013-2021</b>	<b>2021-</b>
<b>President</b>	Ali Khamenei	Rafsanjani	Khatami	Ahmadinejad	Rouhani	Raisi
<b>Faction</b>	Hardliner	Reformist	Reformist	Hardliner	Moderate	Hardliner

Overview of the succession of the Supreme Leader and presidents since 1981.

<sup>23</sup> In 1981, there was a second presidential election because of the assassination of the sitting president.

<sup>24</sup> The spike in the 1996 and 1997 elections could be attributed to the huge popularity of the candidate Muhammad Khatami, his humble leadership style, and his way of convincing the people that change of the existing system was possible. Patrick Clawson and Michael Eisenstadt, "Iran Under Khatami: A Political, Economic, and Military Assessment," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, October 01, 1989, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/iran-under-khatami-political-economic-and-military-assessment> (accessed January 26, 2024).

<sup>25</sup> The spike in the 2009 presidential election could be attributed to several factors. Massive candidate rallies and a highly competitive race, which likely motivated more people to vote. Additionally, the intense public interest and engagement in the election, as well as the presence of multiple candidates. However, there were also reports of voter turnout exceeding 100% in some towns. Robert Tait, "Iran Election Turnouts Exceeded 100% in 30 Towns, Website Reports," *The Guardian*, June 17, 2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/global/2009/jun/17/iran-election-rigging> (accessed January 26, 2024).

<sup>26</sup> Caitlin Shayda Pendleton, "Unofficial Runoff Election Results Produce Divide Parliament," *Critical Threats*, April 30, 2016, <https://www.criticalthreats.org/briefs/iran-2016-elections-tracker-parliament-and-the-assembly-of-experts> (accessed January 15, 2024).

<sup>27</sup> Rasanah International Institute for Iranian Studies, "The Guardian Council's Disqualification of Iran's Presidential Election Candidates: Dimensions and Outcomes," June 01, 2021, <https://rasanah-iiis.org/english/position-estimate/the-guardian-councils-disqualification-of-irans-presidential-election-candidates-dimensions-and-outcomes/> (accessed January 18, 2024).

## Recent Developments

- August 2023 showed a record number of approximately 40,000 initial fillings for candidacy for the upcoming parliamentary elections, of which 11,000 candidates were approved.<sup>28</sup>
- 26 out of 275 parliament members who registered for reelection were not approved by the Guardian Council. This also happened before the 2020 parliamentary elections.<sup>29</sup>
- In upcoming elections, 510 potential candidates registered for a seat in the Assembly of Experts. At the beginning of February, the Guardian Council will announce the approval list.<sup>30</sup>
- Election polls suggest a low (32%) voter participation rate.<sup>31</sup>
- The current laydown of Parliament per faction: Conservatives/principlists, 223 seats. Reformists, 16 seats. Independents, 36 seats. Religious minorities, 5 seats. Vacant, 10 seats.<sup>32</sup>
- The hardline faction wants to bring back former hardliner president Ahmadinejad.<sup>33</sup>
- The Hamas-Israel conflict has surfaced divergent views among Iranian clerics. Their perspectives are in line with their affiliated faction, provenance, and age (Hardline clerics have a more outspoken stance on the situation than reformists. Younger clerics seem to have a more constructive viewpoint).<sup>34</sup>
- Already having a seat at the Assembly of Experts (representing South Khorasan province), Iranian President Raisi and his predecessor Rouhani recently announced they would run for a seat in the 6th term of the Assembly of Experts. Allegedly, Rouhani's influence in the pro-reform, moderate camps is not well received by the hardline conservatives; approval of his candidacy for the Assembly of Experts remains unsure.<sup>35</sup>
- The Assembly of Experts is anticipating the succession of the Supreme Leader.<sup>36</sup> Also, former president Rouhani recently said: "May the Supreme Leader live long, but as the time passes, the day we would never want to come is more likely to arrive, and the Assembly of Experts has to decide on the naming of the next Supreme Leader."<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Constitutional Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran, "Candidate Registrations for Parliamentary Elections Hit Record High," August 15, 2023, <https://www.shora-gc.ir/en/news/235/candidate-registrations-for-parliamentary-elections-hit-record-high> (accessed December 20, 2024); Constitutional Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran, "Constitutional Council Approves over 11,000 Parliamentary Candidates," January 06, 2024, <https://www.shora-gc.ir/en/news/239/constitutional-council-approves-over-11000-parliamentary-candidates> (accessed January 11, 2024).

<sup>29</sup> Iran International, "Many Incumbent and Ex-Lawmakers Barred from Running in Iran Election," January 07, 2024, <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202401071665> (accessed January 15, 2024).

<sup>30</sup> Tehran Times, "Raisi, Rouhani Announce Bid for Assembly of Experts," November 12, 2023, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/iran-pivotal-election-determine-future-supreme-leader> (accessed December 20, 2023).

<sup>31</sup> Iran International, "Iran Pollsters Predict Very Low Turnout for Parliamentary Elections," December 02, 2023, <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202312017614> (accessed December 20, 2023).

<sup>32</sup> Jahannews, "Get to Know the People's Elected Officials in the 11th Parliament Better + Records Details," [https://www-jahannews-com.translate.goog/news/719564?\\_x\\_tr\\_sl=auto&\\_x\\_tr\\_tl=en&\\_x\\_tr\\_hl=en-US&\\_x\\_tr\\_pto=wapp](https://www-jahannews-com.translate.goog/news/719564?_x_tr_sl=auto&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en-US&_x_tr_pto=wapp) (accessed January 15, 2024).

<sup>33</sup> Maryam Sinaiee, "Iran Ultra-Hardliners Push to Bring Ahmadinejad Back to Politics," Iran International, December 19, 2023, <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202312180260> (accessed December 20, 2023).

<sup>34</sup> Amwaj.Media, "Hamas-Israel War Highlights Divergent Views Among Iranian Clerics," December 05, 2023, <https://amwaj.media/article/hamas-israel-war-highlights-divergent-views-among-iranian-clerics> (accessed January 11, 2024).

<sup>35</sup> Iran International, "Debate Intensifies over Ex-President's Role in Upcoming Iranian Elections," <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202311289130> (accessed December 20, 2023).

<sup>36</sup> Iran International, "Cleric Says Discussing a Deputy Supreme Leader for Aging Khamenei," November 30, 2023, <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202311301950> (accessed January 11, 2024).

<sup>37</sup> Iran International, "Iran's Rouhani Talks About the Day After Khamenei's Death," November 26, 2023, <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202311264615> (accessed January 11, 2024).



## **Conclusion**

Iran's political landscape is complex, with a popularly elected parliament and president blended with Islamic theocracy, all under the significant influence of the Supreme Leader and the ruling clerical establishment. The upcoming parliamentary elections in Iran are set against a political backdrop dominated by hardline conservatives, who wield considerable power through the Guardian Council and support by the Supreme Leader.

The advanced age of the Supreme Leader prompts factions to strategize, particularly in the election of members to the Assembly of Experts. Nevertheless, the Guardian Council and a foreseen low voter turnout demonstrate the challenges for reformists to shape Iran's future political trajectory.

Without anticipated changes in the political landscape, the prevailing overall hardline conservative dominance is likely to persist. Moreover, the re-election of President Ebrahim Raisi in 2025 seems plausible unless there is a notable revival of the reformist movement. Iran's forthcoming elections may not herald a transformative era for Iran. As Iran stands at this critical juncture, the contours of its political landscape are set to maintain, rather than reshape, the current political status quo, ushering no wind of change.