



Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian addresses Parliament in the capital Tehran, on August 17, 2024, as he defends his cabinet lineup.  
● ATTA KENARE/AFP

# Parliament starts debating ministerial picks

## Pezeshkian casts new cabinet as gov't of national consensus

conomic, societal, environmental, educational and cultural fields but, "Our people showed that they love their country, and if effective procedure is pursued to solve the problems, they will turn out with all their strength."

He underlined the significance of policy- and decision-making based on a scientific approach, as well as solving problems in light of collective wisdom instead of relying on personal opinions and tastes. Pezeshkian also emphasized his resolve to fight against corruption and respect freedom of speech as well as criticism and national dialogue.

"Economy is the cornerstone of the country's problems, but dissociating the economy from other areas and reducing it to conventional economic issues is a big mistake. Today, simultaneous reforms in international relations and internal reforms are the only way out of the

current situation," Pezeshkian said.

He submitted the list of his new cabinet members to the Parliament on August 11, less than two weeks after he was sworn in before the country's legislators. Pezeshkian's cabinet lineup has ruffled the feathers of a number of individuals in the Reformist camp but he has defended his proposed ministers and has called on critics to "wait for the cabinet to start work and criticize it based on its performance."

### Opponents and supporters

During the Saturday's session, opponents and supporters of the president's cabinet lineup also expressed their views on the proposed ministers and the government's plans. The opponent lawmaker, Hosseinali Haji-Deligani, said the legislators expected the president to unveil his detailed plans for resolving issues such

as housing, subsidies and foreign nationals living in Iran.

Another lawmaker Moslem Salehi pointed to the ministers' experiences, saying that some of the proposed ministers have weak resumes.

Majid Nasirpour complained about the high average age of the proposed ministers, which is about 60.

Pezeshkian's supporters hailed his cabinet lineup. Reza Alizadeh described the formation of the national unity government by the president as an unprecedented move, saying that it is happening in the country after several decades and we should appreciate it.

Rahim Zare appreciated the government's proposed economic team. Mehrdad Goodarzvand Chegini said Pezeshkian proved that by choosing a cross-party cabinet, he is actually seeking to live up to his election promises.

## Israel's strike kills 10 Syrians in Lebanon



● AFP

Lebanon's Health Ministry said an Israeli air strike on Saturday in southern Lebanon killed 10 Syrians.

The toll from the strike in the Wadi al-Kafur area of Nabatieh is one of the largest in southern Lebanon since Hezbollah and Israeli forces began exchanging near-daily fire after war in the Gaza Strip began in October, according to AFP. The death toll from the latest strike included "a woman and her two children" while five other people were wounded, most of them also Syrian, Lebanon's Health Ministry said in a statement.

The official Lebanese National News Agency reported that the casualties were Syrian refugees and workers.

Israel's military, on its Telegram channel, claimed that the air force had struck a weapons storage facility of Lebanon's Hezbollah overnight "in the area of Nabatieh", which is about 12 kilometers (seven miles) from the nearest point of the border.

Following the deaths in Wadi al-Kafur, Hezbollah said it responded with a volley of Katyusha rockets on Ayelet HaShahar, a community in northern Israel. None of the roughly 55 projectiles caused any reported injuries but they sparked "multiple fires", Israel's military said.

Earlier, around 20 kilometers to the north "a projectile that crossed from Lebanon" wounded two soldiers, one of them severely, in the Misgav Am area, Israel's military said. The killings in quick succession in late July of Fuad Shukur, a top operations chief of Hezbollah in south Lebanon, and Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh, led to vows of vengeance from Hezbollah, Iran and other resistance groups in the region which blamed Israel.

Israel claimed the killing of Shukur, in a strike on south Beirut, but has not commented directly on the killing of Haniyeh while he visited Tehran.

In an effort to avert a broader conflict, Western and Arab diplomats have been shuttling around the region.

The cross-border violence between Lebanon and Israel has killed 580 people in Lebanon, mostly Hezbollah fighters but including at least 128 civilians, according to an AFP tally. On the Israeli side, including in the annexed Golan Heights, 22 soldiers and 26 civilians have been killed, according to army figures.

