

Islamic Parliament of Iran; 9th Term

Preface

The 9th term of the Islamic Parliament of Iran started during the second presidential term of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. The end of the 9th parliament's term fell in the middle of the first term in the office of President Hassan Rouhani. Therefore, the 9th parliament was affected by its exchanges with the 10th and 11th administrations.

Ambiance in the 9th Election

Number of Registered candidates: 3444

Number of candidates in Tehran: 850

Number of candidates in Other Cities: 2594

Date of Election: March 2, 2012

Number of Eligible Voters: 48288378

Number of Participating Voters: 30905605

Voter Turnout: 64.20%

Number of First-Round Electees: 244

Number of Second-Round Electees: 62

Date of Runoff: May 4, 2012

Number of Midterm Electees: 4

Date of Mid-Term Election: June 14, 2013 (Kashani, 2017:111)

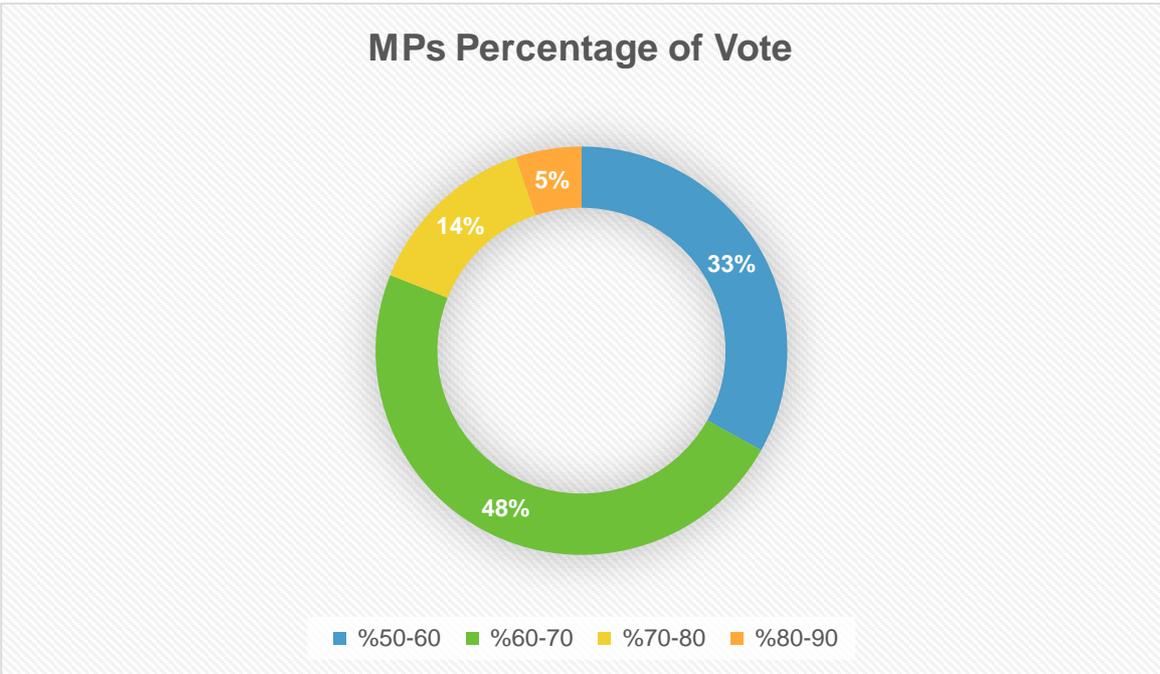
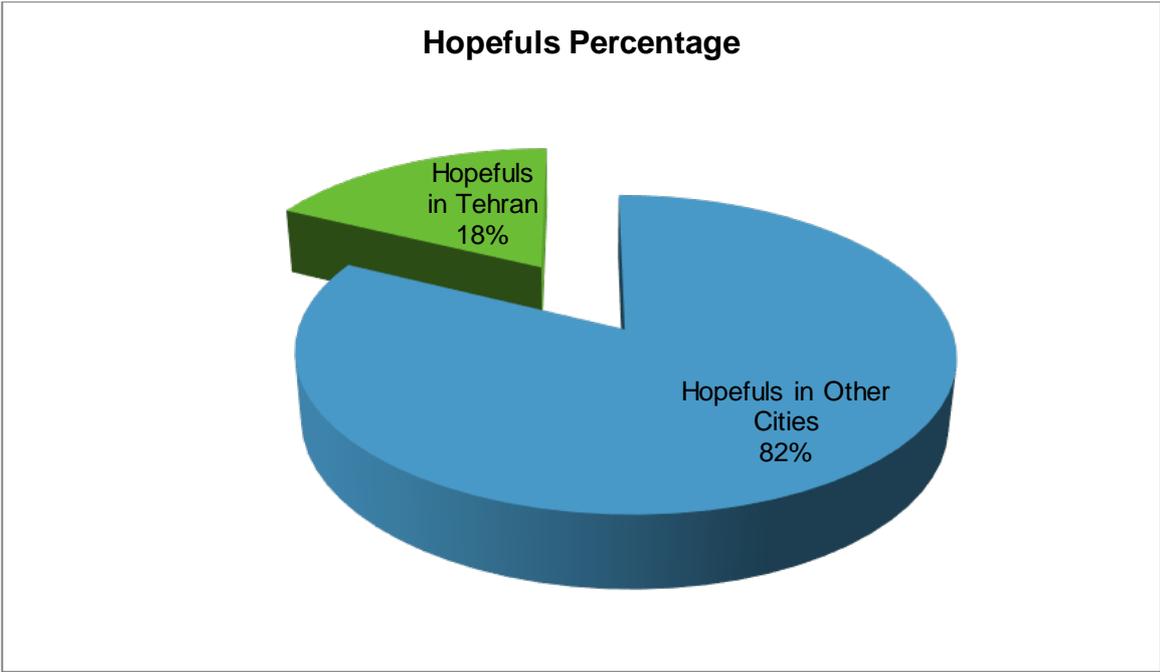
Representative of Armenian Christians in Northern Iran: Karen Khanlari

