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Iran Crisis Update, December 1

Nicholas Carl, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, and Frederick W. Kagan
December 1, 5:00 pm ET

The Iran Crisis Updates are produced by the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute with support from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW). To receive Iran Crisis Updates via email, please subscribe [here](#).

Protesters in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province rhetorically defended prominent Sunni cleric Moulana Abdol Hamid against the regime on December 1, underscoring the dilemma the regime faces in its protest crackdown. Protesters gathered and erected a large poster of Abdol Hamid in a city square.¹ The poster read that Abdol Hamid is the protesters' "red line," implying that they will not tolerate the regime arresting him or suppressing his message. The protesters may be responding to the purported internal regime memo that the Black Reward hacker group released on November 30.² The memo reported that Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei tried to discredit and threatened to arrest Abdol Hamid for his role in inspiring protests, although CTP cannot verify these claims. Abdol Hamid's message is seemingly resonating with a growing number of Iranians, especially in the Iranian Sunni community. Any regime action to silence him risks inflaming protests and anti-regime frustrations further. The regime may target individuals close to Abdol Hamid as a less escalatory step to silence him. The protestors today posed an additional dilemma for the regime, however, since failure to act against Abdol Hamid after the erection of the poster could make it appear that the regime was daunted by the protester threats and thus encourage similar defiance and threats elsewhere.

The Raisi administration may be conducting a purge of local officials across Iran to install more loyal cadres. Parliamentarian Jalal Mahmoud Zadeh accused President Ebrahim Raisi and Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi of conducting this purge in some towns such as Mahabad, West Azerbaijan Province on December 1.³ Raisi has historically used his authorities in different regime positions to purge political opponents.⁴ Mahmoud Zadeh represents Mahabad in Parliament and has previously criticized the security forces' crackdown there.⁵ The Islamic

Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) deployed conventional ground units to violently suppress protesters in Mahabad on November 19, as CTP previously reported.⁶

The Raisi administration may be trying to remove local officials who opposed the brutality of the regime crackdown. IRGC-affiliated *Fars News Agency* reported on October 19 that two percent of arrested protesters were government employees.⁷

Key Takeaways

- Protesters in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province rhetorically defended prominent Sunni cleric Moulana Abdol Hamid against the regime.
- The Raisi administration may be conducting a purge of local officials across Iran to install more loyal cadres.
- At least five protests took place in four cities across four provinces.
- Neighborhood youth groups disseminated instructions on how to prevent state security services from collecting intelligence on protesters in preparation for the planned protests on December 5-7.

Anti-Regime Protests

At least five protests took place in four cities across four provinces on December 1. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Esfahan City, Esfahan Province⁸

- Size: Medium
- Demographic: Mourners
- Notes: Commemoration ceremony for Arshiya Imam Ghloi Zadeh, a 16-year-old boy who reportedly killed himself after being arrested and released for participating in anti-regime protests.

Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province⁹

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Al Zahra Hospital medical students and professors

Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province¹⁰

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Sunni Cleric Moulana Abdol Hamid supporters
- Notes: Protesters stood adjacent to a banner including Abdol Hamid and the slogan “Abdol Hamid is our red line.”

CTP assesses with low confidence that protests occurred in the following locations on December 1:

Esfahan City, Esfahan Province¹¹

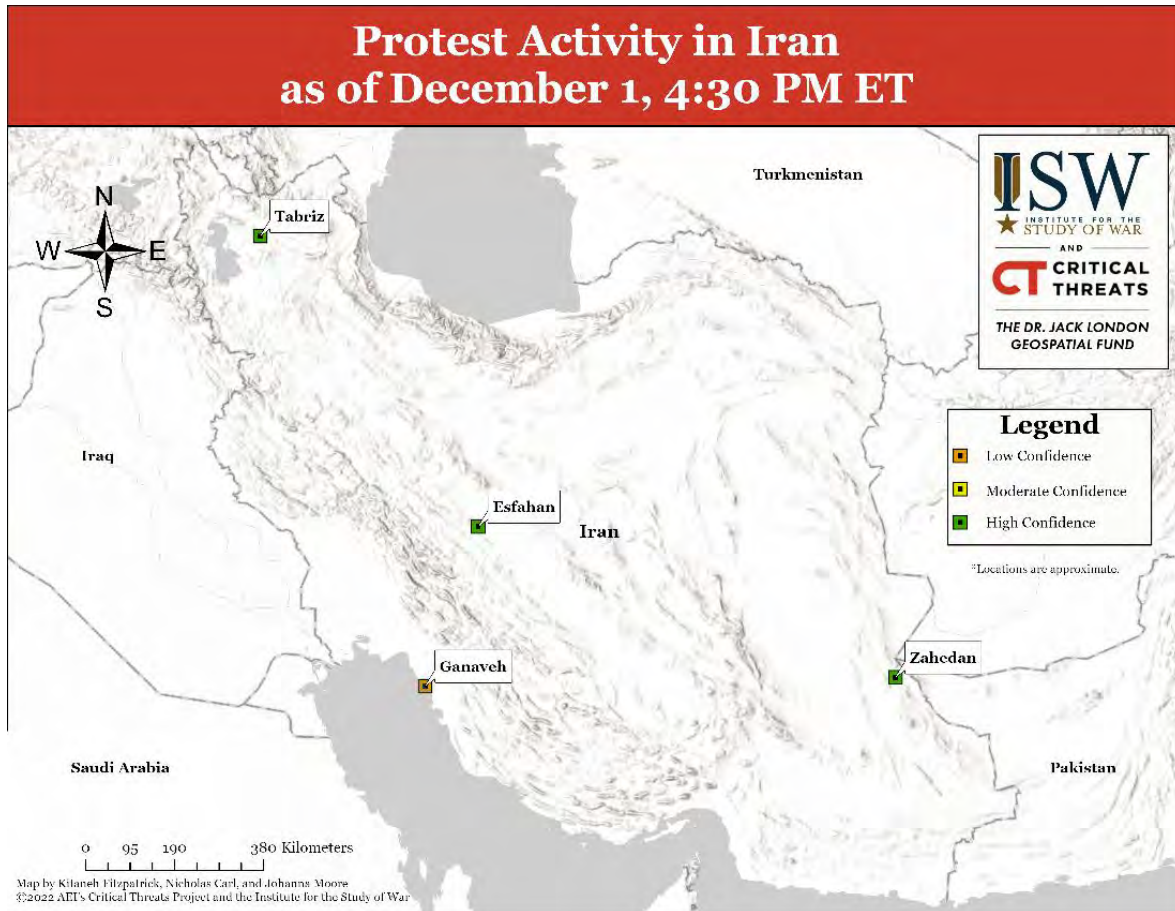
- Size: Small
- Demographic: Esfahan University of Technology Students

Ganaveh, Bushehr Province¹²

- Size: Small

- Demographic: Workers
- Notes: Possibly old footage; only one clip of protest circulating on social media

Note: CTP defines small protests as fewer than 100 individuals, medium protests as between 100 and 1,000, and large protests as over one thousand.



Neighborhood youth groups disseminated instructions on how to prevent state security services from collecting intelligence on protesters in preparation for the planned protests on December 5-7. The Karaj group advised protesters to clear their cellphones and electronic devices of information related to the protests and relevant contacts, place their cellphones on airplane mode, and password-protect their Instagram accounts.¹³ The Mashhad Neighborhood Youth called on its “operational teams” to destroy CCTV cameras to prevent the state security services from using them to identify protesters.¹⁴ The Mashhad Neighborhood Youth has repeatedly issued guidance and instructions to these operational teams since November 2022, implying some level of organization within this particular group.¹⁵

President Ebrahim Raisi traveled to Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province and met with local religious leaders, among others, on December 1.¹⁶ His visit suggests that Raisi and his administration concluded that the unrest in Sanandaj had subsided enough to allow a safe trip. Raisi’s travel is his first to Kurdistan Province since protests began on September 16.

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

There was nothing significant to report today.

¹

https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/159832555128143873?s=20&t=99mUNZNkzFma8WL_VKrU6Q

² <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-november-30>

³ <https://eslahatnews dot com/%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%AA-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A7%D8%AE%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AC-%DA%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%87-%D9%86%DB%8C%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%B4%D9%87%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C-%DA%A9%D9%88%DA%86%DA%A9-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA>

⁴ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Whatever-it-takes-to-end-it.pdf>

⁵ https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-november-21#_edn4c076172923f4af20320503a7d210f978

⁶ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-november-19>

⁷ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-19>

⁸ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/159838511128571911?s=20&t=x3JSUniNfe9Nb3Vv2CCwOg> ;
https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1598412314465763329?s=20&t=x3JSUniNfe9Nb3Vv2CCwOg ;
https://twitter.com/Mojtabapacino/status/1597500883926818816?s=20&t=IGQy_bZmc5kQWNYVoLH35w

⁹

https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1598338165626048513?s=20&t=99mUNZNkzFma8WL_VKrU6Q ;
<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1598329133125304321?s=20&t=MWGx3KUzzemL3z2tJhTIWw>

¹⁰

https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/159832555128143873?s=20&t=99mUNZNkzFma8WL_VKrU6Q ;
https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1598286684000378880?s=20&t=99mUNZNkzFma8WL_VKrU6Q ; <https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1598316257752875009?s=20&t=IER-lqboGcFm59YhVz2h1w>

¹¹ https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1598327086095237120?s=20&t=IoFaMa_nNLe5g62K8Pfrlg ;
<https://twitter.com/VOAfarsi/status/1598393493444886528?s=20&t=yRvsnaOp3DHTc1S60Rc-uQ>

¹²

https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1598372721519431690?s=20&t=99mUNZNkzFma8WL_VKrU6Q

¹³ https://twitter.com/javanane_k/status/1598340102085918720

¹⁴ https://twitter.com/Javanan_mashhad/status/1598287820690333699

¹⁵

https://twitter.com/search?q=%D8%AA%DB%8C%D9%85%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C%20%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%AA%DB%8C%20javanan&src=typed_query

¹⁶ <http://www.president dot ir/fa/141119> ; <http://www.president dot ir/fa/141111>

Iran Crisis Update, December 2

Nicholas Carl, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Johanna Moore, and Frederick W. Kagan
December 2, 5:00 pm ET

The Iran Crisis Updates are produced by the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute with support from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW). To receive Iran Crisis Updates via email, please subscribe [here](#).

Contributor: Amin Soltani

The Mashhad Neighborhood Youth issued further instructions for the planned protests on December 5-7. The Mashhad group called for street protests on December 5, protests moving toward and occupying government buildings on December 6, and countrywide protests and marches in solidarity with university students on December 7.^[1] These instructions partially mirror those distributed by the Tehran Neighborhood Youth, which similarly differentiated planned protest activities by day, as CTP previously reported.^[2]

The Mashhad group provided additional guidance on how to degrade the regime's capability to crack down on protests on December 2. The group called on protesters to target security forces on motorcycles, noting the importance of motorcycle units to the regime protest crackdown.^[3] Some of the most elite regime security units, such as the Basij Imam Ali battalions, use motorcycles to disperse and intimidate crowds and rapidly traverse busy city streets.^[4] The regime formed some of these units after the Green Movement in 2009, specifically to improve its effectiveness in suppressing protests in dense urban areas.^[5] The Mashhad group previously called on its "operational teams" to destroy CCTV cameras to prevent the state security services from using them to identify protesters on December 1.^[6]

The behavior of the Mashhad Neighborhood Youth suggests that it may be more coordinated and organized than some other youth groups in the protest movement. The Mashhad group has repeatedly issued guidance and instructions to its operational teams since November 2022, as CTP previously reported, in addition to advising protesters.^[7] The Mashhad group was also the first and second signatory of the joint youth group statements issued on November 22 and 27, respectively, suggesting that the group may have played a role in organizing the statements among the youth groups.^[8]

Anti-regime outlet *Iran International* published an article on December 2 suggesting that the regime is struggling to sustain the necessary equipment and manpower to continue its protest crackdown.^[9] The article reported that the regime has sought advisors and the purchase of protest suppression equipment from Russia to support the crackdown. Senior US officials warned on October 26 that Russia may advise the regime protest crackdown.^[10] The *Iran International* article separately reported that an unidentified senior IRGC officer claimed that the IRGC tried to mobilize 1,000 retired personnel for the crackdown to mitigate manpower shortages, but that only 300 retirees were willing to help. *Iran International* previously reported on October 14 that the IRGC called on retirees to report to the Mohammad Rasoul Ollah headquarters—the IRGC unit responsible for security in Tehran Province.^[11] CTP cannot verify any of the reports from *Iran International*.

Key Takeaways

- The Mashhad Neighborhood Youth issued further instructions for the planned protests on December 5-7.
- The behavior of the Mashhad Neighborhood Youth suggests that it may be more coordinated and organized than some other youth groups in the protest movement.
- Anti-regime outlet *Iran International* published an article suggesting that the regime is struggling to shore up the necessary equipment and manpower to continue its protest crackdown.
- At least seven protests took place in seven cities across six provinces on December 2.
- Unidentified individuals attacked Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister for General Industries Mohammad Mehdi Baradaran on his way home.
- Prominent Sunni Cleric Moulana Abdol Hamid condemned the **regime's** protest suppression response in his Friday prayer sermon in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province.
- Prosecutor General Mohammad Javad Montazeri stated that Parliament and the Supreme Cultural Revolution Council will announce an opinion on the mandatory hijab law by December 17.

Anti-Regime Protests

At least seven protests took place in seven cities across six provinces on December 2. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Bandar-e Anzali, Gilan Province[12]

Size: Medium

Demographic: Mourners

Notes: Funeral for Mehran Samak

Ghorveh, Kurdistan Province[13]

Size: Small

Izeh, Khuzestan Province[14]

Size: Small to medium

Demographic: Mourners

Notes: Funeral for Hamed Selahshour who security forces reportedly tortured to death for participating in anti-regime protests.

Arak, Markazi Province[15]

Size: Small to medium

Demographic: Mourners

Notes: 40-day commemoration ceremony for Sina Malayaeri

Regime Repression: Security forces verbally threaten mourners

Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province[16]

Size: Medium

Protester Activity: Burned ties in road

Regime Repression: Security forces fired live ammunition and tear gas

Notes: Protests followed Abdol Hamid's Friday prayer sermon

Tehran City, Tehran Province[17]

Size: Undetermined

Protester Activity: Fire lit in street

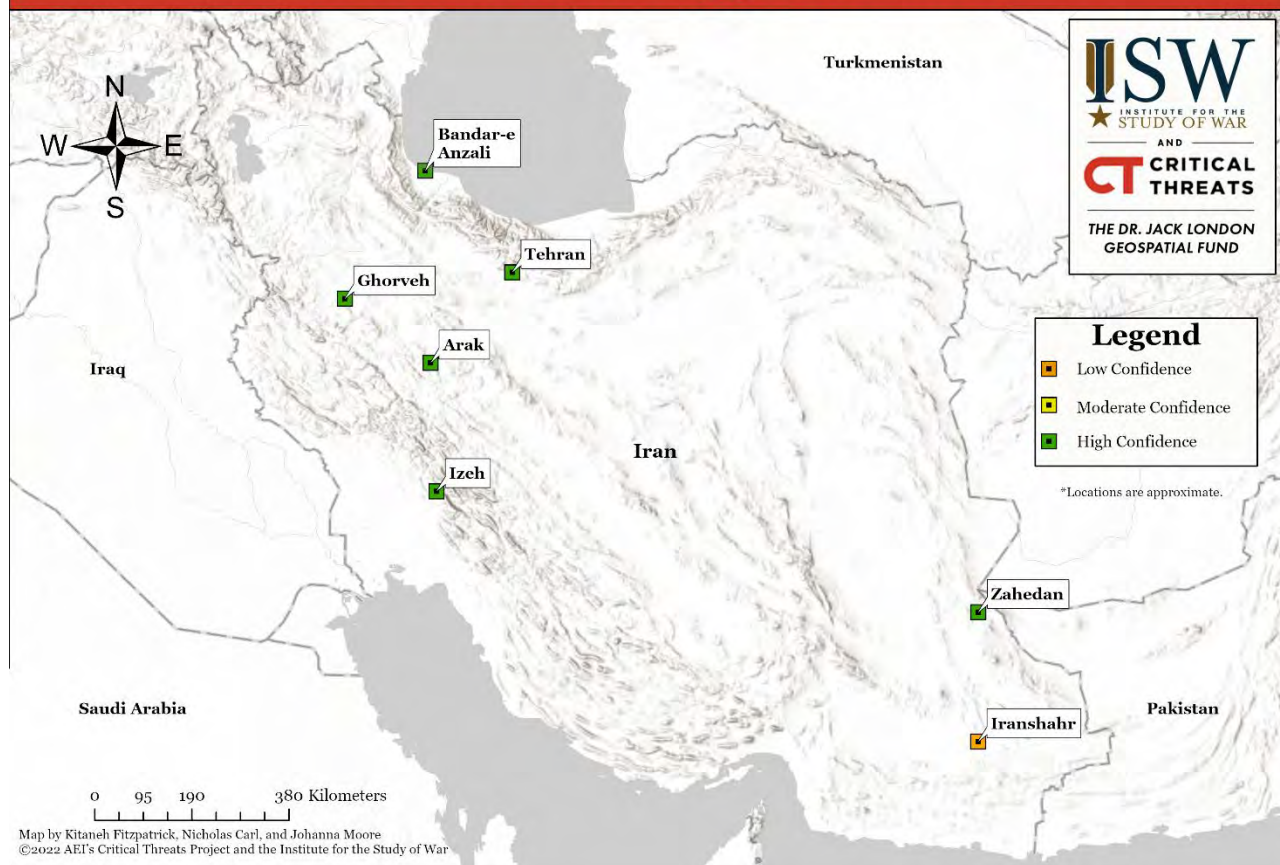
CTP assesses with low confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Iranshahr, Sistan and Baluchistan Province[18]

Size: Small

Note: CTP defines small protests as fewer than 100 individuals, medium protests as between 100 and 1,000, and large protests as over one thousand.

