

Islamic Parliament of Iran; 5th Term

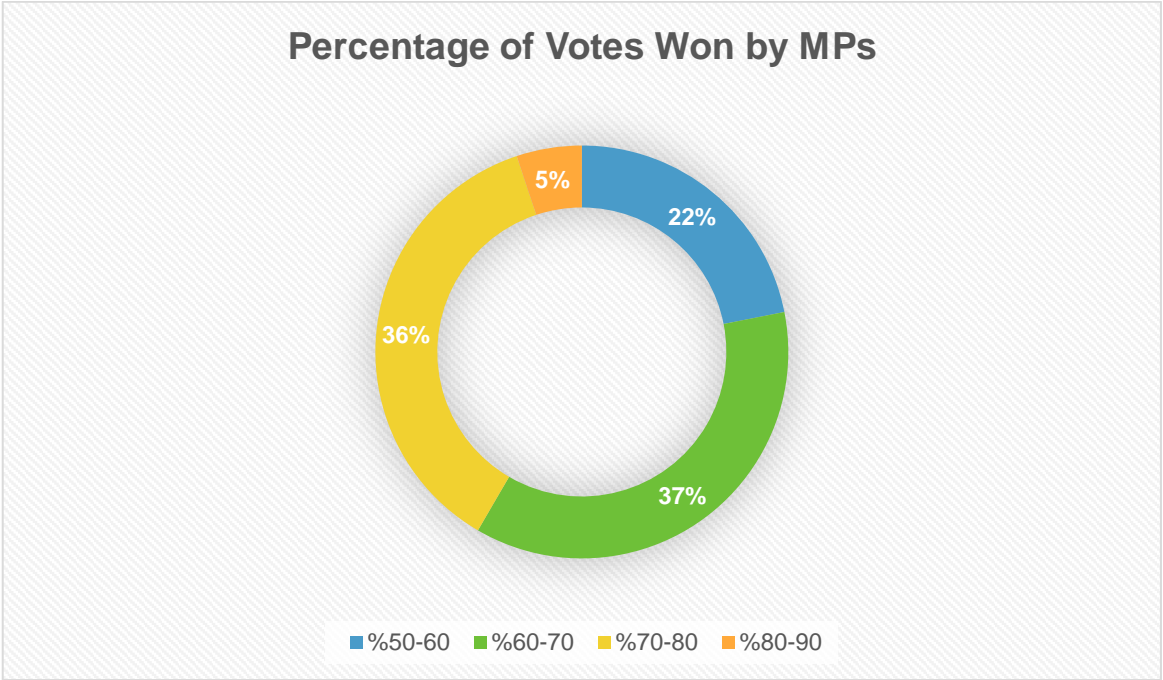
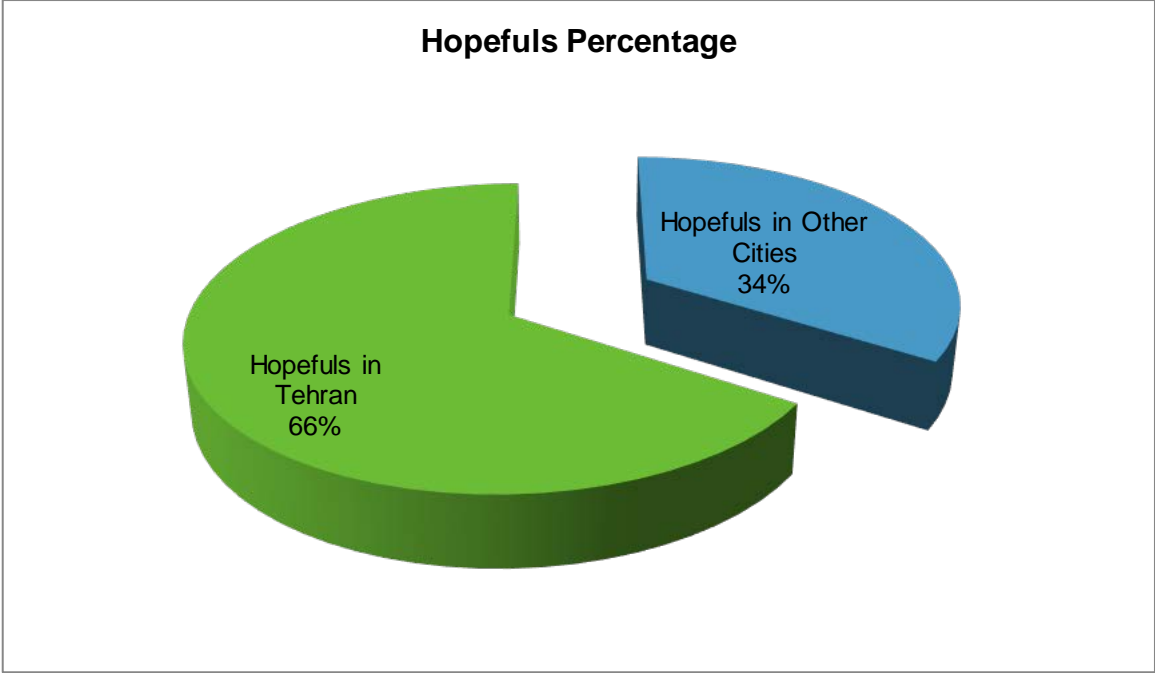
Preface

