

Special News Update

Short Biographies of Iranian Election Candidates

May 22, 2013

On May 21, the Iranian Guardian Council announced the list of candidates who are eligible to run in the presidential election of June 14.

Saeed Jalili

Saeed Jalili is the Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council. In 2007, he replaced Ali Larijani as Iran's chief nuclear negotiator. During the Iran-Iraq War, Jalili served in the Revolutionary Guards on the front line. He lost half of his right leg and is said to have survived two Iraqi chemical gas attacks. He started working in Iran's Foreign Ministry in 1989, and he served as the director of the European and American desks during President Mohammad Khatami's second term in office (2001-2005). Later he was elevated to the position of Director General for the Office of the Supreme Leader. Jalili was considered a potential candidate for the Foreign Ministry, but he was named the Deputy Minister for American and European Affairs. As Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council and chief nuclear negotiator, he has repeatedly negotiated with the 5+1 countries, which include Britain, China, France, Russia, Germany, and the United States. Jalili has twice rejected invitations for direct talks from the United States.

Gholam Ali Haddad-Adel

Gholam Ali Haddad-Adel was the parliament speaker from 2005 until 2008, and currently is a member of Iran's ninth parliament, heading its conservative faction. Haddad-Adel is the top advisor to Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei. His daughter is married to Mojtaba Khamenei, one the Supreme Leader's sons. Haddad-Adel is a member of the Expediency Discernment Council, an advisory body to Khamenei which plays an important role in resolving disputes between Iran's legislature and the Guardian Council. During the past three decades, he has served as Vice Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Vice Minister of Higher Education, and as the Head of Iran's Academy of Persian Language and Literature.

Mohsen Rezaei

The former head of Iran's Revolutionary Guard, Mohsen Rezaei is a conservative figure who has been the secretary of Iran's Expediency Discernment Council since 1997. In 1981, Rezaei was appointed to lead Iran's Revolutionary Guard, which is a post he held until 1997. He ran in Iran's 2005 presidential race but withdrew ahead of the election. In 2009, he ran for the presidency again and was among those in Iran who questioned the election results after Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was declared winner. However, he withdrew his complaint soon after filing it. Mohsen Rezaei is among the Iranian officials accused by Argentina of involvement in the 1994 attack on a Jewish center in Buenos Aires. 85 people died in the attack, putting him on Interpol's Wanted List.

Hassan Rowhani

Hassan Rowhani currently heads the Center for Strategic Research and is a member of the Expediency Discernment Council. He is also a member of the Assembly of Experts, a body vested with the authority to elect and remove the Supreme Leader and supervise his activities. Rowhani is known to be close to both the Supreme Leader and Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the Chairman of the Expediency Discernment Council. He has a long history in Iranian politics and is a former deputy speaker of the parliament. In 2003, Rowhani became Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, and held the post until 2005 when he was replaced by Ali Larijani. He remains a member of the Supreme National Security Council. Since then, he has sharply condemned Ahmadinejad policies, criticizing them for turning the international community against Iran and failing to fix the economy. In October of 2003, Rowhani helped broker a deal with the European Union under which Iran temporarily suspended its uranium enrichment.

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(page 2)

Mohammad Reza Aref

Mohammad-Reza Aref, a reformist politician, was the first vice president under former Iranian president Mohammad Khatami. Mohammad-Reza Aref is currently a member of the Expediency Discernment Council. Aref held different posts during Khatami's presidency between 1997 and 2005. He was Minister of Information and Communications Technology from 1997 to 2000 and Vice President from 2001 to 2005. Aref registered as a parliamentary candidate for the 2008 election, but later withdrew in protest against the disqualification of reformist candidates by executive and supervisory boards.

Mohammad Gharazi

The conservative politician Mohammad Gharazi served in former president Mir Hossein Mousavi's cabinet as Minister of Petroleum from 1981 to 1985. In 1985, he was appointed as the Minister of Telecommunications and Postal Services under Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. Gharazi was a member of Iran's parliament from 1980 to 1984. After placing his bid for candidacy in the 2013 presidential election, Gharazi outlined his main priority as president, which would be to combat rising inflation rates in Iran.

Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf

The conservative Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf is Tehran's current mayor. Qalibaf participated in the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) as a member of Iran's Revolutionary Guard. During the mid-90s, Qalibaf ran the influential "Khatam al-Anbia" firm. The company, belonging to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), is reputedly the biggest government contractor in the country. In 1996, Ayatollah Khamenei, appointed Qalibaf as the IRGC Air Force commander, which is a post he held for three years. In July 1999, Qalibaf pressured reformist Iranian President Mohammad Khatami to suppress a wave of student protests. Joined by 23 IRGC commanders, Qalibaf sent a letter to Khatami vowing strong action if the protests were allowed to continue. A few months later, Ayatollah Khamenei appointed Qalibaf as the chief of national police, where he served until 2005. In 2005, he was elected mayor of Tehran. He appointed his wife, Zahra-Sadat Moshir, as his adviser on women's affairs.

Ali Akbar Velayati

Ali Akbar Velayati is Iran's former Foreign Minister and the current senior advisor on international affairs to Iran's Supreme Leader. Velayati served as Iran's Foreign Minister during Khamenei's presidency (1981-1989) and during that of Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (1989-1997). Velayati is one of the members of the Expediency Discernment Council. During Iran's 2005 presidential election, Ali Akbar Velayati initially entered the race but withdrew in support of Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the former president and current chairman of the Expediency Discernment Council.

By Darya Razavi



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Election date is June 14, 2013.