Protest Activity in Iran as of December 2, 5:00 PM ET



Unidentified individuals attacked Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister for General Industries Mohammad Mehdi Baradaran on his way home, according to Iranian media on December 1.[19] It is unclear where Baradaran lives, though he presumably has a home in Tehran given his position. Baradaran was hospitalized in critical condition after the attack.

The Shiraz Neighborhood Youth on December 2 called on protesters to send in images and videos of businesses open during the planned protests on December 5-7.[20] The Shiraz group expressed intent to use these images and videos to organize boycotts against those businesses.

Prominent Sunni Cleric Moulana Abdol Hamid condemned the **regime's** protest suppression response in his Friday prayer sermon in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province on December 2. Abdol Hamid criticized Iranian officials for issuing death sentences to several protesters. Abdol Hamid additionally responded to the hacktivist Black Reward group's leaked documents allegedly discussing regime efforts to undermine Abdol Hamid, stating: "If you are able to govern and have power, it is by God's will. If we have the respect and love of the people, it is by God's will. God bestows honor and takes it away. No one but God can take honor away." Abdol Hamid stressed the importance of religious unity in a possible attempt to appeal to marginalized groups beyond Sistan and Baluchistan Province.[21] Abdol Hamid's message is seemingly resonating with a growing number of Iranians--especially in the Iranian Sunni community—as CTP has previously reported.[22]

Prosecutor General Mohammad Javad Montazeri stated on December 1 that Parliament and the Supreme Cultural Revolution Council will announce an opinion on the mandatory hijab law by December 16.[23]

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

The Washington Institute for Near East Policy published analysis on how Iranian-backed factions believe they can control major decisions in the Iraqi central government under Prime Minister Mohammad Shia al Sudani.[24] Qais Khazali—the leader of Iranian proxy Asaib Ahl al Haq—stated that Sudani must refer to the Shia Coordination Framework on "strategic decisions, whether political, economic, or security," according to the analysis. The Shia Coordination Framework is the umbrella organization for Iran-backed political factions in Iraq.

- [1] https://twitter.com/Javanan_mashhad/status/1598367357008748545?s=20&t=zlaXNUNCVLApXqPObYMDuQ
- [2] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-november-30>
- [3] https://t.me/mashhad_protests/1171
- [4] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Whatever-it-takes-to-end-it.pdf>
- [5] Read Saeid Golkar, *Captive Society: The Basij Militia and Social Control in Iran* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and New York: Columbia University Press, 2015) for a detailed analysis of the history and structure of the Basij Organization.
- [6] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-1>
- [7] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-1>
- [8] https://twitter.com/javanane_k/status/1595095807480717313;
https://twitter.com/javanane_k/status/1596829675376070656
- [9] <https://www.iranintl.com/202212022167>
- [10] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-26>
- [11] https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-14#_ednb0f9170428c5711aa796a758be63df961
- [12] <https://twitter.com/pouriazeraati/status/1598668338083041281?s=20&t=mBI2gJvDWEcSX2-XQevjuq> ; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1598679126369525761?s=20&t=tqw1CQlviZqAd2ces9XfyA>
- [13] https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1598745201488584705?s=20&t=daq-KARVZsVn2Bmnd5X1Ng ; <https://twitter.com/FattahiFarzad/status/1598753291457789952?s=20&t=daq-KARVZsVn2Bmnd5X1Ng> ; <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1598774161643835392?s=20&t=DhonAlnO-0RnZyRe-m-FAw> ; <https://twitter.com/FattahiFarzad/status/1598752840763158528?s=20&t=daq-KARVZsVn2Bmnd5X1Ng>
- [14] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1598721899013763075?s=20&t=1NVEsDktLVotj0G2keM3sQ> ; <https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1598723328646283265?s=20&t=1NVEsDktLVotj0G2keM3sQ> ; <https://twitter.com/mamlekate/status/1598765965012934656?s=20&t=1NVEsDktLVotj0G2keM3sQ> ; <https://twitter.com/gh0lch0magh/status/1598129152552337409?s=20&t=zlaXNUNCVLApXqPObYMDuQ>
- [15] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1598656763628331011> ; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1598655925358919682?s=20&t=jMGwRlFhIwA3liXcyQgU0A> ; https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1598631834308542464?s=20&t=dCqQ-n-u6orQO8h8NKvMWQ ; https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1598686249379930115?s=20&t=dCqQ-n-u6orQO8h8NKvMWQ
- [16] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1598637415933087744> ; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1598637457863475200> ; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1598657343016894464> ; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1598658593749979139> ; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1598680253068505089> ; https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1598624145830514690 ; <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1598651107466682371>
- [17] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1598768100622540800?s=20&t=DhonAlnO-0RnZyRe-m-FAw> ; <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1598772626217963523?s=20&t=DhonAlnO-0RnZyRe-m-FAw>
- [18] https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1598614356937379841?s=20&t=cUpqpp-dIrrKToG_EqTH1A ; https://twitter.com/FattahiFarzad/status/1598614702355005440?s=20&t=cUpqpp-dIrrKToG_EqTH1A
- [19] www.shahraranews dot ir/fa/news/137722
- [20] https://twitter.com/javananeh_Sh/status/1598803929013157888
- [21] <https://abdolhamid dot net/persian/2022/12/02/13069/>
- [22] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-updates>
- [23] <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/iran-govrment-hejab-policy/32158317.html>
- [24] <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/sudani-general-manager-how-muqawama-views-new-iraqi-pm#main-content>



Iran Crisis Update, December 3

Nicholas Carl, Zachary Coles, Dana Alexander Gray, and Frederick W. Kagan

December 3, 5:30 pm ET

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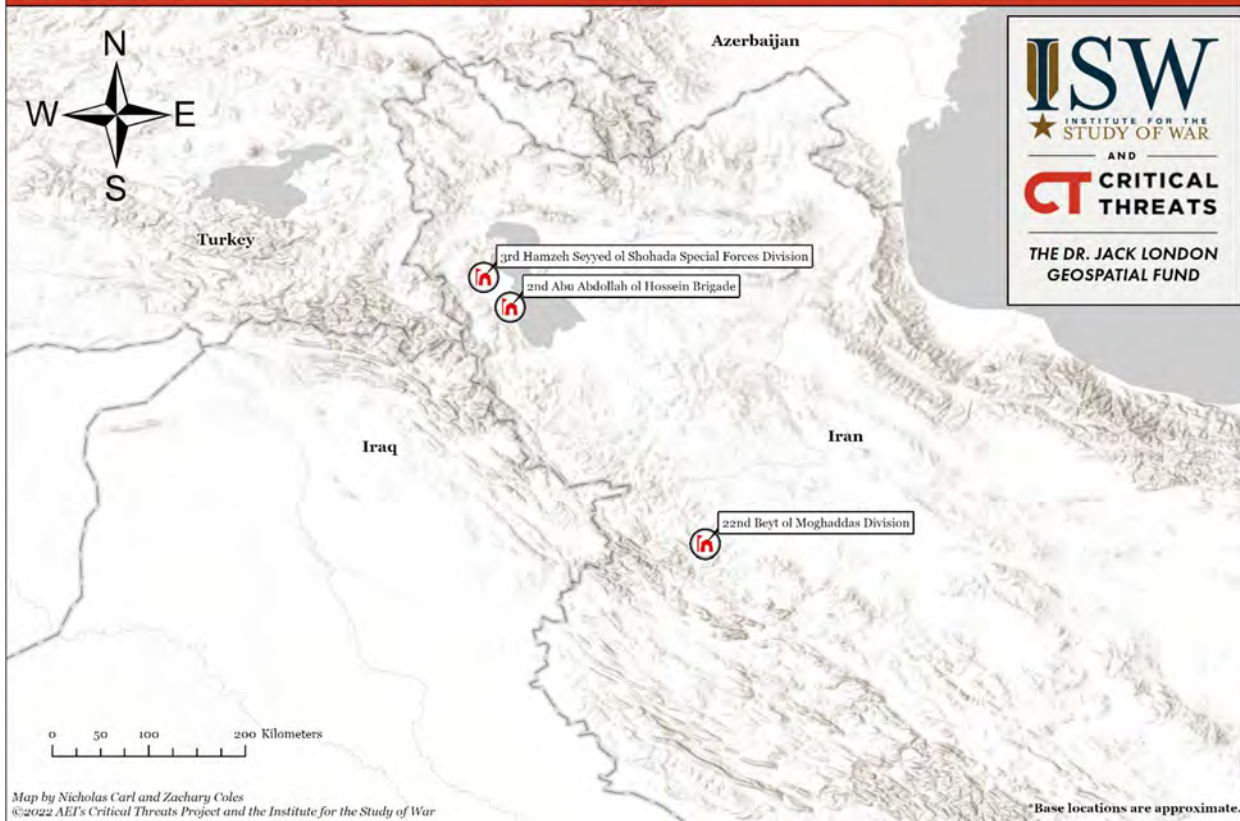
Protest coordinators and organizations continued issuing guidance on December 3 in preparation for the planned countrywide protests and strikes on December 5-7. The Hamedan Neighborhood Youth posted instructions on how to make hand-thrown explosives, Molotov cocktails, and pepper spray.¹ The Karaj Neighborhood Youth and others published maps of planned protest locations.² The Shiraz Neighborhood Youth advised citizens to prepare basic necessities and cash for themselves given the planned strikes.³

Statements from the neighborhood youth groups portray a protest movement that is still trying to cohere and experimenting with different approaches. The Karaj group, among others, called for increasingly concentrated protests on each day from December 5 to 7.⁴ The Tehran group repeated on December 3 its calls for a different approach, in contrast. The Tehran group acknowledged "differences of opinion" and insisted that citizens only strike on December 5 because security forces can more easily identify protesters and traverse city streets during strikes due to the reduced traffic.⁵ The Tehran group called for protests on December 6 and 7. This iteration within the protest movement is a natural step as it tries to coalesce and organize.

Senior Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) officer Brigadier General Mohammad Taghi Osanlou reiterated demands that the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) disarm Kurdish militant groups in Iraqi Kurdistan and extradite some of them to Iran on December 3. Osanlou is the commander of the IRGC Ground Forces Hamzeh Seyyed ol Shohada Operational Headquarters, which controls IRGC units in Kurdistan and West Azerbaijan provinces.⁶ Osanlou is therefore one of the principal officers responsible for any IRGC attacks into Iraqi Kurdistan. His comments are also noteworthy because he rarely makes prominent statements, in contrast with other senior IRGC officers. The main units he controls include:

- The 3rd Hamzeh Seyyed ol Shohada Special Forces Division (Oroumیه, West Azerbaijan Province);
- The 22nd Beyt ol Moghaddas Operational Division (Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province); and
- The 2nd Abu Abdollah ol Hossein Brigade (Oroumیه, West Azerbaijan Province).

Main IRGC Units under the Hamzeh Seyyed ol Shohada Operational Headquarters



Osanlou stated that the Iran-Iraq border is presently stable but expressed dissatisfaction with the KRG's failure to meet Iranian demands. Osanlou's remarks diverge slightly from those of Foreign Affairs Minister Amir Abdollahian, who boasted that the Iraqi central government committed to disarming and removing Kurdish militants from the border region, on November 23.⁷ IRGC leadership may remain dissatisfied with the Iraqi central government's efforts thus far to adhere to Iranian demands.

Key Takeaways

- Protest coordinators and organizations continued issuing guidance in preparation for the planned countrywide protests and strikes on December 5-7.
- Statements from the neighborhood youth groups portray a protest movement that is still trying to cohere and experimenting with different approaches.
- At least nine protests took place in seven cities across seven provinces.
- The State Security Council threatened to confront protests "decisively and without tolerance" in a statement, likely to deter turnout of mass protests planned for December 5-7.

Anti-Regime Protests

At least nine protests took place in seven cities across seven provinces on December 3. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Karaj, Alborz Province⁸

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Khwarazmi University of Karaj students
- Notes: Students protested a mass food poisoning reportedly perpetrated by regime security personnel.

Abdanan, Ilam Province⁹

- Size: Small
- Regime Repression: Regime security personnel reportedly attacked protesters.

Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province¹⁰

- Size: Small

Arak, Markazi Province¹¹

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Arak University of Technology students
- Notes: Students protested a mass food poisoning reportedly perpetrated by regime security personnel.

Tehran City, Tehran Province¹²

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Industrial workers
- Protest Activity: Strike and protest

Tehran City, Tehran Province¹³

- Size: Small
- Protest Activity: Fire lit in street

Boukan, West Azerbaijan Province¹⁴

- Size: Undetermined
- Protest Activity: Fire lit in street

CTP assesses with low confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Esfahan City, Esfahan Province¹⁵

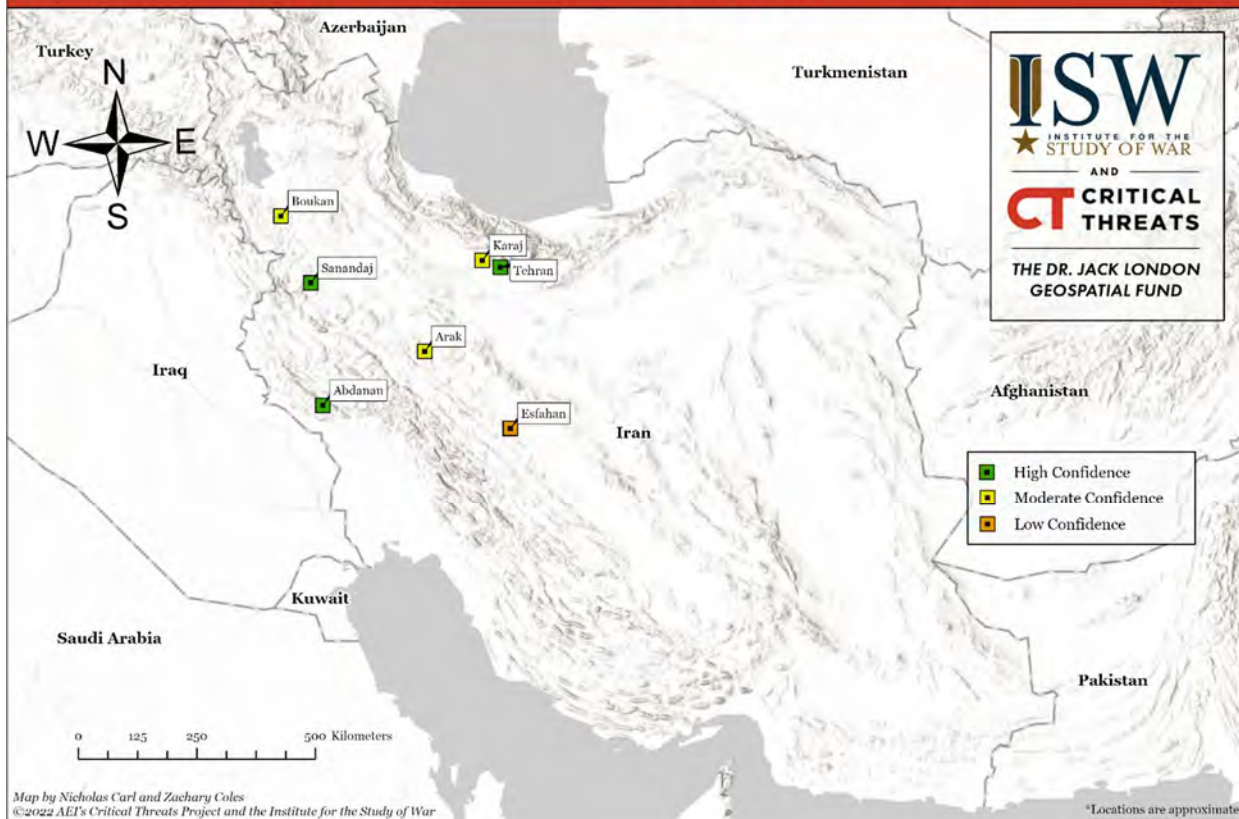
- Size: Small
- Demographic: Farmers
- Notes: Farmers protested in front of the regional water department building in Esfahan City.

Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province¹⁶

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Kurdistan University students

Note: CTP defines small protests as fewer than 100 individuals, medium protests as between 100 and 1,000, and large protests as over one thousand.

Protest Activity in Iran as of December 03, 5:30 PM ET



Shirin—a Persian-language protester social media account—created a website to document its political manifesto on December 2.¹⁷ The group initially tweeted the manifesto on October 14, which called for a democratic, secular Iranian republic, and revised it on October 18, as CTP previously reported.¹⁸

The State Security Council threatened to confront protests “decisively and without tolerance” in a December 3 statement, likely to deter turnout of planned protests on December 5-7.¹⁹ The security body reiterated regime claims that foreign enemies, such as the West and Saudi Arabia, are waging a hybrid war against Iran and thus responsible for the protests. The security body also reported an “unprecedented” level of arms smuggling into Iran. Interior Minister Brigadier General Ahmad Vahidi chairs the State Security Council, which is under the Interior Ministry and responsible for domestic security issues. Other members include representatives from the Intelligence and Security Ministry, IRGC, Artesh, and Law Enforcement Command.²⁰

This statement is noteworthy given how exceedingly rare announcements from the State Security Council are. It is unclear why Vahidi decided to publish this message through the State Security Council rather than issuing it himself. It is also unclear why the Supreme National Security Council did not publish the message. It may be related to the rumored departure of Ali Shamkhani as Supreme National Security Council secretary.²¹

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

Likely Iranian-backed militants launched four rockets at a Turkish military base near Bashiqa, Ninewa Province in northern Iraq on December 3. Two rockets landed within the base but did not cause any damage or casualties.²² Liwa Ahrar al Iraq—an Iraqi front group with ties to Kataib Hezbollah—claimed responsibility for the attack.²³ The group frequently claims responsibility for attacks on the base, including the last incident on October 8.²⁴

¹ https://t.me/hmd_javanan/251; https://t.me/hmd_javanan/248; https://t.me/hmd_javanan/249

² https://twitter.com/javanane_k/status/1599051848627138560; https://twitter.com/sad_mahalle/status/1598737546338369536

³ https://twitter.com/javananeh_Sh/status/1599041698977681413

⁴ https://twitter.com/javanane_k/status/1599051848627138560

⁵ https://twitter.com/javanane_t/status/1599122345251115009

⁶ <https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Irans-Reserve-of-Last-Resort.pdf>

⁷ https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-november-23#_edn03071a284d187e7dd91b8066f9b6c35812

⁸ https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1599061257940013056?s=20&t=tLTDN_uckZXXo6iVz0iRFA;
<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1598976450895368192?s=20&t=G1gDyFzfCeXD8TUv7BMMw>;

https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1598984420446244864?s=20&t=tLTDN_uckZXXo6iVz0iRFA

⁹ https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1599081735383404545?s=20&t=5gtwb6d33xyFsKluAXz9Yw;

https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1598994062161240064?s=20&t=tLTDN_uckZXXo6iVz0iRFA;

https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1598981287045234688?s=20&t=tLTDN_uckZXXo6iVz0iRFA

¹⁰ https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1599063636646961162?s=20&t=tLTDN_uckZXXo6iVz0iRFA

¹¹ https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1599086942053838850?s=20&t=tLTDN_uckZXXo6iVz0iRFA

¹² https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1599070757434556416?s=20&t=tLTDN_uckZXXo6iVz0iRFA

¹³ https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1599111455915347973?s=20&t=tLTDN_uckZXXo6iVz0iRFA;

https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1599113745137299457?s=20&t=tLTDN_uckZXXo6iVz0iRFA;

https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1599112588389818368?s=20&t=tLTDN_uckZXXo6iVz0iRFA

¹⁴ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1599119488921718784?s=20&t=5gtwb6d33xyFsKluAXz9Yw>

¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1598938993718046721?s=20&t=RU9TnlQoA832Gh7u6Gm7cA>

¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1598974139582160896?s=20&t=TDIdhSq9-jRuluaETygtZw>

¹⁷ <https://theirancharter.org/>

¹⁸ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-18>

¹⁹ <https://www.isna.ir/news/1401091207586>

²⁰ <https://www.bbc.com/persian/iran-features-50472083>

²¹ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-november-18>

²² <https://www.dotshafaq.com/en/Iraq-News/The-Islamic-Resistance-Ahar-al-Iraq-attacks-Turkey-s-base-in-Zelikan>

²³ <https://www.dotshafaq.com/en/Iraq-News/The-Islamic-Resistance-Ahar-al-Iraq-attacks-Turkey-s-base-in-Zelikan>

²⁴ <https://www.rudawarabia.net/arabic/kurdistan/081020223>



Iran Crisis Update, December 4
Nicholas Carl, Zachary Coles, and Frederick W. Kagan
December 4, 5:30 pm ET

The Iran Crisis Updates are produced by the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute with support from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW). To receive Iran Crisis Updates via email, please subscribe [here](#).

Western media inaccurately reported that the Iranian regime abolished its morality patrol on December 4.¹ The regime has not made such a concession. Western outlets misinterpreted remarks from Prosecutor General Mohammad Javad Montazeri on December 3. Montazeri noted in response to a journalist's question that security forces have reduced morality patrols in recent months—a statement that some Western media has mistakenly framed as confirmation that the regime abolished the patrols.² Iranian state media later clarified that Montazeri was only acknowledging the reduced morality patrols rather than announcing an end to the program.³ No other Iranian official has indicated that the regime has ended the patrol.

The regime could still offer limited concessions, such as relaxed veiling enforcement, to quell the ongoing protests. Montazeri stated on December 1 that Parliament and the Supreme Cultural Revolution Council will announce an opinion on the mandatory hijab law by December 16.⁴

Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei would likely view any such reform as temporary pragmatism to ensure regime survival. Khamenei has continually argued that the regime has not yet sufficiently ideologized the population, framing social indoctrination as the true solution to many of Iran's problems.⁵ Khamenei has popularized within regime discourse since 2019 the notion that the Islamic Republic has entered a new phase in which the government and society must reaffirm and strengthen their commitment to the state's revolutionary and religious ideals.⁶ The idea that the regime under Khamenei will relax policies such as mandatory veiling is fundamentally incompatible with his vision for the future.

Thirty neighborhood youth groups announced the formation of an umbrella organization—the Neighborhood Youth Alliance—on December 4.⁷ The alliance stated that its objectives are "to coordinate planning to advance the revolution to victory and also create the necessary infrastructure to manage the country's affairs during the critical periods of the transition of power." The alliance emphasized its support for a democratic government and universal human rights.

The emergence of the Neighborhood Youth Alliance reflects the growing organization of parts of the protest movement and indicates the possible emergence of more centralized leadership.

Inclement weather may negatively affect turnout during the planned protests on December 5-7. Many cities and towns across Iran, including Tehran, are forecasted to receive cold weather and precipitation—rain and snow—throughout the day on December 5.⁸ Such conditions could reduce the length and size of the planned protests.

Key Takeaways

- Western media inaccurately reported that the regime abolished its morality patrol.
- Thirty neighborhood youth groups announced the formation of an umbrella organization—the Neighborhood Youth Alliance.
- Inclement weather may negatively affect turnout during the planned protests on December 5-7.
- At least nine protests took place in nine cities across seven provinces.
- Law Enforcement Command Sistan and Baluchistan Provincial Commander Brigadier General Mohammad Ghanbari announced that unidentified gunmen attacked and injured two LEC officers in Chabahar.
- Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Shamkhani met with several prominent hardline, moderate, and reformist politicians likely to discuss cooperation to quell the protests.
- Deputy Interior Minister for Security Affairs Majid Mir Ahmadi tried to emphasize the economic consequences of the protests, possibly to fracture the protest movement.
- The office of prominent Sunni cleric Moulana Abdol Hamid released a statement trying to dissociate his criticism of the regime from Baloch separatism.

Anti-Regime Protests

At least nine protests took place in nine cities across seven provinces on December 4. Inclement weather conditions may have depressed turnout in northwest Iran. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Kangavar, Kermanshah Province⁹

- Size: Medium
- Demographic: Mourners
- Protest Activity: Funeral ceremony for protest martyr Ehsan Ghassemi Farh

Sari, Mazandaran Province¹⁰

- Size: Undetermined
- Demographic: Sari University of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources students
- Notes: Students protested a mass food poisoning reportedly perpetrated by regime security personnel.

Shahriar, Tehran Province¹¹

- Size: Small

CTP assesses with low confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Karaj, Alborz Province¹²

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Highschool students

Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province¹³

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Medical workers
- Protest Activity: Strike and protest

Esfahan City, Esfahan Province¹⁴

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Farmers
- Notes: Farmers protested in front of the regional water department building in Esfahan City for the second consecutive day.

Tehran City, Tehran Province¹⁵

- Size: Undetermined
- Demographic: Tehran University students
- Notes: Students protested a mass food poisoning reportedly perpetrated by regime security personnel.

Boukan, West Azerbaijan Province¹⁶

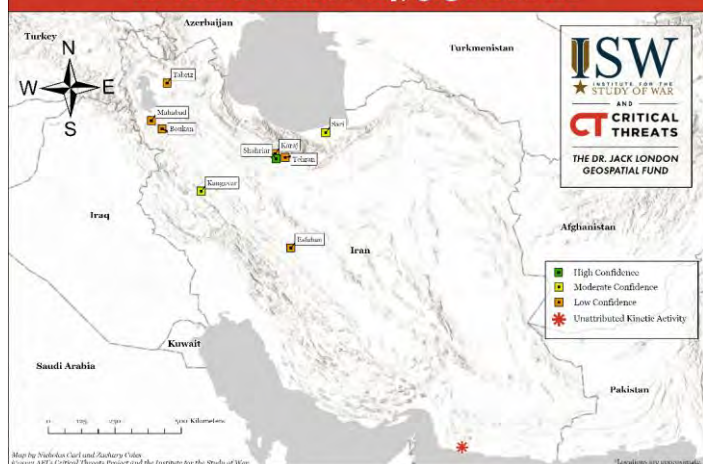
- Size: Undetermined
- Protest Activity: Fire lit in street

Mahabad, West Azerbaijan Province¹⁷

- Size: Undetermined
- Protest Activity: Fire lit in street

Note: CTP defines small protests as fewer than 100 individuals, medium protests as between 100 and 1,000, and large protests as over one thousand.

Protest Activity in Iran as of December 04, 5:30 PM ET



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CD link to Shapefile:

<https://criticalthreats.imeetcentral.com/p/aQAAAAAFAR4l>

Law Enforcement Command Sistan and Baluchistan Provincial Commander Brigadier General Mohammad Ghanbari announced that unidentified gunmen attacked and injured two LEC officers in Chabahar on December 4.¹⁸

Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Shamkhani met with several prominent hardline, moderate, and reformist politicians on December 4 likely to discuss cooperation to quell the protests.¹⁹ Shamkhani previously discussed implementing unspecified "liberalizing measures" with reformist leaders, including members of the Khomeini and Rafsanjani families, in exchange for help ending the protests in late October, as CTP previously reported.²⁰ Iranian state media did not report pictures of these meetings, but these reports, if confirmed, would invalidate the rumors that Shamkhani left his position as Supreme National Security Council secretary.²¹

Deputy Interior Minister for Security Affairs Majid Mir Ahmadi tried to emphasize the economic consequences of the protests on December 4, possibly to fracture the protest movement.²² Mir Ahmadi stated that the protests have caused around \$47 million in damages—not including the economic data from Sistan and Baluchistan Province. Mir Ahmadi added that most protesters are employed and therefore not driven primarily by economic grievances. He also accused foreign enemies of stoking the protests to hurt the Iranian economy. The Interior Ministry may try to increasingly promote the narrative that the protests are not in the best interest of citizens with economic frustrations in order to divide the protest movement and reduce turnout.

The office of prominent Sunni cleric Moulana Abdol Hamid released a statement on December 4 trying to dissociate his criticism of the regime from Baloch separatism.²³

The statement condemned Baloch separatism and reiterated support for the territorial integrity of Iran. The office of Abdol Hamid was responding to an individual who raised a Baloch nationalist flag during his Friday sermon on December 2.²⁴

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

Likely Iranian-backed militants conducted a rocket attack on a Turkish military base in northern Iraq for the second consecutive day.²⁵ The militants fired five to eight rockets at the base but did not cause any casualties or damage.²⁶ Liwa Ahrar al Iraq—a front group with ties with Iranian proxy Kataib Hezbollah—claimed responsibility for the previous rocket attack on December 3 but has not claimed responsibility for the attack on December 4 at the time of this writing.²⁷

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia al Sudani instructed the Iraqi Border Guard to **increase security along Iraq's borders with Iran and Turkey on December 4.**²⁸ Sudani approved the transfer of additional equipment and weapons to the Border Guard. Sudani is likely responding to Iranian demands to secure the border area and disarm Kurdish militant groups operating nearby, although it is unclear whether these latest Iraqi actions will address Iranian concerns.

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/04/world/middleeast/iran-morality-police.html>

² <https://www.hamshahronline dot ir/news/725328>

³ www.fa.alalam dot ir/news/6464538

⁴ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-2>

⁵ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Whatever-it-takes-to-end-it.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/the-second-step-of-irans-islamic-revolution-exploring-the-supreme-leaders-worldview>

⁷ https://twitter.com/javananeardabil/status/1599467490160955393?s=52&t=kUA_IPqUoy2zSSSq9S5wK5Q;

https://twitter.com/javanane_k/status/1599435247611162624; https://t.me/mashhad_protests/1310

⁸ <https://weather.com/weather/tenday/l/75814d99326fdea4d4f0d79772a0a7195eb5cff0285803f5a8a6a7998eba9996>

⁹ <https://twitter.com/RadioFarda/status/1599459343011053569?s=20&t=R3s2xAlcfylOKzE64DqLtQ;>

<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1599436010923778048?s=20&t=R3s2xAlcfylOKzE64DqLtQ;>

¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/RadioFarda/status/1599411619683045378?s=20&t=R3s2xAlcfylOKzE64DqLtQ;>

<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1599389072958828544?s=20&t=R3s2xAlcfylOKzE64DqLtQ;>

¹¹ <https://twitter.com/ManotoNews/status/1599375678562242560?s=20&t=R3s2xAlcfylOKzE64DqLtQ;>

<https://twitter.com/RadioFarda/status/1599422268848971778?s=20&t=R3s2xAlcfylOKzE64DqLtQ;>

¹² <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1599383916741554176?s=20&t=R3s2xAlcfylOKzE64DqLtQ>

¹³ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1599327196555841537?s=20&t=R3s2xAlcfylOKzE64DqLtQ>

¹⁴ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1599346184618881024?s=20&t=R3s2xAlcfylOKzE64DqLtQ>

¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1599473452846415872?s=20&t=R3s2xAlcfylOKzE64DqLtQ>

¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1599476392949055494?s=20&t=R3s2xAlcfylOKzE64DqLtQ>

¹⁷ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1599472477733732352?s=20&t=R3s2xAlcfylOKzE64DqLtQ>

¹⁸ <http://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/09/13/2816666>

¹⁹ <http://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/09/13/2816652>

²⁰ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-november-26>

²¹ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-november-18>

²² <https://isna dot ir/xdMSNV>

²³ www.abdolhamid dot net/persian/2022/12/03/13087

²⁴ <https://twitter.com/seyedhanimsb110/status/1599096031198969856>

²⁵ <https://www.rudawarabia dot net/arabic/middleeast/iraq/041220223>

²⁶ <https://www.shafaq dot com/en/Iraq-News/Rocket-attack-targets-Turkey-s-military-base-in-Zelikan>

²⁷ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-3>

²⁸ <https://shafaq dot com/ar/%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%80%D9%86/%D9%8A%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%89-%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%87-%D8%A8%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%83-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%B7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D9%85%D8%B9-%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D9%88-%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86>

IRAN CRISIS UPDATE, DECEMBER 5

Dec 5, 2022 - [Press ISW](#)



Iran Crisis Update, December 5

Nicholas Carl, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Dana Alexander Gray, Amin Soltani, and Frederick W. Kagan

December 5, 5:00 pm ET

The Iran Crisis Updates are produced by the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute with support from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW). To receive Iran Crisis Updates via email, please subscribe [here](#).

