Iranians' Turnout in the 2024 Elections

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The Group For Analyzing and Measuring Attitudes in IRAN (GAMAAN)

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

GAMAAN is grateful to the Psiphon team for their voluntary assistance in disseminating this survey. We extend our gratitude also to all colleagues and volunteers who assisted us in one way or another.

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SURVEY SUMMARY

- The survey “Iranians’ Turnout in the 2024 Elections” was conducted over 24 hours on February 28th, 2024 (two days before the election day). The results of this report are based on a balanced sample, including 28,578 respondents from inside Iran. The findings of this report reflect the views of literate individuals over 19 years old residing in Iran (equivalent to 90% of the adult population of Iran) and can be generalized to this target population with a 95% credibility level and credibility intervals of 5%.

- The results of this survey show that two days before the elections, about 74% do not want to participate in the parliamentary elections, and 75% do not intend to participate in the Assembly of Experts election; about 16% intend to participate in these two elections and vote for the vetted candidates; about 2% also intend to cast blank (or invalid) votes into the ballot boxes. Additionally, about 8% are still undecided about participating in the parliamentary elections, and 7% are undecided about participating in the Assembly of Experts election.

- Those who do not want to vote or are still undecided were asked, “If you will not vote in the elections, what is the ‘main reason’ for your abstention?” 59% stated “opposition to the overall system of the Islamic Republic” as their reason for not voting; also, 20% “the lack of free and effective elections in the Islamic Republic,” 14% “to protest against the poor performance of the previous parliament,” and just over 1% “the disqualification of my preferred candidates in these elections” were mentioned as the reasons for not participating in the elections.

- Those who want to vote or are still undecided were asked, “If you do vote in the elections, what is your ‘main motivation’ for voting?” 58% stated “electing competent representatives, supporting the Islamic Republic and the Supreme Leader, and disappointing the enemies” as their motivation for voting; also, for 22% “political participation, exercising the right to vote, and preserving the republican element of the Islamic Republic” were identified as their primary motivation for voting. On the other hand, 13% stated they vote “out of compulsion” or “to have a stamp on my ID card.”

- Considering that the target population of GAMAAN’s surveys only includes literate individuals (i.e., about 90% of the adult population) and considering that voter turnout is usually slightly higher among illiterate individuals than the average population, it can be estimated that voter turnout will be between 25% to 30%.

SECTION ONE: KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

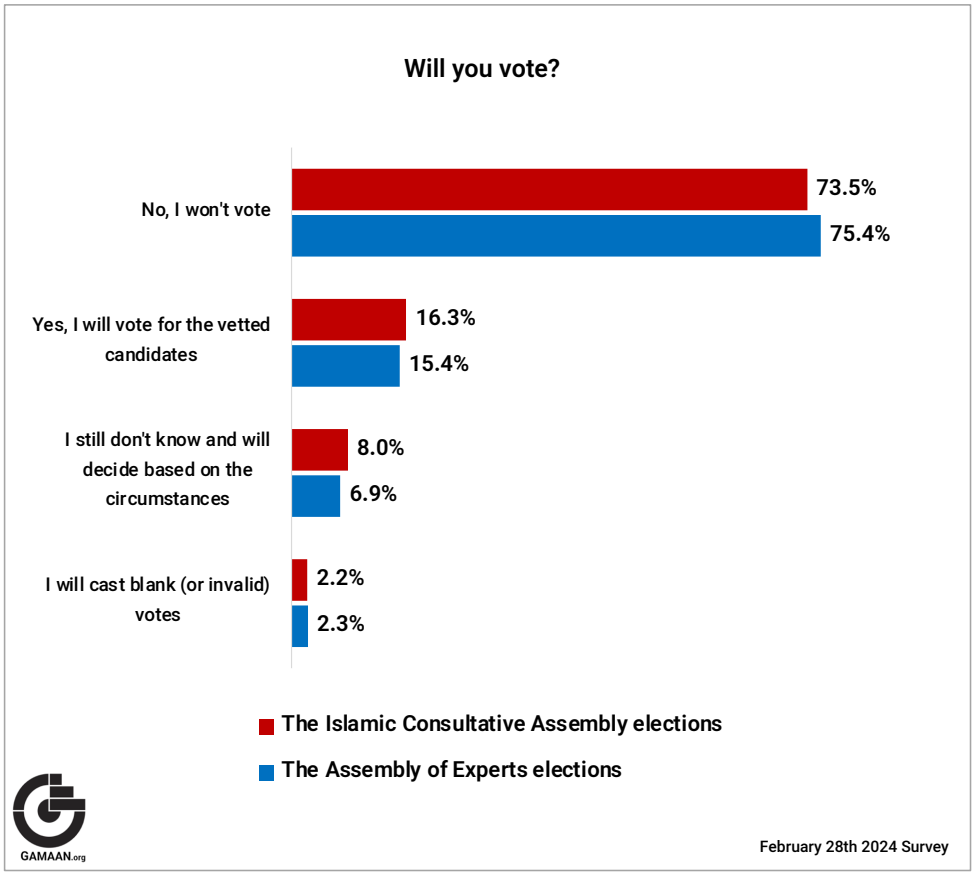
In this report, all results and tables are calculated based on the weighted sample of respondents within the country. The target population was the literate population above 19 years old (approximately 90% of the adult population in Iran). Complete information on the methodology and sample specifications is provided in Section Two.

