



National Public Opinion Survey on Iran Conflict 2026



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Since 2008, PAAIA has commissioned nationally recognized pollsters to survey Iranian American attitudes on important topics ranging from domestic issues to foreign policy preferences.

The first of their kind, these national public opinion surveys advance the voice of the Iranian American community by presenting rigorous, nationally representative data to policymakers and the media to better inform their understanding of Iranian Americans' stances. PAAIA uses the results of these surveys to inform our stances on issues but they do not reflect PAAIA's endorsement of any policies, leaders, or organizations.



Learn more about PAAIA's National Public Opinion Surveys by visiting
<https://paaia.org/educate/surveys>

Executive Summary

Most Iranian Americans support U.S.–Israeli airstrikes on targets in Iran, though nearly half are concerned the current or a more hardline regime could remain in power; roughly three-quarters favor a democratic republic or constitutional monarchy, and a majority support U.S. backing of Reza Pahlavi.

From March 18–23, 2026, SurveyUSA conducted a national survey of 450 Iranian Americans on behalf of the Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans (PAAIA), examining views on U.S.–Israeli airstrikes against Iran and the future of governance in Iran. The survey has a Median Credibility Interval of $\pm 4.7\%$. Presented below is a summary of the findings, followed by data tables and a narrative of the results.

Overall, 58% of Iranian Americans support the airstrikes (including 45% who strongly support), while 40% oppose them. Despite this support, respondents express caution about the long-term impact of the conflict. Nearly half (48%) identify their top concern as the possibility of the current regime or a more hardline alternative remaining in power, while 43% highlight civilian casualties as a primary concern.

When asked about U.S. policy priorities over the current conflict, regime change emerges as the leading objective, selected by 60% of respondents. Other priorities include pursuing a ceasefire and negotiations (27%), preventing nuclear and missile development (18%), and limiting Iran's support for armed groups (16%).

The survey also finds strong consensus around Iran's preferred future system of governance. A substantial majority (57%) believe a parliamentary democracy or republic would work best for Iran, with an additional 19% supporting a constitutional monarchy. All other governance options receive minimal support.

Executive Summary (Continued)

On the question of U.S. engagement with Iranian opposition groups, a plurality (45%) believe the United States should not take a position on specific opposition leaders or groups, while 42% support such involvement.

However, views differ significantly when specific actors are considered. A majority (59%) support the U.S. government publicly backing Reza Pahlavi as an opposition leader, while support for the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK) is extremely limited at just 8%, with broad opposition across the community.

When asked who is most likely to help move Iran toward a democratic system, Reza Pahlavi stands out as the only figure with significant support, selected by 50% of respondents. No other individual or group receives more than single-digit support, while a notable share of respondents (23%) remain uncertain.

Finally, the survey highlights the priorities Iranian Americans believe civic and advocacy organizations should focus on during this period. The top priority is providing humanitarian assistance to people in Iran (46%), followed by promoting internet freedom (37%) and supporting Iranian students, asylum seekers, and those fleeing persecution (25%). Other priorities include cultural preservation, civic engagement, and protecting civil rights in the United States.

Taken together, these findings show a community that supports efforts to counter the Iranian regime, while remaining deeply concerned about humanitarian consequences and long-term stability—and strongly committed to a democratic future for Iran.

Analysis

1. Do you support or oppose U.S. – Israeli airstrikes on targets in Iran?

| Response Option | Percent |
|------------------|---------|
| Strongly Support | 45% |
| Somewhat Support | 13% |
| Somewhat Oppose | 6% |
| Strongly Oppose | 34% |
| Not Sure | 3% |

A majority of Iranian Americans (58%) support U.S.–Israeli airstrikes on targets in Iran, including 45% who strongly support and 13% who somewhat support. In contrast, 40% oppose the strikes, largely driven by strong opposition (34%). Overall, support exceeds opposition by 18 percentage points. Importantly, the relatively low share of respondents who are unsure (3%) indicates that views on this issue are well-formed and strongly held.

Support is particularly strong among Jewish Iranian Americans (89%) and Republicans (86%). In contrast, a majority of Democrats (54%) and those without a college degree (66%) oppose the airstrikes. More broadly, opposition is more prevalent among younger respondents, renters, and middle-income households.

