

(Video) Iran: Internal Rifts Deepen in Iran as Pezeshkian's Cabinet Faces Backlash from All Sides

The ongoing debates in the regime's parliament, and the regret expressed by some proposed ministers in commission hearings, illustrate the deep-seated turmoil.

PARIS, FRANCE, August 19, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [National Council of Resistance of Iran \(NCRI\)](#) Foreign Affairs Committee in an article published that. The recent developments in Iran's political landscape highlight the deep-rooted instability and factional infighting within the regime, underscoring the absence of any realistic hope for internal reform. The introduction of Masoud Pezeshkian's cabinet has triggered fierce competition among rival factions for influence and power, revealing the regime's fractured nature.



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NCRI

Despite attempts by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's affiliates to assert control, tensions have boiled over. The infighting was evident in how Pezeshkian's proposed cabinet was received, with critics from various factions describing it as merely a continuation of Ebrahim Raisi's administration. This sentiment was captured by Pezeshkian, who described the appointees as "experienced" and akin to "the Basijis who managed the war."

On August 14, Pezeshkian wrote on his website, "The proposed cabinet list was prepared and presented to strengthen the synergy between the

government and the parliament.

The criteria for evaluating performance in this government are commitment and effort to properly and maximally implement the vision goals. We are confident that if we move forward with the same spirit that the Basijis managed the war, using the most up-to-date solutions and advanced tools, we can overcome all problems, including sanctions and restrictions.”

The political discord reached a boiling point when the hardline newspaper Farhikhtegan, aligned with Khamenei’s senior advisor Ali Akbar Velayati, attacked former Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, labeling his resignation as an “internal government coup.” The paper questioned how a president, whose strategic council head flipped the table in the first 40 days, could defend his proposed cabinet.

It accused Zarif of weakening the government’s bargaining power against foreign enemies during his tenure and suggested that Pezeshkian might struggle to defend the regime under similar conditions. Farhikhtegan lamented, “If only this internal government coup had not occurred due to disagreements over cabinet formation, and Zarif had understood his political position.”

The resignation of Zarif has sent shockwaves through the political establishment. The state-run newspaper Setareh Sobh expressed concern over the impact of Zarif’s departure, stating on August 14, “The first shock to Pezeshkian’s voters was the list of ministers.

However, the heaviest shock to the fourteenth government was Zarif’s withdrawal from the cabinet. These two shocks are not suitable for this time and this situation. Zarif’s departure in



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Proposed ministers under attack

Prominent figures like former MP Jahanbakhsh Mohebbi-Nia have also voiced concerns, questioning the competence of some proposed ministers, describing them as mere "experts, not ministers." He criticized the opportunism and influence of rival factions in the cabinet formation, warning of a "suspicious presence" within the ranks.

The regime's internal divisions were further exposed by the [Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps \(IRGC\)](#)-run Fars News Agency, which opposed the nomination of Abdolnaser Hemmati for the Ministry of Economy, accusing him of burdening the country with 460 trillion tomans in debt to the International Monetary Fund.

Meanwhile, the Khabar Online website, associated with former parliamentary speaker Ali Larijani, criticized Pezeshkian for including ministers from Raisi's faction in his cabinet, questioning why the new government should keep the old staff while "the thirteenth administration had even replaced "the cafeteria personnel from the previous administrations."

This sentiment was echoed by disillusioned so-called reformist Benazir Jalali, who lamented, "I feel like we are only wanted for voting, just decorative figures. What happened in the Strategic Council was exactly that they wanted a bunch of decorative figures."

The ongoing debates in the regime's parliament, and the evident regret expressed by some proposed ministers during commission hearings, further illustrate the deep-seated turmoil.



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Amid these intense power struggles and growing dissatisfaction, the Pezeshkian administration is already showing signs of strain, with state-affiliated experts like Taqi Azad Armaki predicting a grim future for the new president.