1-1 Plausible Turnouts in the Islamic Consultative Assembly elections and the Assembly of Experts elections

In this survey, conducted two days before the 2024 elections day, respondents were asked in two separate questions whether they would vote in this year's Islamic Consultative Assembly elections and the Assembly of Experts elections.

The results of this survey (Figure 1) show that two days before the elections, about 74% do not want to participate in the parliamentary elections, and 75% do not intend to participate in the Assembly of Experts election; about 16% intend to participate in these two elections and vote for the vetted candidates. About 2% also intend to cast blank (or invalid) votes into the ballot boxes. Additionally, about 8% are still undecided about participating in the parliamentary elections, and 7% are undecided about participating in the Assembly of Experts election.

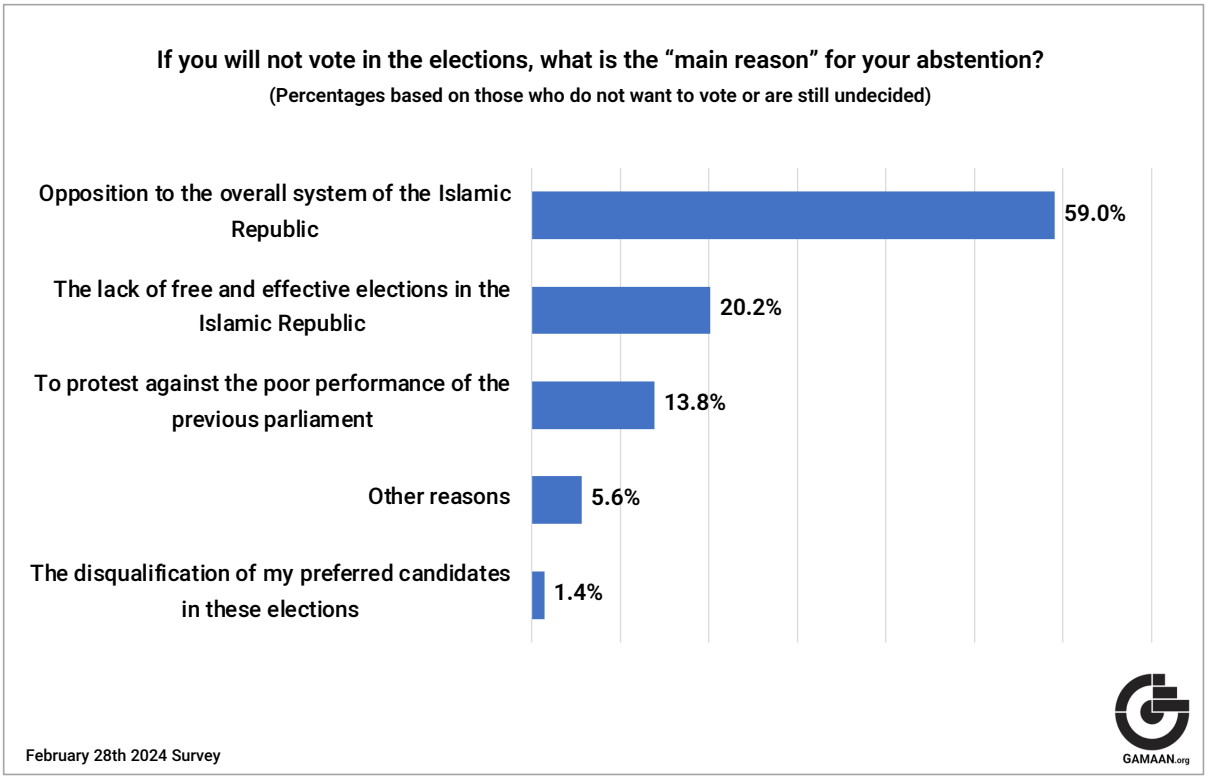
Figure 1



1-2 Reasons for Abstention

In this survey, those who do not want to vote or are still undecided were asked, “If you will not vote in the elections, what is the ‘main motivation’ for your abstention?” 59% stated “opposition to the overall system of the Islamic Republic” as their reason for not voting; also, 20% “the lack of free and effective elections in the Islamic Republic,” 14% “To protest against the poor performance of the previous parliament,” and just over 1% “the disqualification of my preferred candidates in these elections” were mentioned as the reasons for not participating in the elections.

