

## **Pezeshkian's win doesn't change the fact that Iran is dangerously close to the bomb**

Relatively moderate president can move the needle on domestic issues and will be committed to talks with West to relieve sanctions, but real power resides with the supreme leader

By [Lazar Berman](#) / 10 July 2024

Over 15 million Iranians turned out on Friday to cast their vote for reformist presidential candidate Massoud Pezeshkian, who defeated his uber-conservative rival Saeed Jalili.

Washington quickly sought to emphasize that it doesn't anticipate the 69-year-old heart surgeon having any meaningful impact on the regime. "We have no expectation that this election will lead to a fundamental change in Iran's direction or its policies," US State Department spokesman Matthew Miller told reporters on Monday.

[...]

That number climbed to 50% in the run-off, but much of the increase came from fear of what a Jalili victory would have meant for the country, explained **Raz Zimmt, Iran scholar at the Institute for National Security Studies** in Tel Aviv.

"The vast majority of the public does not believe in the regime, and doesn't believe in the possibility of effecting meaningful change under this regime," he continued.

Until the previous president Ebrahim Raisi's tenure ended abruptly with a fatal helicopter crash on the side of a mountain in May, the country's arch-conservatives had enjoyed control over all the levers of power in the country for the past three years. The economy stagnated under sanctions, and inflation spiraled.

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