The fifth term of the Islamic Parliament of Iran took office in 1995 against the backdrop of widespread activities by the left-leaning Executives of Construction Party. The Assembly of Combatant Clerics had boycotted the 5th election due to mass disqualifications. However, the voter turnout in this round of parliamentary election was registered at 71%, a record which remains unbroken to date.

Ambiance of 5th Election

- Number of Hopefuls: 3276
- Number of Eligible Voters: 34716000
- Votes Cast: 24682386
- Voter Turnout: 71.10%
- Legislative elections were held on March 8, 1996, in which 132 MPs were elected.
- The runoff vote was held on April 19, 1996, in which 116 MPs were elected.
- Mid-term vote was held for 26 vacant seats¹. (Khajeh Sarvi, 2003:100)
- Representative of Armenian Christians in Northern Iran: Vartan Vartananiyan
- Representative of Armenian Christians in southern Iran: Artavas Baghoumiyan
- Representative of Assyrians: Shamshoun Maghsoud Pour
- Representative of Jews: Manouchehr Elyasi
- Representative of Zoroastrians: Parviz Ravani

¹ In this round of election, the tally given for the Isfahan, Miandoab, Zanjan, Malayer, Khomein, Fouman, Astara, Natanz, Najafabad, Naenin, Barkhavar o Meimeh, Salmas and Varzaqan constituencies was not endorsed by the Guardian Council. The credentials of the Rafsanjan representative was rejected while Mohammad Majd-Ara, MP from Babolsar, died on September 20, 1996. Mid-term elections were later held to fill the vacant seats.



Political Ambiance of 5th Parliament

- Like the election for the 4th parliament and unlike the 3rd parliamentary election, the 5th election was largely won by the right-leaning Society of Combatant Clergy.
- The 5th Parliament was dominated by the right faction; however, leftist parties, Executives of Construction, the Society for Defending the Values of the Islamic Revolution, and Independents were largely present. The right faction was represented by 140 MPs, Executives of Construction, and labor groups by 110 and independents by 24. Three major parliamentary blocs were established:

1. Right-leaning Hezbollah faction
2. Majma-e Hezbollah faction comprising Executives of Construction, groups following Imam Khomeini's line and labor parties
3. Independent faction which brought together independent MPs. (Movasaq, 2003:121)