Protest activity and strikes in Iran increased significantly on December 5—in line with the calls from protest coordinators and organizations for countrywide demonstrations until December 7.

[1] These strikes are the most reported in a single day since CTP began publishing daily updates on September 28. This dramatic increase in public expressions of dissent will likely continue until at least December 7. The latest protest activity and strikes highlight once again the capability of the protest coordinators and organizations to generate countrywide demonstrations against the regime—even after a few days of reduced protests and strikes.

The regime responded to the increased protest activity and strikes by downplaying their extent and threatening them. *Tasnim News Agency*, which is affiliated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), reported that only a few strikes occurred on December 5.[2] Judiciary Chief Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei ordered the relevant authorities to identify, arrest, and prosecute protesters organizing and promoting the countrywide strikes “quickly and decisively.”[3] Ejei accused protesters of coercing and manipulating the owners of businesses and shops to strike.

Iranian media and officials published conflicting messages on December 5 on whether the regime will abolish the morality patrol. The spokesperson for the Enjoining Good and Forbidding Wrong Headquarters, Ali Khan Mohammadi, stated that the “mission [of the guidance patrol] has ended.”[4] This headquarters is responsible for determining and enforcing certain religious and social standards in Iran. Reformist-affiliated newspaper *Ham Mihan* contrastingly reported that morality patrols have increased in Qom.[5] The Law Enforcement Command (LEC) Tehran Provincial unit's spokesperson refused to clarify the morality patrol's status in a call with a journalist.[6] This inconsistent reporting suggests that the regime may have either failed to coordinate its messaging properly or has not yet reached a consensus over whether to continue the morality patrol.

Prosecutor General Mohammad Javad Montazeri stated on December 1 that Parliament and the Supreme Cultural Revolution Council will announce an opinion on the mandatory hijab law by December 16—leaving the possibility that the regime will announce changes to the morality patrol by then.[7]

The regime will likely maintain and continue enforcing its mandatory hijab law regardless of whether it abolishes the morality patrol, however. Regime officials have suggested using facial recognition technologies for such enforcement. Khan Mohammadi discussed using new enforcement methods, such as advanced technologies, likely referring to the face-recognizing surveillance cameras that the regime has installed in cities and towns throughout Iran. [8]The secretary of the Enjoining Good and Forbidding Wrong Headquarters, Mohammad Saleh Hashemi Golpayegani, previously suggested using facial recognition software to enforce the mandatory hijab law in August 2022.[9]

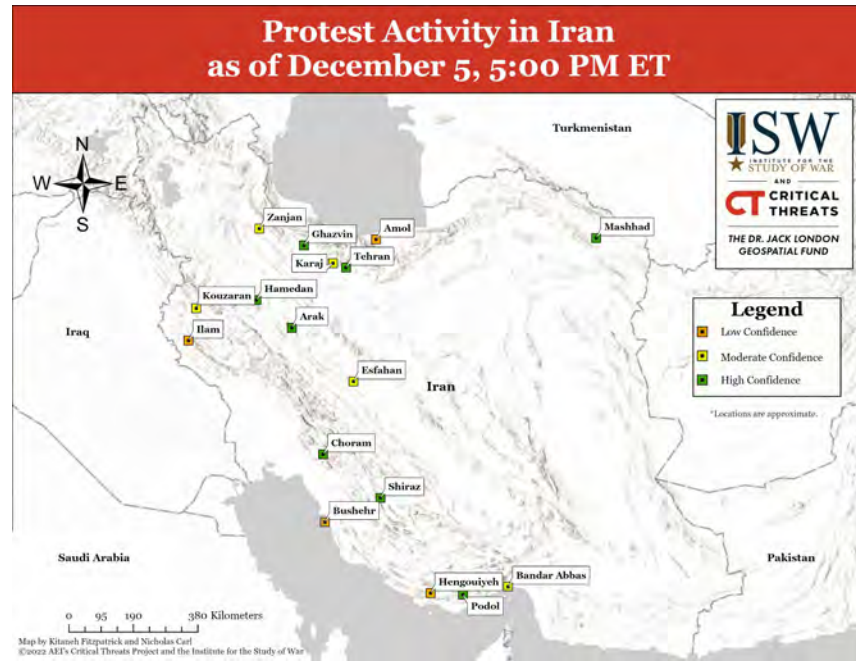
Key Takeaways

- **Protest activity and strikes increased significantly—in line with the calls from protest coordinators and organizations for countrywide demonstrations until December 7.**

- Iranian media and officials published conflicting messages on whether the regime will abolish the morality patrol.
- At least 29 protests took place in 18 cities across 16 provinces.
- Social media users reported significant countrywide strikes in 73 cities across 27 provinces, although this number is almost certainly higher.
- The Mashhad and Karaj neighborhood youth groups called on protesters to identify and mark businesses and shops not participating in the countrywide strikes.
- LEC Sistan and Baluchistan Provincial Commander Brigadier General Mohammad Ghanbari announced the death of an LEC officer who unidentified gunmen attacked and injured in Chabahar.

Anti-Regime Protests

At least 29 protests took place in 18 cities across 16 provinces on December 5.



CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Karaj, Alborz Province[10]

Size: Small

Protester Activity: Fires lit in street

Esfahan City, Esfahan Province[11]

Size: Small

Shiraz, Fars Province[12]

Size: Small

Regime Repression: Security forces shot at protesters, tear gas

Ghazvin City, Ghazvin Province[13]

Size: Small

Rasht, Gilan Province[14]

Size: Small

Regime Repression: Security forces shot at protesters

Hamedan City, Hamedan Province[15]

Size: Small

Protester Activity: Fires lit in street

Bandar-e Abbas, Hormozgan Province[16]

Size: Small

Demographic: Industrial workers

Protest type: Strike and protest

Note: Uncorroborated social media reports suggest that a local official visited the strike and protest site in an attempt to quell protesters

Podol, Hormozgan Province[17]

Size: Small

Protester Activity: Fires lit in street

Kouzaran, Kermanshah Province[18]

Size: Small

Protest Activity: Fire lit in street

Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province[19]

Size: Small

Protester Activity: Fires lit on highway

Choram, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province[20]

Size: Small

Arak, Markazi Province[21]

Size: Small

Tehran City, Tehran Province[22]

Size: Small

Area: Sattar Khan Street

Tehran City, Tehran Province[23]

Size: Small

Area: Shariati Street

Tehran City, Tehran Province[24]

Size: Small

Area: Sadeghieh metro stop

Tehran City, Tehran Province

Size: Small

Area: Shariati Street

Tehran City, Tehran Province[25]

Size: Small

Area: Chitgar

Tehran City, Tehran Province[26]

Size: Small

Area: Tehransar

Tehran City, Tehran Province[27]

Size: Small

Area: Ekbatan

Protester Activity: Fire lit in street

Zanjan City, Zanjan Province[28]

Size: Small

CTP assesses with low confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Bushehr City, Bushehr Province[29]

Size: Small

Hamedan City, Hamedan Province[30]

Size: Small

Hengouyieh, Hormozgan Province[31]

Size: Small

Protester Activity: Fires lit in street

Ilam City, Ilam Province[32]

Size: Small

Protester Activity: Fires lit in street

Amol, Mazandaran Province[33]

Size: Undetermined

Protester Activity: Fires lit in street

Tehran City, Tehran Province[34]

Size: Undetermined

Area: Tehran Pars

Tehran City, Tehran Province[35]

Size: Small

Area: Towhid metro stop

Tehran City, Tehran Province[36]

Size: Small

Protester Activity: Fires lit on highway

Area: Varamin highway

Tehran City, Tehran Province[37]

Size: Small

Area: Narmak

Note: CTP defines small protests as fewer than 100 individuals, medium protests as between 100 and 1,000, and large protests as over one thousand.

A significant number of merchants, truckers, and industrial workers adhered to protest organization groups' calls for countrywide strikes on December 5. Social media users reported strikes in at least 73 cities across 27 provinces on December 5, although this number is almost certainly much higher. Reports suggest that strikes occurred in the following locations:

Karaj, Alborz Province[38]

Bandar-e Ganaveh, Bushehr Province[39]

Bushehr City, Bushehr Province[40]

Jam, Bushehr Province[41]

Boroujen, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province [42]

Shahr-e Kord, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari[43]

Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province[44]

Esfahan City, Esfahan Province[45]

Fouladshahr, Esfahan Province[46]

Kelishad and Soderjaan, Esfahan Province[47]

Najafabad, Esfahan Province[48]

Shahin Shahr, Esfahan Province[49]

Shahreza, Esfahan Province[50]

Evaz, Fars Province[51]

Kazeroun, Fars Province[52]

Marvdasht, Fars Province[53]

Nourabad, Fars Province[54]

Shahr-e Jadid-e Sadra, Fars Province[55]

Shiraz, Fars Province[56]

Zarghan, Fars Province[57]

Ghazvin City, Ghazvin Province[58]

Bandar-e Anzali, Gilan Province[59]

Lahijan, Gilan Province[60]

Rasht, Gilan Province[61]

Hamedan City, Hamedan Province[62]

Bandar-e Abbas, Hormozgan Province[63]

Abdanan, Ilam Province[64]

Eyvan, Ilam Province[65]

Sarableh, Ilam Province[66]

Kerman City, Kerman Province[67]

Eslamabad-e Gharb, Kermanshah Province[68]

Javanroud, Kermanshah Province[69]

Kangavar, Kermanshah Province[70]

Kermanshah City, Kermanshah Province[71]

Kouzaran, Kermanshah Province[72]

Paveh, Kermanshah Province[73]

Ravansar, Kermanshah Province[74]

Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province[75]

Neyshabour, Khorasan Razavi Province[76]

Sabzevar, Khorasan Razavi Province[77]

Gachsaran, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province[78]

Ahvaz, Khuzestan Province[79]

Bandar-e Mahshar, Khuzestan Province[80]

Behbahan, Khuzestan Province[81]

Izeh, Khuzestan Province[82]

Baneh, Kurdistan Province[83]

Dehgolan, Kurdistan Province[84]

Divandarreh, Kurdistan Province[85]

Ghorveh, Kurdistan Province[86]

Kamiyaran, Kurdistan Province[87]

Kani Dinar, Kurdistan Province[88]

Marivan, Kurdistan Province[89]

Saghez, Kurdistan Province[90]

Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province[91]

Boroujerd, Lorestan Province[92]

Doroud, Lorestan Province[93]

Arak, Markazi Province[94]

Khomein, Markazi Province[95]

Babol, Mazandaran Province[96]

Bojnourd, North Khorasan Province[97]

Qom City, Qom Province[98]

Garmsar, Semnan Province[99]

Chabahar, Sistan and Baluchistan Province[100]

Noukabad, Sistan and Baluchistan Province[101]

Andisheh, Tehran Province[102]

Eslamshahr, Tehran Province[103]

Tehran City, Tehran Province[104]

Boukan, West Azerbaijan Province[105]

Mahabad, West Azerbaijan Province[106]

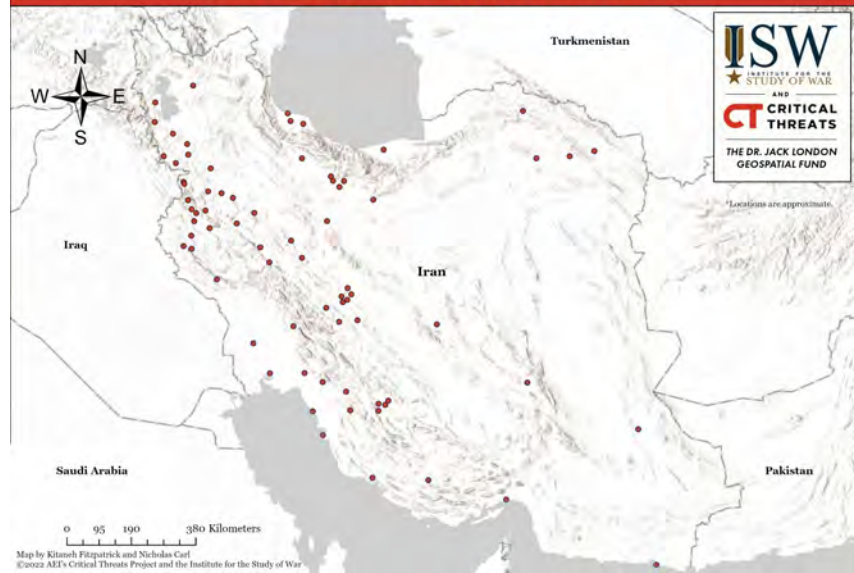
Oroumijeh, West Azerbaijan Province[107]

Oshnaviyeh, West Azerbaijan Province[108]

Sardasht, West Azerbaijan Province[109]

Yazd City, Yazd Province[110]

Strike Activity in Iran as of December 5, 5:00 PM ET



The Mashhad and Karaj neighborhood youth groups called on protesters to identify and mark businesses and shops not participating in the countrywide strikes on December 5.[111] The Shiraz Neighborhood Youth previously called on December 2 for protesters to send in images and videos of stores open during the planned strikes to organize boycotts.[112]

Protesters threw incendiaries at and set aflame the house of a security officer in Saghez, Kurdistan Province on December 5.[113]

LEC Sistan and Baluchistan Provincial Commander Brigadier General Mohammad Ghanbari announced on December 5 the death of an LEC officer who unidentified gunmen attacked and injured in Chabahar on December 4.[114] Around 64 security officers have died since protests began on September 16.[115]

Social media accounts reported on December 5 that Hossein Taeb and his political allies are trying to install Taeb as Supreme National Security Council secretary.[116] CTP cannot verify the rumors about Taeb. Taeb has been an adviser to IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami since Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei dismissed Taeb as IRGC Intelligence Organization chief in June 2022.[117] Taeb has become an increasingly public-facing figure since his removal, regularly making public statements criticizing the US and Israel.[118] CTP previously hypothesized that Taeb may seek to use his public image to bolster his efforts at securing a new senior position within the Iranian security establishment, such as Supreme National Security Council secretary.[119] Uncorroborated reports in recent weeks have indicated some regime officials have criticized the incumbent, Ali Shamkhani, over his response to the protests. Taeb's chances of becoming Supreme National Security Council secretary at present seem low, but CTP will revise this assessment as we process new information.

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

There was nothing significant to report today.

[1] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-november-30>

[2] <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1401/09/14/2817006>

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highlight=WyJcdTA2YWZcdTA2MzRcdTA2MmEiLCJcdTA2MjdcdTA2MzFcdTA2MzRcdTA2MjdcdTA2MmYiLCJcdTA2NDJcdTA2NDUiXQ==
- [6] <https://www.etemadonline dot com/%D8%A8%D8%AE%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B9%DB%8C-23/585919-%DA%AF%D8%B4%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B2%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%87-%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%82>
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[38] <https://twitter.com/IranIntlbrk/status/1599754904205156352?s=20&t=i1CAyS...>

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[46] <https://twitter.com/IranIntlbrk/status/1599713175720665088?s=20&t=l3dWnl...>

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https://twitter.com/javanane_k/status/1599790615977373702
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Iran Crisis Update, December 6

Nicholas Carl, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, and Frederick W. Kagan

December 6, 5:00 pm ET

The Iran Crisis Updates are produced by the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute with support from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW). To receive Iran Crisis Updates via email, please subscribe [here](#).

Countrywide strikes continued throughout Iran on December 6. The extent of the ongoing strikes demonstrates the continued momentum of the protest movement even though strikes do not appear as dramatic as crowded demonstrations in images and videos. The regime has threatened strikers but cannot easily force them to stop.¹ Some businesses and shops that have not been able to close completely have instead refused customers service and transactions, according to some journalists.²

Protest turnout decreased significantly, however, possibly due to divisions and poor planning in the protest movement. CTP recorded protests in around five cities on December 6, despite widely-circulated calls for demonstrations from protest coordinators and organizations.³ Social media users indicated that some protesters were confused about the planned protests and others disagreed with designated locations.⁴ The relative uptick in protests and strikes that began on December 6 will likely continue on December 7, but protest coordinators and organizations will need to overcome these shortcomings if they are to sustain this movement.⁵

Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei met with the Supreme Cultural Revolution Council (SCCR) on December 6, possibly to discuss the morality patrol and mandatory hijab law.⁶ Khamenei called for cultural reconstruction during the meeting but did not explicitly mention the morality patrol or hijab requirement. The SCCR is a regime policy body that prepares resolutions on cultural, religious, and social affairs, which Parliament then approves or rejects. SCCR members include President Ebrahim Raisi, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, and Judiciary Chief Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei--all of whom attended the meeting with Khamenei. Khamenei may have issued a final decision on whether to continue the morality patrol during the meeting. Prosecutor General Mohammad Javad Montazeri previously stated on December 1 that Parliament and the SCCR would issue an opinion on the subject by December 16.⁷

Western observers should avoid overstating a potential regime decision to end the morality patrol and misframing it as a meaningful concession. The regime would likely enforce the mandatory hijab law through various other means. Some regime officials have discussed using surveillance cameras with facial-recognition software to identify women not properly following the hijab requirement, as CTP previously reported.⁸ A parliamentarian suggested that the regime could block the bank accounts of repeat offenders.⁹ It is furthermore unclear whether a regime concession on the morality patrol would satisfy protesters given the wide range of their frustrations and grievances against the political establishment. The regime may, in fact, be attempting to put the issue of hijab back at the center of public discourse in the hopes of obfuscating or diverting the increasingly political and revolutionary tone of the protest movement.

