

# HASSAN ROUHANI: IDEOLOGY AND POLICIES

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## Hassan Rouhani's Record in Office

Hassan Rouhani has emerged victorious with 57% of the vote in the May 2017 Iranian election, defeating his primary hardline challenger Ebrahim Raisi and the five other candidates permitted to run out of over 1600 applicants. Western media accounts of the Iranian election (See [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#) for a small sampling) have incorrectly sought to portray Rouhani as a “moderate” or “reformist,” and have erroneously concluded that his reelection will be a harbinger of domestic social reforms and a more conciliatory approach to foreign policy. These characterizations ignore the reality of Rouhani's true nature as a loyal servant of Iran's Islamic Revolution who is dedicated to the preservation of its repressive, theocratic regime. As such, Rouhani is an avid defender of Iran's most troublesome aspects, including its illicit nuclear and ballistic missile pursuits, dismal human rights record, and hegemonic regional agenda.

In the days immediately following his victory, Rouhani made a number of statements demonstrating that Iran is unlikely to chart a more moderate course during his second term. Although candidate Rouhani offered rare criticisms of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) during the campaign, in his May 21st victory speech, Rouhani displayed that he is fundamentally on board with the IRGC's hegemonic agenda, proclaiming, “We are proud of our armed forces, the Revolutionary Guards, the Basij and the security forces, we consider their strength as a guarantee for peace and stability in the region, the security and the well-being of our people.”

While Rouhani made a campaign promise that he would secure the lifting of all remaining non-nuclear sanctions still in place against Iran, he subsequently made clear that he has no interest in reining in Iran's malign regional activities, which remain the chief impediment to Iran's full reintegration into the global marketplace. On May 22, Rouhani defiantly vowed that, “American officials should know that whenever we need to technically test a [ballistic] missile, we will do so and will not wait for their permission.”

Rouhani's statements in support of the IRGC and advancing Iran's illicit ballistic missile program undermine the persistent claims that he is a “moderate” or “reformist.” Rouhani does not back the transformation of Iran into a more open and liberal society. At best, he is a pragmatist who offers rhetorical support for limited social and economic reforms as a safety valve to reduce public dissatisfaction with a regime that has materially failed to improve the lives of its citizenry. Rouhani's fundamental goal remains the preservation of Iran's oppressive regime based on the principles of Khomeinism – an ideology predicated upon absolute religious authority in government and the rejection of Western interference and influence.

Rouhani's cabinet picks further underscore how his second term will be a continuation of the illiberal status quo, rather than a harbinger of reform. Rouhani succumbed to pressure from conservatives and hard-liners and reportedly consulted heavily with Supreme Leader Khamenei in the formation of his cabinet, which the New York Times described as “a delicate mix of older technocrats, don't rock the boat moderates and even some hardliners.” Rouhani came under criticism from his reformist backers for initially excluding women and minorities completely from his 18-member ministerial cabinet, prompting him to belatedly name two women as vice-presidents.

Among Rouhani's more controversial cabinet selections are Justice Minister Alireza Avae and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi. The European Union levied

sanctions against Avaei for abuses during his tenure as head of Tehran's judiciary, alleging "he has been responsible for human rights violations, arbitrary arrests, denials of prisoners' rights and increase of executions." Avaei also is alleged by eyewitness accounts to have ordered the massacre of political prisoners, including juveniles, in Khuzestan province in 1988. Jahromi has come under fire for his previous role in Iran's feared intelligence ministry, and is alleged to have taken part in surveillance operations and harsh interrogations of dissidents during the regime's 2009 post-election crackdown. By his own admission, Jahromi boasts, "I wasn't responsible for surveillance, but rather I was in charge of the technical infrastructure for the surveillance industry, and I consider it an honor,"

The primary positive development from the election is that the Iranian people signaled their discontent with the regime by picking the most moderate option available to them. Rouhani's campaign rallies on several occasions featured subversive chants of support for the imprisoned leaders of Iran's dissident Green Movement, highlighting the pervasive levels of alienation by segments of the Iranian population. However, the Western media does a disservice to the democratic aspirations of the Iranian people chafing under a repressive regime by legitimating Rouhani as a representative of reform.

In actuality, Rouhani supports the Iranian regime's most egregious human rights abuses. Speaking on Iran's surging execution rate, which has progressively gotten worse during his first term, Rouhani defended the legitimacy of executions as the fulfillment of a "commandment of God or a law approved by the parliament that belongs to the people and we only execute it."

Rouhani's first term was marked by the further deterioration of Iran's human rights situation, the advancement of Iran's ballistic missile program, and increasing belligerence in Syria, Yemen, and throughout the Middle East. The international community must not be taken in by Rouhani's ruse of moderation, but must instead continue to push back against Iran's malign activities which are likely to only accelerate during his second term.

Update: On December 28, 2017, protests against the Rouhani administration's socioeconomic policies erupted in Mashad and quickly spread across the country, with many protestors soon demonstrating against Iran's revolutionary Islamist regime itself. The protests were ultimately quelled by Iranian authorities after over 3000 arrests were made and roughly two dozen protestors killed.