Presiding Board

1. Speaker

- Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri

2. Vice Speakers

- Hassan Rouhani
- Mohammad Ali Movahedi Kermani

5th Parliament at a Glance

- Total Number of MPs: 274
- First Session Held on: June 1, 1996
- Number of Women: 14²
- 98 had already served out the 4th parliament, 44 the 3rd parliament, 24 the 2nd parliament and 22 the 1st parliament. Six had served in all the previous four parliaments while 128 were first-time MPs. (Jahan-Mohammadi, 2010:114)
- Number of Approved Laws: 365³
- Number of Rejected Bills and Motions: 77
- Number of Sessions Held: 387
- Number of Deceased MPs: 1⁴ (Sharei, 2017:118)

MPs Age

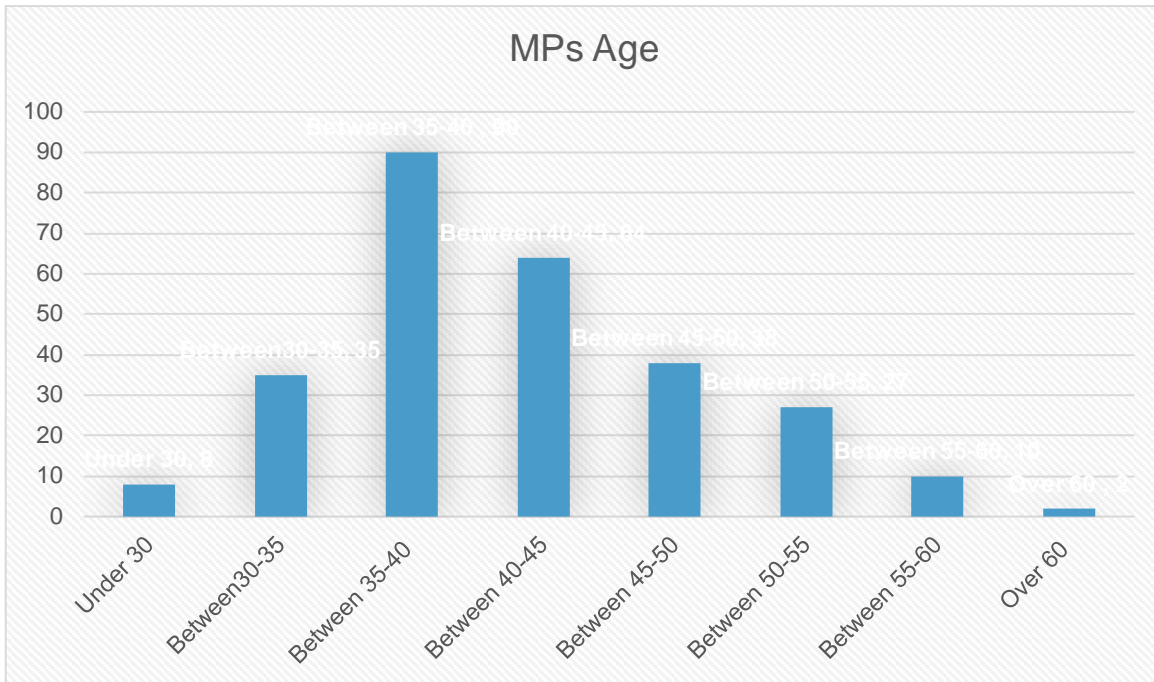
- Aged Under 30: 8 MPs
- Aged 30-35: 35 MPs
- Aged 35-40: 90 MPs
- Aged 40-45: 64 MPs
- Aged 45-50: 38 MPs
- Aged 50-55: 27 MPs
- Aged 55-60: 10 MPs

² Nayyereh Akhavan Bitaraf, Shahrbanoo Amani, Zahra Pishgahifard, Soheila Jelodarzadeh, Marzieh Hadidchi, Elaheh Rastgoo, Fatemeh Ramezanzadeh, Qodsieh Seyyedi Alavi, Marzieh Seddiqi, Nafiseh Fayazbakhsh, Fatemeh Karroubi Monireh Nobakht, Marzieh Vahid Dastjerdi, and Faezeh Hashemi Bahramani

³ As long as this parliament was in office, the government submitted 258 bills for approval. Moreover, parliamentary committees proposed 107 motions.

