

# Iranians vote in parliamentary, Assembly of Experts elections

## National Desk

Iranians headed to the polling stations across the country on Friday to vote in elections for Parliament and the Assembly of Experts.

More than 61 million people, out of Iran's 85-million population, were eligible to choose 290 members of Parliament and 88 members of the Assembly of Experts.

A body with an eight-year mandate, the Assembly of Experts is in charge of overseeing the activities of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, and is in a position of authority to either appoint or dismiss the Leader.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei cast his ballot at a polling station in Tehran in the first minutes of voting.

"Our dear nation should know that today the eyes of many people in the world, both individuals and politicians and those who hold prestigious national and political positions, are on Iran and you," Ayatollah Khamenei said. "They want to see what you are doing in this election and what will be the



People cast their votes at a polling station in Tehran, Iran, on March 1, 2024 during the parliamentary and Assembly of Experts elections.  
● SAJJAD SAFARI/IRAN DAILY

result of your election. Both our friends and people who are interested in the Iranian nation, as well as ill-wishers from all sides are observing the issues of our country and our beloved nation. Pay attention to this; make friends happy and disappoint ill-wishers." Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, who also voted in

Tehran, hailed elections in the country as a national celebration and a symbol of unity. "The people's vote is decisive, [as] all sectors of the country are determined by the people's vote, and this is one of the honors of the Islamic Establishment," Raisi said. Candidates for Parliament are vetted by the country's

Constitutional Council. It has approved a total of 15,200 candidates, out of nearly 49,000 applicants, to run for seats in Parliament. A total of 144 candidates were also competing for the Assembly of Experts seats. Former president Hassan Rouhani, a current member of the assembly, was banned from standing

again in the election for the Assembly of Experts. The elections took place amid crippling international sanctions and mounting economic hardship in Iran, where inflation has hovered around 50 percent, and the rial has sharply declined against the dollar. The problems had caused concerns among the coun-

try's officials about the low participation of the people in the elections. Before the elections, Iranian officials, including Ayatollah Khamenei, had called on people to participate in the polls.

In a Wednesday meeting in Tehran, Ayatollah Khamenei said if the Iranian nation shows the world that they are present in 'decisive scenes,' they will save the country and contribute to Iran's progress. "Strong and fervent elections constitute one of the pillars of running the country properly," the Leader said. "If we can show the world that the nation is present in the country's critical and decisive scenes, we have saved and moved the country forward."

Iran's last parliamentary elections in 2020 had a voter turnout of 42.57 percent – the lowest since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

## Iran launches Pars-1 satellite into space



● REUTERS

Iran successfully put into orbit the domestically-built Pars-1 research-sensing satellite on Thursday.

The 134-kilogram satellite was launched by a Soyuz rocket from the Vostochny Cosmodrome in Russia's far eastern Amur region on Thursday, Press TV reported.

Equipped with three cameras, Pars-1 will scan Iran's topography from an orbit of 500 kilometers above the Earth's surface.

The satellite is designed and manufactured by the Iranian Space Research Center, with the cooperation of knowledge-based companies.

It receives data from ground sources in three spectral ranges of visible, short-wave infrared and thermal infrared.

Speaking on television, Iran's Minister of Communications and Information Technology Issa Zarepour said that the satellite will be added to the country's sensing satellites, and that its sent images and data will be used for multiple purposes. Elaborating on the country's space program, he added that Iran has launched 12 satellites into space over the past 25 months.

"The country's space industry is rapidly advancing forward ... upgrading its place," Zarepour said.

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## Largest launch base in West Asia

Additionally in his remarks, the minister said that Iran is constructing West Asia's largest launch base in the country's south.

He also noted that the first satellite launch from the base will be carried out in the next Iranian calendar year (beginning on March 20), or at the latest by the end of President Ebrahim Raisi's term.

He pointed out that Iran decided to build the base as the country's current launch bases do not have the capability of injecting satellites at the right inclination for a sun-synchronous orbit.

Last month, Iran simultaneously put into orbit the Mahda research satellite, as well as the Keyhan-2 and Hatef-1 nanosatellites using the domestically-made Simorgh (Phoenix) carrier.

In the same month, the Aerospace Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) launched Soraya satellite into orbit using Qaem 100 satellite carrier. Despite sanctions imposed by Western countries in recent years, Iran has taken giant strides in the civilian space program.

Iran is among the world's top 10 countries capable of developing and launching satellites.

# Global anger as Israel kills over 100 Palestinians waiting for aid

## International Desk

Reactions have poured in from all over the world after Israeli troops on Thursday opened fire on Palestinians at a food aid distribution site in northern Gaza, killing more than 100 people.

Gaza's Health Ministry called it a "massacre" and said 112 people were killed and more than 750 others wounded.

The Israeli military claimed a "stampede" occurred when thousands of Gazans surrounded the convoy of 38 aid trucks, leading to

dozens of deaths and injuries, including some who were run over.

However, an Israeli source acknowledged troops had opened fire on the crowd, believing it "posed a threat". Many countries have condemned the incident as "genocide and crime against humanity" and have called for investigation into the tragedy.

Iran lashed out at the US and the Europeans for their silence over the "genocide" in Gaza.

"More than 100 Palestinian citizens who were waiting in line to receive

humanitarian aid on al-Rashid Street in Gaza were martyred, more than 800 people were injured due to the barbaric attack by the Zionist regime," Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani wrote on X.

## 'Another crime'

Turkey accused Israel of committing "another crime against humanity". "The fact that Israel... this time targets innocent civilians in a queue for humanitarian aid, is evidence that (Israel) aims consciously and collectively to destroy the Palestinian people", the

Turkish Foreign Ministry said.

Colombia's President Gustavo Petro denounced what he called a "genocide" of the Palestinian people and suspended purchases of weapons from Israel, a key supplier of his country's security forces.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned the incident and was "appalled by the tragic human toll of the conflict", his spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

France's Foreign Ministry said "the fire by Israeli soldiers against civilians trying to access food is unjustifiable".

Writing on the social media platform X that Palestinian "civilians have been targeted by Israeli soldiers", French President Emmanuel Macron expressed his "strongest condemnation" of the killings.

Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares wrote on X, "The unacceptable nature of what happened in Gaza, with dozens of Palestinian civilians dead as they were waiting for food, underlines the urgency of a cease-fire".

## EU decries 'carnage'

European Union foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell denounced the deaths as "totally unacceptable". "I am horrified by news of



yet another carnage among civilians in Gaza desperate for humanitarian aid," he said on X.

Qatar's Foreign Ministry condemned "in the strongest terms the heinous massacre committed by the Israeli occupation", calling for "urgent international action" to halt the fighting in Gaza. Saudi Arabia's Foreign Ministry condemned the deaths and reiterated "the need to reach an immediate cease-fire".

## China shocked

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Chinese Mao Ning said China was shocked by the incident and strongly condemned the killing of Palestinians during an aid delivery.

Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong said her country was "horrified by today's catastrophe in Gaza and the ongoing human-



Men carry an injured Palestinian at Al-Shifa hospital after an early morning incident when residents rushed toward aid trucks in Gaza City on February 29, 2024.  
● AFP

itarian crisis that has led to it".

US President Joe Biden – whose country provides billions of dollars in military aid to Israel – said Washington was checking "two competing versions" of the incident.

The United States blocked Algeria's request to the UN Security Council demanding the body to issue a statement blaming the Israeli army for the massacre carried out on Thursday.

The US was the only country out of 15 to not back Algeria's statement on the massacre in Al-Rashid Street.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

