# Iran's Presidential Election Heads to Runoff Amidst Public Disillusionment and Divided Candidates



### Iran's Presidential Election to Enter Runoff Phase

**Date**: July 2, 2024

Iran's presidential election will proceed to a runoff on Friday after no candidate secured the majority required for an outright win in the first round held last week. The runoff follows the unexpected death of President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash this May.

**Candidates**: The two remaining contenders are Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian, a reformist and former health minister, and Saeed Jalili, an ultraconservative and former nuclear negotiator. Dr. Pezeshkian received significant support due to the split conservative vote in the initial round, with one conservative candidate receiving less than 1%.

**Voter Turnout**: The turnout in the first round was historically low, with only about 40% of eligible voters participating. This reflects growing public disillusionment with the electoral process and skepticism about any meaningful change.

**Key Issues**: Central issues dominating this election include the struggling Iranian economy, harsh international sanctions, and women's rights, including the contentious mandatory hijab law. Dr. Pezeshkian advocates for re-engagement with Western countries to lift economic sanctions, in contrast to Mr. Jalili's hardline stance promising to withstand sanctions and bolster ties with non-Western countries.

**Supreme Leadership Influence**: While Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, retains ultimate authority over foreign policy and the nuclear program, the elected president will significantly influence domestic policies and social issues.

**Public Sentiment**: Many Iranians, particularly young urban voters, express disillusionment with the political process, seeing both candidates as part of an inept and out-of-touch government. This sentiment is evident in record-low voter turnouts and public statements calling for an end to clerical rule.

**Runoff Dynamics**: Some supporters of eliminated conservative candidate Mohammad Baqer Ghalibaf have shifted allegiance to Dr. Pezeshkian to prevent a Jalili win. This could marginally increase turnout in the runoff.

**Election Legitimacy**: The Guardian Council, which oversees elections, has faced criticism for its stringent candidate disqualifications, exacerbating public skepticism.

**Future Prospects**: The election results are anticipated by Saturday, with the outcome set to impact Iran's direction regarding internal governance and international relations.

This runoff is a significant event for Iran, potentially marking a pivotal moment in its socio-political landscape amidst ongoing domestic and international challenges.