

HOW IRAN IS GOVERNED*

ELECTED INSTITUTIONS

UNELECTED INSTITUTIONS

ELECTORATE

All over 16 can vote.

PRESIDENT

Though elected for a four year term, the President has to be vetted by the Guardian Council and confirmed by the Supreme Leader.

THE CABINET

The Cabinet is chosen by the President, but ministers must be approved by Parliament. As the Supreme Leader is actively involved in defence, security, and foreign policy, ministers must be able to work with his office.

PARLIAMENT

The 290 MPs elected for four years are vetted by the Guardian Council, as is all the legislation they pass.

THE ASSEMBLY OF EXPERTS

This 86 member body is responsible for appointing the Supreme Leader if he dies or resigns, and to dismiss him if he proves incompetent. Members are elected every eight years, all candidates are vetted by the Guardian Council. They meet twice a year.

THE SUPREME LEADER

He is an agent of Shia Islam and holds supreme power on the basis that he can best interpret Islamic law. He appoints six members of the Guardian Council, all the members of the Expediency Council, the heads of the armed forces and judiciary, the Friday prayer leaders and the directors of TV and Radio.

ARMED FORCES

With at least half a million in active service in both the regular and revolutionary forces, and twenty million available if needed, Iran's armed forces are by far the largest in the Middle East. The Supreme Leader is the commander in chief.

HEAD OF JUDICIARY

Appointed by the Supreme Leader, the incumbent's role is to uphold revolutionary values through the judiciary. It is his courts that Christians find themselves in when arrested for practising their faith.

EXPEDIENCY COUNCIL

This small advisory body's role is to settle disputes between Parliament and the Guardian Council. All members are appointed by the Supreme Leader.

THE GUARDIAN COUNCIL

Made up of six theologians appointed by the Supreme Leader and six jurists nominated by the judiciary and approved by Parliament. The Guardian Council vets all presidential, parliamentary and Assembly of Expert candidates, and all legislation. Members serve for six years.

KEY:

-  Directly appointed
-  Appointed or approved
-  Vets candidates