Representative of Armenian Christians in southern Iran: Robert Beglarian

Representative of Assyrians: Yonathan Bet Kolia

Representative of Jews: Siamak Mereh Sedgh

Representative of Zoroastrians: Esfandiar Ekhtiyari Kasnaviyeh Yazd



Dominant Political Atmosphere

- The election for the 9th parliament was held against the backdrop of elimination of reformist groups in the 10th presidential election, along with the lack of consensus and infighting within the ranks of Principalists who comprised three major groups:
 1. Right-leaning United Front of Principalists (longtime Principalists)

2. Perseverance Front¹ (supporters of then president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad)
3. Neoprincipalists or United Front of Nation or critics of government

Therefore, the ninth parliamentary election saw the formation of a multi-polar atmosphere among Principalists.

- After the 9th legislative election, the Followers of Velayat was the most influential parliamentary faction². More than 170 MPs were members of this dominant faction. (Salavati, 2017:110)

Presiding Board

1. Speaker

- Ali Ardeshir Larijani

2. Vice Speakers

- Mohammad Reza Bahonar
- Mohammad Hassan Abutorabifard

9th Islamic Parliament in a Glance

- Total MPs: 290
- First Session Held on: May 27, 2012
- Number of Women: 9³
- Number of Reinstated MPs: 169
- Number of Sessions Held: 426
- Deceased MPs: 1⁴
- Resigned MPs: 1⁵ (Sharei, 2017:150)

¹ In the run-up to legislative elections, the United Front of Principalists was established under the leadership of Ayatollah Mohammad Reza Mahdavi Kani in order to present a list. The Association of War Veterans, the Front Following Imam Khomeini's Line and Supreme Leader, supporters of government and representatives of Messrs Ali Larijani and Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf were to form the so-called 7+8 alliance. However, supporters of government did not accept to join this alliance and established instead the "Perseverance Front" and nominated their own candidates.