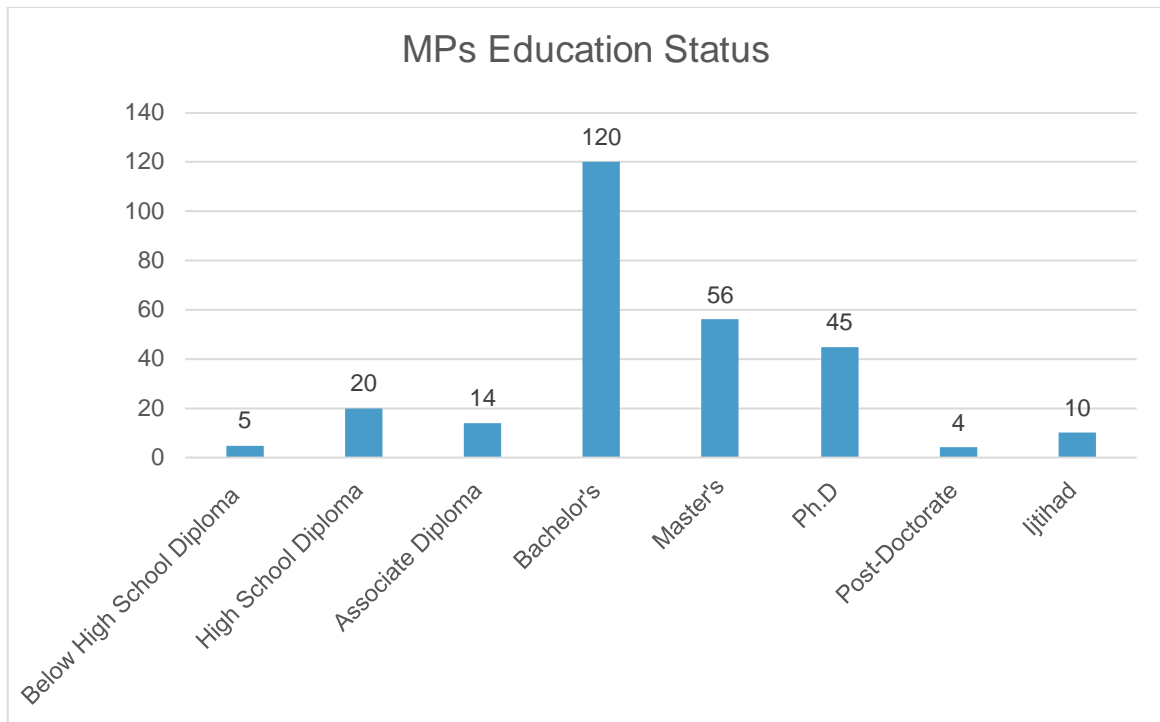
⁴ Mohammad Majd-Ara, representative of Babolsar and Bandpey

- Aged Over 60: 2 MPs (Fawzi, 2008:120)



MPs Education

Five MPs did not hold a high school diploma, 20 were high school graduates, 14 held associate diploma, 120 bachelor's, 56 master's, 45 PhD, 4 post-doctorate, and 10 held high-level degree in Islamic jurisprudence (Ijtihad) (Fawzi, 2008:95). Some lawmakers held multiple university degrees.



Marking Events

1. Participation at IPU Conferences

The 96th conference of Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) was held in Beijing in September 1996. The Iranian parliamentary delegation was led by Mohammad Javad Larijani. The Iranian delegation⁵ was actively present in the conference during which three important resolutions⁶ were adopted.

The 97th IPU conference was held in Seoul April 10-15, 1997. More than 135 parliamentary delegations, including Iran's led by Mousa Zargar⁷, were in attendance. The conference concluded after adopting four resolutions⁸.