Key Takeaways

- Countrywide strikes continued throughout Iran.
- Protest turnout decreased significantly, however, possibly due to divisions and poor planning in the protest movement.
- Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei met with Supreme Cultural Revolution Council, possibly to discuss the morality patrol and mandatory hijab law.
- At least 13 protests took place in five cities across five provinces.
- Judiciary spokesperson Massoud Setayeshi announced the issuance of death sentences to five arrested protesters.

Anti-Regime Protests

At least 13 protests took place in five cities across five provinces on December 6. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Karaj, Alborz Province¹⁰

Size: Small

Bandar-e Anzali, Gilan Province¹¹

Size: Undetermined

Demographic: Mourners

Regime Repression: Security forces shot at protesters, tear gas

Notes: Mehran Samak's seven-day commemoration ceremony

Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province¹²

Size: Small

Protester Activity: Fires lit in street

Tehran City, Tehran Province¹³

Size: Small

Area: Unspecified location in Western Tehran

Tehran City, Tehran Province¹⁴

Size: Medium

Demographic: Sharif University of Technology students

Notes: Students protested visit of Tehran City Mayor Alireza Zakani

Tehran City, Tehran Province¹⁵

Size: Small

Demographic: Allameh Tabataba'i University students

Tehran City, Tehran Province¹⁶

Size: Small

Demographic: K.N.Toosi University of Technology students

Tehran City, Tehran Province¹⁷

Size: Small

Area: Chitgar

Tehran City, Tehran Province¹⁸

Size: Small

Protester Activity: Burned Iranian flag

Area: Ekbatan

Tehran City, Tehran Province¹⁹

Size: Small

Area: Sattar Khan

Mahabad, West Azerbaijan Province²⁰

Size: Medium

Demographic: Mourners

Notes: Zaniar Abou Bakri's 40-day commemoration ceremony

CTP assesses with low confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Tehran City, Tehran Province²¹

Size: Small

Demographic: High school students

Tehran City, Tehran Province²²

Size: Small

Protester Activity: Fires lit in street

Area: Imamzadeh Hassan

Protest Activity in Iran
as of December 6, 5:00 PM ET

Map by Kilarash Filipatrick and Nicholas Carl
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The Barandazan hacker group defaced the websites of over 16 Iranian universities and claimed to have infiltrated their databases on December 6.²⁷ The group promoted the planned protests lasting until December 7. The group also stated that it will publish some of the internal documents and files it recovered.²⁸

Prominent Sunni cleric Moulana Abdol Hamid tweeted on December 6 that there are reports that the regime is sexually assaulting arrested women to humiliate them and force confessions.³⁰ Abdol Hamid called on the Judiciary to punish those responsible. CNN has previously reported on the horrific acts of sexual assault and violence that the regime is committing against arrested protesters.³¹ A young Iranian protester told NPR on November 23 that she would prefer that the regime killed her rather than arresting her.³²

Judiciary spokesperson Massoud Setayeshi announced the issuance of death sentences to five arrested protesters.³³ The Judiciary has thus far sentenced 11 protesters to death since the protests began on September 16.

The Hamedan Neighborhood Youth announced tactical objectives for protesters on December 6 and 7.³⁴ The group called on protesters to block roads and target surveillance cameras in specific neighborhoods in Hamedan.³⁵ CTP did not record protests in Hamedan on December 6, and it is unclear whether the group met or will meet these objectives.

Former reformist President Mohammad Khatami issued a statement on December 6 calling on the regime to heed protester demands.³⁶ Khatami criticized the regime's suppression of protesters, especially students. Khatami previously called for reform in an Instagram post on November 14.³⁷

The IRGC arrested **12 members of a “sabotage team” in Markazi Province on December 6.**³⁸

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

There was nothing significant to report today.

¹ https://twitter.com/Yossi_Mansharof/status/1600164126969384966; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-5>

² <https://twitter.com/Lghara93/status/1600124753586532352>

³ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-november-30>

⁴ <https://twitter.com/MRTS3000/status/1600237279116607488>;

<https://twitter.com/ssssiran/status/1600196647283134466>

⁵ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-5>

⁶ <https://www.leader dot ir/fa/content/26187>

⁷ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-2>

⁸ https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-5#_edn1a2c48e432a9cacc30b5fec38a26752c7

⁹ <https://www.bbc.com/persian/iran-63857875>

¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1600199215086710784?s=20&t=B5zRpLkTIm0zmLu0CZ8Vwg> ;

<https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1600201096982560784>

¹¹ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1600159096098930690?s=20&t=1BNfQn0mb7XJFbnpnijl8Q> ;

<https://twitter.com/pouriazeraati/status/1600106651196878848?s=20&t=1BNfQn0mb7XJFbnpnijl8Q> ;

<https://twitter.com/mamlekate/status/1600203038295134208?s=20&t=1BNfQn0mb7XJFbnpnijl8Q> ;

<https://twitter.com/ICHRI/status/1600203131198984193?s=20&t=1BNfQn0mb7XJFbnpnijl8Q> ;

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<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1600154070802571265?s=20&t=1BNfQn0mb7XJFbnpnijl8Q>

¹² <https://twitter.com/HengawO/status/1600198436761935872?s=20&t=zXMhH7AGABdGmVyGe8QkDA> ;

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https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1600167374442811392?s=20&t=XjpWvUF9wMy_EhfXTp6ePQ

¹³ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1600203221552676866?s=20&t=F1eiZHq2TVjoKi1sR5ZYaw>

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- ¹⁴ <https://twitter.com/bbcpersian/status/1600147515969400832?s=20&t=B5zRpLkTIm0zmLu0CZ8Vwg> ;
<https://twitter.com/FattahiFarzad/status/1600126881675841536?s=20&t=8UNGoKacnyGQqQgxLAak7w>
- ¹⁵ https://twitter.com/bbcpersian/status/1600149755790708736?s=20&t=7tlpDXbFAuzVid7jdPD_Fg ;
https://twitter.com/FSeifikaran/status/1600076665379590145?s=20&t=7tlpDXbFAuzVid7jdPD_Fg ;
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- ¹⁷ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1600231960667860994?s=20&t=3-CkjXJpHGdreLpGLgkL4Q> ;
<https://twitter.com/gh0lch0magh/status/1600241177369853952?s=20&t=3-CkjXJpHGdreLpGLgkL4Q> ;
<https://twitter.com/DTehrany/status/1600214646199181312?s=20&t=3-CkjXJpHGdreLpGLgkL4Q>
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<https://twitter.com/HengawO/status/1600110817382309888?s=20&t=kStVvGqomD3TLOSW0CqguA>
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- ²⁸ <https://twitter.com/brdz1401/status/1600072321980661760>
- ²⁹ <https://donya-e-eqtesad dot com/%D8%A8%D8%AE%D8%B4-%D8%B3%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%AA-%D8%AE%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%86-62/3923580-%D9%84%D8%BA%D9%88-%D8%B3%D8%AE%D9%86%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B3%DB%8C%D9%87-%D8%AE%D8%B2%D8%B9%D9%84%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B4%DA%AF%D8%A7%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%85%DB%8C%D8%B1-%DA%A9%D8%A8%DB%8C%D8%B1-%D8%A8%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%B7%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%86%DB%8C%D8%AA-%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%86%DB%8C>
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Iran Crisis Update, December 7

Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Johanna Moore, Amin Soltani and Frederick W. Kagan
December 7, 6:00 pm ET

The Iran Crisis Updates are produced by the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute with support from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW). To receive Iran Crisis Updates via email, please subscribe [here](#).

Contributor: Paul Stanley

Anti-regime strikes and demonstrations sustained momentum on December 7 as nationwide calls to protest entered their third and final day. Social media users documented significant strike activity in commercial centers throughout Iran on December 7, in line with the calls from protest coordinators and organizations for countrywide strikes from December 5 – 7.¹ Protest activity similarly continued into December 7, particularly among university students. CTP documented larger crowd sizes on December 7 than on December 5 and 6, although fewer overall protests occurred on December 7 than on December 5, a pattern corresponding to some protest organizations' calls for more concentrated demonstrations on the last day.

Protest activity on December 7 largely adhered to instructions issued by various local protest organization groups, albeit on a smaller scale than called for. Social media users documented protest activity in the vicinity of Azadi Square on December 7, mirroring instructions provided by online protest groups. Protesters formed in smaller groups throughout Tehran before marching to Azadi square, similarly mirroring the organization group's calls for localized groups separately meeting at a common location.² Tehran and Esfahan protest participants did not engage in chants and were largely masked and wearing dark colors as called for by some organizers, demonstrating the capability of the protest organizations to generate coordinated acts of anti-regime defiance.³

Some social media users are circulating renewed calls for silent, anti-regime demonstrations on December 10, although these calls have not yet been endorsed by prominent protest organization groups.⁴

Regime officials and entities defended protracted internet restrictions as a means to quell unrest on December 7. President Ebrahim Raisi endorsed cyber censorship and restrictions in a Tehran University address aimed at commemorating Student's Day on 7. Raisi asserted that

businesses should be pressured into using domestic social media platforms and insinuated that internet restrictions would subside if protest activity ceases.⁵ Social media users claimed that security personnel vetted and approved speech attendees and documented large crowds of Tehran University students protesting Raisi's speech.⁶ Raisi's comments coincide with reports that the Iranian National Cyberspace Center issued an ultimatum to Meta platforms on December 7. The National Cyberspace Center is an entity subordinate to Iran's Supreme Cyberspace Council, which is responsible for crafting policies that limit domestic access to online media outlets and social media platforms.⁷ The National Cyberspace Center accused Meta of violating Iranian sovereignty and stated that it must nominate a representative to Iran by December 17.⁸ The center's warning may presage prolonged internet restrictions as the regime seeks to prevent further unrest and preempt greater coordination among protest organization groups.

Key Takeaways

- Protest activity on December 7 largely adhered to instructions issued by various local protest organization groups, demonstrating the capability of the protest organizations to generate coordinated acts of anti-regime defiance.
- Regime officials and entities defended ongoing internet restrictions as a means to quell unrest on December 7.
- At least 19 protests took place in 13 cities across nine provinces on December 7.
- An anti-regime outlet claimed that some Iranian officials are arranging for asylum in Venezuela in the event of regime change.
- The sister of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei issued a public letter on December 7 urging security personnel to defect in support of anti-regime protesters.
- Intelligence and Security Minister Esmail Khatib accused German officials of supporting anti-regime dissident groups in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Anti-Regime Protests

At least 19 protests took place in 13 cities across nine provinces on December 7. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Esfahan, Esfahan Province⁹

Size: Small

Najafabad, Esfahan Province¹⁰

Size: Medium

Ghazvin City, Ghazvin Province¹¹

Size: Undetermined

Kerman City, Kerman Province¹²

Size: Small to medium

Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province¹³

Size: Medium

Demographic: Ferdowsi University students

Regime Repression: Security forces attacked protesters

Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province¹⁴

Size: Small

Protester Activity: Fire lit in street

Yasouj, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province¹⁵

Size: Small

Protester Activity: Fire lit in street, car set on fire

Regime Repression: Audible sound of gunfire

Ghorveh, Kurdistan Province¹⁶

Size: Medium

Regime Repression: Audible sounds of gunfire in some clips

Notes: Silent protest

Boumehen, Tehran Province¹⁷

Size: Small

Protester Activity: Fires lit in street

Regime Repression: Security cars ran over protesters, tear gas

Tehran City, Tehran Province¹⁸

Size: Medium

Demographic: Tehran University students

Regime Repression: Clashes with protesters

Notes: Protesting President Ebrahim Raisi's on-campus address. Crowds observed outside and inside campus

Tehran City, Tehran Province¹⁹

Size: Small to medium (unclear, crowd seemingly includes pro-regime counterprotesters)

Demographic: Amir Kabir University of Technology students

Tehran City, Tehran Province²⁰

Size: Undetermined

Demographic: Pars Higher Education Institute of Art and Architecture students

Tehran City, Tehran Province²¹

Size: Small

Demographic: Allameh Tabataba'i University students

Tehran City, Tehran Province²²

Size: Medium

Regime Repression: Security forces fired tear gas, shot at protesters

Note: CTP is characterizing all protesters reportedly marching to or in the vicinity of Azadi Square as one protest

Tehran City, Tehran Province²³

Size: Small to medium

Demographic: Tarbiat Modares University students

Ardakan, Yazd Province²⁴

Size: Medium

Protester Activity: Fire lit in street

Regime Repression: Shots

CTP assesses with low confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Darreh Shahr, Ilam Province²⁵

Size: Undetermined

Protester Activity: Fire set to Basij statue in town square

Regime Repression: Audible sounds of gunfire or teargas

Baneh, Kurdistan Province²⁶

Size: Small

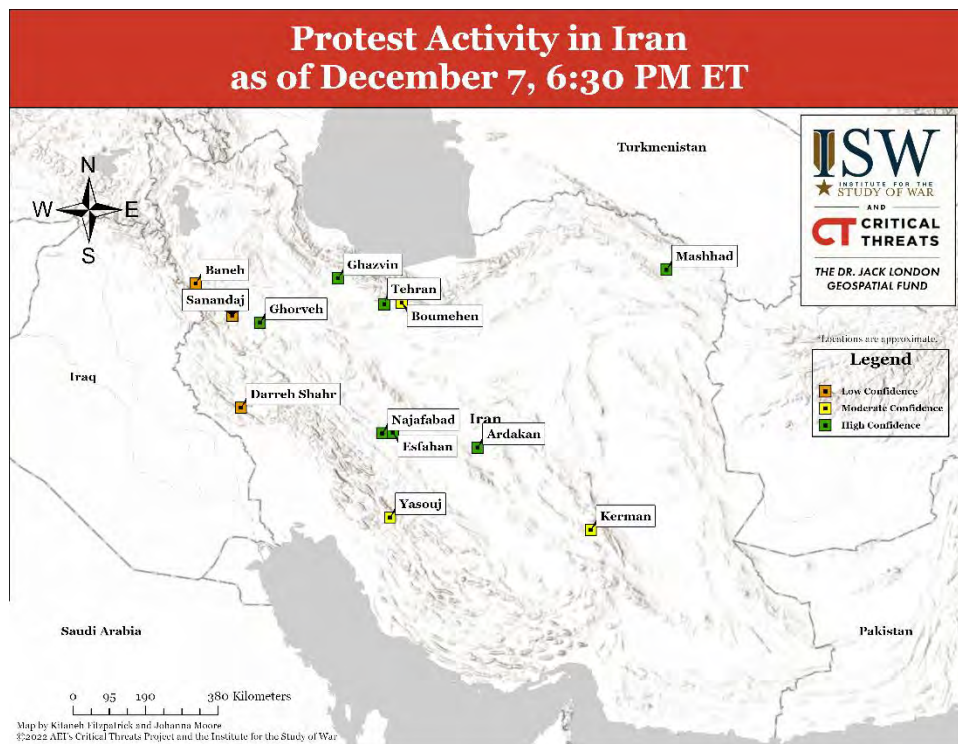
Protester Activity: Fire lit in street

Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province²⁷

Size: Small

Protester Activity: Fire lit in street

Notes: Reliable sources report that security personnel shot into resident's homes and forcibly arrested two individuals. It is unclear if this is connected to reported protest activity or was an act of preemptive intimidation.



