

NCRI-US Press Briefing on Iranian Regime's Sham Parliamentary Elections

Very low voter turnout are expected after 1,500 protesters were killed and thousands were jailed in November

WASHINGTON, DC, U.S., February 21, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The U.S. Representative Office of the National Council of Resistance of Iran ([NCRI-US](https://www.ncrius.org)) held a press briefing in its Washington office on the Iranian regime's upcoming parliamentary elections.

Soona Samsami, the U.S. representative of the NCRI, told reporters that the elections this year are very different than previous elections. "The 2020 Parliamentary elections are taking place after three major uprisings in Iran in January 2018, November 2019, and January 2020, which shook the regime to its foundations," Samsami said. "The population has risen against the rampant corruption, economic mismanagement, and lack of freedoms."



NCRI Rep. in the United States, Soona Samsami speaking before the press ahead of Iran parliamentary elections.

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Soona Samsami

Samsami said that the purge by the Guardian Council reflected the “increasing vulnerability and deadly impasse of Khamenei. His tolerance threshold is at a new low. He is confronted with two choices, each of which is more dangerous than the other.” The NCRI representative listed Khamenei choices as:

To close ranks even more while adopting a more aggressive posture toward the U.S., and carry out more internal purges and suppression.

To lessen the conflict with the U.S. and accept some of the 12 points announced by Secretary Mike Pompeo, which

would involve showing flexibility and tolerance at home.

“Based on the regime's internal deliberations, Khamenei has decided to close ranks and carry out a complete purge during the elections,” Samsami said.

NCRI-US Deputy Director [Alireza Jafarzadeh](#) provided three reasons for the purge.

1) Fear of uprisings - The regime is afraid that any split within the ruling elite would fuel more uprisings which, in turn, would deepen internal schisms, shearing off individuals who are not

completely subservient and loyal to the regime.

2) Fear of the opposition - The regime is alarmed that the opposition, and particularly the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) and the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK), would exploit its internal schisms in the era of popular uprisings, thus facilitating its overthrow.

3) Fear of the U.S. - The regime is worried that any schism would aggravate its vulnerability in its stand-off with the U.S.

Jafarzadeh commended U.S. special representative for Iran Brian Hook for the new sanctions imposed by the U.S. Government on the Guardian Council members, including Ahmad Jannati and Mohammad Yazdi. Hook described the election sham as “an event euphemistically called elections” for the Iranian legislature.

Jafarzadeh said that such increased sanctions by the United States, “send a strong signal to the Iranian people that their repressive rulers’ suppression is not condoned by the international community as the Iranian people and their organized Resistance continue their uprising for regime change by Iranians.”

Jafarzadeh said, “Many candidates who have a good chance of getting into the parliament have spent years in the Iranian regime’s IRGC, the Qods Force, the Bassij, and the MOIS.” This by itself further puts the regime and its parliament at odds with the Iranian people, who have already decided to boycott the elections, and are chanting “My vote is regime change.”

“The Iranian people’s legitimate demands were met with bullets and machine guns. 1,500 were killed and over 12,000 arrested. They have no desire to participate in an election, which only has one purpose: to keep those responsible for these crimes in power,” Jafarzadeh said.

Samsami said it is important to note that despite Tehran’s propaganda, “the voter turnout, anticipated to be radically lower than previous rounds, has caused a crisis.” The NCRI representative in the U.S. said, three factors will be contributing to low voter turnout:

1) The explosive state of society and extensive disenchantment, as well as the November uprising, which led to the massacre of at least 1,500 demonstrators.



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The Iranian Regime's 2020 Parliamentary Elections

A pre-election report by the
National Council of Resistance of Iran, U.S. Representative Office
February 20, 2020

The U.S. special representative for Iran, Brian Hook, has correctly described the so-called elections in Iran as “pure theatre” and said “the clerics pick the winners and losers before the ballots are even cast.” He added: “Today, the Iranian regime is facing a crisis of legitimacy and credibility.”

Indeed, these theatrics are also reflective of the Iranian regime’s deadly impasse.

What is Different in this Election: The 2020 Parliamentary elections are taking place at a time that there were three major uprisings in Iran in January 2018, November 2019, and January 2020, shaking the foundation of the Iranian regime. The population has risen against the rampant corruption, economic mismanagement, and lack of freedoms. Inflation and unemployment are at all-time high. The people are further disillusioned about all factions of the regime after the downing of the Ukrainian passenger plane and lying for three days about it. Tehran’s “strategic depth” in Iraq and Lebanon is shattered, as the population in those countries are pushing the regime out. Regime’s number 2, namely Qassem Soleimani is dead. International sanctions are only increasing and Tehran’s oil exports are close to none. These circumstances have made it an easy decision for the population to boycott the elections, and has left the regime with tough impossible choices to survive. It is a life and death battle for the regime.