Hadi Mohammadpour, a member of the Economic Commission, noted, "Obviously, some ministries have challenges, especially the Ministry of Economy. We have individuals who have no ministerial experience. Likely, at least two ministries will not receive a vote of confidence."

Other MPs, such as Ruhollah Abbaspour, pointed out the likely failure of the proposed Minister of Roads and Urban Development, questioning her ability to interact effectively with the parliament. Hassan Beyadi, a former member of Tehran's city council, warned that if Pezeshkian fails, the entire regime will face significant weakness. He stressed the difficulty Pezeshkian faces due to his lack of extensive executive experience and the challenge of selecting capable personnel.

Repenting for Power

In an attempt to appease hardline parliament members, Ahmad Meydari, the proposed Minister of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare, expressed regret for his past, particularly during his time in the Sixth Parliament.

Former IRGC commander and current MP Ahmad Rastineh quoted Meydari saying, "We took the wrong path in the Sixth Parliament, and we are not ashamed to admit it. This wrong path imposed many costs on the state. Today, we declare that the path the reformists took in the Sixth Parliament was very dangerous and wrong."

This sentiment was echoed by Hossein Shariatmadari, editor-in-chief of the Kayhan newspaper, who wrote about the proposed ministers' regrets over their past actions, noting, "Some of these deviants, who appeared before the relevant committees of the Parliament, expressed regret and admitted that they had made mistakes!"

Others, while knowing that their deviant positions and actions were indefensible, chose to remain silent, leaving the evidence and documents presented unanswered, indicating their insistence on previous positions and actions."

Shariatmadari concluded with a warning to the regime, stating, "Now you are regretful, so do not expect us to make the mistake of accepting you as ministers, only to regret it later like you! Why would a wise person do something that leads to regret again?"

Meanwhile, in a bid to stave off further political brinkmanship and rally disillusioned "reformists," Pezeshkian's Vice President, Mohammad-Reza Aref, admitted, "The current state of the nation is incomparable to the conditions when the reformist government first assumed power. The strategy of the national consensus government is to engage and cooperate with all political factions."

The escalating factional strife and power struggles within the Iranian regime, intensified by the contentious cabinet selections, expose a regime teetering on the edge of crisis.

The relentless tug-of-war between rival factions, compounded by mounting domestic and international challenges, underscores the system's inherent fragility. As Khamenei grapples with navigating his fractured regime through these turbulent times, his efforts to maintain control are increasingly marked by isolation and dwindling support.

The ongoing power struggle within Iran's ruling theocracy has reached new heights as factions aligned with Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei escalate their efforts to eliminate rivals within the regime.

Following the appointment of Masoud Pezeshkian's cabinet, these factions have taken further steps to marginalize Pezeshkian's allies, reflecting the deepening rift.

Following the resignation of Mohammad-Javad Zarif, state media are reporting on the impending departure of other Pezeshkian allies, writing, "According to reliable information, Vahid Aref, the son of Vice President Mohammad-Reza Aref, has obtained German citizenship, making his position illegal under the law regulating sensitive jobs."

These sources also claimed that the son of Mohammad-Jafar Ghaempanah, Pezeshkian's executive deputy, is also a resident of a European country and he also gets off the government train.

Saberin News said, "It remains to be seen whether Aref and Ghaempanah will comply with the law or be summoned to the Judiciary. Reports suggest that three presidential deputies Aref, Dabiri, and Ghaempanah have taken up their positions without security clearances."

Further amplifying the pressure, the Kayhan newspaper attacked two of Pezeshkian's proposed ministers, stating, "Among the nominees presented to parliament are individuals with a history of sedition a red line for the state.

Therefore, the parliament must refrain from trusting these seditionists who are on the verge of infiltrating the government." The newspaper specifically named Mohammad Reza Zafarghandi and Ahmad Meidari, Pezeshkian's choices for the Ministries of Health and Labor.

On August 12, Mohsen Zanganeh, a member of the parliamentary Budget and Planning Commission, criticized Abdolnaser Hemmati, Pezeshkian's nominee for Minister of Economy, in a televised interview.