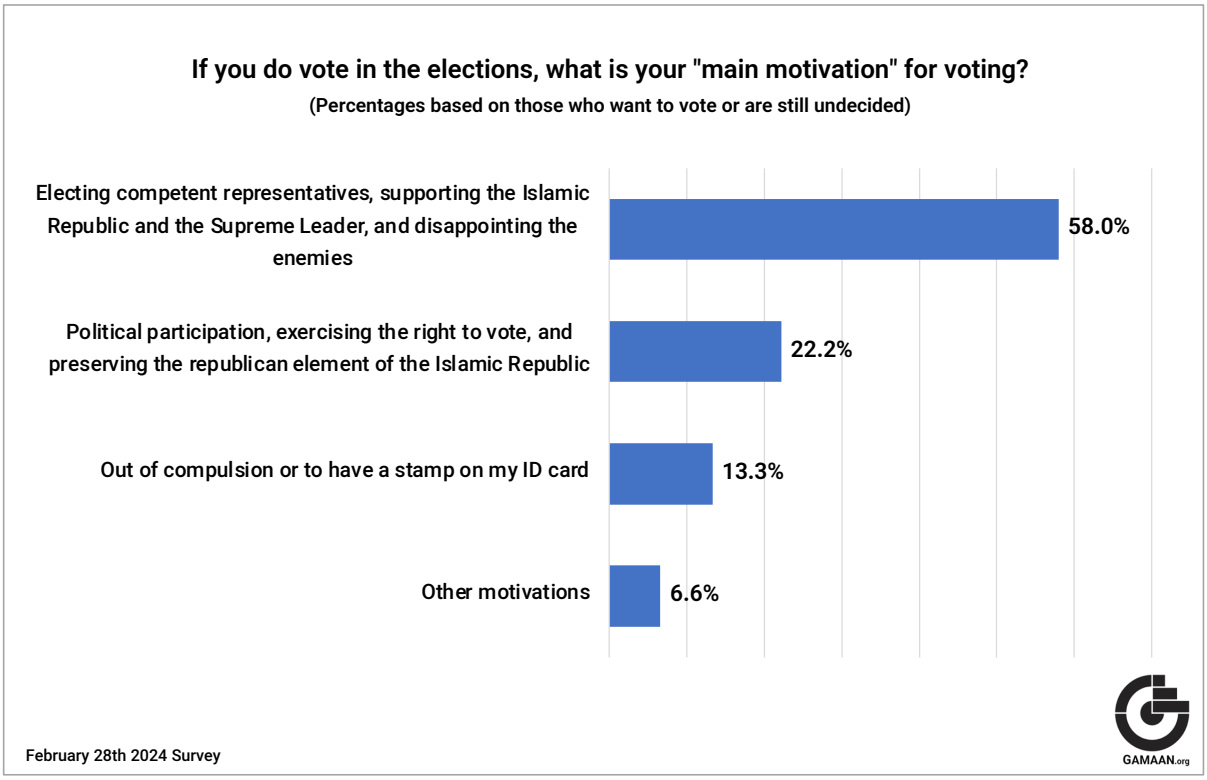
Figure 2



1-3 Motivations for Voting

In this survey, those who want to vote or are still undecided were asked, “If you do vote in the elections, what is your ‘main motivation’ for voting?” 58% stated “electing competent representatives, supporting the Islamic Republic and the Supreme Leader, and disappointing the enemies” as their motivation for voting; also, 22% “political participation, exercising the right to vote, and preserving the republican element of the Islamic Republic” were identified as their primary motivation for voting. On the other hand, 13% stated they vote “out of compulsion” or “to have a stamp on my ID card.”

Figure 3



SECTION TWO: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2-1 Sampling Method

