

## The ninth *Majlis* elections in Iran: Electoral laws, procedures and institutions

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**Abstracts:** Elections have been held regularly in the Islamic Republic of Iran since 1979. This shows the importance the ruling elites attach to elections as a method of legitimating their rule. This paper examines the ninth *Majlis* (parliamentary) elections held on March 2, 2012. It analyses the Iranian electoral laws, the candidates contesting elections, their campaign style, the voting, and the post-election debates. It answers the following questions: What was the significance of the ninth *Majlis* elections? How were the ninth *Majlis* elections conducted? And how did the proponents and opponents of the Islamic Republic of Iran look at the entire electoral process?

**Keywords:** Election; Supreme Leader; Iran; Guardian Council; Ninth *Majlis*.

**Abstrak:** Pilihan raya telah diadakan secara berkala di Republik Islam Iran sejak tahun 1979, menunjukkan kepentingan yang diberikan oleh golongan elit pemerintah terhadap pilihan raya sebagai satu kaedah bagi mengesahkan pemerintahan mereka. Kertas kerja ini mengkaji pilihan raya *Majlis* ke sembilan (Parlimen) yang diadakan pada 2 Mac, 2012. Ia menganalisis undang-undang pilihan raya Iran, calon-calon yang bertanding dalam pilihan raya, gaya mereka berkempen, proses undian, dan debat pasca pilihan raya. Kajian ini ingin menjawab persoalan berikut: Apakah kepentingan pilihan raya *Majlis* ke sembilan? Bagaimanakah pilihan raya *Majlis* ke sembilan dilaksanakan? Dan bagaimanakah pemerintah dan pembangkang melihat keseluruhan proses pilihan raya di Republik Islam Iran?

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**Kata kunci:** Pilihan raya; pemimpin tertinggi; Iran; Guardian Council; *Majlis* ke sembilan.

Since the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 31 regular elections have been held for Presidency, Assembly of Experts, Islamic Councils of Cities and Villages, and the Islamic Consultative Assembly. This clearly shows the importance the ruling elites attach to holding elections on time. This also comes out clearly in the ubiquitous billboards carrying a message of the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatullah Ruhollah Khomeini, that “the vote of the nation is the true measurement.” However, independent observers and analysts have expressed reservations in terms of the elections’ quality. Many believe that the sole purpose of these elections is to gain legitimacy for the ruling elites (Amuzegar, 2012), and that elections in Iran are a “safety valve, an instrument of repressive tolerance” (Milani & Mcfaul, 2008). Analysts also refer to the electoral legal framework in the Islamic Republic of Iran which, according to them, virtually divides Iranians into two broad groups: *khudi* (the insiders) and *ghair-e-khudi* (the outsiders). *Khudis* are supposed to be the supporters of the ruling elites while *ghair-e-khudis* are the non-conformists. The analysts argue that such a framework systematically prevent non-conformists from contesting elections (Milani & Mcfaul, 2008).

The ninth *Majlis* election was an important event in the history of the Islamic Republic of Iran if seen in the context of the disputed 2009 presidential election. The post-2009 presidential election unrest led to the emergence of a popular movement known as the Green Movement. Consequently, the ninth *Majlis* election became a matter of interest for two reasons. First, observers were eager to know the strategy of Green Movement activists for the ninth *Majlis* election after being severely repressed; and, second, they wanted to know how the ruling elites would manage the ninth *Majlis* election after the crisis.

### **Analytical considerations**

Elections are considered as the very spirit of democracy. However, as noted by Moten (2000, p. 67), one needs to know more “about the conditions existing in particular countries before awarding them the accolade ‘democratic’ simply on this basis”. To put it differently, although democracy cannot exist without elections, it is not the only political system where elections are held. According to Schedler (2002,

p. 36), “elections have been an instrument of authoritarian control as well as a means of democratic governance”. He argues that the era of overt repression is over, and even the authoritarian regimes want to work under the shadow of elections (Schedler, 2002, p. 37). He suggests three types of political systems where elections are held: liberal democracy, electoral democracy, and electoral authoritarianism. According to him, “while liberal democracies go beyond the electoral minimum”, electoral democracies “manage to ‘get elections right’ but fail to institutionalise other vital dimensions of democratic constitutionalism, such as the rule of law, political accountability, bureaucratic integrity, and public deliberation” (Schedler, 2002, pp. 37-38). In electoral authoritarianism, the contests do not comply with minimal democratic norms at all.

