

# (Video ) Iran Election 2021 - A Fait Accompli: Elections In Iran Underscore That “The Game Is Over”

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PARIS, FRANCE, May 27, 2021

/EINPresswire.com/ -- When the final list of candidates for Iran’s sham presidential election was released this week, it confirmed what the Iranian resistance had long been saying. The June 18 election will be little more than a formality, finalizing the process of installing a pre-selected President.

After the call by [the People’s Mojahedin Organization of Iran \(PMOI/MEK\)](#) to

boycott the election and two months of a campaign by the MEK resistance units, even state media outlets anticipate that most Iranians will avoid participating in the election.



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The Guardian Council, a de facto agent of the Supreme Leader’s will, has eliminated all prospective candidates who might have been categorized as “reformists.” This came as little surprise, since it did the same in advance of parliamentary elections in February 2020, thereby helping to fuel public support for a boycott of the polls. But that boycott had already gained steam as a result of organizing efforts by the MEK.

In early 2018, the MEK was credited with initiating a nationwide anti-government uprising, which brought

explicit calls for regime change into the mainstream. The associated slogans were repeated in countless demonstrations throughout that year, as well as in another, even larger nationwide

uprising in [November 2019](#). This in turn set the stage for historically low voter turnout three months later, built upon a campaign by the MEK which portrayed electoral boycotts as a way of “voting for regime change.”

The prior uprisings had been defined in part by chants that addressed both of the establishment political factions by name and declared, “The game is over.” The subsequent electoral boycott could therefore be best understood as a rejection of the entire system whereby two factions share power while advancing the same fundamental policies.

In public demonstrations promoting various specific causes, various activist groups publicly endorsed such a boycott in the days and weeks before the final candidate list was announced. That endorsement was often given in absolute terms, with crowds of protesters chanting slogans like, “We have seen no justice; we will not vote anymore.”

This apparent rejection of the entire industry of Iranian elections underscores the notion that those elections are only a “game.” And in the face of this sentiment, the Supreme Leader evidently saw little value in attempting to perpetuate the illusion of real choice at the ballot box. Thus, the Guardian Council went beyond its expected rejection of “reformist” candidates and also eliminated figures from the ballot who might have enjoyed support within the hardline establishment and thus presented a genuine challenge to Ebrahim Raisi.

Among these figures were former Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani and Rouhani’s predecessor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who was technically eligible to run for the office again after a gap following his two-term administration. Upon registering as a prospective candidate earlier in May, Ahmadinejad announced that if he were not permitted to run, he would boycott the election. Although his rationale is worlds apart from that of most ordinary Iranians, his public commentary underscores the notion that this election represents a crisis for the clerical regime.

Ahmadinejad specifically described his bid to reclaim the presidency as the last chance for the regime to save itself from collapse. While Iranian state media outlets have avoided discussing the situation in such dire terms, many have predicted that voter turnout could reach another historic low and that this could be a precursor to resurgent social unrest.



Some outlets have also noted that official silence over those movements and their aftermath is likely to further fuel the boycott effort. Over the course of several days in November 2019 alone, Iranian authorities killed approximately 1,500 peaceful protesters and carried out thousands of arrests. For months afterward, many of those arrestees were subjected to systematic torture at the hands of a judiciary led by the man who would go on to become a shoo-in to be the country's next president.

That torture further reinforced a brutal legacy that Raisi had already secured more than 30 years ago, at which point the entire regime demonstrated the extent of its commitment to staving off any real alternatives to the policies and theocratic ideology shared by all establishment officials. In 1988, the regime's founder Ruhollah Khomeini issued a fatwa that declared all members and supports of MEK to be enemies of God and viable targets for summary execution. As a result, "death commissions" were convened throughout the country to interrogate political prisoners and determine who should be subject to this order, and Raisi, as Tehran's deputy public prosecutor, played a leading role in the process.

Over the course of several months that year, over [30,000 political](#) prisoners were hanged in groups and then buried in secret mass graves. The vast majority of the victims were members of the MEK. To this day, Raisi and other participants in the 1988 massacre continue to defend their legacy, sometimes going so far as to say that they were executing God's will by ordering the deaths of MEK members.

Khamenei's decision to install Raisi as president is an open endorsement of continued brutality against the MEK and thus against all the Iranians who supported its democratic platform by participating in recent public demonstrations and electoral boycotts.

With this in mind, human rights defenders throughout the world should be paying very close attention to Iranian officials' own predictions of low voter turnout and looming unrest. When that unrest emerges, it is sure to result in more instances of mass killing and systematic torture like that which accompanied the November 2019 uprising, unless the international community takes serious action to prevent it.

Raisi's ongoing ascendance through the regime's hierarchy is a chilling reminder of the impunity that human rights abusers enjoy within the Iranian regime. But it is also a prime opportunity for Western powers and the United Nations to challenge that impunity on the international stage by calling renewed attention to the 1988 massacre, imposing sanctions on the prospective president because of it, and promoting an investigation that might lead to charges at the International Criminal Court for him and others.

Knowing that all the regime's officials and its factions have been involved in all the crimes of the regime, the Iranian people have made it clear that they reject the entire system. It is long past time for the international community to join in rejecting the notion that internal reform of the

regime is a viable solution to its legacy of malign activity and crimes against humanity. When Iran's population refuses to vote on June 18, Western leaders should make it immediately clear that they will support the Iranian people's will to change the regime in Tehran.

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