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Family, Religion, and Politics Their Role and Impact on the Iranian Political System

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“**B**rothers Larijani live like gods while we cannot afford bread”. This slogan was an accurate reflection of popular rage in the demonstrations that erupted in Iran in December 2017. The protestors showed their dissatisfaction with some families, given their monopoly over power in Iran for decades. Most of the participants in these demonstrations did not live at the time when Iranians rebelled against Shah in 1979, but they were completely convinced that their living conditions were the same as same forty years ago. They believed that the only difference between both regimes was the transition that had taken place from the Shah and his tyranny to the theocratic system of the Supreme Leader and his followers.

By studying its history, geography, cultural heritage, and civilization, Iran is part of the traditional Middle Eastern political culture where the family, tribe, and race share power and impact the political system and form of government. However, this is more notable in Iran than in other countries with similar traditional political cultures. Some families in Iran have absolute political power in contrast with the claims of the Iranian ruling elite who pretend sincerity and love for democracy and try to give the political system a civilized picture. The dominant political role of some families in Iran is reflective of the high level of corruption and the low level of development, which has increased poverty and damaged living conditions. This has consolidated the regimes absolute power and supported its expansionist sectarian project to boost its internal legitimacy. This expansionist tendency has impacted the role of Iran regionally and internationally through the imposition of sanctions and its isolation by the international community, resulting in the Iranian people being deprived from their own wealth and opportunities for development. As a result, the Iranian people went to the streets at the end of 2017 and called for regime to be toppled, along with its prominent figures. This is evidence of the failure of the Iranian regime to build a political system that meets the aspirations of all Iranians and a decline in legitimacy of its key political figures. Since the 1979 revolution, Iran's politics witnessed several families that took over several influential positions in the structure of the Iranian regime. The members of these families played major roles in all spheres of power like Khomeini, Khamenei, Rafsanjani, Khatami, Larijani, Araqchi, and others. The political role of the family has been widely questioned by many advanced and developing countries because of its impact on the nature of rule, the future of the concerned countries, and the welfare of the people. In fact, the political role of the family is not a problem unless it turns into minority rule with broad political powers that damages and limits the effectiveness of the regime. Since the emergence of the role of the family in Iran's politics many reflections on the regime's effectiveness have taken place. Basically, any political regime has to be effective by ensuring the supremacy of law, political participation, transparency, honesty, equality, liability, accountability, control, and independence. However, the Iranian experience has resulted in a negative impact of the role of the family on these characteristics that make a regime effective. This study handles the political role of the family in Iran by discussing the following points: the factors behind the rise of the role of the family and its nature within the political system, its relationship to the regime's vitality and efficiency, and how promotions and internal political activities gave ground for this role.

Factors behind the rise of the political role of the family in Iran

Many historical, political, social, and cultural factors played a major role in the involvement of several families in Iran's politics. After the 1979 revolution, Iran witnessed significant political changes, giving ground for strengthening the role of

the family and its diversity because of the following factors:

» **The regime's problem in the relationship of the Supreme Leader to authority**

The Iranian regime derived its legitimacy from the theocratic principle, the Supreme Leadership- the benchmark for the Iranian regime's rule. This theory has given Iran's regime a state of complexity and entanglement through the availability of parallel authorities and institutions to the official ones. This has created confusion in building and delegating power while legitimacy is mixed between what is religious and what is political.⁽¹⁾ Iran's political system has made the Supreme Leader the center of the Iranian regime, its director, and He is all over its interactions. He has become the actual director of power by restricting senior officials in the regime's actual and pro forma institutions. After denying political participation to rivals and opponents, the Iranian regime has become limited to those who believe in the Supreme Leadership in line with the Khomeini perspective, giving ground for the rise of the role of the family in Iran's politics in an unprecedented way, relying on traditional ideological standards in selecting the ruling elite and their subordinates. Indeed, the family has become one of the main streams of the regime, its subordinate and supporter.

» **Traditional political culture**

The Iranian political culture opened the door wide for the family, with its extended links, to play a major role in the Iranian regime's economic and political structure. The family in Iran gained its political and economic status by appointing its members in vital positions in the country to guarantee its status. Before the 1979 revolution, the upper class in Iran had control of power and wealth. To preserve their status and gains, wealthy and politically influential families rushed to take part in the structure of the new Iranian regime after the revolution and built various complicated mutual family relations that resulted in their continuity and control of the vital political and economic centers of power for several generations. For example, before the revolution, some senators- the political elite - had been members of the boards of directors of several trade and economic organizations and were big land owners.⁽²⁾

Iranian political history reflects the role of the family in power. The Safavids ruled Iran from 1501 until 1773 and thirteen kings succeeded each other to the throne.⁽³⁾ After that, from 1779-1925 seven Qajari kings inherited the throne in Iran following the fall of Safavid dynasty until the succession of the Pahlavi family from 1925 until the 1979 revolution and the establishment of the theocratic state. Indeed, this extended political culture- like a constitutional monarchy- has played a major role in consolidating the political and social role of the family in Iran by giving it legitimacy. The Iranian people believe in the role of successful members in the family to assist their relatives in having good governmental positions. They see this form of cronyism as a duty, not a type of corruption. In addition,

prominent figures in Iran believe the family is part of their rank and that the person without a strong and extended family has no high rank in society.

» **Absence of institutionalism and the expansion of cronyism**

As one of its main principles, the Iranian revolution denied the caste system but could not change it. On the contrary, it has been strengthened as each family had senior officials in Tehran and in the provinces to support this kind of cronyism and kinship solidarity. The relatives of the new ruling elite in Iran- clerics, politicians, and officials have, by time, spread in the different institutions- especially the military which hires only personnel loyal to the new leaders of Iran.⁽⁴⁾ After the Iranian revolution, a generation of young people between 25-35 years old from the followers of the Supreme Leader were given positions in management and ministries. Later, this young generation was promoted to the top positions in governmental institutions, ministries, and the parliament. They appointed their trustworthy people as their subordinates.⁽⁵⁾ For example, Hussein Montazeri, the Supreme Leadership theorist and second man after Khomeini, before cutting ties with the regime, appointed most of his subordinates from his own town, Najaf Abad in the Esfahan province. Indeed, most appointments in senior positions were personal and subjective rather than institutional and objective. Many officials assumed responsibility in Iran only because they were sons of well-known religious leaders or followers of Hawza (Iran's religious authority).⁽⁶⁾ After the revolution, the nature of the regime and its religious tendency encouraged inbreeding, formerly it was unusual for marriage to take place between the religious and the secular elite. Affinity increased amongst politicians and prominent clerics who know each other well inside Iran's closed society where ties of ideology and kinship were combined to create a strong base to support the regime until today.⁽⁷⁾