In the light of the discussion presented above, this paper analyzes Iran’s ninth *Majlis-e-Shoraay-e-Islami* (Islamic Consultative Assembly) elections held on March 2, 2012. First, it examines the electoral laws and procedures in Iran. Second, it discusses the parties and candidates. Third, it examines the campaigns, the campaign issues, and the voting. Finally, it analyzes the results of the elections and the post-election debate.

### **Pre-election alignment**

The post-1979 revolution political system of Iran is a “two-tiered sovereignty”. It claims popular legitimacy on the basis of regular elections being held. However, the major portion of power is reserved for the clergy (Saikal, 2009). The Supreme Leader is the most powerful political and religious authority under the Article 57 of the constitution. He controls *Majlis* through the Guardian Council (GC), a supervisory body comprising six senior clerics and six law specialists. The clerics are appointed directly by the Supreme Leader in accordance with the Article 91 of the constitution. He also appoints the law specialists nominated by the Chief of Judiciary. The GC is the major source of legitimacy for the *Majlis*. Article 93 of the *Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran* (1406H) reads: “the Islamic Consultative Assembly does not hold any legal status if there is no Guardian Council in existence....” However, there is no clearly defined system of vetting in the GC, and its decisions are often inconsistent. For instance, Muhammad Reza Zavareh’ee, a member of the GC from 1989 to 2005, was disqualified for expressing his desire to contest the 2005 presidential elections.

The *Majlis*, more or less, resembles a parliament. It has 290 members directly elected from defined constituencies for four years. It is a legislative body engaged in making and modifying laws. There are various committees in the *Majlis* dealing with different affairs, and the president is supposed to secure vote of confidence for his cabinet members from the *Majlis*. Forty-eight out of 177 Articles of the constitution discuss the role and power of the *Majlis* in one way or the other (Baktiari, 1996, p. x), showing that this body is of utmost importance in Iranian political system. Article 1 of the Election Act of Iran also requires that the country should not be without *Majlis* at any time, and that it is the duty of the government to hold new election three months before the end of the sitting *Majlis*.

Discussions on the ninth *Majlis* elections started soon after the post-2009 election crisis was tackled. The prime concern for the ruling elites was to conduct peaceful elections. The security threat was so immense that the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, regarded the ninth *Majlis* election as the greatest security challenge since the establishment of the Islamic Republic (Supreme Leader, 2011). Later, Sardar Ahmadi Mughadam, commander of police force, announced that 85,000 forces under his command were on high alert. He warned the members of the opposition against creating any commotion if the results were not in its favour, and that the forces under his command would crush any unrest with heavy hand ("85,000 Basji on high alert," 2012).

The second greatest challenge for the ruling elites was to ensure a high turnout. Given the prospect of opposition boycotting the ninth *Majlis* elections, the ruling elites took every conceivable measure to ensure high turnout of voters in these elections. Two strategies were adopted to ensure high turnout: first, top clerics appealed to the public to consider voting as a religious duty ("Grand Ayatullahs calls for participation," 2012); second, the General Prosecutor of Iran introduced a set of 25 points as 'Election Offences', among which calling or encouraging boycott of elections was considered a criminal act ("List of election offences announced," 2012).

