



COI QUERY

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COI QUERY RESPONSE – Iran

Major political, security, and humanitarian developments

1. Political situation with a focus on reformists

On 5 July 2024, the reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian,¹ a politician of Azeri-Kurdish descent,² won the presidential election³ against his rival, the hardliner candidate Saed Jalili in a runoff election.⁴ While Iran's both elected and unelected institutions are mainly dominated by conservatives, the Guardian Council, an unelected vetting body, accepting Pezeshkian as a reformist candidate during the elections, made a way through for the reformist candidates.⁵ However, according to Abbas Abdi, a prominent reformist political activist in Iran, the new cabinet minister did not include reformists in his cabinet. While most members of the cabinet are from security and military backgrounds, it includes only one woman and lacks members of

¹ BBC, Masoud Pezeshkian: the reformist former heart surgeon now Iran's president-elect, 8 July 2024, [url](#)

² International Crisis Group, Man on a Wire: A Way Forward for Iran's New President, 30 July 2024, [url](#)

³ Le Monde, Reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian wins Iran's presidential runoff election, 6 July 2024, [url](#)

⁴ BBC, Masoud Pezeshkian: the reformist former heart surgeon now Iran's president-elect, 8 July 2024, [url](#)

⁵ International Crisis Group, Man on a wire: a way forward for Iran's new president, 30 July 2024, [url](#)



ethnic minorities.⁶ The new President appointed Abdelkarim Hosseinzadeh, a politician from the Sunni minority, as vice president for rural development.⁷

While the new reformist elected President has spoken in favour of the nuclear deal during his campaign, today's reformists 'merely want loosened cultural restrictions on women's dress and better management of the economy'.⁸ However, Iran's new president announced that the morality police will no longer 'bother' women regarding the compulsory *hijab*, following recent reports of violent punishments for dress code violations. His comments coincided with the second anniversary of Mahsa Amini's death in police custody, which had triggered widespread protests across Iran.⁹

In an interview with the EUAA, Iranian lawyer and human rights advocate, Leila Alikarami noted that 'reformists in Iran have consistently promised to create more openness within the country while operating within the framework of the constitution and the state's core principles'.¹⁰ The reformist faction has been grappling with widespread public disenchantment regarding the likelihood of achieving systemic change.¹¹ Although there have been some signs of progress, such as the new president's more open dialogue with journalists and efforts to ease the pressure from the morality police on women, no significant changes have been noticed so far.¹² Since Khatami's presidency between 1997 and 2005,¹³ many Iranians have voted for reformists in hopes of change, but low voters turnout in recent elections suggests growing dissatisfaction with the current system, according to Alikarami.¹⁴

In September 2024, Mostafa Tajzadeh, a prominent figure of the reformist camp, has received new charges with 'propaganda' against the state, while in jail since July 2022.¹⁵

2. Security situation

During the period between 6 April 2024 and 27 September 2024, ACLED recorded 18 battles in Iran including 15 in Sistan and Baluchistan, two in Kurdistan and one in West Azerbaijan. During the same timeslot, ACLED recorded four explosions/remote violence in Iran including two in Sistan and Baluchistan, one in Isfahan and one in Tehran.¹⁶

Figure 2. Events by province, 6 April 2024 – 27 September 2024 (ACLED)

⁶ IranWire, Iran's reformist challenges President's cabinet choices, 13 August 2024, [url](#)

⁷ VoA, Iran president makes rare appointment of Sunni to senior post, 26 August 2024, [url](#)

⁸ CFR, What can change under Iran's new 'reformist' president, 8 July 2024, [url](#)

⁹ BBC, Iran's morality police will not "bother" women, president says, 16 September 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰ Alikarami, L, Interview with EUAA, 24 September 2024

¹¹ Le Monde, In Iran, the presidential candidacy of a reformer attracts previously disengaged voters, 27 June 2024, [url](#)

¹² Alikarami, L, Interview with EUAA, 24 September 2024

¹³ USIP, Whither the reformists?, 14 December 2022, [url](#)

¹⁴ Alikarami, L, Interview with EUAA, 24 September 2024

¹⁵ IranWire, Iranian Reformist Tajzadeh Faces New Charges Amid Ongoing Jail Time, 7 March 2024, [url](#); VoA, Iran brings new charges against jailed reformist, 2 September 2024, [url](#)

¹⁶ EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Iran, data covering 6 April 2024 to 27 September 2024, as of 7 October 2024, [url](#)



Source: EUAA chart based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Iran, data covering the period from 6 April 2024 to 27 September 2024, as of 23 September 2024, [url](#)