» **Absence of a modern national project in favor of the traditional social and political components**

Identity and affiliation still impact Iranian politics even forty years after the fall of the Shah. In fact, the revolution did not establish a modern constitutional state, but a theocratic form of rule. Iran's regime does not believe in limited borders but in an empirical project to expand and include all Shiite territories outside Iran, along with helping the oppressed people of the world. Accordingly, Iran has deprived many of its people all rights of citizenship and ignored them. Also, it defined one segment of the Iranian people to succeed to power and assume responsibility while many others have been deprived of this right, which has resulted in this regime having a sectarian rather than a national character. In fact, the Iranian constitution and its laws maintain the interests of a certain ethnicity and sect. The Iranian project reflects expansionist ambitions, but, at the same time, dwarfs the state and deprives some of its components integrity and

coexistence. No doubt, this reality has consolidated the status of the primary form of affiliation like tribe and family and made them essential pillars of Iran's politics and economics with prominent roles in public life. The modernization conducted in the twentieth century in Iran until the eruption of the 1979 revolution was accompanied by the emergence of new, other than the traditional elites and castes, social classes like well-educated people and workers. However, the majority of Iranians remained living under the umbrella of the traditional regime that strengthened its existence by adopting the guardianship and patriarchal form of rule in the name of religion to gain the support of certain social segments,⁽⁸⁾ which paved the way for families to emerge and take a role in Iran's politics.

» **Consolidating religious and political patriarchy**

Despite modernization aspirations that accompanied the Iranian revolution, the state kept its patriarchal nature with more personalization of authority within a limited sphere. Under the Shah, the Iranian regime revolved around the Pahlavi family after it had been controlled by the Qajaris. In 1979 and after, the Iranian regime received legitimacy from the Supreme Leadership theory which turned this regime into a religious/patriarchal model resulting in arbitrary rule and dictatorship. The Iranian regime consists of duplicate and contradictory entities and institutions where one has power under the supervision of the Supreme Leader while the other parallel institutions give an impression of a balanced political system, but, in reality, the regime is inefficient with many deficiencies.⁽⁹⁾

The patriarchal nature of the Iranian regime has played a major role in consolidating the importance of kinship and family relations as key determinants in selecting political subordinates, knowing that the Iranian regime has given clerics absolute power over public affairs and the appointment of officials based on no specific rules or criteria. The nature of the social/religious relations between Shiites and their jurists provided the new regime with trustworthy officials in light of the close relationship between the jurists and their followers because, in the Shiite ideology, jurists have sacred status and obeying them is a form of worship, which has given them spiritual, political, social, and financial authorities over their followers.⁽¹⁰⁾ This form of traditional relations has served the Iranian regime. The role and influence of traditional ties and relations of dependency like family and affinity have increased elite formation and building loyalty to the regime—especially with the succession of the first revolutionary generation to power and the establishment of their political system in its new structure and ideology.

» **Adopting loyalty standard in political recruitment**

Considering patriarchy that dominates the religious, social, and political arenas in Iran, the loyalty standard has been adopted as the base for promotion inside the regime. After the revolution, religious status has become the determinant of the social class of an individual rather than wealth while ideological commitment

and family ties played a major role in forming the administrative backbone of the new regime. Indeed, these two factors were the basic standards for selecting and appointing administrative staff and enlisting personnel in the revolutionary security institutions in Iran.⁽¹¹⁾ Accordingly, the concept of *Khoudi* and *non-khoudi* (with us or against us) appeared as a main determinant for political promotion,⁽¹²⁾ which explains why the regime went after some revolutionary figures and thinkers like *Shariatmadari*, *Hussein Montazeri*, *Mohammad Mahdi Shirazi*, and others when they criticized the regime's leaders or differed with them.⁽¹³⁾ On the other hand, those who were committed to the "line of the Imam" and swore allegiance to the regime leaders were privileged and promoted. Certainly, all individuals who succeeded to power in Iran after the 1979 revolution belong to the new current that believe in the Iranian jurisprudence (*Marja'yya*) and its theorists.⁽¹⁴⁾ At the early beginning of the revolution, *Khomeini* relied on trustworthy people in his team as stated by *Rafsanjani* in his diaries when he said, "The structure of the revolutionary *Shura Council* comprised of trustworthy people by the Imam and people."⁽¹⁵⁾ Indeed, this is evidence that succession to political positions in Iran became linked to definite loyalty of individuals. The nature of the ideological regime in light of the absence of disciplined institutions and standards for promotion and movement inside the Iranian regime relied on family relations- the regime's trust- as one source of selecting staff and leaders in all state's positions. The struggle for power, the expansion of violence and political assassinations encouraged the new leaders of Iran to hire members of their families for personal protection and guarantee of loyalty, which paved the way for families to take a big part in the Iranian political system until today.

» **The suffocation of politics and the absence of intermediary political institutions**

The absence of real competition- the standard for selecting and promoting individuals for political positions- and the suffocation of politics by the Iranian regime, the environment has become inappropriate for the existence of effective intermediary political institutions like parties, unions, and civil society institutions. For example, partisan life is in real crisis and no party can survive in Iran because they are exposed to division or elimination. Parties in Iran suffer from dependency, internal oppression, seasonal activities, absence of programs and weak regulatory laws. While unions and the other intermediary political and social institutions were never better than parties; a situation which has led to the suffocation of politics and made political promotion closed to individuals and currents.⁽¹⁶⁾ There are two currents in Iran defending the same ideas, compete for power, and exchanging positions under the control of the Iranian Supreme Leader who is in control of all political activities in the country. Iran's Supreme Leader can accept or decline the candidacy of any individual for all positions starting from

the president of the republic to medium and lower positions in the administrative chain of command in the capital and the provinces.⁽¹⁷⁾ In addition, the most important administrative and military positions are occupied by supporters of the Supreme Leader. In the absence of real competing political institutions, selecting relatives and family members prevailed - especially after Khomeini's death that resulted in a struggle for power and limiting the Iranian political system within certain narrow constituencies that support the regime and its survival.

» **External pressures and consolidating totalitarianism**

Since the beginning of the 1979 revolution, Iran has adopted a hostile policy toward its regional countries and the world. It has ignored its people's right of representation and participation in the political decision-making process. This tendency exerted big pressure on the regime in its early beginning and contributed to its isolation, withdrawal, and a stalemate. With increasing pressures, the regime was threatened and promoted the theory of external conspiracy. It narrowed political participation to ideological families with definite loyalty, giving them ground to play major roles in the regime's structure and decision-making institutions. All in all, Iranians with political ambitions found their way closed or risky and that promotion and succession to senior positions was limited to certain channels controlled by the Supreme Leader.

