

The status of people

Question No. 29

What is the role of people in policy-making and enforcing laws in Islamic State? What should we do in the case of a contradiction between people's opinions and views and those of the rulers?

In Islamic State, people play an active and decisive role in legislation, policy-making and enforcing laws. For instance, people participate in legislation and major policy-makings of the society by electing members of the parliament. They participate in collective policy-makings by electing members of the councils. They elect members of the Guardian Council to participate in determining the leader and supervising him. And finally, they elect the president as the highest state official after the leader.

The State Cabinet is elected by people indirectly: on one hand, the elected president introduces the Cabinet, and on the other hand the elected MPs cast vote of confidence for the Cabinet members after investigating their qualifications. Nevertheless, it should be noted that people's role in all these affairs is in accordance to religious rules and cannot be contrary to them. Article 6 of the Constitution states:

“In Islamic Republic of Iran, the state affairs must be managed based on the public votes: through elections of the president, MPs, the members of the councils, and the like, or through plebiscite”.

The problem of contradiction between people's views and those of rulers has different forms:

1. People's will and the decisions of the government's agents may be equal as far as consistency with religious rules is concerned. In this case, people's will will be preferable. Reasons such as “the necessity of counsel” can religiously support this idea. Besides, from a sociological viewpoint, this results in more “acceptability and efficiency” of the government. This is true, except when changing the decision is not possible due to some reasons.
2. People's will may be religiously and legally prior to the decision of government's agents. In this case, people's will is preferable.
3. People's will may be inconsistent with religious rules and principles, or may be contrary to the

common good of the society, but the decisions of the government's agents may be consistent with religious rules and principles; in this case, the latter has priority.

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