



A session of the Iranian parliament in November 2023

As Radicals Dominate, Concern Grows About Governance In Iran

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As young radicals are set to dominate Iran's upcoming parliamentary elections, media and politicians express concern about the future of governance in the country.

[Khabar Online website, which is close to moderate conservatives](#) such as former Majles Speaker Ali Larijani, describes the situation as one in which "Young radicals gallop ahead while the wise elderly are silent."

The website added that the conservative camp is left with no fair, popular and moderate politicians after some of its heavyweights died during the past years, and some others have been side-lined by loud young radicals with little if any political experience. Elder conservatives have been silenced or have chosen silence to avoid attacks by radicals.

The report also highlighted that key politicians in all factions failed to train younger successors who would replace them at one point, and this is a danger for the future of governance in Iran.



Former Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani and Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei

Meanwhile, Iranian media quoted [a report originally produced by IRGC-linked Tasnim News Agency](#) about who are likely to be the conservatives leaders and candidates in the upcoming parliamentary elections. The names in the Tasnim report and their poor track record in management makes the threat mentioned by Khabar Online look even more serious.

According to Tasnim, incumbent Majles Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Tehran Mayor Alireza Zakani and the ultraconservative Paydari Party will have their separate list of candidates for the next Majles. Ghalibaf leads his group of neo-cons, Zakani is the leader of his own Rahpouyan [followers of Khomeini and Khamenei] party and fundamentalist Paydari will list some of its current lawmakers as well as new names from among young radicals.

In fact, [according to conservative commentator Mohammad Mohajeri](#) in an interview with Fararu website, Paydari is so radical that it might even go its separate way and leave President Ebrahim Raisi alone at least for the upcoming election. Meanwhile, Mohajeri accused Paydari Party of planning to restrict the entire government to radical members of the party.

Ghalibaf has recently given a name to his group of neo cons: The Association for Awakening Revolutionary Forces. The group's first gathering was also attended by vice President Mohsen Rezaei and former Majles Speaker Haddad Adel. During the meeting, Ghalibaf said that in spite of all the talk about unity, there is nothing wrong with competition among various conservative groups.



Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf (left) and former speaker Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel (March 2023)

Zakani held his group's gathering about three weeks later with a smaller number of politicians present. He also rebranded his group with a new name: Tahavol Khahan which is another synonym for the Persian term Eslah Talaban (Reformists). However, this does not change the conservative and opportunist nature of the group gathered around the mayor mainly to benefit from the Tehran Municipality's vast resources.

According to Tasnim, the traditional conservatives who believe in the wisdom of their elder members, are also active in the elections under the name of Shora-ye Vahdat (The Council for Unity). That is a unity Iran's conservatives have been talking about for over 45 years. However, it never materialized thanks to rivalries and interests that divided the entire conservative camp. One of the leading faces of this group is former Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki who was fired by former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the middle of a meeting in Africa.

Paydari is pursuing its election agenda under the umbrella of the party and also as the re-branded political group SHARIAN, a Persian acronym for the Strategic Council of Friends of the Islamic Revolution. The group operates under Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash.

Interestingly, none of these individuals and their team members are known for any outstanding achievement, as Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's office continues to run and micromanage all the affairs of the state.

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