Anti-regime outlet Iran International claimed that some Iranian officials are reportedly arranging for asylum in the event of regime change, citing Western sources. The report alleged that four high-ranking officials visited Venezuela in mid-October to ensure the Maduro government would grant them and their families asylum in the event of an “unfortunate incident.”²⁸ CTP cannot corroborate the veracity of this report and such accounts should be treated with skepticism.²⁹

The sister of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei issued a public letter on December 7 urging security personnel to defect in support of anti-regime protesters. Badri Hosseini Khamenei stated that Khamenei had failed to heed the Iranian population's requests and endorsed the Mahsa Amini protest movement, stating "I hope for the people's victory and the overthrow of [the Islamic Republic]." Hosseini additionally called on the IRGC and other armed forces to join protests "before it is too late."³⁰ Hosseini alluded to having privately voiced her grievances to Khamenei.³¹ Security personnel arrested Hosseini's daughter, Farideh Moradkhani, on November 23 for publicly supporting protesters.³²

Intelligence and Security Minister Esmail Khatib accused German officials of supporting anti-regime dissident groups in Iraqi Kurdistan on December 7. Khatib echoed regime rhetoric blaming ongoing unrest on Western actors and criticized the French, German, and Canadian leadership for endorsing anti-regime protests. Khatib alleged that German officials traveled to Iraqi Kurdistan at an unspecified date to meet and make an agreement with "armed separatists and terrorists." Khatib warned that Germany would be held accountable for this alleged encounter.³³

A Parliamentarian representing Chabahar, Sistan, and Baluchistan Province praised prominent Sunni cleric Moulana Abdol Hamid, who has become increasingly critical of **the regime's crackdown on anti-regime** protests in recent months. Mouinaladdin Saeedi asserted that Abdol Hamid could leverage his local influence to discourage unrest throughout the province and described him as a unifying figure. Saeedi warned that protests will endure so as long as protester grievances remain unaddressed.³⁴

Iranian authorities have allegedly arrested a Bandar-e Anzali, Gilan Province Law Enforcement Commander (LEC), Jafar Javanmardi. The family lawyer of Mehran Samak, whom security personnel killed on November 30 for celebrating US soccer team's victory against Iran in the FIFA world cup, stated that local authorities arrested an LEC commander for his role in Samak's death.³⁵ Officials have additionally arrested other unspecified actors for Samak's death.³⁶

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

There was nothing significant to report today.

¹ https://twitter.com/IranRights_org/status/1600573052621832293?s=20&t=BnCCAQjHftKiShGc3wa1jQ ;
<https://twitter.com/HengawO/status/1600436901030244352?s=20&t=BnCCAQjHftKiShGc3wa1jQ> ;
<https://twitter.com/Kolbarnews/status/1600489329297707008?s=20&t=BnCCAQjHftKiShGc3wa1jQ> ;
<https://twitter.com/Vlsfehan/status/1600407730572902400?s=20&t=BnCCAQjHftKiShGc3wa1jQ> ;
<https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1600402359074623493?s=20&t=BnCCAQjHftKiShGc3wa1jQ>

² https://twitter.com/javanane_t/status/1600164268111908876

³ https://twitter.com/khoshnevisnaser/status/1600474993237819393?s=20&t=TbtLhNM2nSS4L5QS82Ce_w ;
https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1600528402536189952?s=20&t=TbtLhNM2nSS4L5QS82Ce_w ;
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⁴ https://twitter.com/mamadporii/status/1600604378569838593?s=20&t=TbtLhNM2nSS4L5QS82Ce_w

⁵ <https://www.irna dot ir/news/84963516>

⁶ <https://twitter.com/IranWireEnglish/status/1600502681394716672?s=20&t=r7Z6a0lz68TW3YgXld6nsQ> ;
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<https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1600546051609726978?s=20&t=r7Z6a0lz68TW3YgXld6nsQ>

⁷ <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm0250>

⁸ <https://www.etemadonline.com/%D8%A8%D8%AE%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B9%DB%8C-23/586300-%D9%81%D8%B6%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D9%85%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%B2%DB%8C-%D8%B4%D8%B1%DA%A9%D8%AA-%D9%85%D8%AA%D8%A7-%D9%85%D8%B1%DA%A9%D8%B2-%D9%85%D9%84%DB%8C-%D8%A7%DB%8C%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%DA%AF%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%85>; <https://isna.ir/xdMTXK>

⁹ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1600560221176274944?s=20&t=J1s-Yo2OQ57wo1gKOnfvQw>

¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1600510153199161345?s=20&t=utjanWhup-rBEEK3K7X6og> ;
<https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1600539318086516748?s=20&t=utjanWhup-rBEEK3K7X6og> ;
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¹¹ https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1600549728550371344?s=20&t=uAb_LsNq81AWo5vCyn_ISA ;
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¹² <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1600570103644438546>

¹³ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1600434970220036096> ;
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<https://twitter.com/ManotoNews/status/1600457670359928832?s=20&t=pvaMHDadILP0pdQzsAG7ow> ;
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¹⁴ <https://twitter.com/iranwire/status/1600616225842798592?s=20&t=J1s-Yo2OQ57wo1gKOnfvQw> ;
<https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1600596453722042368?s=20&t=BnCCAQjHftKiShGc3wa1jQ>

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¹⁶ https://twitter.com/barin_omid/status/1600460225609441281?s=20&t=gSZoixe9JllymnBxg4cc1w ;
https://twitter.com/barin_omid/status/1600442309333684225?s=20&t=gSZoixe9JllymnBxg4cc1w ;
<https://twitter.com/kayvanrassooli/status/1600448525304676352?s=20&t=gSZoixe9JllymnBxg4cc1w>

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¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1600437262352719872?s=20&t=c2W0RnDYiu1Pg6V53os9YQ> ;
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²¹ https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1600431617658396677?s=20&t=Gt36Z_1eapdTn52dWoEOdw ;
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²² <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1600517998439194624?s=20&t=A7O93AsqQOBI800s4I4cJA> ;
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²⁴ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1600533016689999877?s=20&t=BckBKSfWfaOpWCrggGbCoHg> ;
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<https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1600566890488799233?s=20&t=XIMLXh3pgAdePoQ1SXJig>
²⁵ <https://twitter.com/HengawO/status/1600548181708009474?s=20&t=ITUVM2bGOQwLRmhlsY3iGw>
²⁶ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1600458540824416258?s=20&t=D60K8tmCqrhxHUDxU13Clg> ;
<https://twitter.com/OutFarsi/status/1600450370613825536?s=20&t=D60K8tmCqrhxHUDxU13Clg>
²⁷ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1600520087349379072?s=20&t=EE36bpOHAwZkuFfNvsuYg> ;
<https://twitter.com/goliammar/status/1600587967772430344?s=20&t=EE36bpOHAwZkuFfNvsuYg> ;
<https://twitter.com/Kolbarnews/status/1600601751303905281?s=20&t=EE36bpOHAwZkuFfNvsuYg> ;
<https://twitter.com/HengawO/status/1600555136354598941?s=20&t=EE36bpOHAwZkuFfNvsuYg>
²⁸ https://twitter.com/IranIntl_En/status/1600594580881215504?s=20&t=ROCDvx7-g9fq_7Uhc206RQ
²⁹ https://twitter.com/IranIntl_En/status/1600594580881215504?s=20&t=ROCDvx7-g9fq_7Uhc206RQ
³⁰ <https://ali-tehrani dot com/B-KHAMENEI-AZAR-1401.pdf>
³¹ <https://ali-tehrani dot com/B-KHAMENEI-AZAR-1401.pdf>
³² <https://www.dw.com/en/iran-arrests-khameneis-niece-after-criticizing-regime/a-63908126>
³³ <https://irna dot ir/xjLbGx>
³⁴ <https://www.tabnak dot ir/fa/news/1153785/%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%AA-%D9%86%D9%85%D8%A7%DB%8C%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%87-%DA%86%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B2-%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%87-%D8%AE%D9%88%D9%86%DB%8C%D9%86-%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86>
³⁵ <https://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/09/16/2817887>
³⁶ <https://www.borna dot news/%D8%A8%D8%AE%D8%B4-%DA%AF%DB%8C%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86-88/1408287-%D9%BE%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%87-%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%88%D9%85-%D9%85%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B3%D9%85%D8%A7%DA%A9-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D8%B7%D8%B1%DB%8C%D9%82-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D9%86%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%85%DB%8C-%DA%AF%DB%8C%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%B1%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%AF%DA%AF%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA>

Iran Crisis Update, December 8

Nicholas Carl, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Frederick W. Kagan
December 8, 5:00 pm ET

The Iran Crisis Updates are produced by the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute with support from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW). To receive Iran Crisis Updates via email, please subscribe [here](#).

The Iranian regime executed a protester on December 8 for the first time since the Mahsa Amini protests began. The Judiciary announced the execution of 23-year-old Mohsen Shekari after convicting him of “waging war against God.” Security forces arrested Shekari for blocking a road and attacking a security officer with a machete during protests in Tehran in September 2022.[1]

The regime is likely using the execution to deter protest participation and instill fear in demonstrators. The execution and the manner in which it was carried out could have the opposite effect, however. Social media reports indicate that neither Shekari nor his family were informed of his impending execution beforehand and that the regime disposed of his body, depriving his family of the opportunity to bury him and of the location of a grave at which to mourn him.[2] Protest coordinators and organizations condemned the execution and promised to avenge Shekari.[3] The regime likely sought to avoid giving protesters the opportunity to rally in advance of Shekari’s execution and to deprive them of a gravesite around which to rally future commemoration ceremonies that could in turn become demonstrations. The covert burial of Shekari, however, opens possibilities for protesters to choose to commemorate him at any location or several. The regime has sentenced 10 other arrested protesters to death at the time of this writing and thus could conduct additional executions in the coming weeks.[4] Executions could reinvigorate the ongoing protests in the same way that funerals and commemoration ceremonies for killed protesters have.

Key Takeaways

- The Iranian regime executed a protester on December 8 for the first time since the Mahsa Amini protests began.
- At least nine protests took place in seven cities across six provinces.
- Two Iranian security personnel have died since December 7.
- Hossein Taeb discussed the alleged Western-Israeli hybrid war against Iran.

Anti-Regime Protests

At least nine protests took place in seven cities across six provinces on December 8. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Karaj, Alborz Province[5]

Size: Undetermined

Demographic: Rasam Institute of Higher Education students

Dezfoul, Khuzestan Province[6]

Size: Medium

Demographic: Mourners

Notes: 40-day commemoration ceremony for Mohammad Ghamei Far

Saghez, Kurdistan Province[7]

Size: Small

Protester Activity: Fires in streets

Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province[8]

Size: Small

Demographic: Mourners

Notes: 40-day commemoration ceremony for Sarina Saedi

Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province[9]

Size: Medium

Demographic: Mourners

Regime Repression: Security forces emplaced cement barriers to prevent access to cemetery; shots heard in the vicinity of cemetery

Notes: Funeral for killed protester Houman Abdollahi

Qom City, Qom Province[10]

Size: Small

Demographic: Azad University of Qom students

Notes: Protesting visit from bonyad official

Tehran City, Tehran Province[11]

Size: Small

Notes: Protesting death sentence of arrested protester Hamid Gharah Hasanlou in front of Evin prison

Tehran City, Tehran Province[12]

Size: Small

Area: Sattar Khan

Notes: Protesting execution of arrested protester Mohsen Shekari, protesters allegedly marched to his family's house

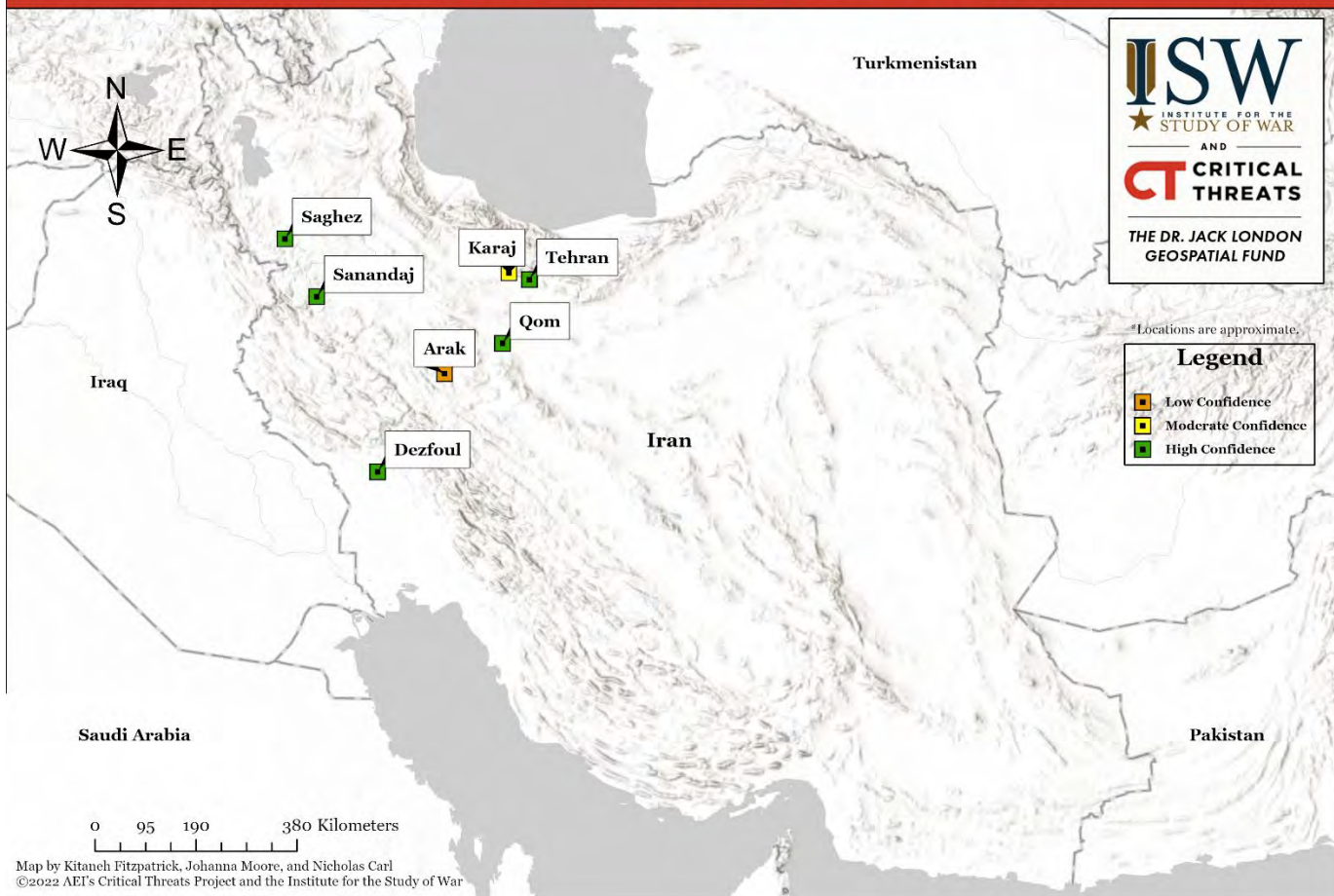
CTP assesses with low confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Arak, Markazi Province[13]

Size: Small

Notes: Coincides with 40-day commemoration ceremony for Mehrshad Shahidi, which security personnel seemingly managed to prevent from occurring.

Protest Activity in Iran as of December 8, 5:00 PM ET



Two Iranian security personnel have died since December 7. Unidentified militants clashed with and killed a Law Enforcement Command Border Guard member near Zabol, Sistan and Baluchistan Province on December 7. [14] A security forces member died on December 8 due to injuries sustained in protests in Shiraz, Fars Province on October 26. [15] Around 66 security personnel have died since protests began on September 16. [16]

Hossein Taeb discussed the alleged Western-Israeli hybrid war against Iran on December 8. [17] Taeb has been the adviser to IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami since Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei dismissed Taeb as IRGC Intelligence Organization chief in June 2022. [18] Taeb may be trying to position himself to replace Ali Shamkhani as Supreme National Security Council secretary. Social media rumors claimed that Taeb and his political allies are trying to install him to the position, as CTP previously reported, although their chances of success at present appear low. [19] Taeb has become an increasingly public-facing figure since his removal, regularly making public statements criticizing the US and Israel. [20]

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

There was nothing significant to report today.