The survey "Iranians' Turnout in the 2024 Elections" was conducted over 24 hours by the Group for Analyzing and Measuring Attitudes in Iran (GAMAAN) on February 28th (two days before the election day). This survey was carried out online, utilizing a specialized and secure platform for sampling.

GAMAAN has employed innovative methods to systematically and scientifically measure and record viewpoints and opinions that, due to the nature of authoritarian regimes, cannot be openly questioned or measured using conventional survey methods.

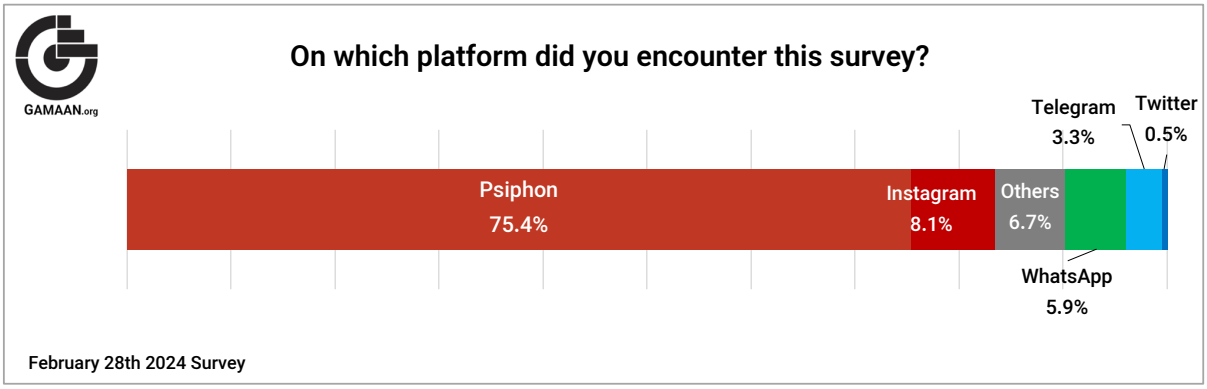
The online questionnaire reached diverse demographic groups across Iran through random sampling via the popular Internet censorship circumvention platform Psiphon VPN, as well as ensuing sharing by respondents on social networks (Telegram, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter).