The opposition groups had expressed their doubts about the ninth *Majlis* elections from the very beginning. A significant number of Green Movement activists like Tajzadeh and Zaid Abadi were serving prison terms because of their stand on the 2009 presidential elections. In such

a situation, there was no reason for the opposition to field candidates (Harrison, 2012). Yet the opposition leaders could not talk of boycotting the elections publically, as it would have been considered a display of enmity towards the Islamic Revolution. When former reformist president Muhammad Khatami said that their participation would be meaningless unless their conditions were met, the GC's chief replied that there was "no need for the reformists' participation" (Ayatullah Jannati, 2011a). Nonetheless, a call for boycott was championed by Green Movement activists, despite the fact that its two main leaders - Karrobi and Mousavi - were under house arrest. The representatives of these two leaders based outside Iran appealed to the people to stage a demonstration on the day before the elections, and advised the people to stay at homes on the election-day (Wahedi, 2012).

The ruling elites, nevertheless, went ahead preparing for elections. According to official data (Table 1), 3,960,000 out of 48,288,799 eligible voters were first-timers. Arrangement had been made for 46,924 polling stations. The nomination period was set from 24-30th January, and the election campaigns were scheduled from February 23 to the late hours of March 29, 2012.

*Table 1: The 9th Majlis election factsheet*

Voters & candidates	Number
Eligible persons for voting	48,288,799
First time voters	3,960,000
Total polling stations	46,924
Total applicants for candidacy	5,405
Women applicants	428
Male applicant for candidacy	4,977
8thMajlis Members who applied	260
Number of former Majlis Members who applied	197
Number of candidates who withdraw their application	713
Number of candidate who were disqualified by Interior Ministry and GC	1,238
Qualified applicants endorsed by GC	3,454

**Source:** Extracted from the data announced by the interior minister *Jomhoori Islami*, (January 1, February 25 & February 27, 2012).

## Candidates and the parties

As announced, nominations were held from 24-30 January, 2012. As shown in Table 1, some 5,405 people applied for candidacy including 428 women. Two hundred and sixty members of the eighth *Majlis* and 197 former *Majlis* members also applied. Later, 713 applicants withdrew. There was a significant decrease in the number of applicants for the ninth *Majlis* elections as compared to the eighth and the seventh *Majlis* elections in which 7,200 and 8,172 persons had applied respectively (“Election will be held tomorrow,” 2012). But the authorities justified the lower ratio of applications on the basis of new education qualification criteria for applicants, which required them to have master or PhD degrees. In the double-stage vetting process in the Interior Ministry, and the Guardian Council, the applications of 1,238 persons, including 30 members of the eighth *Majlis*, were rejected.

Qualified candidates belonged to different loose coalitions of individuals and groups. Most of these groups emerged only few months or weeks before the elections, and preferred to introduce themselves as “fronts”.<sup>1</sup> According to a report by daily *Kyhan*, about 24 fronts were operating in the capital (Tehran) alone and the figure reached 67 if provincial lists were included (“Unprecedented increase,” 2012). Out of these fronts, only five were successful in getting their members elected (Table 2). First is *Jebhe Muttahide Osulgarayan* (United Front of Principled, UFP), a coalition of conservative groups formed by Ayatullah Kani (Head Assembly of Experts, an elected body of clerics responsible for choosing and supervising the Supreme Leader), and Ayatullah Yazdi (Former Chief of Judiciary, and currently a member of the GC). It introduced 258 candidates. Second is *Jebhe Payedari* (Resistance Front, RF) led by an ultra-conservative cleric, Ayatullah Taqi Mesbah Yazdi, who at one stage had been considered as the spiritual mentor of President Ahamadinejad. It introduced 199 candidates, 49 of whom also belonged to the UFP.<sup>2</sup> Third is *Jebhe Istadagi* (Determined Front, DF), which was associated with Muhsin Razaee (General Secretary of the Expediency Council, and the former chief commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard). It introduced 180 candidates. Fourth is Democratic Front, a semi-reformist group which introduced 83 candidates. Fifth is Monotheism and Justice Front which introduced 30 candidates. This group was believed to be associated with Rahim Masha’ee, the most controversial figure among

the close associates of President Ahmadinejad. The list introduced by this front was also controversial as 18 candidates whose names were on the list later denied any relation with this front. Finally, there were a significant number of independent candidates. Some of them had formed a coalition namely *Itelaf-e-Kandidahay-e-Mustaghel* (Coalition of Independent Candidates, CIC) comprising 86 independent candidates.

