

Iran Election Update

May 16, 2013

- Former Minister of Commerce under President Khatami, Mohammad Shariatmadari, has withdrawn in favor of former President Hashemi Rafsanjani. His spokesperson [said](#), "Mr. Hashemi is better suited for the presidency, which is why we have withdrawn."
- English news website PressTV [reports](#) Ayatollah Mohammad Mo'men, a member of the Guardian Council, said that the body might approve more than 10 candidates for the presidential election.
- Bahman Sharifzadeh, a cleric aligned with presidential candidate and close confidant of President Ahmadinejad, Esfandiar Rahim Mashaei, [described](#) Mashaei's campaign headquarters as "a modest building that is sparsely furnished with a chair and a rug."
- English news website PressTV [reports](#) that "Coalition of Five" candidate Mohammad Hassan Aboutorabi-Fard has promised not to withdraw from the presidential race if he is approved by the Guardian Council.
- Fars News [claims](#) that 70 percent of BBC Persian programming and discourse regarding the upcoming presidential election "serves the sedition and the deviants." "Sedition" is the term used by the Iranian government in labeling people associated with the 2009 post-election upheaval. "Deviants" is the term used by some in the Iranian government to describe President Ahmadinejad's political camp, which includes candidate Esfandiar Rahim Mashaei.
- Mansour Haghighatpour, member of the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission in parliament, [said](#), "Former President Hashemi Rafsanjani entering the presidential election will make the majority of the people want to participate in the elections and vote."
- BBC Persian [posted](#) a map showing the birthplaces of all of the final 49 presidential candidates and the six presidents of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as a chart highlighting the ratio of city population to presidential candidate.
- Meeting with a group of professors and students at the University of Tehran, former President Hashemi Rafsanjani [said](#), "It is my national and religious duty and obligation to understand the current situation and the problems the country faces," and "there is a lack of transparency in the media, and news has become distorted as a mixture of truth and lies."
- The Chairman of the Central Election Observation Council, Mahmoud Javad Koolivand, [said](#) that throughout the country over 300,000 people registered for city and local elections. Of those, 3,000 of the candidates have been disqualified by the Guardian Council and of those who have been disqualified, 2,810 have appealed the Guardian Council's decision. "This is about a 90% approval rating for the city and local elections," and "those who were disqualified were seen to be critics of Islam and the Velayat-e faqih (Islamic jurisprudence)."
- Senior cleric and Guardian Council member Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi joked about the possibility of a female presidential candidate by [saying](#), "Among the individuals who have registered, ten to twelve of them are female. One of them has said, 'If I become president, half of the cabinet will be composed of women and the other half will be gentlemen.'" He continued, "The law does not allow ladies to become president, now how has this individual determined a cabinet composition!"

By Hanif Zarrabi-Kashani



Additional Iran Election Updates are available [here](#).

Election date is June 14, 2013.