Analysis

2. Which of the following do you think should be the main objectives of U.S. policy toward Iran during the current conflict? (select two)

| Response Option | Percent |
|---|---------|
| Bring about regime change in Iran | 60% |
| Seek a ceasefire and negotiate an agreement with the current government in Iran | 27% |
| Prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons and limit its ballistic missile capabilities | 18% |
| End Iran's support for armed groups in the Middle East | 16% |
| Another | 9% |
| Not sure | 3% |

When asked about the main objectives of U.S. policy toward Iran during the current conflict, a clear majority of Iranian Americans (60%) identify bringing about regime change as a top priority, making it by far the most widely selected objective. Support for regime change is especially strong among Republicans (78%) and also commands majority support among Independents (55%) and Democrats (49%), indicating broad - though uneven - backing across the political spectrum.

Significantly fewer respondents prioritize diplomatic or security-focused approaches, with 27% favoring a ceasefire and negotiations with the current government, 18% prioritizing efforts to prevent nuclear weapons and limit missile capabilities, and 16% focusing on ending Iran's support for armed groups in the region.

These findings suggest that Iranian Americans are more likely to favor transformative political change in Iran over more limited or incremental policy goals. At the same time, a notable share of younger individuals (among 18 to 34-year-olds) support diplomatic engagement (51%) indicating some division within the community on the preferred path forward.

Analysis

3. Which of the following concerns you most about the current conflict? (select 2)

| Response Option | Percent |
|---|---------|
| The current or a more radical regime remaining in power | 48% |
| Civilian casualties in Iran or elsewhere in the region | 43% |
| Damage to civilian infrastructure, including cultural or historic sites | 26% |
| The possibility of civil or fractional war | 13% |
| Retaliatory attacks inside the U.S. or U.S. interests | 13% |
| The conflict spreading further across the Middle East | 9% |
| The possibility of U.S. ground troops becoming involved | 9% |
| Not sure | 2% |

When asked about their top concerns regarding the current conflict, Iranian Americans most frequently cite the possibility that the current regime - or a more hardline alternative - remains in power (48%), followed closely by concerns about civilian casualties in Iran or elsewhere in the region (43%). Concern about regime survival is particularly pronounced among Republicans and Jewish Iranian Americans (65% each), as well as those living in rural areas (62%). Meanwhile, concern about civilian casualties is higher among younger respondents ages 18–34 (57%), Muslims (55%), and those in the Northeast (58%).

Secondary concerns include damage to civilian infrastructure, including cultural and historic sites (26%), and, at lower levels, retaliatory attacks against the United States or U.S. interests (13%) and the possibility of civil or factional conflict within Iran (13%). Concerns about broader regional escalation (9%) and the potential involvement of U.S. ground troops (9%) rank lowest overall.

Taken together, these findings indicate that Iranian Americans are primarily focused on the long-term political outcome inside Iran and the humanitarian consequences of the conflict, while placing comparatively less emphasis on direct risks to the United States or broader regional spillover.

Analysis

4. What type of government do you think would work best in Iran?

| Response Option | Percent |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| Parliamentary Democracy/Republic | 57% |
| Constitutional Monarchy | 19% |
| Reformed Islamic Republic | 4% |
| Islamic Republic | 3% |
| Islamist/Marxist | 3% |
| None Of The Above | 3% |
| Not Sure | 10% |

A clear majority of Iranian Americans (57%) favor a parliamentary democracy or republic, making it the most widely supported option by a significant margin. While support for this model is somewhat lower among those with the lowest household incomes (39%), it remains the preferred choice across all demographic groups.

A notable minority (19%) support a constitutional monarchy, with higher levels of support among Republicans (39%) and more recent immigrants to the United States (32%). All other governance models receive minimal support, with just 4% favoring a reformed Islamic republic, 3% an Islamic republic, and 3% an Islamic/Marxist system.

These findings are like the results from our 2025 survey, which found that 55% of Iranian Americans favor a parliamentary democracy. This points to a strong consensus within the Iranian American community in favor of democratic governance, with limited support for maintaining or reforming the current system or for alternative ideological models.