Table 2: Number of nominees by fronts

United Front of Principled	Determined Front	Resistance Front	Democratic Front	Monotheism and Justice Front	Coalition of Independent candidates*	Other groups
258	180	199	83	30	86	1-30

**Source:** Data extracted from the official websites of the ‘Fronts’, and cross-checked with other sources.

\* This figure excludes the number of independent candidates who contested individually.

### Campaign and the voting

Election campaigns were scheduled from February 23 to the late hours of March 29, 2012. Nevertheless, on the ground, campaigns started long before the due date, but they were, to a large extent, confined to the exchange of allegations. A significant portion of such allegations was about the sources of campaign funding. Such allegations had been fuelled by the recently revealed bank fraud of 3000 billion Iranian *Rials* (“The biggest file of embezzlement,” 2012,) as some principled groups claimed that a part of this amount was going to be spent for the election campaign by *Jaryane Inherafti* (Deviant Current), a label used for a segment of President Ahmadinejad’s supporters headed by Mashae (“Tawakkoli criticises election activities,” 2012).

The head of *Jebhe Muttahed-e-Ousoul Garayan* (United Front of Principled), Alireza Zakani, claimed that he had received reports from Deviation Current insiders that it would spend two to three billion Iranian *Rials* for its every single candidate (“Billions spent by candidates,” 2012). Given the association of the so-called Deviant Current with the president, his name also entered into the debate. Alireza questioned the sources of funding of some candidates stating that given the amount of salary being paid to the *Majlis* Members, he wanted to know from

where their elections campaigns were being funded (“Billions spent by candidates,” 2012).

The most interesting case was the appearance of a new source of funding for campaigns. It was revealed that Sadeq Mahsooli, one of the former ministers of Ahmadinejad, had donated an amount of 450 million Iranian Rials to the Resistance Front, as *khums*.<sup>3</sup> In fact, for the first time such source of funding for election purpose had been revealed to the public. The UFP and other principled fronts with the help of patron clerics tried to block the amount to be given to their rival. In this regard, they succeeded to get the approval of two prominent clerics – Grand Ayatullah Wahid Khorasani and Grand Ayatullah Makarem Shirazi – as their offices issued religious decrees stating that spending *khums* for political purposes was not allowed (“Answers of two clerics,” 2012).

As scheduled, the voting started at 8am, and the time allotted for casting votes was increased from the scheduled eight hours to 13 hours. The state TV was engaged in broadcasting the footage of the voting stations while playing revolutionary songs. The election authorities were impatiently engaged in predicting the election turnout. At 11am, only three hours after the start of the polling, the spokesman for the GC claimed that the voting turnout was nine percentage points higher than the eighth *Majlis* elections. He even claimed that some people started queuing as early as 4am to cast their votes (“GC spokesman’s press conference,” 2012). Meanwhile, Solat Razavi, the head of the Election Commission, declared that a historic turnout ratio would be recorded in this election (“Historic participation,” 2012). Such statements led to suspicions among opponents that the election commission would announce the turnout rate to be above 60 per cent as predicted by the members of the ruling elite.

After casting their votes, top political and religious figures issued statements to put their stamp of approval on the fairness of elections. The Supreme Leader expressed his confidence about high turnout, and, at the same time, appealed to the people to go for voting at early hours. He even declared voting to be equivalent to the five daily prayers at their earliest times (Supreme Leader, 2012b). The Supreme Leader had predicted before the polling that “the turnout will be enemy breaker” (Supreme Leader, 2012a), forcing some analysts to argue that given



the Supreme Leader's religious status, his followers could not allow their leader's prediction go wrong. However, not all of the high-profile theocrats were operating at the same level. Ayatullah Rafsenjani, after casting his vote, told the reporters that "God willing! [I hope] the result will be what the people want, and the ballots will be those that the people would cast into the ballot boxes" (as cited in "Candidates awaiting results," 2012).