According to the latest statistics from the International Telecommunication Union, about 82% of Iran's population are internet users, and research within Iran indicates that 80% of these internet users utilize Internet censorship circumvention tools. Between 5 to 11 million people in Iran use Psiphon on daily basis. Distributing the survey through random sampling among users connected to Psiphon mitigated network bias (i.e., the likelihood of participants sharing similar views with the organizers).

Moreover, the International Telecommunication Union data shows that only about 55% Iranian households have a landline telephone. This means that random sampling via the internet and internet censorship circumvention tools can cover a broader segment of society than telephone surveys can (through landlines).

Figure 4 shows the distribution of respondents' access to the survey questionnaire. One survey question revealed that only 23% of respondents had previously participated in GAMAAN's surveys, indicating that the random sampling method was effective in distributing the questionnaire among a wide range of demographic groups, reaching far beyond networks familiar with GAMAAN.

Figure 4



2-2 Questionnaire and Sample Characteristics

In this survey, in addition to the main questions, respondents were asked about their demographic characteristics (gender, age group, level of education, province of residence, urban or rural area, employment status, household income level, spoken language at home, type of health insurance); respondents were also asked about their political orientation and past electoral behavior. Since respondents participated in the survey anonymously without questions about personal characteristics, it is estimated that they felt more secure in expressing their genuine opinions.

Over 30,000 respondents from inside and outside the country fully completed the survey questionnaire. Given the distribution of the questionnaire through a circumvention platform that only targeted users inside Iran and based on what respondents have stated about their place of residence, 99% of the respondents were residents of Iran. Iranians inside the country from all 31 provinces and from urban and rural areas participated in this survey (Table 5).

2-3 Sample Refinement

A question was placed to identify random or bot-entered responses. Incorrect responses to this question, as well as contradictory cases were removed from the refined sample (such as those who stated they were not of voting age in 2017 or 2021 but mentioned their age group as over 30 years, or those who said they were not of voting age in 2021 but had voted in 2017). After the refinements, **the final sample size from inside Iran was 28,578 respondents**. In this report, the term “raw sample” refers to the refined sample from within the country. Considering the standard age groups in publicly available census characteristics and statistical data, the final sample used in this analysis only includes respondents above 19 years old.

2-4 Extracting a Representative Sample

Online survey samples usually do not fully match the demographic characteristics of the target population; therefore, various balancing methods such as weighting and the

sample matching method are used to balance the raw sample and align it with the main characteristics of the target population. The target population for this survey are literate individuals above 19 years old residing in Iran (those who have the ability to use the internet and read survey questions, covering 90% of the adult population of Iran). In this research, the raking weighting method was used to extract a representative sample from the raw sample. According the Pew Research Center, this weighting method, considering appropriate demographic variables, is one of the most effective and reliable methods for balancing online survey samples.

To convert the raw sample of respondents within the country into a representative sample of the target population, the raking method was used based on five demographic variables: age group, gender, level of education, residential area (urban or rural), and provincial population.

Also, upon examining the responses to the question about the political orientation of respondents, it was determined that in the sample of this survey, the percentage of those who support "the principles of the Islamic Revolution and the Supreme Leader" was slightly higher than the social base of this group (about 11%) based on the results of previous GAMAAN surveys and also recent surveys by other institutions. This could be due to their greater motivation to participate in elections and related surveys. Therefore, the variable of political orientations was also considered for weighting to ensure that the social base of different political orientations in the final sample was balanced.

Given that the sampling method using a circumvention platform is similar to random sampling, this survey's raw sample had a balanced distribution and high quality. After the weighting calculations, the **effective sample size was 8,198**, a very high sample size for a 95% credibility level and a 5% credibility interval. The sample weighting calculations were performed using a specialized tool of the Dutch company Sample Weighting. To determine the most up-to-date demographic characteristics of the Iranian population, GAMAAN relied on the 2022 Labor Force Survey.