The Family in Iran's Politics: Map of Deployment and Interactions

The following factors contributed to the emergence of the political role of the family and its size and limits in Iran:

» **The family, an influential factor in both religion and politics**

The political and economic role of the family in any society is not a problem by itself, but in the size, nature, and consequences of this role. Apparently, the political role of the family in Iran has been growing since the 1979 revolution until today. However, the definite support and loyalty to the regime and its principles remain the main determinants of this role and its limits. In certain cases, the family might not be able to protect some of its members who go against the Supreme Leadership or the regime and their tendencies. This was apparent in the restrictions imposed on the late president Rafsanjani and his family members after he had adopted a parallel, but not an opposing line with that of the regime. Another example is the restrictions imposed on some of the current Supreme Leader's family members like his younger brother, Hadi who was denied candidacy for the Shura Council by the Guardian Council due to his stance towards the regime's figures and its policies. Indeed, this practice seems to be an advantage ensuring coherence of the regime and its solidity since its establishment. Khomeini was angered by his grandson, Hussein for his objection and criticism of the violent political events in the first years after the 1979 revolution. Another

grandson of Khomeini, Hassan was also exposed to a war of words and media offensive by Khamenei's subordinates for his comments on the 2009 events. This resulted in the Guardian Council abstaining in approving his qualification and candidacy for the fifth cycle of the Assembly of Experts in Iran.⁽¹⁸⁾ On the other hand, some leaders relied on members of their families and in-laws to be their subordinates and assistants by appointing them in decision-making institutions at the national level. For example, President Rouhani appointed his brother Hussein Faridoun Assistant to the President of the Republic for executive affairs. Earlier, former President, Ahmadinejad appointed his son's father in-law, Esfندیار Rahim Masha'i as his office manager after being dismissed from the position of first Vice-President of the Republic. Similarly, late President Rafsanjani appointed his brother, Mohammad Hashemi Rafsanjani Assistant to the President of the Republic for Executive Affairs and hired Hussein Mar'ashi, his brother in-law as his office manager. In his second term of presidency, the late President Rafsanjani replaced Mar'ashi with his son Mohsen Hashemi Rafsanjani. Likewise, former President Mohammad Khatami, in his second term of presidency, appointed his brother, Ali Khatami as his office manager and his nephew, Mohammad Reza Tabish as his deputy office manager. Now, Tabish is a member of parliament and chairman of the Environmental Committee in the Iranian parliament.

Family relations provided the regime with loyal technocratic elements and a non-cleric administrative elite in many political, religious, and media positions. Indeed, family and affinity relations ensured loyalty and were protecting factors for the political elite in all positions starting from President of the Republic to minor positions in the central governmental. For example, Mujtaba Khamenei married the daughter of Gholam Reza Haddad who became the first Speaker of the Iranian Shura Council not to wear a turban. Ali Tehrani, President of the Revolutionary Court in Mashhad who was, for a while, President of the Revolutionary Court in Ahwaz and a member of the Assembly of Experts is Khamenei's brother in-law as he is married to his sister Badriah. The family political role expanded outside the capital toward the provinces. For example, late President Rafsanjani's nephew and his son in-law, Hussein Mar'ashi won two seats in the local councils in southeast Iran, home of the Rafsanjani family. Abdulazim Shamkhani, the brother of the Secretary General of the National Security Council for Foreign Policy, Ali Shamkhani was appointed Executive Director of the Ahwaz Cosmetic Committee, then, Executive Director of the Cooperation Commission of the Ahwaz municipalities, and recently, he has been appointed in the Municipal of Ahwaz.⁽¹⁹⁾ The family in Iran has played a major role in providing medium and high-ranking staff. However, this did not prevent some opponents from benefiting from the political influence of their families. Some politicians used their relatives' opposing positions against the regime to attract as many votes as possible from the regime opposing sectors in elections. For example, Ali Reza Nouri got involved

in politics on the day his brother and former Minister of Interior, Abdullah Nouri was sentenced to five years imprisonment and benefited from the protest vote against the regime; however, many people believed Abdullah Nouri was tried for political reasons.⁽²⁰⁾

» **Control of the family over some official institutions**

The role of some institutions in Iran increased due to the increasing role of the family and personal relations. For example, the status of the IRGC was strengthened because of its role as guardian of the revolution and its values, in addition to its political, economic, and social role that allowed it to build a multilateral-interest network within the regime. The IRGC has given the regime a special status because of mutual interests with the clerics and a broad network of beneficiaries and subordinates.⁽²¹⁾ The IRGC took control of the Iranian public arena assisted by the fact that IRGC senior officers have close family and personal relations with prominent figures of the Iranian political elite. For example, the two sons of the former IRGC supervisor, Hassan Lahouti, Sa'eed and Hameed, married the two daughters of the Speaker of the Shura Council at that time, Hashemi Rafsanjani, Fatimah and Faizah.⁽²²⁾ In addition, Khomeini's granddaughter, Zahra Mustafavi married Ali Mohsen Rezai, son of a former IRGC commander.⁽²³⁾ Since Khomeini's succession to the Iranian leadership, the IRGC has been appointing its own personnel in the administrative and governmental structure in Iran, which has created a form of cronyism permitting it to permeate the regime's structure and all its institutions.⁽²⁴⁾ For example, Rostum Qassemi, Ahmadinejad's Minister of Oil in his second term of presidency was commander of the IRGC Khatam Anbia military base. Ali Larijani, the current head of the judiciary is a former deputy IRGC commander. While the former president of Culture and Relations Establishment, Hojatoleslam, Mahmoud Mohammadi Iraqi served as the Supreme Leader's representative in the IRGC. Cronyism increased the influence of some families in certain institutions in Iran. For example, the Fazli family is in control of the Ministry of Interior through its members who occupy many positions in this ministry. For example, Hadi, the son of the current Minister of Interior, Abdurreza Fazli, is a member of the Resistant Economy Committee in this ministry under the leadership of his father. While Salman Samani Rahmani Fazli sister's in-law is the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Interior and the Director of the Inspection and Legal Affairs Department. In addition, Saeed Rahati Qotchani, Rahmani Fazli's brother in-law, serves as advisor of the Minister of Interior while his other brother, Khalil Rahati Qotchani serves as Deputy Assistant to the Minister of Interior for Constructional Affairs and Improving Urban and Rural Areas.⁽²⁵⁾ Another example is Mohammad Javad Larijani who served as advisor to his brother, Sadiq, the chief of the Iranian Judiciary (see annex 3). The relationship between authorities is interrelated due to the presence of members of the same family on the top of more

than one authority. For example, the Larijani brothers occupy the top positions of both the Judicial and Legislative authorities. Ali Larijani serves as the Speaker of the Shura Council while Sadiq serves as the Chief of the Judiciary. Recently, Sadiq Larijani faced accusations of financial corruption by the chairman of the parliamentary Committee for Financial Discipline, but these accusations were dismissed while the person who accused him was subject to investigation and a financial penalty.⁽²⁶⁾

