

## Timeline of Iran's Political Events

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1979

Jan. 16 - The shah and his family went into exile.

Feb. 1 - Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini returned to Iran after 14 years in exile in France and Iraq.

Feb. 11 - Mehdi Bazargan appointed interim prime minister.

March 30-31 - In a referendum, voters overwhelmingly approved the creation of an Islamic Republic. Khomeini declared April 1 the first day of "the government of God."

May-June - Five prominent clerics close to Ayatollah Khomeini established the Islamic Republican Party.

June 14 - First official draft of the constitution was published. It did not include the position of *velayat-e faqih* (guardianship of the jurist).

Oct. 24 - New constitution, with *velayat-e faqih*, is approved by referendum after months of debate over the role of Islam in the state. The new constitution went into effect in early December, and Khomeini became supreme leader.

Nov. 4 - Students seized the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. The hostage crisis dragged on for 444 days.

Nov. 5 - Interim Prime Minister Bazargan resigned along with his cabinet to protest the hostage seizure.

1980

Jan. 25 - Abolhassan Bani-Sadr was elected Iran's first president.

March-May - The first parliament was elected. The Islamic Republican Party had the most members, but other parties such as the Freedom Movement also had significant representation. Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani was elected speaker.

March 21 - The Cultural Revolution began. In June, Khomeini ordered formation of the university jihad and began the "Islamization" of universities. Around 20,000 teachers were fired.

Aug. 28 – Amnesty International appealed to Iran to end executions and imprisonments, after citing at least 1000 post-revolution executions.

Sept. 22 – Iraq invaded Iran. The war lasted until August 1988.

## 1981

Feb. 4 – Khomeini told squabbling politicians to stop “biting one another like scorpions,” followed by a warning to clergy in government one week later that they “should by no means interfere in areas outside their competence.”

June 21 – President Bani-Sadr was impeached; he fled the country in late July. Iran banned all political parties except the Islamic Republic Party.

June 28 – A bomb at the Islamic Republic Party headquarters killed 73 officials, including Chief Justice Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti, four cabinet ministers and 27 members of parliament. The Mujahedin el-Khalq organization was believed responsible.

Aug. 15 – Mohammad Ali Raja’i became president, but was assassinated on Aug. 30 in a bombing that also killed Prime Minister Mohammad Javad Bahonar.

Oct. 2 – The third presidential election in 21 months – and the second in 10 weeks – was held. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was elected president for the first of two four-year terms.

Oct. 31 – Mir Hossein Mousavi was appointed prime minister.

## 1982

April 10 – Former Foreign Minister Sadegh Ghotbzadeh and more than 1,000 others were arrested for plotting to assassinate Ayatollah Khomeini. He confessed on television. Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Shariatmadari, who advocated separating mosque and state, was implicated by Ghotbzadeh under torture and stripped of his religious rank. Ghotbzadeh was executed in September.

Dec. 15 – Ayatollah Khomeini outlined an eight-point human rights platform and warned the judiciary and Revolutionary Guards against abusing individual rights in arrests, searches and seizures. On Dec. 22, he said, “We should not engage in oppression. We should not investigate what is going on in people’s homes.” On Dec. 28, the Tehran and Qom prosecutors were dismissed. On Jan. 1, 1983, further purges of revolutionary tribunals were undertaken.

1983

May 11 - Ayatollah Khomeini appealed for an end to disagreements among government officials. On Aug. 23, Khomeini pledged that the clergy would retreat from political life when the public "gets on the right track." In an Oct. 5 speech to clerics, he warned against "satans" fomenting discord.

Dec. 8 - Ayatollah Ali Montazeri, later to become Ayatollah Khomeini's heir apparent, urged government reforms, criticizing the revolution for lacking "a certain moral courage."

1984

April - In the second parliamentary elections, the Islamic Republican Party dominated, but divisions remained between the conservatives associated with President Ali Khamenei and leftists associated with Prime Minister Mousavi.

1986

Sept. 5 - In a clandestine broadcast, Reza II, son of the late shah, declared himself ruler of Iran and called for overthrow of Ayatollah Khomeini's regime.

1987

May - Ayatollah Khomeini disbanded the Islamic Republic Party because of internal conflicts.

1988

Feb. 6 - Khomeini established the Expediency Discernment Council to mediate conflicts between the Guardian Council and the parliament, and to advise the supreme leader.

March - A political split in the country's main clerical organization - the conservative Society of Combatant Clergy - led to the creation of a competing radical and populist clerical organization called the Association of Combatant Clerics.

April - In the third parliamentary elections, candidates identified with the leftist Society of Combatant Clerics and non-clerical Islamic Revolution Mujahedin won the majority of seats.

1989

March 28 - Khomeini fired heir apparent Ayatollah Montazeri, who later became the leading dissident cleric and was put under house arrest.

June 3 - Ayatollah Khomeini died.

June 4 - Ayatollah Ali Khamenei became the new supreme leader.