Widespread Purge: The purge of candidates by the Guardian Council, which is controlled by the regime’s supreme leader Ali Khamenei, is a regular occurrence. But, this time, Khamenei has ordered the near purge of all of the rival faction members. It is anticipated that more than 80 percent of the upcoming parliamentary seats will be allocated to Khamenei’s faction.

Why the Purge: The reason for this purge is the increasing vulnerability and deadly impasse of Khamenei. His tolerance threshold is at a new low. He is confronted with two choices, each of which is more dangerous than the other.

A. The first is to close ranks even more while adopting a more aggressive posture toward the U.S., and carry out more internal purges and suppression.

A 13-page pre-elections Report by NCRIUS on Iran Sham Parliamentary Elections is released



Reporters do side interviews with NCRI-US Deputy Director Alireza Jafarzadeh about Iran elections

2) Rouhani's lies and absolute loyalty to Khamenei, turning his back on those who voted for him.

3) The expansion of Resistance networks inside Iran and their active calls for a boycott."

Jafarzadeh said that Tehran for years has been "election engineering to both ensure that loyalists end up in the Majlis and to significantly inflate the numbers on voter turnout 4 to 5 fold, at the minimum."

Samsami said that these elections "will have severe short-term and medium-term consequences for the regime, leaving it increasingly broken, more vulnerable, with a weaker social base and faced with the potential of greater protests and social uprisings."

During the press briefing the NCRI released a 13-page pre-elections report which elaborated on the election boycott activities of the Resistance Units of the main Iranian opposition movement, the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK), all across Iran.

Large posters of the Resistance's leaders have been hung from bridges and posted on the walls in the capital Tehran as well as other cities across Iran, calling for an election boycott. One, hung from a major highway in Tehran on Feb 15, featured Massoud and [Maryam Rajavi](#)'s pictures with the sentence, "My Vote is Regime Change." Another, hung from a bridge in Karaj on February 11, had Maryam Rajavi's picture over the phrase, Maryam Rajavi: "Killing and imprisonment will not stop the uprising."

A poster hung on February 16, in the city of Saveh in the Central Province had Maryam Rajavi's picture above the quotation, "Boycotting the sham elections is a national duty and our commitment to the martyrs of the uprising."

The NCRI-US report elaborated on the preventative security precautions, taken by the regime, as



Alireza Jafarzadeh describing activities of Resistance Units to boycott elections

Activities of Resistance Units



Posters hung from a bridge in busy section of Tehran carrying Resistance leaders' pictures Massoud and Maryam Rajavi says My Vote is Regime Change

What's Different in 2020 "Elections"

- **Three Uprisings:** Jan 2018, Nov 2019, Jan 2020
- **Casualties:** 1500 killed; 12,000 arrested
- **Economy:** High Inflation; Unemployment
- **People:** Further Disillusioned after Ukraine plane
- **Weakness:** Soleimani (regime no 2) is dead
- **Oil Exports:** Near zero
- **Strategic Depth:** Lost influence in Iraq/Lebanon
- **Concern:** Resistance Units seeking regime change

NCRI-US officials described to reporters at a press briefing ahead of elections what is different in 2020 elections in compare to the past

follows:

-- The IRGC and the Bassij paramilitary forces are tasked with protecting and providing security for the elections and operate in coordination with the Intelligence Ministry (MOIS);

-- The IRGC, the Bassij, and the State Security Forces (SSF) have been placed on high alert since February 15. All furloughs have been cancelled;

-- The anti-riot forces are on high alert and tasked with preventing any protests or revolts; SSF vehicles patrol the streets with their sirens in order to create an atmosphere of fear and trepidation among the public;

-- Police stations have been ordered to arrest anyone suspicious, including people on bikes without plates or anyone not carrying an ID card, starting daily from 23:30 at night to 05:00 in the morning;

-- All soldiers in all garrisons and military locations have been ordered to bring in their birth certificates in order to cast votes.

Jafarzadeh concluded by specifying what steps the United States may and should take:

-- Regardless of what lies Tehran announces following the election sham, the Iranian regime's actions, not promises, must be the sole gauge to determine how to deal with it.

-- Experience has shown that the ruling clerics only understand the language of firmness and strength. Thus, more sanctions should be imposed on the regime and calls for accountability for the murderers of the uprising must be a priority.

-- It is time for the United States to recognize the right of the Iranian people to change their repressive regime, and to acknowledge that their time has come to establish a republic based on the free vote, on the separation of religion and state, and on pluralism, justice and equality.



Alireza Jafarzadeh describing the repressive candidates during the NCRI-US press briefing ahead of the elections.



Reporters and TV cameras at NCRI-US office where a 13-page report was released ahead of the parliamentary elections in Iran.

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