» **The family role in reshaping the political elite**

The family has become the main source of staff for high ranking positions in Iran and guarantor of preserving these positions- especially families having popularity. For example, Abu Hassan Bani Sadr, the first Iranian president after the revolution, was not a cleric and had no classical religious education, but he was a thinker who combined Islamic knowledge with studying in the West. Bani Sadr was influenced by liberalism and Marxism. He did not have popularity amongst most people for his western tendencies and never established a broad regulatory board of loyalists and influential allies inside the regime. Bani Sadr succeeded to power through his personal relationship with Khomeini, but when he gave up the line of the Supreme Leader, at that time, his political life came to an end. On the other hand, Mohammad Khatami was a cleric carrying the Hojatoleslam title. Like Khomeini and Khamenei, Khatami claimed belonging to the descendants of the Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him). He is a master and his black turban gave him significant status amongst the Shiite and his brother, Dr. Mohammad Reza Khatami is the former Supreme Leader's, Khomeini's son in-law. In addition, Khatami succeeded in achieving significant political popularity amongst young people, women, ethnic and religious minorities, and secular well-educated people and students because of his support of pluralism, forgiveness, and rule of law in an Islamic civil society. He received support of the Islamic left. The difference between the two former presidents is notable in the status of their families and the ability to penetrate the major regime institutions- Hawza and the family- as the main source of staff and leadership. In addition to the importance of the role of the family in achieving popularity to support this political role,⁽²⁷⁾ which is evidence of the importance of networks- family, religion, and politics. The regime believes these factors are necessary for promotion and continuity within its structure. For example, the daughter of Bani Sadr married the leader of the opposing and banned Mujahideen Khalq organization, Masoud Rajavi,⁽²⁸⁾ resulting in Bani Sadr facing political isolation, whereas Mohammad Khatami, despite his problems with the regime has close family and affinity relations with clerics and political leaders, resulting in him having some breathing space in Iranian political life.⁽²⁹⁾

» **The family and its impact on the parliamentary structure**

The regime takes elections as a tool to select the parliamentary elite. However,

in light of the role of the Guardian Council, these elections seem to be limited to competition between candidates selected by the religious leadership based on their loyalty and support to the regime. This process is like filtering the elite based on illogical standards at which dismissal and acceptance are determined based on cronyism and mutual-interest relations in addition to the family and personal relations.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Most Reformers whose candidacy was accepted by the Guardian Council- controlled by Iran's Supreme Leader- had strong family relations- the important standard concerning the Guardian Council decision on who can run for parliamentary elections and who cannot.⁽⁵¹⁾

The parliamentary structure was impacted by the role of the family since the new regime relied on family relations, either by blood or affinity, to hire its loyalists. For example, in the parliamentary elections during Mohammad Khatami's era, there were four major competitors in Tehran; the brothers of the President Khatami and Supreme Leader Khamenei and two prominent clerics, Mohsen Kadivar and Abdullah Nouri in addition to other candidates connected to the late President Rafsanjani- his daughter, nephew, and brother in-law. Only 30% of all candidates at that time had strong family relations. In the current parliament, the Larijani family has twenty MPs out of 290 Iranian lawmakers connected to them by blood or affinity.⁽⁵²⁾ For example, Mohammad Reza Tabish, a member of the Budgetary Committee in the parliament is the nephew of the former President Mohammad Khatami. Ali Larijani, the current Speaker of the Iranian parliament, is the former member of parliament Ali Motaheri's brother in-law and the former member of parliament Ahmad Tavakoli's cousin (see annex 3).

» **Emergence of some influential families and women leaders in the public domain**

Considering cronyism and the absence of institutionalism, some individuals benefited from family relations to succeed to certain senior positions in the government like members of the Araghchi family (see annex 4). Another example is Mohammad Reza Bahnar and his brother the former Prime Minister, Mohammad Javad Bahnar and the nephews of former President Ahmadinejad's Senior Assistant, Mujtaba Thamrah Hashemi. The Bahnar family is connected to Khamenei and to the Mahdavi Kinni family by affinity (see annexes 2 and 5) and Mahdavi Kinni brothers occupied high seats in the state's institutions. For example, Mohammad Reza Mahdavi Kinni remained chairman of the Assembly of Experts until his death after he had succeeded to various executive positions like the Ministry of Interior while his brother Mohammad Baqir Baqiri Kinni was his deputy. The latter was also a former member of the Guardian Council while his son Misbah Baqir Kinni married Huda Khamenei and was Assistant of Planning Affairs and President of Imam Sadiq University. In addition, Ali Mohammad Baqiri Kinni was Assistant to former Secretary General of National Security, Sa'eed Jalili and director of Jalili's electoral campaign in the presidential elections 2013 (see

annex 5). The family has also benefited its women members. The daughters of revolutionary leaders succeeded to high political and societal seats like Zahra Khomeini who was an activist in the Women Movement in Iran. Zahra Ishraqi, Khomeini's granddaughter and wife of prominent Reformer Reza Khatami, brother of former President Mohammad Khatami (see annex 1) was a political activist while Faizah Rafsanjani was an activist in women's rights.

» **Controlling internal political interactions**

By analyzing the family and affinity relations amongst the Iranian political elite, we notice the size and nature of these relations between Reformers and Conservatives. For example, Mohammad Khatami's sister, Maryam married Mohammad Ali Soddouqi, the Jum'a Imam and the Supreme Leader's representative in the Yazd province. In addition, the Speaker of the parliament, Ali Larijani married the Reformer member of parliament, Ali Motaheri's sister while Emad, the Son of the late President Rafsanjani married Zahra, the granddaughter of Ayatollah Ishraqi, Khomeini's son in-law. Family and affinity relations determine the relationship between the Conservatives and Reformers within the framework of definite loyalty to the Supreme Leadership- the key determiner of participation in politics in Iran. These relations allow the exchange of power and roles between the two currents within the regime and disregard the real political opposition. In fact, both currents- Conservatives and Reformers- compete on serving the same idea and any violation of this would result in the removal from power and influential departments. For example, the Khomeini and Khamenei families are models for the role of the family in determining the internal political interactions based on definite loyalty to the Supreme Leader. Some members of these two families belong to the Conservatives, while others belong to Reformers, and some of them are connected to prominent Reformers by affinity relations (see annexes 1 and 2). It is noted that affinity has created a broad network of relations that strengthened clerical control of the Iranian regime, politically and economically. For example, the Khomeini family maintained its political presence through a network of in-laws that connected children of the Supreme Leader to religious and political leaders inside the Iranian regime. The current Supreme Leader, Khamenei, through a broad network of in-laws, is in control of many decision-making, political, religious, and, financial institutions in the country (see annexes 1 and 2). In fact, this form of relations prevailed among the first revolutionary generation and has consolidated the principle of loyalty and cronyism. For example, the former Supreme Leader Representative in the IRGC and the former Chief of Islamic Culture and Relations, Mahmoud Mohammadi Iraqi was the son in-law of Mohammad Taqi Misbah Yazdi, a member of the Qom Hawzah Scholars Association, a member of Higher Council for Revolutionary Culture, and a member of the Struggling Clerics Association while Khamenei's in-