July 28 - A revised constitution eliminated the office of prime minister and made permanent the Expediency Discernment Council. The supreme leader's power was expanded.

Aug. 3 - Rafsanjani was elected president for the first of two four-year terms and launched the era of reconstruction.

1992

April-May - In the fourth parliamentary elections, the Guardian Council for the first time extensively vetted candidates and disqualified 30 incumbents. The conservative Society of Combatant Clergy won two-thirds of the seats. Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri was elected speaker.

1996

March-April - In the fifth parliamentary elections, the conservative Society of Combatant Clergy received the most seats. But candidates of the newly created Servants of Construction, which consisted of technocrats allied with President Rafsanjani, also did well. Nateq Nouri was reelected as speaker.

1997

May 23 - Mohammad Khatami won the presidency in an upset landslide with 70 percent of the vote. The reformist era began. A coalition of 18 organizations and parties identified as reformist formed a front called the Second Khordad Front, named for the Persian calendar date of Khatami's election.

1999

July 8 - Students demonstrated at Tehran University after reformist *Salaam* newspaper was closed by the judiciary. Protests continued for six days. More than 1,000 students were arrested.

2000

February-May - In the sixth parliamentary elections, the reformist Second Khordad Front won 65 percent of the 290 seats. Mehdi Karroubi was chosen as speaker.

April - Widening a crackdown on the burgeoning independent press, the judiciary banned 16 reformist newspapers.

2001

June 8 - Khatami was re-elected president by a landslide.

## 2003

June 10 – Students led protests against raising university fees and privatization of universities that grew into wider pro-democracy demands. They also condemned President Khatami for failing to support them.

Oct. 10 – Human rights activist and lawyer Shirin Ebadi won the Nobel Peace Prize.

## 2004

February – In the seventh parliamentary elections, the Guardian Council disqualified thousands of reformist candidates, including many incumbents. Conservatives took control of parliament. Gholamali Haddad Adel was elected speaker.

## 2005

June 24 – In presidential elections, conservative Mahmoud Ahmadinejad defeated Rafsanjani.

## 2007

June 27 – Protests erupted after the government imposed fuel rationing.

## 2008

March – In the eighth parliamentary elections, the Guardian Council's extensive disqualification of reformist candidates assured a conservative victory. But political rivalry among conservatives intensified. Ali Larijani replaced Haddad Adel as speaker.

## 2009

June 12 – Ahmadinejad won re-election, defeating former Prime Minister Mousavi, former parliamentary Karroubi and former Revolutionary Guard commander Mohsen Rezaei. The election featured the first televised debates. The defeated candidates and many others claimed massive voting fraud.

June 13 – The opposition Green Movement launched the most serious challenge to the theocracy since the revolution. Millions turned out on the streets of several Iranian cities for the next two weeks with banners declaring "Where is my vote?"

June 21 – The cell phone video capturing the shooting of Neda Agha Soltan, a 26-year-old student, was broadcast around the world. She became an international symbol of the Green Movement.

July 29 – Karroubi revealed incidents of death, torture and sexual abuse of protesters at Kahrizak Prison, which was followed by other first-hand accounts.

Among the dead was the son of a senior Revolutionary Guards commander. The government closed the facility.

Aug. 1 - The judiciary launched televised trials of well-known reformers and former government officials such as former Vice-President Mohammad Ali Abtahi and Mohsen Mirdamadi, leader of the Islamic Iran Participation Front, the most popular reform party. They were accused of fomenting unrest and other anti-government activities. Five trials lasted into the fall.

Sept. 18 - On Qods Day (or Jerusalem Day), thousands demonstrated across Iran in support of opposition candidate Mousavi. A dominant slogan became, "No to Gaza and Lebanon. I will give my life for Iran," rejecting the government's support of Palestinian and Lebanese militancy. Qods Day marks the last Friday of the month of Ramadan, which Ayatollah Khamenei had dedicated as a day of solidarity with the Palestinian people

Nov. 4 - On the anniversary of the U.S. Embassy takeover, tens of thousands of protesters gathered across major cities. Instead of chanting "Death to America," protestors chanted, "Death to the dictator," a reference to Iran's supreme leader.

Dec. 19 - Leading dissident cleric Ayatollah Montazeri died, sparking widespread protests across Iran, including in the holy city of Qom.

Dec. 27 - Commemorations on Ashoura, the holiest day for Shiites, turned into violent anti-government protests.

Dec. 30 - Thousands of pro-government forces rallied in response to opposition protests on Ashoura.

## 2010

January - The parliament and the Guardian Council approved a plan for subsidy reform.

Feb. 11 - Both pro-government forces and members of the opposition movement turned out onto the streets on the anniversary of the revolution. But security forces prevented the opposition from mass protests, marking the success of a crackdown against the Green Movement.

July 21 - Ayatollah Khamenei issued a fatwa declaring that the supreme leader's rule is a direct succession to the Prophet Mohammed and the Shiite imams.