2-5 Sample Demographics

The tables below depict the distribution of population variables in the raw survey sample, the weighted sample, and the target population. It can be observed that the demographic characteristics of the weighted sample closely match those of the target population.

Table 1: Sex Distribution

Sex	**Refined sample (number of samples)**	**Weighted sample**	**Literate population above 19 years old (work force statistics 2022)**
Female	22.1%	47.9%	47.9%
Male	77.9%	52.1%	52.1%

Table 2: Rural/Urban Distribution

Region	**Refined sample (number of samples)**	**Weighted sample**	**Literate population above 19 years old (work force statistics 2022)**
Rural Areas	7.1%	19.7%	19.7%
Urban Areas	92.9%	80.3%	80.3%

Table 3: Age Group Distribution

Age groups	**Refined sample (number of samples)**	**Weighted sample**	**Literate population above 19 years old (work force statistics 2022)**
Between 20 and 29 years old	5.0%	19.9%	19.9%
Between 30 and 49 years old	57.1%	53.9%	53.9%
At least 50 years old	37.9%	26.2%	26.2%

Table 4: Education Level Distribution

Education level	**Refined sample (number of samples)**	**Weighted sample**	**Literate population above 19 years old (work force statistics 2022)**
Non-university educated	33.8%	72.3%	72.3%
University educated	66.2%	27.7%	27.7%

Table 5: Province Distribution

Province of residence	**Refined sample (number of samples)**	**Weighted sample**	**Literate population above 19 years old (work force statistics 2022)**
East Azerbaijan	5.0%	4.8%	4.8%
West Azerbaijan	2.3%	3.7%	3.7%
Ardabil	1.2%	1.4%	1.4%
Isfahan	10.5%	6.9%	6.9%
Alborz	4.3%	3.8%	3.8%
Ilam	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%
Bushehr	1.2%	1.4%	1.4%
Tehran	23.6%	18.7%	18.7%
Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari	1.4%	1.1%	1.1%
South Khorasan	1.2%	0.9%	0.9%
Razavi Khorasan	7.2%	8.0%	8.0%
North Khorasan	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%
Khuzestan	3.0%	5.5%	5.5%
Zanjan	1.0%	1.3%	1.3%
Semnan	0.6%	1.0%	1.0%
Sistan and Baluchistan	0.8%	2.4%	2.4%
Fars	9.8%	6.2%	6.2%
Qazvin	0.9%	1.6%	1.6%
Qom	1.1%	1.6%	1.6%
Kurdistan	2.2%	1.8%	1.8%
Kerman	2.2%	3.9%	3.9%
Kermanshah	2.4%	2.3%	2.3%
Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad	0.9%	0.8%	0.8%
Golestan	2.2%	2.1%	2.1%
Gilan	3.1%	3.4%	3.4%
Lorestan	2.3%	2.0%	2.0%
Mazandaran	2.7%	4.5%	4.5%
Markazi	1.6%	1.8%	1.8%
Hormozgan	1.2%	2.1%	2.1%
Hamadan	1.3%	2.0%	2.0%
Yazd	1.4%	1.5%	1.5%

In this survey, unlike GAMAAN's previous surveys, the variable of the 2017 election behavior was not used to weight the final sample. This was because, due to the passage of time, many respondents claimed not to remember their election behavior from six years ago. Additionally, many young respondents did not have voting rights during that election. On the other hand, the use of random sampling methods through

the VPN platform ensured that the raw survey sample included a balanced distribution of respondents with various political orientations in society. To test this claim, it is possible to examine responses to a question about respondents' political orientation. It was determined that those who support "the principles of the Islamic Revolution and the Supreme Leader" (known as Principlists or conservatives) constitute 11% of the weighted sample, which is consistent with the social base of this group based on the results of previous GAMAAN surveys and recent surveys by other institutions.