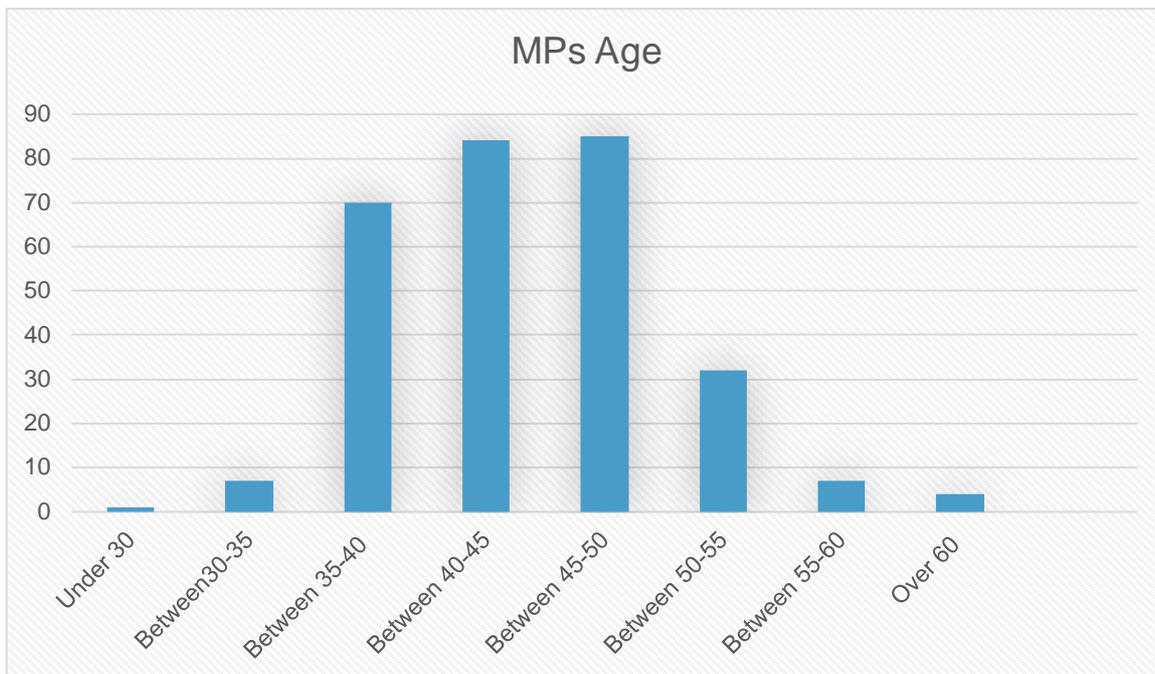
² Ali Larijani, Kazem Jalali, Ezzatollah Yousefian, Mohammad Reza Bahonar, and Mohammad Shojaei Kiasari were among members of this faction.

³ Mahnaz Bahmani, Shahla Mirgalou, Nayereh Akhavan, Halimeh Ali, Sakineh Omrani, Fatemeh Alia, Fatemeh Rahbar, Zohreh Tayebzadeh, and Laleh Eftekhari