Zanganeh remarked, "From 2018 to 2021, during Hemmati's most critical period of responsibility, the inflation rate increased from 24 percent to around 55 percent. For example, the producer price index surged from 33.8 percent to 103 percent. The 12-month inflation rate for consumer goods and services at the end of his tenure was 51.8 percent. In other words, we experienced the highest inflation rate at the end of his term, which unfortunately persisted for one or two

more years.”

Zanganeh further emphasized, “What does Hemmati’s name signify? It means 55 percent inflation, a plummeting stock market, impoverished people, and skyrocketing rent prices.”

“Reformist” grievances

The criticism from within the regime is not limited to Khamenei’s faction. The so-called “reformist camp,” which has found itself increasingly marginalized, has also lashed out at Pezeshkian. Setareh Sobh newspaper, quoted a state researcher on August 13, saying, “My message to Pezeshkian is that his cabinet resembles a cooperative rather than a national consensus. This cabinet cannot deliver on his campaign promises.”

Donya-e-Eqtasad echoed this discontent, highlighting the ousting of Zarif from Pezeshkian’s strategic advisory role. The newspaper reported, “Zarif’s early departure from the administration has two explanations: first, behind-the-scenes disagreements over ministerial selections within the Strategic Council; second, pressures on Pezeshkian to remove Zarif from the government. According to the second account, Zarif’s presence alongside Pezeshkian from the early days of the election campaign angered the rival faction, and this anger intensified after Zarif was appointed head of the Strategic Council for selecting ministers and appeared on state television. The final blow was delivered when he was given an official role in the fourteenth government, leading to increased pressure on both Pezeshkian and Zarif, prompting Zarif to resign after the final selection of ministers to avoid further strain on the government.”

The state-run Rouydad24 website reported a curious twist in the selection of the Minister of Sports and Youth: “The committee had finalized nine candidates for the position, but Ahmad Donyamali, the current representative from Anzali in parliament, who was not on the list, was ultimately nominated as the new minister to seek a vote of confidence.”

Qodratollah Heshmatian, head of the House of Parties, pointed out that some of Pezeshkian’s proposed ministers were supporters of his rivals Saeed Jalili and Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, both staunch hardliners. He remarked, “By presenting this cabinet, Pezeshkian has weakened his popular support base.

If these individuals were going to be members of the cabinet, it would have been better if the other candidates had won the election.”

The eternal apologists.

As the attacks on Pezeshkian’s cabinet intensified, former president Mohammad Khatami attempted to downplay the significance of the criticisms. Khatami urged restraint, stating on August 12, “The selection of government members has generally followed a comprehensible and natural course.

Any new initiative may encounter issues, but this should not lead to hasty evaluations or despair.

Criticizing the president harshly before he has even started his work is unjust.”

Khatami acknowledged that some of the negative reactions stemmed from “accumulated public dissatisfaction and expectations arising from the election,” while others were influenced by “prejudices and misconceptions about the selection process.” He concluded by urging against “emotional, unfair, and hasty judgments based on incomplete or incorrect information and previous biases.”

Also, Javad Zarif, attempting to manage the fallout from his resignation, posted on social media, “Pezeshkian graciously contacted me, and we had a sincere conversation. He remains the same Pezeshkian we voted for, and wherever I am, I will continue to support him and his government.”

Grim outlook

Amid these intense power struggles and growing dissatisfaction, the Pezeshkian administration is already showing signs of strain, with state-affiliated experts like Taqi Azad Armaki predicting a grim future for the new president.

On August 12, Armaki stated, “I foresee a bad fate for Dr. Pezeshkian during this wartime period, which will lead to his downfall early on. Suppose internal disputes between radical reformists and hardliners continue.

In that case, the resulting chaos in the political sphere will consume the time and focus of the government and the security apparatus, leaving us with less than a year, maybe just a bit more, before we no longer have a president. I’m not saying the president will be killed, but like Raisi, he will face a political demise.”

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