



AP Photo/Vahid Salemi

An Iranian voter shows her hand with numbers 30+16, a reformists slogan urging people to vote all reformists and moderate candidates in Tehran for both parliament and Assembly of Experts during the elections, as she fills out her ballot in a polling station in Tehran, Iran, on Friday.

## Iran votes in first elections since landmark nuclear deal

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iranians voted Friday in the country's first election since its landmark nuclear deal with world powers, deciding whether to further empower moderates backing President Hassan Rouhani or support hard-liners long suspicious of the West.

The elections for Iran's parliament and a powerful clerical body known as the Assembly of Experts are tightly controlled by the establishment headed by the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, which ultimately determines who can run.

But within the range allowed by the Islamic Republic, the voting may provide a referendum on Rouhani's policies — and his promises that the nuclear deal, the lifting of most international sanctions and a greater degree of opening to the West can help boost a battered economy — a top concern for most voters.

Nearly 55 million of Iran's 80 million people were eligible to vote. Participation figures and other statistics were not immediately available, though Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli predicted late Thursday there would be a turnout of 70 percent.

Polls had been scheduled to close at 6 p.m., but the Interior Ministry said it would extend voting time until 11:45 p.m. in the capital. Authorities said election workers had begun counting ballots after that.

In Tehran, voter Hossein Gerami said he backed reformists to support Rouhani.

"The country suffered under hard-liners," he said. "Today is the time to change Iran for the better."

Sakineh Mamoudi, who backed hard-

liners, said she worried about Western influence growing in Iran.

"I voted for those who protect the values of the revolution and oppose foreign domination of the country because I don't want pro-West figures to get control of the parliament," Mamoudi said.

The nuclear deal has been the centerpiece of Rouhani's policies since he was elected in 2013 — and the sealing of the deal won Iran the lifting of most international sanctions against it. Throughout, he and the negotiating team had to push against hard-liner opposition. Supreme leader Khamenei eventually gave his consent to the final result. Now reformists want to build on that opening to the world, promising improvements in the economy.

Despite the nuclear deal, Iran and the West have a long history of enmity, fueled by the 1953 Britain and U.S.-engineered coup that installed the shah and the 1979 Islamic Revolution and takeover of the American Embassy. A billboard put up in Tehran before the election showed the face of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II replaced with that of a camel, warning voters about "foreign meddling."

The hard-line camp is largely made up of loyalists of Rouhani's predecessor, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who during his two terms in office avidly stoked tensions with the U.S. and cracked down on internal dissidents.

The vote is unlikely to radically change Iran, but reformists and moderates peeling away seats from hard-liners could help Rouhani push through his domestic agenda. Reformists say that about 200 of its 3,000 would-be candidates were allowed to run in the election.

## Sheriff: Cop who killed Kansas gunman a 'tremendous hero'

Associated Press

HESSTON, Kan. — A man who stormed into a Kansas factory and shot 14 people, killing three, had just been served with a protective order involving a former girlfriend that probably set off the attack, authorities said Friday.

The assault at the Excel Industries lawnmower-parts plant in the small town of Hesston ended when the police chief killed the gunman in a shootout.

Harvey County Sheriff T. Walton described the officer as a "tremendous hero" because 200 or 300 people were still in the factory and the "shooter wasn't done by any means."

Had the officer "not done what he did, this would be a whole lot more tragic," Walton said.

The gunman was identified as Cedric Ford, a 38-year-old worker at the factory. As a convicted felon, he was prohibited from owning any kind of firearm. A woman was charged with supplying him with an assault rifle and a pistol.

Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback said preliminary information indicated that the officer was Hesston Police Chief Doug Schroeder, who did not wait for backup and "seized the situation."

Schroeder has been on the job since 1998, according to his LinkedIn profile.

While driving to the factory, the gunman shot a man on the street, striking him in the shoulder. A short time later, he shot someone else in the leg at an intersection, authorities said.

The suspect shot one person in the factory parking lot before opening fire inside the building, the sheriff's department said.

Ford had several convictions in Florida over the last decade. His past offenses included burglary, grand theft, fleeing from an officer, aggravated fleeing and carrying a concealed weapon, all from Broward and Miami-Dade counties.



AP Photo/Orlin Wagner

Shattered glass and bullet holes are seen at the front door of Excel Industries in Hesston, Kan., Friday.

According to the *Wichita Eagle*, Ford also had criminal cases in Harvey County, including a misdemeanor conviction in 2008 for fighting and various traffic violations from 2014 and 2015.

A Facebook page under the name of a Cedric Ford employed at Excel includes photos posted within the past month of a man posing with a long gun and another of a handgun in a man's lap in a car. Federal law bars felons from possessing firearms.

Recent posts also include music videos of rappers from Miami, photos of cars and pictures posted in January of a trip to a zoo with children.

Sarah T. Hopkins, 28, was in jail awaiting a court appearance Monday on charges that she gave Ford a semi-automatic rifle similar to an AK-47 and a Glock .40-caliber handgun.