⁴ Representative of Taft and Meybod Jalal Yahyazadeh Firouzabadi

MPs Age

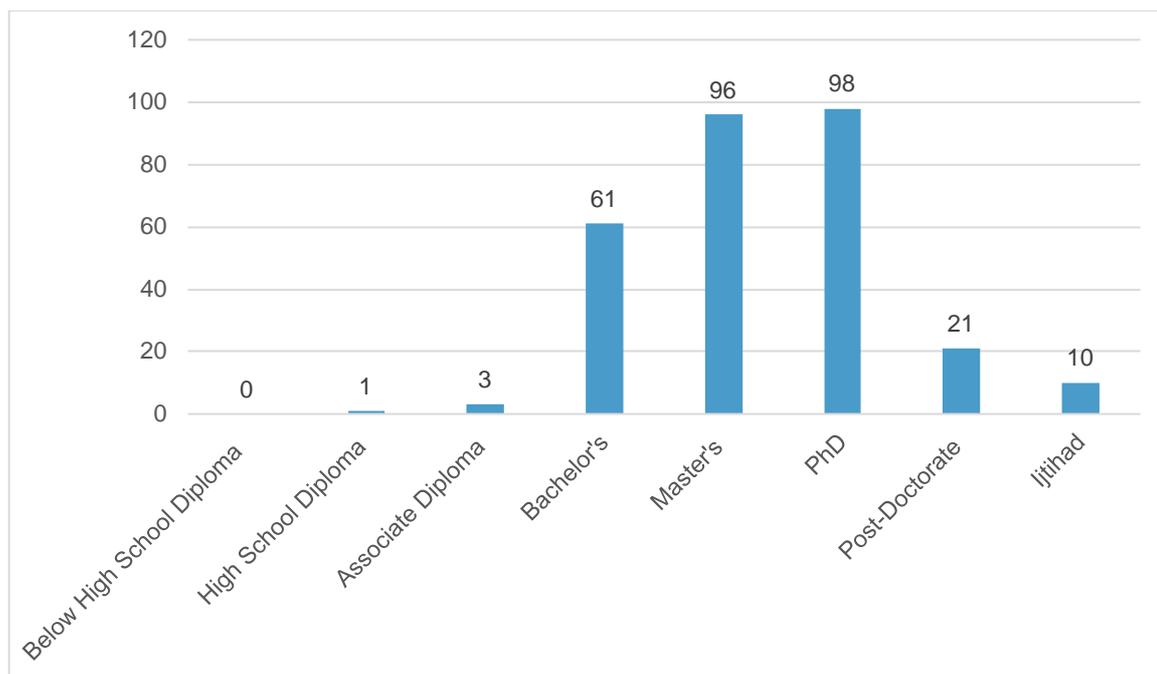
- Aged Under 30: 1 MP
- Aged 30-35: 7 MPs
- Aged 35-40: 70 MPs
- Aged 40-45: 84 MPs
- Aged 45-50: 85 MPs
- Aged 50-55: 32 MPs
- Aged 55-60: 7 MPs
- Aged Over 60: 4 MPs (Ayoubi, 2016:120)



MPs Education

There was no MP with education below high school diploma, 1 was high school graduates, 3 held associate diploma, 61 bachelor's, 96 master's, 98 PhD, 21 post-doctorate, and 10 were High-Level Degree in Islamic Jurisprudence (Ijtihad) (Malekian, 2016:140). Some lawmakers held multiple university degrees.

⁵ Nahavand MP Mehdi Sanaei quit and was appointed ambassador to Russia.



Marking Measures and Legislation

*1953 Coup Damages Follow-Up

One of the widely reflected pieces of legislation in the 9th parliament was the motion to follow up on reparations for the 1953 coup against the then Iranian government. This legislation required the government to follow up on a complaint filed against the United States and Britain for their involvement in the coup against the government of Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq⁶. (Kashani, 2017:180)

*Gov't Obligation to Preserve Nuclear Achievements

The 9th parliament voted a piece of legislation in June 2015, requiring the government to preserve Iran's nuclear achievements. However, Iran's nuclear agreement with six world powers, dubbed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was struck shortly after. There were conflicting views about the legislation between MPs and also between government and MPs. (Sedaqat, 2017:163)

⁶ An ad hoc committee comprising foreign minister, representative of judiciary chief, minister of intelligence, chief of Islamic Iran Revolution Guards, minister of economy, chairman of Foreign Policy and National Security Committee of Parliament, and chairman of Planning and Budgeting Committee of Parliament was tasked with following up on damages for the CIA-engineered 1953 coup against Iran. This legislation was approved in September 2013 and sent by Speaker of Parliament Ali Larijani to President Hassan Rouhani to take effect.