Analysis

5. Do you think the U.S. government should or should not publicly support specific Iranian opposition leaders or groups seeking political change in Iran?

| Response Option | Percent |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Should Publicly Support | 42% |
| Should Not Take a Position | 45% |
| Not Sure | 13% |

Iranian Americans are divided on whether the U.S. government should publicly support specific opposition leaders or groups seeking political change in Iran. A plurality (45%) believe the United States should not take a position, while 42% support publicly backing opposition figures.

Views vary significantly across demographic groups. Support for U.S. backing is highest among Republicans (71%), Jewish Iranian Americans (67%), and Zoroastrians (78%). In contrast, opposition to the U.S. taking a position is more pronounced among independents (56%), Democrats (51%), Muslims (58%), and younger respondents ages 18–34 (55%).

Analysis

6. Would you support or oppose the U.S. government publicly backing Reza Pahlavi as a legitimate opposition leader to the Islamic Republic of Iran?

| Response Option | Percent |
|------------------|---------|
| Strongly Support | 44% |
| Somewhat Support | 15% |
| Somewhat Oppose | 7% |
| Strongly Oppose | 24% |
| Not Sure | 10% |
| Total | 100% |

A majority of Iranian Americans (59%) support the U.S. government publicly backing Reza Pahlavi as an opposition leader to the Islamic Republic of Iran, including 44% who strongly support and 15% who somewhat support. In contrast, 31% oppose such backing (7% somewhat oppose, 24% strongly oppose), while 10% are unsure.

Support is particularly strong among Republicans (86% total support, including 76% strongly), and Jewish Iranian Americans (88% total support, including 77% strongly). In contrast, views are more divided among Democrats (48% support, 37% oppose) and Independents (51% support, 42% oppose). Among Muslims, respondents are nearly evenly split, with 44% supporting and 43% opposing.

Overall, these findings suggest that while Iranian Americans are divided on whether the United States should support opposition groups in general, there is a greater willingness to support a specific and well-known figure such as Reza Pahlavi.

Analysis

7. Would you support or oppose the U.S. government publicly backing the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK), also known as the People’s Mojahedin Organization of Iran, as a legitimate opposition group to the Islamic Republic of Iran?

| Response Option | Percent |
|------------------|---------|
| Strongly Support | 3% |
| Somewhat Support | 5% |
| Somewhat Oppose | 7% |
| Strongly Oppose | 66% |
| Not Sure | 18% |
| Total | 100% |

Support for the U.S. government publicly backing the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK) is extremely limited among Iranian Americans. Only 8% express support (3% strongly, 5% somewhat), while a large majority (73%) oppose such backing, including 66% who strongly oppose. An additional 18% are unsure.

Opposition to the MEK is broad and consistent across nearly all demographic groups, with net opposition evident across the political spectrum and among all major subgroups. Notably, opposition increases significantly with age, rising from a net -35 among those ages 18–34 to -64 among those 35–49, -79 among those 50–64, and reaching -84 among those 65 and older.

Analysis

8. Which of the following individuals or groups do you think is most likely to help move Iran toward a democratic system of government?

| Response Option | Percent |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Reza Pahlavi | 50% |
| Mir Hossein Mousavi | 6% |
| Nasrin Sotoudeh | 3% |
| Iran Freedom Congress | 3% |
| Narges Mohammadi | 2% |
| Group Of 17 | 1% |
| Maryam Rajavi | 0% |
| Other | 2% |
| None Of These | 9% |
| Not Sure | 23% |

When asked which individual or group is most likely to help move Iran toward a democratic system of government, Reza Pahlavi stands out as the only figure with significant support, selected by **50%** of Iranian Americans. Notably, he receives support across all major demographic groups, with no subgroup falling below **31%**, and particularly strong backing among Republicans (**77%**) and Jewish Iranian Americans (**76%**).

All other individuals and groups receive minimal support, with no alternative exceeding single digits. Mir Hossein Mousavi receives **6%**, while Nasrin Sotoudeh and the Iran Freedom Congress each receive **3%**, and Narges Mohammadi **2%**. Maryam Rajavi and the “Group of 17” receive negligible support at **1%** each.

At the same time, a notable share of respondents express uncertainty, with **23%** unsure and **9%** indicating that none of the listed individuals or groups would be able to move Iran toward democracy.

