

Demands in Iran to Put Khatami on Trial After Warning 'the Regime Might Collapse'



Former President Mohammad Khatami delivers a speech in Tehran last April (Jamaran)

Iranian conservatives were angered by former reformist President Mohammad Khatami, who criticized the rulers, warning that the regime will inevitably fall if it doesn't make any amendments to the constitution.

Khatami strongly criticized the governance and the country's waste of energy and talent, calling on the politicians to stand with the people and support them.

"We must tell the authorities that it deals badly with the people," according to the Jamaran website, affiliated with the family of the first Supreme Leader Khomeini.

Khatami, who held the presidency for eight years between 1997 and 2005, was speaking to a group of political prisoners during the Shah's time.

- Self-reformation

Khatami said the revolution and Islamic regime are welcomed, but recent developments are "far from the Islamic Republic," stressing the need for "self-reform" of the ruling body.

He warned that such governance would cause harm to Islam, the people, and Iran, causing irreparable losses.

Khatami touched on the powers of the Iranian institutions, saying that the Assembly of Experts for Leadership's duty is to appoint and dismiss the Supreme Leader and supervise his performance and the apparatus attributed to him.

The former president warned that security will only be sustainable if the governing body is concerned with development and justice.

"Unless it is self-reformation, your end will be inevitable," said Khatami, adding that the government must admit its mistakes and reform itself.

- Participation in the elections

Khatami also commented on the parliamentary elections, saying elections are for the people. He indicated that parties worldwide determine the candidates' eligibility, wondering why authorities do not allow semi-authorized parties to present their nominees.

He believed that it is normal that people do not wish to participate in the elections when 70 percent do not find their desired candidate, warning that resorting to coercive force does not fix matters.

In February, Khatami gave a speech calling for reforms within the framework of the current constitution and distanced himself from the statement of his ally, the reformist leader Mir Hossein Mousavi, who called for a general referendum on a new form.

-Trial and Accountability

Hours after Khatami's statements, the hardline Kayhan newspaper called for the reformist president to be arrested and brought to court.

Kayhan editor-in-chief, Hossein Shariatmadari, described Khatami as an "incompetent person" who tries to portray himself as opposition, saying he repeatedly betrayed the country.

Javan newspaper, affiliated with Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), responded to Khatami's statements regarding his support for the revolution, saying the leadership had tolerance within the framework of the law.

The newspaper accused Khatami of borrowing the phrases of former president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

IRGC media criticized Khatami during the period that followed the candidates' registration for the presidential elections.

- Reform aspirations

Several reformist figures and parties aspired to run in the parliamentary elections.

The former head of the Reform Front, Behzad Nabawi, downplayed the chances of young people joining the reformists.

In June, the reformist parties chose activist Azar Mansouri as the head of the front after Nabawi resigned following his controversial positions against the protest movement in the wake of the death of the young woman, Mahsa Amini, while the morality police detained her.

Nabawi said young people will not accept a woman presiding over the reform front.

Reform Front spokesman Javad Imam denied, in a statement to Jamaran, the existence of divisions in the Reform Front or any intentions to boycott the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Imam criticized the new electoral law, which gives the Guardian Council broader powers in deciding candidates' eligibility, warning that if it is not reviewed, the country will not witness free elections.

Recent reports revealed meetings between some reformist figures, including Hadi Khamenei, the brother of the Supreme Leader, and reformist leader Mehdi Karroubi, who has been under house arrest since 2011.

On Monday, Hossein Karroubi, the son of Mehdi, told the reformist "ILNA" agency that reports about his father's meeting with the reformists were "incorrect" and that he has no current position on the elections, given the developments in the country.

Earlier, the reformist Insaf New website reported that Karroubi and Hadi Khamenei met to discuss participating in the elections.

Reformist parties did not reveal their plans for the parliamentary elections, and the moderate parties still need to be clear about their position.

- More than 40,000 applicants

On August 13, the Iranian Elections Commission, affiliated with the Ministry of the Interior, completed the process of registering candidates for the parliamentary elections.

Iranian media said 48,000 people applied for candidacy nationwide to compete for 290 parliamentary seats.

The Fars Agency, affiliated with the IRGC, said that more than 800 reformists had applied for the parliamentary elections.

Last week, Kayhan newspaper reported that several reformists "silently" registered for the elections.

Interior Minister Ahmed Vahidi said that representatives of all political currents have applied for candidacy.

This is the first election following the recent protests, and the authorities fear weak voter participation after the recent parliamentary and presidential polls recorded the lowest turnout in four decades.

Earlier this year, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei ordered the mobilization of all forces to increase the number of election participants.

Fars news agency reported that parliament is reviewing a draft plan to increase 40 seats in the Iranian parliament. The program includes increasing the number of representatives in 25 of the 31 Iranian provinces.

The parliament currently includes 290 seats, and 250 deputies from the current parliament have submitted their requests to run in the upcoming elections.