[1] <https://www.mizan dot news/4547346>

[2] https://twitter.com/1500tasvir_en/status/1600827123429961733?s=20&t=1CBafWMiR5x7yW6bR45c6A ; <https://twitter.com/Muzyar/status/1600890332656590850?s=20&t=1CBafWMiR5x7yW6bR45c6A> ; <https://twitter.com/NazaninBoniadi/status/1600884527987134464?s=20&t=1CBafWMiR5x7yW6bR45c6A>

[3] <https://t.me/unitedyouthofiran/5> ; https://twitter.com/javanane_t/status/1600873857946042368 ; https://t.me/mashhad_protests/1539

[4] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-6>

[5] https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1600848154722697216?s=20&t=Zk_4vlzZgwIUkt5LrL4Pjw ; https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1600873128124502016?s=20&t=Zk_4vlzZgwIUkt5LrL4Pjw

[6] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1600849904905359362?s=20&t=6jldq5tEc-PRWH2f12ud7Zg> ; <https://twitter.com/bbcpersian/status/1600858810087661568?s=20&t=6jldq5tEc->

PRWH2f12ud7Zg ; <https://twitter.com/RadioFarda/status/1600847427833036801?s=20&t=6jdg5tEc-PRWH2f12ud7Zg> ; <https://twitter.com/RadioFarda/status/1600852184207446017?s=20&t=6jdg5tEc-PRWH2f12ud7Zg>
[7] https://twitter.com/barin_omid/status/1600888702225551363?s=20&t=WiX66PcxgoAk9fy719S-ag ; <https://twitter.com/indypersian/status/1600973817551421441?s=20&t=WiX66PcxgoAk9fy719S-ag> ; <https://twitter.com/HengawO/status/1600920482928545792?s=20&t=WiX66PcxgoAk9fy719S-ag>
[8] https://twitter.com/barin_omid/status/1600827766081036289?s=20&t=NMqneDaABT-FABZaF9dcYA ; https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1600828311558447106?s=20&t=HgoP6B75INki5Ay_edovIA ; https://twitter.com/RadioFarda/status/1600843355226775552?s=20&t=HgoP6B75INki5Ay_edovIA ; https://twitter.com/hra_news/status/1600836793506697218?s=20&t=HgoP6B75INki5Ay_edovIA
[9] https://twitter.com/Kolbarnews/status/1600883797553475585?s=20&t=LP_e1SzhClpZFUIG4P0D_w ; https://twitter.com/barin_omid/status/1600876569802612736?s=20&t=Ull7pp9DhQW8ROJNPb9pJA
[10] https://twitter.com/RadioFarda/status/1600845976624893953?s=20&t=Rf2biyqI_Zc4HbfNARnPTg ; https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1600816118268153857?s=20&t=Rf2biyqI_Zc4HbfNARnPTg
[11] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1600891605829193730?s=20&t=NLw58FzeHuzdSkHUnQtalw>
[12] https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1600908399373586432?s=20&t=n8rcjn-yse-3vf_Kr5d9cg ; https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1600909694901653508?s=20&t=u1G_gwdvUxTaYniV4O1rBA ; https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1600924884070060032?s=20&t=Oqzql0JIENHgC_XAd1Sv8Q ; https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1600923977865576448?s=20&t=CoQkeS6P9n_uh4vhW_4vGw
[13] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1600837911486042113?s=20&t=islL0sHq15zw8zRu5nGnlw>
[14] <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1401/09/16/2818217/>
[15] <https://www.mehrnews.com/news/5649981/>
[16] <https://twitter.com/Alfoneh/status/1600843497380417536>
[17] <https://isna.ir/xdMV6q>
[18] <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/23/world/middleeast/iran-revolutionary-guards-intelligence-chief-hosseintaeb.html>
[19] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-5>
[20] https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-november-10#_edn95ae8a47564256e164ecf4a90dfa15e0572685105675102fe1f4b933ee0f9f2422



Iran Crisis Update, December 9

Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Johannah Moore, Amin Soltani, and Frederick W. Kagan
December 9, 5:00 pm ET

The Iran Crisis Updates are produced by the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute with support from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW). To receive Iran Crisis Updates via email, please subscribe [here](#).

Mass protester arrests and detentions are likely impacting protest turnout. An anti-regime Iranian human rights organization estimated in November that over 18,000 Iranians had been arrested for acts of dissidence since the Mahsa Amini protest wave commenced on September 16.¹ The regime has repeatedly promoted the arrest of individuals it claims to be protest organizers as well. The Qom Province IRGC Intelligence Organization announced on December 8 that it had arrested leaders of an anti-regime protest organization that was active on social media, for example.² The arrest of protesters—particularly within key nodes of protest organizations—may have resulted in lower turnout for anti-regime demonstrations planned for December 5-7. Significant strike activity documented on these dates suggests that protest organizers are still capable of coordinating widespread acts of anti-regime defiance, however.³

Some social media users voiced skepticism of groups purporting to represent local protest organizations on social media, reflecting the complex information environment in which dissidents are operating. The Neighborhood Youth of Karaj group issued a statement acknowledging distrust of the organization on December 9. The group claimed that it did not advertise a protest in Karaj, Alborz Province on December 8 because the protest was coordinated by regime actors.⁴ CTP cannot verify the authenticity of this protest group, nor can most protesters. However, the group's statement and subsequent exchanges with its followers suggest that protest coordinators are being held accountable for their perceived successes and failures as they learn to operate in a heavily censored information space.⁵ These exchanges also highlight efforts by Iranians to verify or discredit organizations with online presences. This process is vital for the success of the protest movement considering the real risk that regime agents posing as protest organizations could misdirect protesters. It also adds an additional vulnerability to the movement, however, because the regime can use agents to cause mistrust of legitimate protest groups. Iranians are likely using a hybrid approach to validating calls for protests that involves both online and direct person-to-person communications.

The Iranian regime may exploit the death of a Sunni cleric to crack down on acts of dissidence in Sistan and Baluchistan Province. Unidentified assailants reportedly kidnapped, shot, and killed Khash city Sunni Friday Prayer Leader Moulavi Abdol Vahed Rigi in the vicinity of Khash, Sistan and Baluchistan Province on December 8. Pro-regime media outlets described Rigi as a “martyr” and circulated footage of Rigi showing support for Khamenei with Friday Prayer Leader Policy Council Chief Mohammad Javad Haj Ali Akbari in November.⁶ The Supreme Leader dispatched a high-ranking delegation headed by Ali Akbari to Sistan and Baluchistan Province on November 13 in a likely effort to escalate against prominent Sunni cleric Moulana Abdol Hamid, who has repeatedly voiced support for anti-regime demonstrations since Mahsa Amini’s death on September 16.⁷

Some social media users alleged that regime actors killed Rigi, although there is no evidence to corroborate this claim.⁸ A state-run media outlet suggested that armed groups killed Rigi in an attempt to foment religious divisions within the province, citing a clip wherein Rigi alluded to threats he had received from unnamed terrorist groups.⁹ Pro-regime social media actors additionally accused Abdol Hamid’s followers of killing Rigi for supporting Khamenei.¹⁰ The regime may seek to frame Abdol Hamid and his followers for Rigi’s death in an attempt to undermine Abdol Hamid’s popularity throughout Sistan and Baluchistan. Iranian leadership may also use Rigi’s death to justify violently suppressing protests throughout the province.

Key Takeaways

- Mass protester arrests and detentions are likely impacting protest turnout.
- Some social media users voiced skepticism of groups purporting to represent local protest organizations on social media, reflecting the complex information environment in which dissidents are operating.
- The Iranian regime may exploit the death of a Sunni cleric to crack down on acts of dissidence in Sistan and Baluchistan Province.
- At least eight protests took place in seven cities across five provinces on December 9.
- Several senior Iranian officials endorsed death penalties for arrested protesters and described executions as an effective means to discourage protest activity on December 9.
- **The Iranian Special Clerical Court sentenced Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei’s niece Farideh Moradkhani to three years in prison on unknown charges.**
- Senior US officials stated that Russia is providing an unprecedented level of military and technical support to Iran in exchange for Iranian-made weapons systems.
- Iran is reportedly smuggling weapons to Lebanon through the Beirut International Airport in order to bypass blocked routes through Syria.

Anti-Regime Protests

At least eight protests took place in seven cities across five provinces on December 9. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Roudsar, Gilan Province¹¹

- Size: Small
- Protester Activity: Protesters set a fire in the street protesting the execution of arrested protester Mohsen Shekari

Kermanshah City, Kermanshah Province¹²

- Size: Small
- Protester Activity: Silent march
- Regime Repression: Security forces fired Kalashnikovs and shotguns at protesters
- Notes: At least seven protesters reported injured; several seized

Dehgolan, Kurdistan Province¹³

- Size: Medium
- Demographic: Mourners
- Protester Activity: Mourners gathered for the 40-day commemoration ceremony for Momen Zandkarimi
- Note: This protest likely occurred in the vicinity of Dehgolan, but not in Dehgolan proper

Khash, Sistan and Baluchistan Province¹⁴

- Size: Undetermined
- Demographic: Worshippers

Pishin, Sistan and Baluchistan Province¹⁵

- Size: Small

Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province¹⁶

- Size: Medium to large
- Demographic: Worshippers, protests followed prominent Sunni cleric Moulana Abdol Hamid's weekly Friday prayer sermon
- Protester Activity: Protesters carried a flag without the Islamic Republic Symbol on it

Tehran, Tehran¹⁷

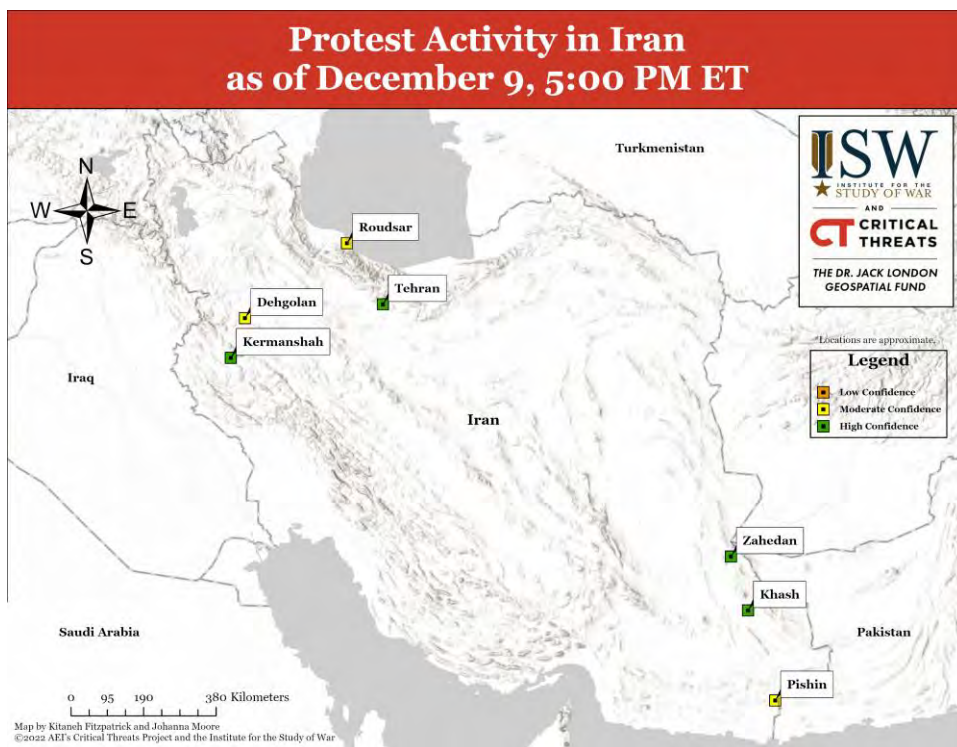
- Size: Small
- Demographic: Mourners
- Protester Activity: Mourners gathered to around executed protester Mohsen Shekari's home
- Note: In the vicinity of Narmak

CTP assesses with low confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Tehran, Tehran¹⁸

- Size: Small
- Protester Activity: Protesters gathered to chant anti-regime slogans
- Note: In the vicinity of Chitgar

Note: CTP defines small protests as fewer than 100 individuals, medium protests as between 100 and 1,000, and large protests as over 1,000.



Several senior Iranian officials endorsed death penalties for arrested protesters and described executions as an effective means to discourage protest activity on December 9. Interim Tehran Friday Prayer Leader Ahmad Khatami praised Judiciary officials for executing arrested protester Mohsen Shekari on December 8 in his December 9 sermon and suggested that Shekari's death would deter other acts of dissidence.¹⁹ Parliamentary Judiciary and Legal Committee Chairperson Mousa Ghazanfarabadi described Shekari's execution as a warning to other protesters on December 9.²⁰ President Ebrahim Raisi similarly stressed that relevant authorities would decisively punish actors involved in the death of killed security personnel on December 8.²¹ Senior officials from Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs additionally described Shekari's death sentence as an effective deterrent against breaking the law and warned that other protesters will be punished.²² Iranian officials' rhetoric advocating for harsh sentences for arrested protesters mirrors Supreme Leader Khamenei's calls for the judiciary to punish anti-regime actors on November 19.²³

Executions have the potential to reinvigorate the Mahsa Amini protest wave, however. CTP observed that protest coordinators and organizations condemned Shekari's execution and promised to avenge his death on December 8.²⁴ Several protest organizations reiterated calls to protest Shekari's death on December 9. Protest groups are advocating for nation-wide demonstrations in Shekari's memory on December 10.²⁵

Prominent Sunni cleric Moulana Abdol Hamid condemned the regime for executing Mohsen Shekari on December 8 in his weekly Friday prayer sermon in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province. Abdol Hamid added that unknown actors will seek vengeance against security forces for killing innocent protesters, although he did not directly call on protestors to avenge

these deaths. Abdol Hamid warned protestors that unspecified agents had infiltrated the protest movement.²⁶ Abdol Hamid has notably continued to publicly criticize the regime despite reports that Iranian leadership is seeking to diminish his influence.²⁷

The Iranian Special Clerical Court sentenced Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's niece Farideh Moradkhani to three years in prison on unknown charges.²⁸ The Special Clerical Court is a court system designed to prosecute clerics and only answers to Khamenei. It is noteworthy that this court sentenced Moradkhani, who is not a cleric. Iranian authorities arrested Moradkhani on November 23 for unclear reasons.²⁹ Moradkhani's brother Mahmoud Moradkhani published a video of his sister criticizing the regime's violent crackdown on ongoing, anti-regime protests on November 25.³⁰ Moradkhani's lawyer tweeted that the court initially sentenced his client to 15 years in prison.³¹ Moradkhani's mother also publicly criticized Khamenei on December 7, as CTP previously reported.³²

Several regime officials continued to promote mandatory veiling laws on December 9. Hardline Parliamentarian Hossein Jalali reiterated that women who do not adhere to state-imposed veiling standards should lose access to government services, benefits, and opportunities for employment.³³ Shiraz Friday Prayer Leader Lotfollah Dezhkam described veiling as inextricably linked to Iranian national identity in his weekly Friday prayer sermon.³⁴ Senior cleric Ahmad Alamolhoda similarly characterized women who disregard mandatory veiling as extensions of malign foreign networks.³⁵ Alamolhoda is a Mashhad Friday Prayer Leader, Assembly of Experts member, and reportedly close to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and President Ebrahim Raisi, who is his son-in-law.

Protesters targeted the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) office in Darreh Shahr, Ilam Province on December 9.³⁶ Protesters were seen throwing a Molotov cocktail into the building. Protesters also set fire to the Razavieh Seminary school in Shiraz, Fars province.³⁷

Note: The following text is included in **ISW's Russian** Offensive Campaign Assessment for December 9:

Senior US officials stated that Russia is providing an unprecedented level of military and technical support to Iran in exchange for Iranian-made weapons systems. *NBC News* reported on December 9 that senior US administration officials stated that Russia may be providing Iran with advanced military equipment and components, including helicopters and air defense systems, in exchange for Iranian-made high precision weapons systems that Russia has and intends to use in the war in Ukraine.³⁸ The officials specified that Russia may send Iran Su-35 aircraft within the next year and that Russia is possibly seeking to establish a joint Russian Iranian production line for drone systems in the Russian Federation.³⁹ US intelligence officials stated on November 19 that Russian and Iranian officials finalized a deal in early November to manufacture Iranian drones on Russian territory.⁴⁰ A Russian milblogger claimed on December 9 that air traffic monitors show that Iranian Air Force cargo planes resumed flights to Moscow on December 8 following a short break of such flights.⁴¹ ISW assessed that Russian Deputy Defense Minister Colonel General Alexander Fomin met with Iranian Armed Forces General Staff Chief General Mohammad Bagheri in Tehran on December 3 likely

to further discuss the sale of Iranian drones and missiles to Russia for use in Ukraine.⁴² ISW has previously assessed that the Russian military is increasingly reliant on Iranian-made weapons systems due the depletion of its arsenal of high precision weapons systems.⁴³

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

The *Times of Israel* reported that Iran has is smuggling weapons to Lebanon through the Beirut International Airport to bypass blocked routes through Syria. The *Times of Israel* published an article claiming that the Israeli government was investigating commercial Meraj Airlines planes that are smuggling arms from Tehran and Damascus to Beirut.⁴⁴ The report claimed that Tel Aviv warned of strikes on the airport.