On September 7, 1998, the 100th IPU conference was inaugurated in Moscow. The five-day event was attended by 123 parliamentary delegations from member states. Iran's delegation was in attendance⁹. The conference agreed to discuss in its next gathering proposals submitted by Iran, Britain, Denmark, and Japan on parliamentary action to encourage all

⁵ They were Mousa Zargar, Ahmad Nateq-Nouri, Mehdi Mehdizadeh, Elias Hazrati, Mohammad-Mehdi Khazaei, Abufazel Razavi Ardakani, Jamshid Qanbari Maman, and Fatemeh Ramezanzadeh

⁶ World Banning of Anti-Personnel Mines and the Need to Remove Them for Humanitarian Purposes, Resolution on Promoting Greater Respect and Protection of Human Rights in General and in Particular for Women and Children, and Resolution on Food Security

⁷ Other parliamentary delegates were Ahmad Nateq-Nouri, Bahaaddin Adab, Ali Qanbari, Ali Nematzadeh, Mohammad-Baqer Mousavi Jahanabad, Marzieh Vahid Dastjerdi, and Zahra Pishgahifard

⁸ The resolutions were on the following subjects: 1. Cooperation for global and regional stability and security and respecting all forms of sovereignty and independence of nations 2. Necessary action to change models of production and consumption with focus on sustainable development 3. Israeli settlement construction in occupied land including East al-Quds; Israel was urged to refrain from any change in the geographical status of the region 4. Emergency conditions in Albania and Zaire.

⁹ Iranian parliamentary delegates were Mohammad Javad Larijani, Mousa Zargar, Mohammad Reza Mavalizadeh, Qodsieh Seyyedi Alavi, Seyyed Ahmad Rasoulinejad, Qasem Ramezanzadeh, Asghar Raeisi Dehkordi, Mohammad Raouf Qaderi, and Ebrahim Azizi.

countries to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, take urgent action for upgrading nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT), and make efforts for the annihilation of nuclear weapons.

The 101st IPU conference was held in Brussels from April 11-15 1999. The Iranian delegation was in attendance¹⁰. The 102nd IPU conference was held on October 10-16 in Berlin where 131 parliamentary delegations attended. The Iranian delegation was led by Mohammad Javad Larijani¹¹. Thanks to efforts by the Iranian delegation, the issue of Dialogue Among Civilizations topped the agenda of the Oman conference and the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States were granted the observer status. (Azimi Dowlatabadi, 2008:135)

2. Muslim IPU in Tehran

The most outstanding event during the term of the 5th parliament was Tehran's hosting of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States. Preliminary consultations and negotiations had already been held between inter-parliamentary groups of Muslim nations on the sidelines of the IPU conferences. Tehran hosted exchange of views between parliamentary delegates from Muslim nations December 14-15, 1998¹². On February 28, 1999 an emergency meeting of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States was held in Tehran with 32 Muslim nations in attendance. Iran's then speaker of parliament Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri strongly condemned the Israeli attacks against Lebanese civilians and called on the Muslim world to counter the Israeli regime's acts of aggression. (Mosavar Rahmani, 2002:400)

3. D'Amato Law

The adoption of D'Amato Law¹³ in 1996 by the US House of Representatives elicited reaction in the Iranian parliament. The MPs condemned the law. (Khajeh Sarvi, 2003:115)

4. Mykonos Court

The verdict issued by the Mykonos court¹⁴ in Germany drew strong reaction in Iran, including in the parliament. On November 17, 1996 more than 200 Iranian MPs signed a petition demanding that the government reconsider its ties with Germany. (Shadloo, 2007:96)

¹⁰ The Iranian delegation comprised Mohammad Javad Larijani, Mahmoud Astaneh, Seyyed Mahmoud Nourizadeh, Gholam Reza Ashrafi, and Marzieh Hadidchi.

¹¹ Accompanied by Mahmoud Astaneh, Ebrahim Pir-Nemati, Qodrat Ali Heshmatian, Abdorreza Sepahvand, Jahanbakhs Mohebbinia, Seyyed Mojtaba Mousavi Ojaq, and Fatemeh Karroubi.