Rouhani himself offered some conciliatory language to protestors defending their rights to peacefully protest, but also threatened, "The nation will themselves respond to the rioters and lawbreakers... Our nation will deal with this minority who chant slogans against the law and people's wishes, and insult the sanctities and values of the revolution."

During his reelection campaign, Rouhani offered criticisms of the IRGC and hard-line establishment, expressed hope that circumstances would permit the release of political prisoners, and called for women and minorities to be elevated into managerial roles at the national level. Since his reelection, however, he has largely ignored the constituencies which put him in power and instead sought reconciliation with hardliners. Rouhani has praised the IRGC, installed a hardline cabinet devoid of minority representation, and ignored the plight of political prisoners.

The mass uprising demonstrated that Iranians clearly see through the image of Rouhani as a reformer. Slogans such as "Not Gaza, not Lebanon. My life only for Iran," demonstrated their

dissatisfaction with the Rouhani administration's backing of Iran's foreign policy adventurism while also failing to deliver on social and economic promises. Another refrain, "Reformists, hard-liners. The whole game is over" reflected the protestor's view of Rouhani as part and parcel of the revolutionary system that oppresses them.

The charts below are meant to hold President Rouhani to account for the disparity between promises he has made in office and Iran's actions to date. It is clear to see that Rouhani's pledges for moderation have been widely disregarded.

## Nuclear Program

If a country wanted, with the technical resources it has, to gain an atomic bomb, this deal would have been a very bad deal for it. Because the deal creates limitations from all sides to getting an atomic bomb. But if a country has been after peaceful technology from the beginning, then it has lost nothing. We wanted this incorrect accusation that Iran is after nuclear weapons corrected and resolved and that the goal of Iran is peaceful activity. In this deal, we have accepted limitations for a period of time in order to create more trust with the world. - September 20, 2015 interview with CBS "60 Minutes"

	YES	NO
Has Iran resolved " <u>the outstanding issues, including those related to possible military dimensions to Iran's nuclear program</u> " in order "to restore international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program?"		✓
Has Iran " <u>Acted strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Additional Protocol to its IAEA Safeguards Agreement that it signed on 18 December 2003</u> " and " <u>ratified promptly the Additional Protocol.</u> "		✓
Has Iran refrained from " <u>any activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using ballistic missile technology?</u> "		✓
Has Iran complied with " <u>the provisions of the modified Code 3.1 of the Subsidiary Arrangements General Part to Iran's Safeguards Agreement,</u> " which requires Iran to submit " <u>design information for new facilities as soon as the decision to construct, or to authorize construction of, a new facility has been taken, whichever is the earlier?</u> "		✓
Has Iran provided the IAEA full and direct access to the Parchin site, where intelligence indicates " <u>Iran constructed a large explosives containment vessel in which to conduct hydrodynamic experiments; such experiments would be strong indicators of possible nuclear development?</u> "		✓

Has Iran assented to “anytime, anywhere” IAEA inspections of sites, including military facilities, where nuclear-related activities are suspected to have taken place?		✓
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## Human Rights

“We want freedom of press, freedom of association, and freedom of thought” – May 9, 2017 at a campaign rally

Executions	2013	<u>913</u>
	2014	<u>964</u>
	2015	<u>1052</u>
	2016	<u>567</u>
Public executions	2013	<u>21</u>
	2014	<u>53</u>
	2015	<u>49+</u>
	2016	<u>33</u>
Political prisoners jailed in Iran		<u>666</u>
U.S. citizens detained in Iran		<u>4</u>
	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Has Iran cooperated with the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, and allowed her entry into the country?		✓
Has Iran ended Internet censorship and permitted access to blocked social media websites like Facebook and Twitter that regime officials themselves use?		✓
Has Iran released from house arrest Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi, the leaders of Iran’s opposition “Green Movement?”		✓
Has Iran ended the morality police's harassment of Iranian citizens and routine violations of Iranians' human rights?.		✓
End discrimination and harassment against Has Iran ended discrimination and harassment against persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities, particularly the Baha'i?		✓
Has Iran decriminalized consensual same-sex activity between adults?		✓

Has Iran abolished the death penalty for non-violent crimes such as “insulting the Prophet,” apostasy, same-sex relations, adultery, and drug-related offenses?		✓
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## Syria Conflict

“All should know that the Syrian issue has no military solution and must be resolved through diplomatic means,” – October 29, 2016 in a meeting with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini

	YES	NO
Has Iran continued to provide the ruthless Syrian regime, which has used chemical weapons against its own people, with extensive military and economic support in order to keep President Bashar al-Assad in power?	✓	
Has Iran employed Hezbollah terrorists and Shi’a militiamen from Iraq, the Gulf states, Afghanistan and Pakistan to bolster the Assad regime’s fighting forces, inflaming sectarian tensions?	✓	
Have Iran's government and IRGC-affiliated entities “ <u><a href="#">signed major economic contracts with Syria, reaping what appear to be lucrative rewards for helping President Bashar al-Assad regain control of parts of his country from rebels?</a></u> ”	✓	

See more at: <http://www.unitedagainstnucleariran.com/rouhani/record#sthash.OUAQjqb5.dpuf>