law, Gholam Reza Haddad was the Speaker of the Shura Council.⁽⁵³⁾

» **The family and building broad networks of economical interests**

One factor behind the rise of the role of the family in Iranian politics was the economic status of some individuals who came from respected political families. For example, many members of the current Supreme Leader family have been involved in economic activities they couldn't have achieved without political support from the position of their family. Mohammad Khamenei, brother of the current Supreme Leader is a big partner in the project of refrigerating the meat coming to Tehran in addition to his status as a lawyer and cleric. Hassan Khajastah Baqir Zadeh, Khamenei's brother in-law is a contractor in governmental television and an exclusive agent for the Japanese Sony in Iran with 600 million USDs business dealings. Indeed, Hassan is benefitting from the intersection of interests between his official position and personal company. The total annual Radio and Television purchases from Sony amount to 50-60 million USDs; 7% goes as commission to him in addition to the profit of his company.⁽⁵⁴⁾ In addition, Mustafa Khamenei, the eldest son of the current Supreme Leader has control of real estate in Tehran and heads the sales of Peugeot in Iran. His youngest son, Maytham is one of the most prominent Bazaar businessmen and partner of his brother Masoud in the French car company Renault in Iran. Notably, there is a difference between members of the Khamenei family who maintain their status through economic channels, despite some of them receiving religious education, and members of the Khomeini family who maintain their status through religion and jurisprudential education. Furthermore, the income of the One-Fifth (annual tax paid by Shiite people to jurists) has been dominated by Khamenei through the carrot-and-stick approach and personal relations with leaders and religious scholars in Qom and Mashhad. For example, Ayatollah Alamolhoda, representative of the Supreme Leader in *Khorasan Arrazavyah*, Jum'a Imam of the city of Mashhad, and a member of Khamenei's inner circle, is Jamilah's father, wife of the Chief of the Razavi shrine and the former presidential candidate, Ibrahim Raisi⁽⁵⁵⁾ who was appointed by Khamenei in 2016 as Chief of Astan Quds Razavi- a religious and economic institution with a budget comprising of billions of US dollars. This institution administers donations for tombs in the city of Mashhad and runs, according to its official website, thirty-six companies and institutes including mines, textile factories, pharmaceutical plants, and big Oil and Gas Companies.⁽⁵⁶⁾ It is well known that these institutions and the likes are directly linked to the Supreme Leader's office.⁽⁵⁷⁾

Impact of the Role of the Family on the Regime's Effectiveness in Iran

The role of some families impacted Iran's politics and the effectiveness and vitality of the regime. These families have turned into a huge complicated lobby of interests penetrating all political, economic, and social spheres in Iran. This has

resulted in the following consequences for the regime:

Absence of a national project and the building of state cronyism under the Supreme Leadership

The family has taken its role in Iran under a totalitarian political system with no rule of law and the nonexistence of a balance of power between the branches of government. This paved the way for the role of the family to infringe on the interests of the state, regime, and society. Accordingly, selecting members of the same family for high ranking positions in the decision-making institutions because of loyalty and cronyism has characterized Iran's regime rather than relying on objective standards of effectiveness and experience. This negatively impacted the regime and its capability to carry out its basic responsibilities. In addition, Khomeini's death, as the spiritual and charismatic leader of Iran, resulted in political changes inside the regime by expanding the role of the family and affinity relations. Indeed, Khomeini clearly left a political vacuum which could not be filled by his successor Khamenei who does not have the charisma to lead Iran's political system like Khomeini. To overcome this deficiency, Khamenei limited the electoral base to loyalists inside the regime only, which paved the way for beneficiaries and families to strengthen their political role in Iran.⁽⁵⁸⁾ Furthermore, some politicians from the first revolutionary generation who consolidated their positions in power, tended to build strong family coalitions among officials in high ranking positions to guarantee support and protection- especially in the influential security and military institutions.⁽⁵⁹⁾

Khamenei could not fill the jurisprudence vacuum left by Khomeini.⁽⁴⁰⁾ To overcome this problem, Khamenei annexed the Qom religious authority to the Supreme Leader's office- run by one of his sons- directly to ensure religious and financial control over the Qom Hawza.. Khamenei dismissed his opponents in all state's institutions and, by time, narrowed the circle around him. He relied on a loyal circle where the small family and affinity relations among politicians and senior decision makers became an alternative to the big political family built by Khomeini after the revolution.⁽⁴¹⁾ To strengthen his religious and financial influence on the Mashhad Hawza, Khamenei appointed the Chief of the Razavi Shrine and a former presidential candidate, Ibrahim Raisi as Chief of Astan Quds Razavi and then, days after, he appointed Alamolhoda representative of the Supreme Leader in Khorasan Arrazavyah and the Jum'a Imam in the city of Mashhad, knowing that Alamolhoda is Raisi's in-law, both, in their religious and financial influence, are loyal to Khamenei.⁽⁴²⁾ The definite loyalty of political families has dominated the political decision-making process in Iran. These families and the networks of cronyism have linked their political fate to the Supreme Leader's directives and economically influential institutions. None of the members of these networks can criticize or call for reviewing the political

decisions in Iran because if this happens, they face dismissal and discharge. Even when some differences emerged between the Supreme Leader and some Jurists in Qom, the family networks interfered and solved these problems in complete secrecy.⁽⁴³⁾ Political cronyism in Iran has increased the gap between the ruling elite and their children on one side and the rest of Iranian people on the other. For example, there are about four thousand children of officials who study in Britain most of whom, according to Iranians themselves, assume responsibilities in the state's institutions and important positions in the country when they come back home, benefiting from the influence of their families.⁽⁴⁴⁾ In light of the current networks of mutual interests- especially family networks, the Iranian regime has lacked rationality and scientific thinking and, ultimately, has failed to establish a real project of development in the country. On the contrary, the varied consecutive leaderships adopted popularity and mobilization options- especially on the economic level- like the idea of the resistant economy. In addition, they adopted a broad external project that strained the state, financially and morally, and deprived the Iranian people of benefitting from their own resources. In fact, no one could have questioned these tendencies as they gave legitimacy to the religious/family ruling elite, diverting people's attention away from the tense internal conditions, and ensuring the continuity of state cronyism.