On 31 July 2024, Ismail Haniyeh, top political leader of the Palestinian Hamas, was killed in Tehran during his visit to attend the inauguration of Iran's new president. The attack was attributed to Israel, although no official claim of responsibility was made.¹⁷ On 27 September 2024, Iranian General Abbas Nilforushan was killed in an Israeli airstrike targeting Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in Beirut. Nilforushan, who was a senior member of the IRGC, had faced U.S. sanctions for his role in quelling protests in Iran.¹⁸ On 1 October 2024, Iran reportedly launched approximately 200 ballistic missiles targeting Israel, marking a significant escalation in the ongoing conflict between Iran and Israel. This attack is part of a broader pattern of increasing hostilities involving Iran and its allies in the region.¹⁹ The strike resulted in damages in Israel, including damages at air force bases.²⁰

3. Humanitarian developments

According to the UNHCR Global Trends report from June 2024, Iran hosts around 3.8 million refugees and individuals in similar circumstances, making it the world's largest refugee hosting country while the country faces economic challenges.²¹ Due to the prolonged economic

¹⁷ CRS, Iran: Background and U.S. policy, 6 September 2024, [url](#), pp. 11, 9

¹⁸ VoA, Top Iranian general died in Israeli strike that killed Hezbollah leader, 29 September 2024, [url](#)

¹⁹ BBC, What we know about Iran's missile attack on Israel, 1 October 2024, [url](#)

²⁰ Times of Israel, IDF planning 'serious and significant' response to Iranian ballistic missile attack, 5 October 2024, [url](#)

²¹ UNHCR, Overview of Iran's operations, 19 September 2024, [url](#)



downturn, scarce job opportunities, and limited access to employment, vulnerable displaced Afghans and Iranians are finding it increasingly difficult to fulfil their basic needs.²²

By September 2024, the Iranian population continued enduring severe hardships caused by ongoing economic, political, and social crises. These challenges stem from government mismanagement and widespread corruption.²³ According to Iran International, article of 7 September 2024, the country is grappling with a severe energy crisis, with electricity demand exceeding supply by 10 000 megawatts, resulting in power outages lasting up to 8 hours and causing disruptions in various industries.²⁴ Electricity supply to industries is not only drastically limited, but households are also suffering from frequent blackouts, according to Iran Focus.²⁵ Iran International indicated that gasoline consumption outpaces production by 10-12 million liters, necessitating annual fuel imports at a cost of USD 4 to 8 billion. Compounding these issues represents a 50 % budget shortfall, leading to six years of money printing and over 40 % annual inflation. The source further noted that the banking sector has been in turmoil due to government deficits and misaligned credit policies, with many banks burdened by more debt than assets. The source also stated that the environmental challenges such as water depletion and air pollution have led to the depopulation of half of Iran's villages, exacerbating economic decline in rural areas and devastating agriculture.²⁶ Citing national authorities, Deutsche Welle reported, on 19 June 2024, that 'More than 800 towns and villages, including the capital Tehran and the major city of Isfahan, are at risk from land subsidence'.²⁷ Additionally, the National Pension Fund is nearly bankrupt, covering only 4 % of retiree salaries, which places significant pressure on public finances. With only 24 million of 65 million working-age citizens employed, a staggering 55 % of the eligible population remains outside the labour market, highlighting a critical unemployment crisis, according to Iran International.²⁸

As of September 2024, approximately 30 % of Iran's population, or about 25.4 million people, lived below the poverty line and suffered from absolute poverty due to inadequate incomes to meet their basic needs. This statistic has increased from around 20 % in the mid-2010s. Furthermore, about 6 % of the population, equating to roughly 5 million individuals, endured extreme poverty and struggled to obtain even the most basic food items. In certain regions, such as Sistan and Baluchistan, nearly half of the residents have been living in poverty, which raised significant concerns regarding social issues, including the rise in child labour and the potential for social unrest.²⁹

²² European Commission, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, Iran, 30 September 2024, [url](#)

²³ Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, The situation in Iran and the protection of Iranian human rights defenders in Council of Europe member States, 9 September 2024, [url](#), p. 34

²⁴ Iran International, Pezeshkian's economic 'surgery': Will it heal or hurt Iran?, 7 September 2024, [url](#)

²⁵ Iran Focus, Why Does Iran's Electricity Shortage Worsen Every Year?, 23 July 2024, [url](#)

²⁶ Iran International, Pezeshkian's economic 'surgery': Will it heal or hurt Iran?, 7 September 2024, [url](#)

²⁷ DW, Iran's water crisis leads to alarming ground collapse, 19 June 2024, [url](#)

²⁸ Iran International, Pezeshkian's economic 'surgery': Will it heal or hurt Iran?, 7 September 2024, [url](#)

²⁹ Iran Focus, The Escalating Poverty Crisis in Iran: A Grim Reality, 13 September 2024, [url](#)

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