2-6 Reliability Checks

2-6-1 Comparison of Economic and Social Statistics

One of the methods that can be used to assess the credibility and representativeness of the weighted sample is to compare the results of the weighted sample with external evidence. Table 6 displays the employment status of individuals in the weighted sample compared to the target population at two levels, urban and rural, for the literate population above 19 years old, based on the annual labor force report. As can be observed, the national employment ratio for the weighted sample is consistent with the target population.

Table 6: Employment Status

Employment status	**Refined sample**	**Weighted sample**	**Workforce statistics (literate individuals above 19 years old; 2022)**
Whole country	52.5%	38.7%	42.2%
Urban areas	53.4%	39.4%	40.8%
Rural areas	40.4%	35.7%	47.8%

In this survey, participants were also asked about their household income status to compare the distribution of economic status in the sample with the target population. Table 7 illustrates the distribution of household income status. According to the definition, ten percent of households in the country are placed in each decile. As can be seen, the distribution of household income status for three groups, low income (comprising the first three deciles), medium income (comprising the middle three deciles), and high income (comprising the top four deciles) in the weighted sample aligns with the recent official statistics on household income levels in society.

Table 7: Household Income Distribution in Iran (official exchange rate, 1 USD = 285,000 Rials)

Income level of different deciles according to the Statistical Center of Iran in 2023	**Refined sample**	**Weighted sample**	**Distribution in society**
First three lower deciles (household monthly income below 70 million Rials)	19%	32.1%	30%
Middle three deciles (household monthly income between 70 and 130 million Rials)	39.2%	42.8%	30%
Upper four deciles (household monthly income above 130 million Rials)	41.8%	25.1%	40%

In this survey, participants were also asked about the language spoken at home. As shown in Table 8, the distribution of spoken languages in the weighted sample closely matches the statistics provided by Ethnologue encyclopedia for Iran.

Table 8: Home Language Distribution in Iran

What language do you normally speak at home?	**Refined sample**	**Weighted sample**	**Ethnologue statistics (2021, 24th ed.)**
Farsi	72.0%	66.5%	60.1%
Azerbaijani/Turkic	10.6%	11.9%	12.9%
Kurdish	5.6%	5.8%	5.7%
Luri	4.4%	5.0%	4.8%
Baluchi	0.5%	1.3%	1.4%
Gilaki	1.5%	1.9%	2.9%
Mazandarani	0.9%	1.4%	2.7%
Arabic	0.8%	0.9%	1.8%
Laki	0.8%	0.9%	1.4%
Qashqai	0.5%	0.4%	1.1%
Turkmeni	0.4%	0.5%	0.9%
Dari (Afghan Persian)	0.1%	0.3%	0.4%
Tati	0.3%	0.4%	0.6%
Lari	0.3%	0.4%	0.1%
Armeni	0.05%	0.1%	0.1%
Other	1.5%	2.2%	3.1%

The distribution of the type of health insurance of respondents is another external evidence used for the validation of the weighted sample. In this survey, participants were asked about the type of health insurance they have. This question was also asked through a telephone survey by ISPA in March 2022. Since the type of insurance coverage of individuals is considered a non-sensitive question, a comparison with the results can serve as a criterion for validating the weighted sample. As seen in Table 9, the distribution of health insurance coverage in the weighted sample closely aligns with the statistics provided by the ISPA survey.

Table 9: Health Care Insurance Types in Iran

Which health care insurance do you currently have?	**Refined sample**	**Weighted sample**	**ISPA Survey 2022 (March)**
Social Security Organization	52.0%	48.2%	50.7%
Iran Health Insurance Organization	9.7%	10.8%	7.2%
Salamat	14.6%	9.7%	7.8%
Roostaa	2.7%	6.8%	9.8%
Armed Forces Insurance	3.1%	2.9%	3.4%
Other insurance	1.7%	1.5%	2.9%
I am not insured	16.1%	19.1%	17.6%

2-6-2 Validation Using the World Values Survey (WVS)

The World Values Survey (WVS) conducted a survey in Iran using face-to-face interviews in the spring of 2020. In the Iranians' Turnout in the 2024 Elections survey, some questions from the WVS survey were included alongside other questions to compare the results of the two surveys. To this end, a set of non-sensitive questions, alongside one sensitive question, were asked to compare the results of the two surveys.