» **Widespread corruption and the absence of transparency**

Notably, the emergence of the role of the family was accompanied by financial corruption which burdened the state's budget and wasted its resources. To take the lead in all aspects of life in Iran and preserve its current ideological structure, the regime wasted considerable funds on propaganda projects and buying loyalty. It provided loyalists with freedom of action over the state's resources with no supervision or accountability as many officials avoided charges of corruption and notable violations because of family links. The role of the family created a mixture of power and wealth. Many sons of senior religious and political leaders were involved in corruption cases for billions of USDs including the son of the Supreme Leader himself. However, no one has ever been held accountable for this corruption, which has created an environment of competition between families and their children in senior positions infringing on the nation's resources while increasing their political role in Iran.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Statistically, Iran is among the most corrupt countries in the world. According to the Transparency International report in 2017, Iran was 136 in corruption out of 175 countries in the world.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Another survey conducted by the University of Maryland on more than one thousand Iranians, 63.3% believed that internal corruption was the major impediment to economic growth and development in the country.⁽⁴⁷⁾ Iran has been classified first in the world in money laundering and supporting terrorism for the fourth consecutive year out of 146 countries.⁽⁴⁸⁾ The clerical state favors personal commitment over written legal principles where clerics and officials have freedom

of action over their practices and selections away from accountability and review. This form of family cronyism has achieved interests and privileges for members of certain families over others. In a political system suffering from personalization and authoritarianism, public funds have become the legitimate right for senior officials and their relatives. For example, Mahdi Hashemi Rafsanjani, one of late President Rafsanjani's five sons, received a bribe in 2002/2003 to grant oil contracts to the Norwegian company Statoil by using the company of Horton Investment as a cover. Mahdi received 15.2 million USDs from the Norwegian company to facilitate the contracts of offshore gas platforms to the South of the Pars field. Earlier, he received a bribe from the French Total company when it signed the contract for implementing the first phase of developing the South Pars field in 1997 when Mahdi was president of the Iranian Oil Company at that time. This was revealed after the arrest of Christophe Do Margery, President of Total for charges of bribing the company of Mahdi Rafsanjani to win profitable oil contracts. Investigators found that 95 million Swiss Francs (78 million USDs) entered two accounts in Sweden in favor of an Iranian person residing in Switzerland named Bijan Dadfar who worked as a middleman between Total and Mahdi Rafsanjani.⁽⁴⁹⁾

» **Vulnerability of the regime under a lack of independence and overlapping authorities**

The rapid and horizontal growth of the political role of the family in Iran has weakened the political system. Senior positions were limited to political loyalists and their relatives while the state and regime was deprived of the experience of significant experts in their fields. The lack of the rule of law and the nonexistence of a separation of powers led to a failure for regime reform from inside. Some endeavors faced stiff resistance from influential leaders inside the regime, creating tension and disputes to the extent of accusations of treachery, corruption, and bribery. The message of the former President Ahmadinejad to the Supreme Leader about several corruption cases- especially in the judicial authority- reflected this disruption. In his message, Ahmadinejad accused judicial officials, particularly, the Larijani family of using their influence in repression, embezzlement, and robbery of the state and people's funds. Ahmadinejad did not stop at throwing accusations, but called on people to face the "gangs in decision-making positions" who are responsible for the poor socio-economic conditions in the country.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Ahmadinejad revealed documents showing the confiscation of lands, properties, and real-estate in favor of Larijani and his family and the inner circle around them,⁽⁵¹⁾ which proves the relationship of this family to the files of corruption without any accountability for their deeds. This escalation by Ahmadinejad reflects disagreement and disruption inside the Iranian political system, which is evident by the response of the Commander of the Quds division, Qassem Suleimani on this crisis and his criticism touched the Supreme Leader after the

demonstrations of December 2017 when he warned the internal currents “that are trying to play the role of opposition” and called on them to stop mudslinging.⁽⁵²⁾

» **Mistrusting the regime and erosion of its legitimacy**

The Iranian political culture strengthens the role of the family in all political and social spheres.⁽⁵³⁾ The growth of the political role of the family and its link to bad living conditions has resulted in the regime being mistrusted. The people’s slogans during the December 2017 demonstrations included sharp criticism of some families dominating decision-making positions and some regime figures.⁽⁵⁴⁾ However, the regime has been unable to respond to the demands of the people and undertake essential reforms to tackle the crisis of its legitimacy because of the broad network of interests represented by families who control the Iranian political system. This is considered as an essential factor in erosion of the regime’s legitimacy in Iran. The network of interests and cronyism in Iran has become the principal political and economic policy directive instead of the religious ideology that the republican regime has been derived from. In fact, on the level of performance and policies, the Iranian regime has achieved nothing for its own people. On the contrary, Iran has witnessed a deterioration in the economic conditions, a decline in living standards, and the domination of a group of beneficiaries and sons of religious and political families over authority and wealth in the country. The sons of these families achieved enormous wealth due to their relationships with the leadership. Families penetrated some institutions vertically and horizontally and corruption spread in an unprecedented way. However, it cannot be said that the family and cronyism are the only factors in straining legitimacy of the Iranian regime because this regime, in its early beginning, disrespected the laws and constitution of Iran.

» **Increasing demand for religion and religious affinity**

In his directive to his children, Khomeini stated the importance of religion and ideology as a major determinant for protection and to stay within the active platforms of the regime. Khomeini recommended his sons to be protected and to study in the Hawza saying, “I ask my dear children, Hassan, Yasser (Reza), and Ali to be religious. I’d like they take religious classes in Qom Hawza and wear the clerical dress code; by doing this, I think they will stay protected.”⁽⁵⁵⁾ Khomeini’s recommendations explain the importance of religion as a standard and determinant for influence inside the current regime. However, after Khomeini, the demand increased, not for studying religious sciences as recommended by the leader of the Iranian revolution to his sons, but for expanding influence and power by building relations with the religious circles and their leaders in the Hawza, around the Supreme Leader, and in the key political institutions characterized by religious features. All in all, the family and affinity relations, as overlapping circles, dominate both the Iranian religious and political spheres and strongly connect them together.

Conclusion

After the Iranian 1979 revolution, a number of networks have shaped the nature of social and political relations in the country- especially revolutionary organizations that determine the standards for nationality and loyalty. The Iranian people looked at this revolution as the national umbrella under which to liberate themselves from the rule of the Shah, improve socio-economic conditions and end state cronyism in the country. However, this revolutionary umbrella narrowed to include Shiite clerics and their followers only. After that, the circle narrowed more to include only clerics loyal to the Supreme Leadership, which stunted the revolution. Khomeini and Khamenei after him set the principles of hiring and promotion inside the new regime and surrounded themselves by a network of cronies that harmed the reputation of the revolution and the regime.