As claimed by officials, a number of international journalists covered the election. However, some of them reported that they had not been given free access to visit the polling stations of their choice. Ivan Watson of CNN tweeted that "This is the 1st election I've covered anywhere in the world where authorities ordered reporters on buses to cover vote." Another tweet from a journalist said that they had been ordered "to stay at their hotel" (Dehghan, 2012).

In the afternoon of the polling day, the most surprising news of the day came out. It was reported that former reformist president Muhammad Khatami had cast his vote in a remote area of Tehran province, far away from the eyes of the media. This was not taken to be true by the reformists and Green Movement activists. Initially, they called it regimes' propaganda, but once the news was confirmed, criticism poured out for the reformist leader forcing him to announce on his homepage that he would give an explanation about his action very soon ("Explanation will be issued," 2012). Khatami's voting news overshadowed other issues, providing an argument for the ruling elite that the boycott call had failed, not only at public level but also at the leadership level.

### **The results**

The voting ended at 11pm, after an extension of five hours, without any untoward incident and top Iranian officials celebrated a successful election. As usual, they called the election a "powerful punch on the mouth of the arrogant - the US and the Zionism". Ayatullah Jannati, the head of the GC, in his Friday speech after the election, thanked the people for their participation and, at the same time, for not voting those who, according to him, had been qualified by the GC with reluctance (Ayatullah Jannati, 2012b). The Supreme Leader, in his address at the Assembly of Experts on March 9, 2012, emphasised that the successful election was a clear sign of people's confidence in the Islamic political

system. Besides, he thanked the GC for successfully overcoming the huge burden of vetting (Supreme Leader, 2012c).

However, results told a different story. The UFP secured 97 seats. Of them, 49 winners had also been supported by the RF. Although, the UFP gained the largest share, none of the principled groups won majority in Tehran. Out of 30 seats of Tehran, they collectively could confirm only five seats. The most fortunate group in March 2 elections was the CIC. Out of the 86 candidates it nominated, 16 emerged victorious. Some independent candidates who contested the election were also successful. Therefore, out of 225 confirmed seats, 83 seats were captured by independent candidates. According to Sadeqi, the success of independent candidates can be explained on the basis of a change in the political taste of people as they had become tired of issues being discussed by principled groups (Sadeqi, 2012). Perhaps the main loser in this election was the ultra-principled front (RF). It won only 17 seats. The shares of semi-reformist Democratic Party (DF) and Monotheism and Justice Front were 16, 7, and 5 seats, respectively (Figure I).

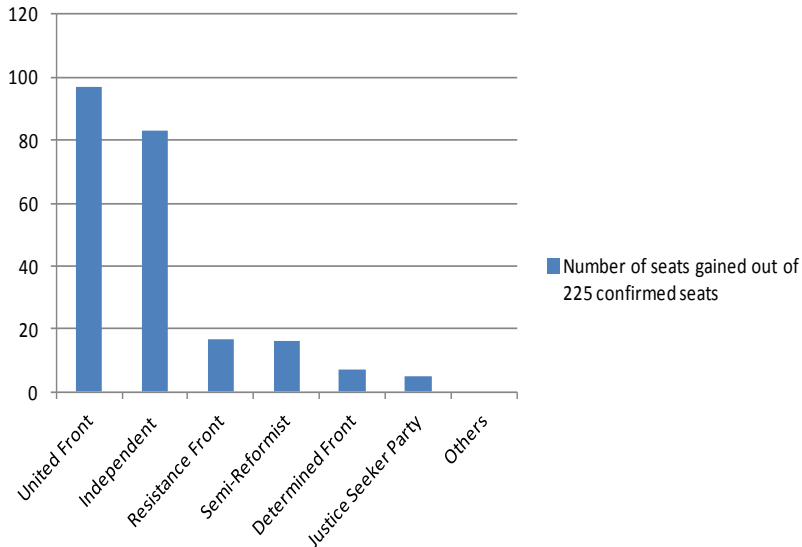


Figure 1: Election results

**Source:** Data extracted from daily *Tehran e Imrooz*, (2012, March 4), *Donyaay e Iqtisad*, (2012, March 5) & <http://www.roozonline.com>.

