

## Iran's 2024 Elections: Crossroads of Legitimacy and Change

The upcoming elections on 01 Mar 2024, stand as a pivotal moment for Iran, determining the composition of the 12th term parliament and the influential Council of Experts. With 290 seats up for grabs in the Islamic Consultative Assembly, the political landscape is poised for a potential shift, amid a backdrop of economic challenges and social unrest.

- **The Political Arena:** The ultra-conservative Paydari Party currently dominates the political scene, while the Reform Front seeks to rejuvenate its presence, instilling hope for a political transformation. The elections occur amidst a climate of economic strife, with soaring inflation rates and the aftermath of Mahsa Amini's death catalyzing widespread dissent against the regime.
- **Public Discontent and Electoral Legitimacy:** Efforts by the state to engage the populace through media discussions on sensitive topics have been met with scepticism, as the disqualification of numerous candidates raises doubts about the election's legitimacy. With an anticipated 77% voter abstention rate (as per surveys), the regime faces a dilemma: to fortify its conservative stronghold or to accommodate moderate voices within a constrained political framework marginally.
- **Prospects for Moderate Inclusion:** In an optimistic scenario, the regime might permit moderate conservatives to enter parliament, forming a minority opposition to the ultraconservative majority, albeit within a system that limits genuine political expression. However, there are no signs that the regime's core is considering a shift from its goal of consolidating power within the conservative camp.
- **Echoes of 2009 and the Quest for Justice:** The memory of the 2009 presidential election protests, which contested Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's re-election, serves as a reminder of the enduring pursuit of justice and accountability in Iran.

The 2024 elections represent not just a political event, but a litmus test for the regime's legitimacy and a reflection of the Iranian people's deep-seated frustrations and aspirations. The outcome will not only shape Iran's domestic politics but also have far-reaching implications for regional stability and global geopolitics.