In the end, the save-Iran project presented by the 1979 revolution has turned into a kinship solidarity project that reflects the interests of the Supreme Leader and his companions in the structure of the Iranian political system. Indeed, this project eliminated representation, participation, and political competition and limited it within narrow circles of loyalty. By time, these circles created a network of family and affinity relations on the model of the upper class that ruled Iran during the Shah era before the revolution. This means that the post-1979 events were nothing but a project of new state cronyism with ideological tendencies. It seems the future of the Iranian regime, in case of the continuity of this form of rule, will face various problems, knowing that the regime's ideology has lost its significance. In addition, this ideology was in contrast with reality. It promised people of justice but has consolidated injustice. It pledged to end oppression but has adopted it. Indeed, the new Iranian regime removed the Shah, but failed to build an operative political model. On the contrary, the 1979 revolution established a new reactionary regime in violation of law and constitution. The continuity and survival of the Iranian regime is threatened by contradictions and disruption inside it and by the increasing public anger that recently attacked all the sacred components of the Iranian political system. Moreover, the regime has exported hostility outside its borders which has deprived Iran from living in harmony with its neighbors and the world resulting in the country being under constant pressures and isolation. At the same time, this regime has never responded to this crisis and never introduced an alternative for its hostile practices- killing, repression, and oppression- to preserve its networks of interests and to continue its political, economic, and religious domination. In summary, this regime, either in the short-run or long-run, will face the same destiny as the Shah's regime.

Annex (1) explains the political and social status of Khomeini's family in Iran⁽⁵⁶⁾

Wife	Khadija Thaqafi	Daughter of Haj Mirza Thaqafi, one of the prominent clerics in Iran
Children		Social and Political Status
Mustafa		Died before the revolution
Ahmad		Worked as an advisor for his father and for Khamenei after his father's death. Died in 1995
Siddiqah		Belongs to the Reformer current. Headed the Youth Committee in the coalition of Reformers in the elections of 2013
Zahra		Most active daughter of Khomeini in politics and served as the Secretary General of the Woman Association that played a major role in the victory of Reformer Mohammad Khatami the 1997 presidential elections. She also served as Secretary General of NGOs Union for supporting Palestinian rights and chairman of the Association of defending Palestinian People.
In-Laws		Social and Political Status
Ha'iri Yazdi		Jurist with Ayatollah rank. Founder of the Qom Hawza
Shihab Uddin Ishraqi		Jurist with Hojatoleslam rank
Mahmoud Brojerdi		Former Ambassador in Finland and son of Hussein Bin Assayed Ali Tabatabaei Brojerdi known as Imam Brojerdi, Iranian Shiite cleric, scholar, and jurist. Khomeini was one of his disciples.

Grandchildren	Social and Political Status
Maryam Mustafa	Married and is living outside Iran
Hussein Mustafa	An opponent subject to house arrest
Hassan Ahmad	Jurist and spokesperson of Bait Imam. His mother is Fatima Tabatabaei daughter of Ayatollah Sultani. He is related to the family of Musa Sadr. His wife is granddaughter of Ayatollah Ozma Esfahani. He wanted to run for the elections of the Assembly of Experts in 2015 but did not get the legal approval for participation.
Yasir Ahmad	Cleric and married to Hawra, daughter of Mohammad Sadr Deputy Foreign Minister during the era of Reformer president Mohammad Khatami. Mohammad Sadr is cousin of Fatima Tabatabaei mother of Yasser and Zahra Khomeini, wife of former president Khatami. Fatima is sister of Imam Musa Sadr and Imam Mohammad Baqir Sadr who was executed by Saddam Hussein in Iraq. Yasser Sadr refuses to appear on media.
Ali Ahmad	Studied religious sciences and has become a cleric like his father, grandfather, and brothers. He is married to the daughter of Javad Shahrستاني who is married to the daughter of the head of the Shiite Marja'yya, Ayatollah Ali Sistani. He runs Bait Imam affairs and introduces himself as a thinker.
Zahra Ishraqi	Wife of the prominent Reformer, Mohammad Reza Khatami. She is a doctor and political activist.
Na'imah Ishraqi	Wife of son of Jum'a Imam in the city of Esfahan, Ayatollah Tahiri who was one of the most prominent clerics defending the Reform movement.

Annex (2) explains the political and social status of Khamenei's family in Iran

Wife	Mansourah	Daughter of Khajastah Baqir Zadeh.
Br ⁽⁵⁷⁾ others/Relatives		Social and Political Status
Mohammad/brother		Cleric and was a lawyer during the Shah era. Now he is a partner in a big project in refrigerating meat in Tehran.
Hadi/brother		On ⁽⁵⁸⁾ e of Shah opponents before the revolution. He joined the Reform movement and a founder of the "Struggling Clerics Association" that supported Mir Hussein Mousavi in the 2009 elections. In 1993, he established Jihan Islam (Muslim World) newspaper and then Hayat Nu (New Life) newspaper in 2000.
Hassan/brother		Former chairman of the investigating commissions in the administrative violations in the Ministry of Oil.
Badryah/sister		Wife of Hojatoleslam Sheikh Ali Tehrani, president of revolutionary court in Mashhad and for a while, president of revolutionary court in Ahwaz and a member of the Assembly of Experts.
Hassan Khajastah Baqir Zadah/ brother in law		Khamenei's brother in law. Contractor of the governmental television and responsible for purchases of cameras, electrical appliances, and montage appliances for the official television. He is also exclusive agent of the Japanese Sony company all over Iran.
Children		Social and Political Status
Mustafa		Ayatollah Aziz Khoshoqt's son in law and Ali Khamenei's eldest child. Did not have any political activities and studied on the hand of his father, Ayatollah Shahrwardi. He is in control of real estates in Tehran. He also has control of Peugeot sales in Iran.