Analysis

9. Given current circumstances with Iran, what do you think should be the main priorities of Iranian American civic or advocacy organizations? (select 2)

| Response Option | Percent |
|---|---------|
| Promote internet freedom in Iran | 37% |
| Protect the civil rights of Iranian Americans in the United States | 16% |
| Provide humanitarian assistance to people in Iran | 46% |
| Encourage greater civic and political participation among Iranian Americans | 18% |
| Support Iranian students, asylum seekers, and individuals fleeing persecution | 25% |
| Preserve and promote Iranian culture and heritage | 21% |
| None of these | 4% |
| Not sure | 3% |

When asked about the main priorities for Iranian American civic and advocacy organizations under current circumstances, respondents most frequently identify providing humanitarian assistance to people in Iran (46%) as the top priority, followed by promoting internet freedom in Iran (37%) and supporting Iranian students, asylum seekers, and individuals fleeing persecution (25%).

Support for humanitarian assistance is broad across demographic groups, while prioritization of internet freedom varies more significantly - particularly higher among Democrats (46%), respondents ages 35-49 (47%), and those with higher levels of education, including 57% among those with postgraduate degrees.

Other priorities receive more modest support, including preserving and promoting Iranian culture and heritage (21%), encouraging greater civic and political participation among Iranian Americans (18%), and protecting the civil rights of Iranian Americans in the United States (16%).

Overall, these findings suggest that Iranian Americans place the greatest emphasis on humanitarian and Iran-focused efforts.

Methodology

About the Research: SurveyUSA interviewed 450 Iranian Americans across the entire United States 03/18/26 through 03/23/26 using a blended sample, mixed mode approach. 15% of adults were interviewed on the display of their smartphone, tablet or other electronic device using non-probability sample of internet panel members provided by Cint USA. Panel members were pre-screened by Cint as being of Middle Eastern descent, and were further screened by SurveyUSA for being of Persian or Iranian descent before being allowed into the survey. 85% of adults were interviewed using probability-based telephone sample of pre-screened adults of Persian heritage from Aristotle of Washington, DC, and were texted by live operators, who hand-dialed respondents on their mobile telephone, secured their cooperation, and texted them a link to an online survey. The pool of adult respondents was weighted to US Census-derived targets for gender, age, and education level. The margin of sampling error for this survey is calculated per question, and reported as a "credibility interval," which is a more conservative measure of total survey error than traditional margins of error. Credibility intervals, like traditional margins of sampling error, attempt to show how far in either direction a set of numbers might slide, if every other part of the research had been undertaken completely perfectly. And, just like traditional margin of error calculations, they vary from question to question based on both the number of respondents and on how the respondents "split" in their answers. Unlike traditional calculations, credibility intervals also incorporate additional sources of total survey error into their calculations, including the impact of weighting on the poll results, and as a result, they are a more conservative measure of error, typically somewhat larger than traditional margins of sampling error would be. Credibility intervals on the substantive questions on this project range from a low of ± 1.6 percentage points to a high of ± 5.6 percentage points, with the median credibility interval across the survey being ± 4.7 percentage points.

Demographic Breakdown

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Male | 52% |
| Female | 48% |
| 18-34 | 21% |
| 35-49 | 39% |
| 50-64 | 22% |
| 65+ | 18% |
| Republican | 24% |
| Democrat | 32% |
| Independent | 37% |
| Married | 55% |
| Live With Partner | 8% |
| Divorced | 11% |
| Widowed | 3% |
| Never Married | 23% |

| | |
|---------------|-----|
| Muslim | 24% |
| Baha'i | 4% |
| Zoroastrian | 5% |
| Christian | 12% |
| Agnostic | 17% |
| Atheist | 20% |
| Jewish | 8% |
| Other | 9% |
| < \$40K | 20% |
| \$40K - \$80K | 36% |
| > \$80K | 44% |
| No Degree | 21% |
| 4-year Degree | 34% |
| Post-Graduate | 45% |
| 2000+ | 20% |
| 1990s | 18% |
| 1981-89 | 22% |
| 1978-80 | 16% |
| Pre-1978 | 24% |

| | |
|-----------|-----|
| Own | 71% |
| Rent | 29% |
| Urban | 45% |
| Suburban | 49% |
| Rural | 6% |
| Northeast | 13% |
| Midwest | 9% |
| South | 18% |
| West | 59% |



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