**Note:** The affiliations of candidates are determined on the basis of the candidacy lists in which their names appeared. Given the overlap of candidacy lists, the share of each group might be claimed more or less than what is shown in the graph.

The number of successful clerics sharply fell from 49 in the eighth *Majlis* to 27 in the ninth *Majlis*. Perhaps this is the reason why Ayatullah Kani, the head of Assembly of Experts, had requested ahead of elections to all eligible clerics to apply for candidacy, as according to him with the continuous decrease in the number of clerics, a time would come when the *Majlis* will neither be revolutionary nor Islamic (“Principled’s grand gathering,” 2011). Finally, the tiny number of women also became tinier, from eight seats in the eighth *Majlis* to three seats in the new *Majlis*.

Interestingly, different streams claimed victory in the ninth *Majlis* elections. The anti-government principled groups (opponents of Ahmadinejad) took into account the defeats of some close associates of Ahmadinejad such as his sister Parvin Ahmadinejad, and the low performance of pro-government principled group like RF that won only 17 seats. On the other hand, the pro-government groups referred to 58 laid-down principled members of eighth *Majlis* who had summoned the president to the parliament few months before the election.

To those opposing the regime, the election results indicated the defeat of principled camp as a whole. They argued that while opposition parties were absent, and the principled camp had a good access to resources, it was not able to send its entire people to the *Majlis*. For opposition groups, the significant change in the fortune of high-profile candidates of principled camp was a big victory. For example, although the forerunner candidate in Tehran for the last three *Majlis* elections had been Haddad Adil – father-in-law of the Supreme Leader’s son - his vote balance in this election was 790,088 short as compared to his eighth *Majlis* votes; while Ali Mutahhari, the third winner in the eighth *Majlis* election, could not secure one-fourth of the required votes. In other parts of Iran, there were cases of similar nature. For instance, Hussain Jalali - Ayatullah Mesbah Yazdi’s chief of staff and the director of Imam Khumaini Education and Research Institute - lost ground to an independent challenger in Kirman city. Mujtaba Zoonnor, the special representative of the Supreme Leader in the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, who had resigned from his post to contest election, lost in Qom city, the hub of clerics. And Parvin Ahmadinejad, sister of President Ahmadinejad, was defeated in Garmsar city. Furthermore, the impressive number of successful independent candidates is another factor for opposition to argue that citizens have lost their confidence in the ruling class (Kazemian, 2012).

## The turnout issue and discontentment

The Iranian opposition groups usually question the level of inclusiveness of elections in Iran in terms of electoral laws and the availability of nomination and candidacy opportunities. To them, in Iran, the 'right to elect' does not go in tandem with the 'right to be elected'. In the same way, they argue that in the ninth *Majlis* election while the establishment was enthusiastically encouraging the people to exercise their right to vote, they were reluctant to recognise the rights for candidacy and nomination. In this regard, they took into account the disqualification of 1,238 candidates, including 30 members of the eighth *Majlis* by the GC. The GC decisions even irked Ali Larijani, the conservative speaker of the *Majlis*, who criticised the GC for disqualifying the members of the eighth *Majlis*, who had applied for the ninth *Majlis* election ("Principled protest," 2012).

Apart from such structural problems, the integrity of election statistics was a major source of dispute. As noted earlier, the turnout had highly overshadowed the outcome of the election. At 10:22 pm (38 minutes before the closure of voting), the Iranian English Press TV reported that the turnout had been 64.2 per cent ("Polls close in Iran," 2012). The news about the high turnout and the people's "thirst to vote" continued the next day with newspapers carrying incredible stories. For instance, daily *Kayhan* reported that in Hamdan city a 100-year-old man cast his vote only one hour before his final breath ("Historical participation," 2012).

