

Iran's March 1 Elections: Parliament, Assembly of Experts await historic decisions

Iran is gearing up for two significant elections on March 1: the 12th parliamentary and the 6th Assembly of Experts elections. With the candidate list now finalized and preparations in progress, the country is eagerly anticipating these upcoming elections.



Parliamentary elections

- Eligible voters from 31 provinces will choose their provincial representatives for the 290-seat Parliament.
- Five seats in the Iranian Parliament are reserved for religious minorities. A representative of Parliament has a four-year term.
- To secure victory and serve as a lawmaker for the four-year term in the 290-seat Parliament, a candidate needs to attain a minimum of 20 percent of the votes cast in his or her constituency.
- Should candidates fall short of the required percentage, there is a possibility of a second round of elections to determine the outcome for undecided seats.
- This term, approximately one million personnel will be involved in ensuring smooth elections at about 59,000 polling stations.

Registration process

- The 12th round of the parliamentary election registration process was carried out via the Interior Ministry's website, and candidates were required to meet specific criteria.
- The registration period for this term took place between Oct. 19-25, 2023.
- During this period, 24,829 volunteers registered, with 12% of them being women.
- The Constitutional Council confirmed the approval of 15,000 candidates for the parliamentary elections.
- The eligibility criteria for candidates include a minimum age of 30 and a maximum age of 75, a master's degree or its equivalent, Iranian citizenship, and no dual nationality.

Qualification process

- Under the Iranian Constitution, candidates who file their nominations are vetted by the Constitutional Council before they make it to the final list.
- The Constitutional Council is the 12-member oversight body, with six of its members being Islamic jurists, directly appointed by the Leader, and six members being nonclerical jurists.



Assembly of Experts

- Assembly of Experts is composed of 88 Islamic jurists and clerics who, based on the Constitution, are responsible for appointing, supervising, and dismissing the Leader of the Islamic Revolution.
- The body holds biannual meetings to review major national issues and every other year to appoint a new chairman.
- Members of the assembly are directly elected to office by the people for an eight-year term.
- All candidates must possess high-level clerical knowledge to be eligible to run for the Assembly of Experts elections.

Election campaigns

- The election campaigns for the sixth round of the Assembly of Experts elections began on February 14, and will last for 15 days.
- A total of 500 hopefuls submitted applications for membership in the 88-member assembly, although jurists in charge of vetting the candidates only approved 144.
- In this election, as per the Constitution, the minimum age requirement is 40.
- It is compulsory to have a level four seminary degree.
- The Assembly of Experts has 88 seats, with 16 seats allocated to Tehran Province.

Elections in past years

- The first election for the Assembly of Experts took place on December 10, 1982, with approximately 18 million voters participating.
- Seventy-five candidates were elected, while the remaining candidates went to a second round of voting.
- The assembly commenced its activities on August 15, 1983.
- Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf was elected as the speaker.
- The vote was overshadowed by the disqualification of some reformist candidates as well as the lowest turnout in the country's history, 42.4%, which was attributed to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Iran.
- Reformists received 6.9% of the vote, a decrease from 41.7% in 2016.
- On the other hand, conservatives got a whopping 76.2% vote share, up from 28.6% in 2016.
- The 2020 parliamentary elections, out of roughly 14,000 people who registered to run for Parliament, more than 6,500 names were rejected by the Constitutional Council.
- The last election was swept by the conservatives, with reformists getting only 20 seats.
- The 2020 election was held in the backdrop of the anti-West wave in the country following the assassination of Iran's top military commander Qassem Soleimani in a US airstrike in Baghdad on January 3, 2020.