

# Iran Election Update

May 14, 2013

- In a meeting with students, the head of the Imam Khomeini Research Institute and spiritual guide of the Perseverance Front, Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi [emphasized](#) that when voting in the presidential elections, “one’s vote should not be based on friendship, interest groups or political groups. One’s vote should be based on who could better reflect Islamic culture on society.”
- Mehr News [posted](#) photos of presidential candidate Hassan Rouhani having a lively debate with a standing-room only audience of students at Shariff University of Technology. Some students even shouted, while other students quietly listened in an overflow room. Mehr News also [posted](#) photos of presidential candidate Mohsen Rezaei speaking to economic students in an almost empty auditorium at Tabatabai University.
- Reports of former President Hashemi Rafsanjani contacting the Supreme Leader’s office on the final day of candidate registration are now being [denied](#). Reports have been circulating in recent days of what happened on the last day of the candidate registration period. According to someone in the Rafsanjani camp, there were [apparently](#) high-profile calls and meetings with prominent MPs, including a positive comment by senior Iraqi cleric Ayatollah Sistani that ended up swaying Rafsanjani to register on the last day.
- Former reformist MP and head of Iran’s Mardomsalari Party, Mostafa Kavakebian, [said](#) that “even with the addition of former President Rafsanjani, I currently have no intention of withdrawing my candidacy in the presidential election.”
- Conservative MP Farhad Bashiri [said](#) that this year’s presidential elections will be fought between the conservatives and former President Rafsanjani and that “these elections can be more competitive and exciting than previous ones.”
- Prominent political analyst and University of Tehran political science professor Sadegh Zibakalam [claims](#) that the reason that current Vice President Mohammad-Reza Rahimi has withdrawn his candidacy as a presidential nominee just two days after registering is because President Ahmadinejad is now certain that his trusted confidant and senior aide Esfandiar Rahim-Mashaei will be allowed to run and not disqualified by the Guardian Council as many inside and outside of Iran have presumed.
- Hamid Reza Taraghi, a prominent member of the Islamic Coalition Party [said](#) that the high number of presidential candidates does not necessarily mean the race will be competitive. “Many candidates are not religious and do not qualify as statesmen and therefore will be disqualified.”
- Speaking to students at Tehran’s Azad University, member of the 2+1 Coalition of presidential candidates Hadad Adel [said](#), “Everyone who supported Mir Hussain Mousavi in the 2009 elections will be supporting former President Hashemi Rafsanjani in this year’s election.” Adel was asked if he thought Rafsanjani was part of the “sedition,” (the term used for the 2009 post-election protests), and Adel warned that “we need to see what type of people support Rafsanjani as well as ask what role his children had (in the 2009 protests).”

By Hanif Zarrabi-Kashani



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Election date is June 14, 2013.