It was obvious that the opponents would not accept the statistics, though they would not be able to disprove their claims. In the absence of international observers, the opposition could only refer to absence of crowds at polling stations to support their claim of low turnout. Several reports circulating on the online forums quoted opposition leaders claiming that the rush of people at polling stations had been lower than that in 2009 presidential election in which the turnout had been declared to be 51 per cent. Some informed sources also talked about some ballots containing other things than the name of any candidate (Kazemian, 2012). It is not clear if this allegation meant vote rigging by the authorities. Furthermore, opponents came with micro calculations showing that the turnouts for some constituencies had been given about 95 per cent to 127 per cent (Akbarin, 2012).

Nevertheless, doubts were raised with the release of official statistics. There were various cases reflecting confusion among the election authorities. For instance, initially the Interior Ministry, on its official website for elections, said in a memo entitled “The last results of the presence saga” quoted the interior minister as saying that 26,472,760 people had cast their votes, and that, the turnout had been 64.2 per cent. Given the total number of eligible persons voting (48,288,799) announced by the Interior Minister on February 19, 2012, the opposition claimed that according to the above figures the turnout ought to be no more than 54 per cent. In response to this, the memo was replaced with a new one quoting the Interior Minister saying that the previous figure was not the final one, and that to the time the figure of total ballots cast had reached up to 29,000,000 (Akbarin, 2012).

But doubts remained, even as the new figure for the turnout was not more than 60 per cent. Additionally, the reason for mentioning the turnout ratio prematurely, the correct estimate of which is only possible once all votes cast are counted, was not clear. Furthermore, the same controversial memo mentioned that the turnout ratio was 11 per cent higher than the eighth *Majlis* elections. Given that the turnout ratio for the eighth *Majlis* election had been officially declared 51 per cent, the turnout in ninth *Majlis* would be below 64.2 per cent even with the addition of 11 per cent (Bastani, 2012). Finally, the claims of some high-profile losers such as Parvin Ahmadinejad - sister of the president - alleging electoral fraud added further credence to the opposition claims and were well used by the opponents of the regime (“Parvin claims electoral fraud,” 2012).

## **Conclusion**

Unlike the previous elections, the ninth *Majlis* election was a great challenge for the ruling elites. One, the ruling elite had to ensure that the boycott call did not materialise and, if it did, it was unsuccessful. Second, they had to struggle hard to get their trusted people into the ninth *Majlis*. The ruling authorities succeeded in achieving both their aims. However, in the absence of international observers and given the lop-sided electoral process of Iran, from the beginning to the end, some procedural, institutional and legal issues were raised by the opponents of the regime and the election observers which cast serious doubts on the credibility of the Ninth *Majlis* elections. More importantly, the official

statistics of the ninth *Majlis* election lacked integrity which leads to further questioning the credibility of the election. Finally, a micro analysis of the election results reveals that the Iranian conservative leadership was not as successful in the ninth *Majlis* election as claimed. This failure is reflected both in the victory of independent candidates as well as the defeat of high-profile conservative figures.

## Endnotes

- 1 In Iran, essentially, political forces operate under two loose alignments namely 'Conservative' and 'Moderates'. The Moderate camp is also known as a 'Reformist camp'. In the 9th *Majlis* election, the mainstream reformist groups did not participate, and the 'conservative' camp was fragmented into different groups all of them calling themselves *Osulgara* (principled or traditionalist).
- 2 In the Iranian elections it is a common practice that a single candidate appears in more than one list. For instance, in the nominee lists issued by various groups, a cleric named Muhammad Hassan Abutrabi had his presence in 14 candidacy lists which in itself is a record.
- 3 *Khums* is the Arabic word for One Fifth (1/5). In Shia Islamic legal terminology, it means "one-fifth" of certain items which a person acquires as wealth, and which must be paid to a religious clergy.

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