Mujtaba Khamenei	The first public appearance for him was in 2004 and 2005 when he was member of electoral committees when Ahmadinejad won the presidential elections. He runs his father's affairs and responsible for important files like the support of the Lebanese Hezbollah, Shiite organizations in Iraq, Hamas, and others. His wealth amount to three billion USDs most of which are deposited in banks in the UAE, Syria, Venezuela, and other banks in some African countries. He is married to daughter of the former Speaker of the Shoura Council, Gholam Reza Haddad Adel.
Masoud Khamenei	Son in law of Ayatollah Mohammad Baqir Kharrazi one of Qom Hawza directors and father of Sadiq Kharrazi , Assistant Foreign Minister in Khatami's cabinet and his advisor. Masoud studied Law in the University of Tehran and was married to Sawsan Kharrazi but he divorced her after the 2009 events because of her father's stance that embarrassed the Supreme Leader's family. He was responsible for several of his father's institutions and an administrator of his website.
Maytham	Married to one of the most popular businessmen of the Bazar. He studied theology in the University of Tehran. He is an executive official in the institutions of the revolutionary command and his brother's partner in Renault.
Bushra	Daughter in law of Mohammadi Kalbi Jani, Iran's Supreme Leader office manager.
Huda	Wife of Misbah Huda, teacher in the University of Imam Sadiq and nephew of former chairman of the Assembly of Experts, Mohammad Reza Mahdavi Kinni. His father was deputy Minister of Interior in Mohammad Javad Bahnar's cabinet. His brother, Ali Baqiri Kinni served as Assistant of former Secretary of the Higher Council for National Security, Sa'eed Jalili.

In ⁽⁵⁹⁾ -Laws	Political and Social Status
Ayatollah Aziz Khoshoqt	Brother of Mohammad Hussein Khoshaqt, Director General for media and publications in the Ministry of Culture and Guidance during Khatami's era.
Gholam Reza Haddad Adel	Former Speaker of the Iranian parliament.
Ayatollah Mohammad Baqir Kharrazi	One of Qom Hawza Directors
Mahmoud Lolajian	One of the biggest men of the Bazar
Mohammadi Kalbi Jani	Iran's Supreme Leader's office manager.
Sayed Baqiri	Brother of Ali Baqiri, one of the nuclear negotiations caseworkers.
Grandchildren	Political and Social Status
Javad Mustafa	Responsible for religious institutions under his grandfather, Ali Khamenei's control.

Annex (3) explains the political and social status of Larijani's family in Iran.⁽⁶⁰⁾

Father	Ayatollah Mirza Hashem Larijani	One of the most prominent clerics during the reign of Reza Khan Pahlavi and his son Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.
Mother	-	Daughter of Ayatollah Sayyed Mohsen Ashrafi, scholar in the city of Bashar in Mazindan province north Iran.
Children	Political and Social Status	
Mohammad Javad	National Security Advisor and theorist of the hardliner current and traditional Conservatives in general. He served as advisor to the Chief of the Judiciary headed by his brother Sadiq. He was also an MP in the second, forth, and fifth sessions and one of three members that oversees the Radio and Television establishment. He was Deputy Foreign Minister, chief of the foreign policy committee in the parliament, and founder of the research center in the House of Representatives. Now, he is spokesperson of human rights before the international community.	

Fadhil	President of the University of Azad Far' Amal and former cultural attaché in Iran's Embassy in Canada.
Ali	Former IRGC Deputy Commander and head of news center in the Radio and Television establishment. He served as Secretary General of the Ministry of Public Works and Communications and Minister of Culture and Guidance in Rafsanjani's cabinet. Khamenei appointed him as chairman of the Radio and Television Commission. He also served as Secretary General of Higher Council for National Security and chief negotiator in the Iranian nuclear file. Now, he is the Speaker of Iranian parliament and member of the Guardian Council and member in the Higher Advisory Council for Culture.
Sadiq	Chief of Judiciary
Baqir	Advisor in the University of Tehran for Medical Sciences
Their Sister	Wife of Ayatollah Mustafa Muhaqiq Damad, grandchild of Sheikh Abdulkarim Ha'iri Yazdi who was, for years, a member of the Higher Council for Judiciary and head of the Central Investigating Department and professor in the faculty of Law in the University of Bahshati Martyr. In addition, he served as the head of the studies section in the Iranian General Assembly for Sciences.
In-Laws	Political and Social Status
Ayatollah Murtaza Motaheri	Religious Jurist
Ayatollah Ozma Wahid Khorasani	Religious Jurist
Ayatollah Hassan Zadeh Amly	Religious Jurist
Mustafa Muhaqiq Damad	Religious Jurist
Grandchildren	Political and Social Status
Fatima Ardashir Larijani	Daughter of Speaker of the Iranian parliament. Works in Keloland Medical Center in the State of Ohio in the United States of America.
Relatives	Political and Social Status
Ahmad Tavakoli	Brothers Larijani's cousin. Former MP and belongs to the Hardliner current
Zahra Muhaqiq	Niece of Speaker of the parliament. Nuclear researcher and is living in the United States.

Annex (4) explains the political and social status of Araghchi's Family in Iran⁽⁶¹⁾

Brothers	Political and Social Status
Murtaza Araghchi	Executive Director of Bazargan Araghchi Company
Mujtaba Araghchi	Head of Manmade Carpet Selling Union in Tehran
Abbas Araghchi	Iran's Assistant Foreign Minister and chief nuclear negotiator
Ahmad Araghchi	Assistant to the President of the Iranian Central Bank for currency affairs.
Ali Araghchi	General Director of Investment in Idor Establishment (the establishment of improving and updating industries).

Annex (5) explains the political and social status of Mahdavi Kinni family in Iran⁽⁶²⁾

Brothers	Political and Social Status
Mohammad Reza Mahdavi Kinni	Minister of Interior in Mohammad Javad Bahner's Cabinet and Acting- Director of Prime Minister after killing of Mohammad Ali Raja'i, President of the Republic and his Prime Minister, Mohammad Javad Bahner. He served as Chairman of the Assembly of Experts, former member in the Guardian Council, and former president of the University of Imam Sadiq.
Mohammad Baqir Baqiri Kinni	Deputy Minister of Interior in Mohammad Javad Bahner's cabinet, former member of the Guardian Council, and former deputy of the President of the University of Imam Sadiq.
In-Laws	Political and Social Status
Mustafa Mirlouhi	Former Chairman of the Assembly of Experts, Mohammad Reza Mahdavi Kinni's in-law and office manager. He was also director of the International Relations Unit in the University of Imam Sadiq. ⁽⁶³⁾ His son married daughter of Hojatoleslam, Ali Reza Banahian, disciple of Misbah Yazdi and Ali Khamenei who served as Deputy Chairman of Central Council of Ammar Base. ⁽⁶⁴⁾

Children	Political and Social Status
Ali Baqiri Kinni	Son of Mohammad Baqir Baqiri Kinni. Assistant to former Secretary General of the Higher Council for National Security, Sa'eed Jalili and head of Jalili's presidential campaign in 2013. ⁽⁶⁵⁾
Misbah Huda Baqiri Kinni	Son of Mohammad Baqir Baqiri Kinni. Married Huda, Iran's Supreme Leader's, Khamenei's daughter. He served as Assistant to Planning Affairs and Projects and teacher in the University of Imam Sadiq.

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