### National Desk

Iran's Parliament officially started reviewing the qualifications of proposed ministers in the new administration, with President Masoud Pezeshkian throwing his weight behind his 19 ministerial picks.

"The cabinet that was introduced to the parliament today is the government of national unity; the govern-

ment of national unity is a government that considers itself the government of all Iranian people. The national unity government is obligated to secure the citizenship rights of all Iranians and is committed to the prioritization of national interests over any other interest," Pezeshkian told an open session of the Parliament on Saturday. He also underscored the

importance of maintaining unity and cohesion among the three branches of government to resolve the country's problems.

Pezeshkian called for amicable solutions to address the national and international challenges instead of resorting to harsh measures.

The president said the Islamic Republic is suffering "imbalances" in the eco-

# Iran warns about 'untrustworthiness' of Israel, US in Gaza cease-fire talks

### International Desk

Iran warned about "the deceit and untrustworthiness" of the Israeli regime and its most important supporter, the United States in the Gaza cease-fire talks. Iran's Acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani issued the warning in a telephone conversation with Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani

on Friday. Kani wrote in a post published on the social media platform X on Friday evening that he and the Qatari prime minister exchanged opinions "about the developments of the second day of talks to stop the genocide by the Zionists in Gaza."

"Referring to the aggression and criminal nature of the Zionists in Gaza, I warned about the deceit and untrustworthiness of

the criminal gang ruling Tel Aviv and their most important supporter, the United States, at the negotiating table," he stated.

Bagheri Kani also said that the United States, which is present in the cease-fire talks, is providing weapons to Israel which makes it "an accomplice, not a neutral mediator."

Earlier in the day, the US, Qatar and Egypt issued a joint statement saying they

held Gaza cease-fire talks in a positive atmosphere in the Qatari capital Doha. They added that the talks were "serious and constructive."

The mediators put forward a "bridging proposal" that would allow the "swift" implementation of a deal that would end the war in Gaza and see the release of Israeli captives, the joint statement said. The mediating trio claimed

that their proposal "narrows the gaps between the parties," referring to the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas and the Israeli regime.

Meanwhile, US President Joe Biden said, "We are closer than we have ever been."

A senior Hamas official on Saturday dismissed optimistic talk by Biden that a Gaza truce is nearer after negotiations in Qatar.

"To say that we are getting close to a deal is an illusion," Hamas political bureau member Sami Abu Zuhri told AFP. "We are not facing a deal or real negotiations, but rather

the imposing of American diktats."

Hamas did not attend the Doha talks. An official of the movement, Osama Hamdan, had told AFP the group would join if the meeting set a timetable for implementing what Hamas had already agreed to.

Despite the cease-fire talks, the Israeli regime is pushing ahead with its air and artillery attacks in the besieged Gaza Strip as the genocidal war enters its eleventh month.

The latest massacres have raised the number of Palestinian deaths to over 40,000 and left more than 92,400 others injured.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



## The road to ...

The cooperative spirit is indeed a rational approach, given the current challenges facing Iran.

However, should partisan and factional interests take precedence over national interests within Parliament, and lawmakers fail to embrace the concept of a national accord government, the consequences could be far from desirable. An excellent opportunity for national collaboration to tackle pressing issues affecting the Iranian people

could be lost, and the existing polarization within Iran's political arena would only deepen.

In the highly polarized political landscape of Iran, Pezeshkian represents a potential bridge toward healing and unity. Should this opportunity be squandered, and other powerhouses, including Parliament, fail to lend their support to his efforts, political confrontations will likely intensify. With Iran facing countless challenges, from economic woes and relative dissatisfaction to a rift

between the people and the government, ongoing sanctions, and a volatile regional situation, fostering internal cohesion is of paramount importance.

The concept of a national accord government is a prudent and commendable approach to addressing these issues. Given the expected rationality and wisdom within Parliament, it is unlikely that legislators will choose to face off the government and allow Iranian society to descend into a quagmire of escalating disputes and polarization.