¹² This gathering was attended by representatives of 29 member states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference including 10 speakers and vice speakers. Consensus was achieved on the final framework of draft constitution of the OIC and the Iranian parliament speaker's proposal for the Tehran conference in spring 1999 was approved.

¹³ The US would impose sanctions on oil companies that invested more than \$20 million in Iran's oil sector.

5. Family Court and Child Custody Law Amendments

On July 30, 1997, the parliament adopted a motion submitted by the Legal and Judicial Committee on the establishment of family courts, as enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution. In light of the growing number of family-related disputes and their interference with other affairs, special tribunals were needed to specifically deal with such cases. The law on family courts required the head of the judiciary to assign at least one bench the mission to hear family litigation in counties all across the country. (Khajeh Sarvi, 2003:119)

6. Interior Minister Impeached

No later had 10 months passed since Abdollah Nouri took office as the minister of interior than 31 MPs tabled a motion on June 10, 1998 to impeach him for his politically motivated appointments and dismissals. Nouri showed up in parliament to face questions by MPs. Finally he failed to win the vote of confidence and he was sacked. (Mosavar Rahmani, 2002:409)

7. Serial Murders

The mid-1990s was marked by the murder of intellectuals and political dissidents. Daryoush Forouhar¹⁵ and his wife¹⁶ were stabbed to death in Tehran on November 22, 1998. Later on December 3 and 9 two writers¹⁷, who had been reported missing, were found dead. On December 13, more than 140 MPs signed a letter to President Mohammad Khatami, demanding urgent action against the serial murders. They said in their letter that foreign intelligence services and the Mujahideen Khalq Organization (MKO) were behind the deaths to disturb Iran's national security. On January 6, 1999, the Ministry of Intelligence released a statement, saying a small group of intelligence agents had been behind the murders. Four days later, more than 150 MPs signed a letter to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Mohammad Khatami, congratulating them on the arrest of suspected murderers. And on January 13, more than 180 MPs signed a letter to Ayatollah Khamenei, in which they offered gratitude to the president and Iran's intelligence service. (Azimi Dowlatabadi, 2008:145)

8. Revised Press Law

Parliamentarians voted in favor of a motion to amend the Press Law in order to strengthen the judiciary against any misuse of freedom of expression by the press and to toughen monitoring

¹⁴ In 1996, a German court issued a biased and politically motivated ruling, accusing Iranian officials of involvement in the murder of a Kurdish dissident leader in Germany.

¹⁵ Leader of Nation Party of Iran

¹⁶ Parvaneh Eskandari

¹⁷ Mohammad Mokhtari and Mohammad Jafar Pouyandeh

of the press. The generalities of the motion were approved in July 1999 while the details were passed on to the next parliament. (Khajeh Sarvi, 2003:93)

9. Student Dormitory Raid

Following the raid¹⁸ on the Tehran University dormitory, the parliament released a condemnatory statement and called on Iranian police and security organs to follow the Supreme Leader's order for restoring calm in the country. An ad hoc committee comprising reformist and principalist lawmakers was set up to probe the issue. On August 4, more than 160 MPs demanded tough action against the perpetrators of the incident. (Mosavar Rahmani, 2002:407)

10. 3rd Development Plan Approved

The 3rd Five-Year Economic Development Plan, made of 26 chapters, 199 articles and 57 notes, was submitted by president to parliament on September 15, 1999. The plan was approved on April 5, 2000 after some changes. (Azimi Dowlatabadi, 2008:149)

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¹⁸ It started on July 8, 1999 with a group of students protesting amendments to Press Law and the ensuing closure of Salam newspaper. One day later, street riots were triggered. Police and military forces entered the Tehran University dormitory and arrested many of students. The crisis ended after Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei intervened, police, judiciary, and intelligence organs took action and nationwide rallies were held on July 14.

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