***11 Economic Laws**

In addition to the national budget bills for 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016, nearly 10 other laws in the economic sector passed the 9th parliament: Law on removal of obstacles to competitive production and upgrading national fiscal system (to get out of stagnation), law on modifying direct tax law, law on adding some points to the law on government financial regulations, law on amendments to the law on the implementation of Article 44 of the Constitution, law on the supply of basic commodities for vulnerable classes, law on mandatory liability insurance for owners of motor vehicles versus third party insurance, law on Articles of Association for the National Iranian Oil Company, law on amendments to law on combating contraband and foreign currency smuggling, law on follow-up on the implementation of general policies of resilient economy, and law on the formation of Management and Planning Organization (Mansour, 2016:195)

***11 Cultural and Social Laws**

The 9th parliament voted 11 laws on cultural and social issues: Law on family planning, law on supporting promoters of virtue and preventers of vice, law for reforming high council of employment, unemployment insurance law, law on extending deadline for trial run of state services management law, law on supporting guardianless and uncared children and juveniles, law on amendments to family planning law, law on accelerating reconstruction of areas damaged by natural disasters, law declaring one more day public holiday, law on serving war veterans and law banning employment of retirees. (Mansour, 2016:199)

***9 Judicial Laws**

The 9th parliament approved nine laws in the judicial and legal sectors: law on monitoring on MPs' conduct, law on penal procedure, law on holding 11th presidential and 5th local council elections together, amendments to presidential election law, law on feasibility of moving the country's political and administrative center and decentralization from Tehran, law on political offense, law on dispute settlement councils, Islamic Penal Code and family support law. (Mansour, 2016:200)

***5 Education and Research Laws**

Five laws on education and research were voted in the 9th parliament: Law on admission of students into universities and higher education centers, law on amendments to admission of students into universities and higher education centers, law on establishment and administration of private schools and education centers, law on employing hourly paid trainers of Vocational Training Organization and law on employing hourly paid teachers and assistant teachers (Mansour, 2016:201)

***Minister Impeached**

A censure motion was tabled on February 3, 2013 against Abdorreza Sheikholeslami, the then minister of cooperative, labor and social affairs, for his appointment of former Tehran prosecutor Saeed Mortazavi, facing charges over the death of election protestors in 2009, as the head of Social Security Organization. MPs said Mortazavi's appointment was illegal, but Sheikholeslami had refused to replace him. On impeachment day, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad defended his minister and accused the speaker of parliament of meddling with executive affairs. Ahmadinejad, who threatened to make revelations, aired a video of a meeting between Mortazavi and Fazel Larijani⁷. That drew protest from MPs. The speaker of parliament asked President Ahmadinejad to leave the chamber. Then, voting started and Sheikholeslami was sacked⁸. (Salavati, 2017:56)

***Controversial Visit to Qom**

Nearly one week after the impeachment of Abdorreza Sheikholeslami as minister of labor, Speaker of Parliament Ali Larijani travelled to the holy city of Qom to deliver a speech on the anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution. As soon as he tried to deliver his speech, a group of supporters of Ahmadinejad shouted him down. Larijani had to stop his speech. This issue was discussed in a meeting of the Foreign Policy and National Security Committee of Parliament and a report signed by 153 MPs was submitted to the Judiciary for action. (Ayoubi, 2016:78)

***Social Security Organization Probe**

Among reports read out in the parliament, the report on investigation into the Social Security Organization was the most significant and the most influential. The inquiry was launched after labor minister refused to dismiss Saeed Mortazavi as the SSO head. The report contained cases of denial of people's rights, the insured's deprivation of revenues, and absence of effective and optimal management in the agencies led by the Social Security Investment Company, and payment of unreasonable bonuses and sums to managers and advisors. The report was then sent to the Judiciary. (Malekian, 2016:19)

⁷ Brother of the speaker of parliament

⁸ Of 272 votes cast, 192 were for censure motion, 56 were against and 24 abstained.

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