According to an affidavit, Hopkins lived with Ford in nearby Newton before moving out in July. Newton police later met her at the home so she could retrieve the weapons, which she had purchased. Hopkins told officers on Friday that she gave the weapons to Ford in August because he had threatened her.

Hopkins and Ford had a 2-year-old son and a 4-year-old daughter, according to a report in the *Eagle* that cited a paternity case in Harvey County last year. She is not the same woman who sought the order of protection.

The shooting came less than a week after a man opened fire at several locations in the Kalamazoo, Michigan, area, leaving six people dead and two severely wounded. Authorities have not disclosed a possible motive in those attacks.

Walton said his office served the suspect with the protection-from-abuse order at around 3:30 p.m., about 90 minutes before the first shooting happened.

A judge issued a temporary order of protection earlier this month for a former girlfriend who said in her petition that Ford was a violent, depressed alcoholic.

"It's my belief he is in desperate need of medical and psychological help!" she wrote.

The ex-girlfriend, who indicated on court documents that she had lived with Ford, said the two were arguing on Feb. 5 when he grabbed her, placed her in a choke hold from behind and took her to the ground.

On Thursday, Ford left work early without explanation before returning hours later with a rifle, according to a co-worker.

Martin Espinoza, who works at Excel, heard people yelling to others to get out of the building, then heard popping and saw the shooter.

Espinoza said the shooter pointed a gun at him and pulled the trigger, but the gun was empty.

At that point, the gunman got a different gun and Espinoza ran.

### BRIEFLY

#### U.S., Russia-brokered cease-fire goes into effect across Syria

BEIRUT (AP) — A cease-fire brokered by the United States and Russia went into effect across Syria on Saturday, marking the biggest international push to reduce violence in the country's devastating conflict, but the Islamic State group and al-Qaida's branch in Syria, the Nusra Front, were excluded.

The cease-fire aims to bring representatives of the Syrian government and the opposition back to the negotiating table in Geneva for talks on a political transition. The U.N.'s envoy, Staffan de Mistura, announced that peace talks would resume on March 7 if the cessation of hostilities "largely holds."

If it does, it would be the first time international negotiations have brought any degree of quiet in Syria's five-year civil war. But success requires adherence by multiple armed factions — and the truce is made more fragile because it allows fighting to continue against the Islamic State group and Nusra Front, which could easily re-ignite broader warfare.

The Syrian government and the opposition, including nearly 100 rebel groups, have said they will abide by the cease-fire despite serious skepticism about chances for success.

Moments after the truce took hold, Mazen al-Shami, an opposition activist near Damascus, said an opposition-held eastern suburb of the capital known as Eastern Ghouta was "quiet for the first time in years." The Ghouta region, which includes the sprawling suburb of Douma, has been the scene of intense fighting during Syria's conflict.

An Associated Press crew

in Damascus said the sounds of explosions stopped three minutes before midnight. An Aleppo-based opposition media collective, Aleppo24, said Russian warplanes left Aleppo skies at 12:19 a.m.

There were some reports of violations, which could not be independently confirmed, but they appeared to be relatively limited. Opposition activist Mohammed al-Sibai, who is based in the central province of Homs, told the AP that the cease-fire was violated 15 minutes after it went into effect in the town of Talbiseh, which was being subjected to shelling by government artillery based around the town. However, he said things later quieted down. Significantly, there were no immediate reports of any airstrikes.

#### Zika confirmed in 9 pregnant women in U.S.

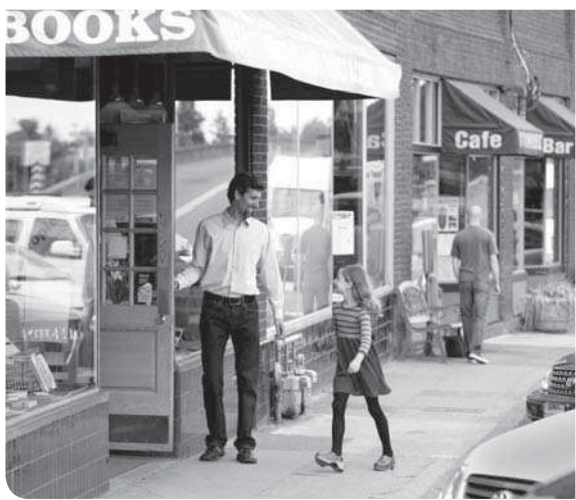
NEW YORK (AP) — Zika infections have been confirmed in nine pregnant women in the United States, including one who gave birth to a baby with a rare birth defect, health officials said Friday.

All got the virus while visiting or living in places with Zika outbreaks.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said it is also investigating 10 more reports of pregnant travelers with Zika.

The U.S. cases add to reports out of Brazil. Officials there are exploring a possible link to babies born with unusually small heads, a rare birth defect called microcephaly that can signal underlying brain damage.

Zika has become epidemic in Latin America and the Caribbean since last fall. The virus — mainly spread by through mosquito bites — causes mild illness or no symptoms in most people.



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