Table 10: "Importance in Life" in WVS (spring 2020) and GAMAAN (February 28th 2024) Surveys

For each of the following aspects, indicate how important it is in your life.		**Very important**	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**	**Do not Know**
Family	WVS	93.9%	5.2%	0.8%	0.1%	0%
	GAMAAN (weighted)	94.2%	3.9%	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%
Friends	WVS	28.6%	54.4%	11.2%	5.7%	0%
	GAMAAN (weighted)	31.2%	51.4%	12.6%	3.6%	1.1%
Work	WVS	78.0%	18.6%	1.9%	1.3%	0.2%
	GAMAAN (weighted)	86.0%	9.3%	1.5%	1.3%	1.9%
Religion	WVS	69.4%	22.8%	3.5%	4.2%	0.1%
	GAMAAN (weighted)	30.0%	18.6%	16.3%	32.1%	2.9%

As seen in Table 10, the overall importance ratings of non-sensitive topics (family, friends, and work) in both surveys show minor differences, while regarding a sensitive topic, religion, in the political and social context of Iran, the responses in the two surveys are entirely different.

This comparative analysis corroborates the hypothesis that measuring people's real opinions regarding sensitive questions faces serious challenges if based on common survey modes like telephone and face-to-face interviews.

With the confirmation of multiple validation tests, the weighted sample can be considered representative of the target population (literate individuals above 19 years old), and the results obtained from it can be generalized to the majority of the Iranian target population (about 90% of the adult population of the country) with a 95% credibility level and a 5% credibility interval.

We at the non-profit research foundation GAMAAN would like to express our sincere gratitude to all of those who took the time to contribute to this survey.

We are professionally committed to sparing no effort in collecting the opinions and attitudes of Iranians from all levels of society and all walks of life. GAMAAN commits itself to ethical guidelines with regard to protecting respondents' submitted data and strives to employ scientific methods in extracting representative samples. We pledge to be transparent to the public and in explaining probable error levels.

Our team gladly receives any comments, suggestions, and criticisms. Scientists and scholars working at universities and research institutes can collaborate with us and request survey data, which can be granted upon agreement with GAMAAN's terms.

GAMAAN can be reached at info@gamaan.org.

ABOUT GAMAAN

GAMAAN, the Group for Analyzing and Measuring Attitudes in Iran, is an independent, non-profit research foundation registered in the Netherlands. We study Iranians' attitudes towards different social and political topics.

GAMAAN conducts online surveys to extract the (real) opinions of Iranians about sensitive topics. The rationale for GAMAAN's innovative approach, spreading surveys on a large variety of digital channels and collaborating with VPN-platforms, is the fact that conventional survey modes like face-to-face and telephone interviewing cannot yield valid results in the existing Iranian context. To obtain representative samples, we use matching and weighting methods; we then compare our results with external data and other survey institutes' results for non-sensitive questions. In this way, we strive to understand the extent to which our results can be said to be representative.

GAMAAN's findings have been cited and discussed in many international outlets, including The Economist, The Wall Street Journal, The Guardian, The Conversation, Deutsche Welle, New York Magazine, and Newsweek, and have been widely covered by Persian media. In 2022, GAMAAN was awarded the Market Research Society's President's Medal in London for making an "extraordinary contribution to research."

GAMAAN operates under the supervision of a board including Dr. Ammar Maleki (founder and director), an assistant professor of comparative politics at Tilburg University, and Dr. Pooyan Tamimi Arab, an assistant professor of religious studies at Utrecht University.