¹ <https://www.npr.org/2022/12/08/1141509858/iran-execution-protests-shehari>

² <http://tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/09/17/2818409/>

³ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-7>

⁴ https://twitter.com/javanane_k/status/1601152090747072512?s=20&t=9Terbmzq7R9I8NUTbhhpNQ

⁵ https://twitter.com/javanane_k/status/1601248770557370369?s=20&t=X6j4uxxsMLtTb6zJcN6U6g ;
https://twitter.com/javanane_k/status/1601179792711507969?s=20&t=9Terbmzq7R9I8NUTbhhpNQ ;
https://twitter.com/javanane_k/status/1601208361273692160?s=20&t=9Terbmzq7R9I8NUTbhhpNQ

⁶ <https://twitter.com/PresstvExtra/status/1601234113238683651?s=20&t=9Terbmzq7R9I8NUTbhhpNQ> ; <https://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/09/18/2818898/>

⁷ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-november-13>

⁸ https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1601208931585777668?s=20&t=54EA_noSyrxNF_5iYNP27A ;

⁹ <https://twitter.com/PresstvExtra/status/1601234113238683651?s=20&t=wYnAKSFJl6xMmtTS5hfYSQ>

¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/HAhmadnezhad/status/1601223457332596737?s=20&t=B-K6PTIS9t2yxEzKn1Q-5g>

¹¹ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1601265937789128704> ;

<https://twitter.com/iranwire/status/1601274630957805571?s=20&t=VsZiRvIspXUdVuMtHy41Mg> ;

<https://twitter.com/indypersian/status/1601317515057319938?s=20&t=VsZiRvIspXUdVuMtHy41Mg>

¹² <https://twitter.com/HengawO/status/1601235802763448320?s=20&t=9Terbmzq7R9I8NUTbhhpNQ>

<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1601240882636021760?s=20&t=9Terbmzq7R9I8NUTbhhpNQ>

<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1601227424834154496?s=20&t=9Terbmzq7R9I8NUTbhhpNQ>

¹³ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1601204380640116738?s=20&t=9Terbmzq7R9I8NUTbhhpNQ>

¹⁴ <https://twitter.com/farzinkadkhodae/status/1601159672517787650?s=20&t=9Terbmzq7R9I8NUTbhhpNQ>

¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1601170454487896064?s=20&t=9Terbmzq7R9I8NUTbhhpNQ>

¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1601239174715035650?s=20&t=9Terbmzq7R9I8NUTbhhpNQ>

<https://twitter.com/farzinkadkhodae/status/1601153118578053120?s=20&t=9Terbmzq7R9I8NUTbhhpNQ>

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IRAN CRISIS UPDATE, DECEMBER 10

Dec 10, 2022 - [Press ISW](#)



Iran Crisis Update, December 10

Nicholas Carl, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Dana Alexander Gray, and Frederick W. Kagan

December 10, 5:00 pm ET

The Iran Crisis Updates are produced by the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute with support from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW). To receive Iran Crisis Updates via email, please subscribe [here](#).

The Iranian regime is using protester executions to instill terror among the population. The Judiciary upheld a death sentence for 23-year-old Mahan Sadrat Madani on December 10.[1] The regime charged Madani with "waging war against God" after he was arrested for brandishing a knife and protesting. The regime has set this low standard for the death penalty because of how easily protesters can identify with Madani and the nine other demonstrators currently on death row. Iranian authorities likely intend these executions to deter further protest turnout. This approach could easily backfire on the regime, however. Many protesters will likely sympathize with Madani and the others on death row, possibly inciting further popular unrest.

The regime's disrespectful handling of the bodies of dead protesters could further inflame popular resentment. The regime has buried many killed protesters—including Mohsen Shekari, whom the regime executed on December 8—in unmarked graves to prevent citizens from gathering at their gravesites.[2] The regime has informed the deceased's families of the burial only afterward in many instances. This mistreatment sharply contrasts with the way Iranian leaders are treating Rostam Ghassemi—the former roads and urban development minister and Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) brigadier general who died of cancer on December 8.[3] Iranian state media reported that the body of Ghassemi arrived in Tehran on December 10 after he died seeking medical treatment in China.[4] The regime has planned a funeral for Ghassemi on December 11, during which senior political and security leaders will likely gather to pay their respects. Iranian state media will likely cover the funeral and include remarks from senior officials. It is neither surprising nor unusual for the regime to observe the death of a senior IRGC officer in this fashion, but Ghassemi's treatment seems jarringly tone-deaf considering the regime's unnecessary and intentional mistreatment of dead protesters.

Prominent Iraqi Shia cleric and spiritual leader Ali al Sistani reportedly expressed concern about "the situation in Iran and the Shia religion," according to reformist Iranian cleric Mohammad Ashrafi Esfahani on December 10.[5] Esfahani added that Sistani sent messages to regime leadership about the protests but has not received a response. Esfahani claimed that Sistani made these remarks to him while meeting in Iraq. Sistani is Iraq's most senior Shia religious authority and has many followers across Iran and Iraq. It is unclear whether Esfahani accurately conveyed Sistani's comments, but even the impression that Sistani supports the protesters and has criticized the regime crackdown could stoke further public opposition to the Islamic Republic and undermine the regime among religious Iranians. Certain segments of the Iranian clerical establishment have already criticized the regime over the death of Mahsa Amini and the protest crackdown, as CTP previously reported.[6]

Sistani has not formally commented on the protests thus far nor has he commented on past major protest waves in Iran. Sistani has occasionally issued public statements clarifying his position when individuals attribute comments to him.[7] Sistani could signal his approval of Esfahani's claims silently if Sistani does not issue a public statement on the matter in the coming days.

Key Takeaways

- The Iranian regime is using protester executions to instill terror among the population.
- The regime's disrespectful handling of the bodies of dead protesters could further inflame popular resentment.
- Prominent Iraqi Shia cleric and spiritual leader Ali al Sistani reportedly expressed concern about "the situation in Iran and the Shia religion," according to reformist Iranian cleric Mohammad Ashrafi Esfahani.
- At least 15 protests took place in nine cities across nine provinces.
- The Karaj Neighborhood Youth seemed to successfully coordinate demonstrations.
- Deputy Interior Minister for Security and Law Enforcement Majid Mir Ahmadi stated that over 20,000 security officers have been injured in the protests.

Anti-Regime Protests

At least 15 protests took place in nine cities across nine provinces on December 10. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Karaj, Alborz Province[8]

- Size: Medium

Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province[9]

- Size: Small
- Protestor Activity: Silent march

Ghazvin City, Ghazvin Province[10]

- Size: Small

Rasht, Gilan Province[11]

- Size: Undetermined
- Regime Repression: Basij members attacked protestors with batons

Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province[12]

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Sanandaj Girl's Technical University students
- Protestor Activity: Barricaded a city street
- Regime Repression: Attacked students

Qom City, Qom Province[13]

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Qom University students
- Notes: Students verbally confronted Member of Parliament Mojtaba Zulnouri over the execution of Mohsen Shekari

Tehran City, Tehran Province[14]

- Size: Small to Medium
- Protestor Activity: Silent march during the day, anti-regime slogans at night. Fire lit in street at night.
- Regime Repression: Tear gas
- Area: Sattar Khan

Tehran City, Tehran Province[15]

- Size: Medium
- Area: Narmak

Tehran City, Tehran Province[16]

- Size: Small
- Demographic: University of Science and Culture students

Tehran City, Tehran Province[17]

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Shahid Beheshti University students

Tehran City, Tehran Province[18]

- Size: Small
- Area: Chitgar

CTP assesses with low confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Galehdar, Fars Province[19]

- Size: Small

Ahvaz, Khuzestan Province[20]

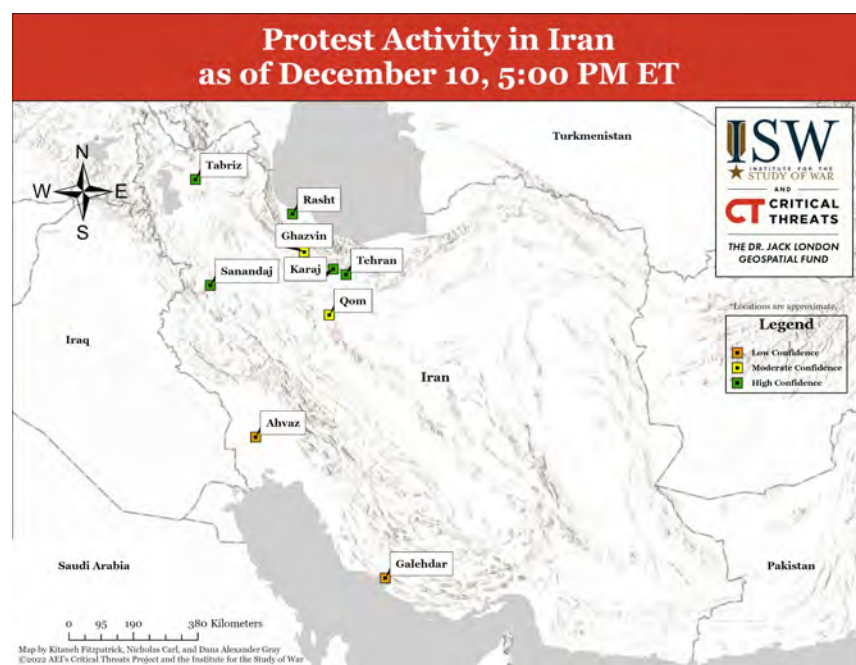
- Size: Small
- Protestor Activity: Fire lit in street

Tehran City, Tehran Province[21]

- Size: Undetermined
- Demographic: Allameh Tabataba'i University students

Tehran City, Tehran Province[22]

- Size: Undetermined
- Protestor Activity: Fire lit in street
- Area: Jannat Abad Neighborhood



The Karaj Neighborhood Youth seemed to successfully coordinate demonstrations on December 10. The Karaj group called for protests in several areas of the city—including the Gohardasht neighborhood—on December 10.[23] Social media users later documented protests in Gohardasht, suggesting that the Karaj group or affiliated entities successfully organized despite the ongoing regime censorship and heightened security presence countrywide.[24] The Karaj group later attributed protester turnout to its local field leaders, confirming one component of the structural organization of the group.[25] The apparent success of planned protests in Karaj could validate the legitimacy of the Karaj Neighborhood Youth among local demonstrators.

Unidentified individuals set fire to an office of the Basij Students Organization at Sharif University in Tehran on December 10.[26] The fire destroyed much of the office. Protesters have regularly thrown Molotov cocktails and other hand-thrown incendiaries at Basij bases throughout Iran since the protests began on September 16.

Deputy Interior Minister for Security and Law Enforcement Majid Mir Ahmadi stated on December 10 that over 20,000 security officers have been injured in the protests.[27] Mir Ahmadi added that some wounded have lost body parts or suffered from other serious conditions such as comas. Around 67 security officers have died.[28]

President Ebrahim Raisi attended a conference of the Supreme Cultural Revolution Council (SCCR) on December 10.[29] Raisi discussed the protests and socio-cultural affairs and called for the establishment of “dialogue centers.” The SCCR is a regime policy body that prepares resolutions on cultural, religious, and social affairs. Council members include Raisi, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, and Judiciary Chief Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei. Prosecutor General Mohammad

Javad Montazeri stated on December 1 that Parliament and the SCCR would issue an opinion on the mandatory hijab law by December 16.[30] Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei met with the SCCR on December 6, possibly to discuss the subject.[31]

President Ebrahim Raisi condemned the killing of Sunni cleric Moulavi Abdol Vahed Rigi and called on the state security services to urgently identify those responsible on December 10.[32]

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

There was nothing significant to report today.

[1] [https://www.sharghdaily dot com/fa/tiny/news-863996](https://www.sharghdaily.com/fa/tiny/news-863996)

[2] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-8>

[3] [https://en.mehrnews dot com/news/194665/iran-s-former-road-minister-Rostam-Ghasemi-dies-of-illness](https://en.mehrnews.com/news/194665/iran-s-former-road-minister-Rostam-Ghasemi-dies-of-illness)

[4] [www.isna dot ir/news/1401091912418](http://www.isna.ir/news/1401091912418)

[5] [https://www.jamaneh dot news/fa/tiny/news-1577014](https://www.jamaneh.com/news/fa/tiny/news-1577014)

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[9] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1601628871174279169?s=20&t=EbzlCw...> ; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1601683747858186240?s=20&t=uJDtArN...>

[10] <https://twitter.com/RadioFarda/status/1601660960690868225?s=20&t=uJDtAr...>

[11] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1601682375905157121?s=20&t=uJDtAr...>

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[12] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1601494235383230464?s=20&t=nUAINE...>

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- [16] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1601607126329491457?s=20&t=nUAtNE...>
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- [17] <https://twitter.com/arixolin/status/1601535201573687297/video/4> ; <https://twitter.com/bbcpersian/status/1601537688326180864?s=20&t=awivzi7...>
- [18] <https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1601683961964552195?s=20&t=vZjD-o-89...>
- [19] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1601662315019243521?s=20&t=uJDtAr...>
- [20] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1601655423429660674?s=20&t=uJDtAr...>
- [21] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1601552809501261824?s=20&t=nUAtNE...>
- [22] <https://twitter.com/FattahiFarzad/status/1601642428020428800?s=20&t=vZjD...>
- [23] https://twitter.com/javanane_k/status/1601179792711507969
- [24] <https://twitter.com/OfficialToomaj/status/1601625589831831553?s=20&t=uJD...>
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- [30] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-2>
- [31] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-6>
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Protest Map - 10 DEC.png

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IRAN CRISIS UPDATE, DECEMBER 11

Dec 11, 2022 - [Press ISW](#)



Nicholas Carl and Frederick W. Kagan

December 11, 6:00 pm ET

The Iran Crisis Updates are produced by the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute with support from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW). To receive Iran Crisis Updates via email, please subscribe [here](#).

Some Iranian political and religious figures are debating the use of the death penalty against arrested protesters. Various reformist leaders, Qom seminary officials, and prominent Sunni cleric Moulana Abdol Hamid, among others, have separately criticized death sentences for arrested protesters in recent days.[1] These officials were responding to the Judiciary executing a protester on December 8 for the first time since the Mahsa Amini protests began.[2] The Judiciary has sentenced at least 10 other arrested protesters to death thus far. No senior official involved in issuing and implementing the death sentences has voiced opposition to them, however, indicating that the regime will likely continue the executions.

These criticisms over the death penalty represent yet another issue dividing parts of the political and religious establishments over the protest crackdown. Iranian leaders have also debated continuing the morality patrol and how much force to use against protesters in recent months, as CTP previously reported.[3]

The ineffectiveness of the regime protest crackdown has likely allowed and encouraged some in the political and religious establishments to criticize and debate more openly. The regime's use of brutality and extreme force has thus far failed to end the protests as they continue in their thirteenth consecutive week. Many protesters, especially the Iranian youth, have repeatedly expressed their readiness to die fighting the regime, reflecting its failure to deter demonstrations, as CTP previously reported.[4] The political and religious establishments would not have likely debated over these issues related to the crackdown—at least not as openly as they have—had the regime successfully quelled the unrest within the first few days.

Some protest coordinators and organizations called for protests on December 12. The Karaj Neighborhood Youth called for silent demonstrations in solidarity with arrested protesters on death row.[5] The Countrywide Youth similarly called for protests to commemorate the two-year anniversary since the Islamic Republic killed anti-regime activist Ruhollah Zam.[6] The IRGC Intelligence Organization lured Zam to Baghdad in October 2019, where it kidnapped him and transported him to Iran.[7] The regime later executed Zam on December 12, 2020.[8] CTP has not previously observed protest coordinators and organizations invoking the memory of Zam to plan protests.

Key Takeaways

- Some Iranian political and religious leaders are debating the regime's use of the death penalty against arrested protesters.
- The ineffectiveness of the regime protest crackdown has likely allowed and encouraged some Iranian officials to criticize and debate more openly.
- Some protest coordinators and organizations called for protests on December 12.
- At least six protests occurred in six cities across six provinces.
- The IRGC claimed to have thwarted a plot to assassinate Mashhad Friday Prayer Leader Ahmad Alam ol Hoda.
- The United Neighborhood Youth released a 43-point political manifesto.

- Protest coordinators and organizations continued trying to divide state security services in support of the protesters.
- The Iranian rial dropped to a new all-time low against the US dollar.

Anti-Regime Protests

At least six protests occurred in six cities across six provinces on December 11. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Karaj, Alborz Province[9]

Size: Undetermined

Notes: Chants against the regime execution of protesters

Kermanshah City, Kermanshah Province[10]

Size: Small

Protester Activity: Lit fire in street

Babol, Mazandaran Province[11]

Size: Small

Demographic: Noushivani University students

Notes: Chants against the regime execution of protesters

Tehran City, Tehran Province[12]

Size: Small

Protest Activity: Allameh University students

Notes: Chants against the regime execution of protesters

CTP assesses with low confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Esfahan City, Esfahan Province[13]

Size: Small

Demographic: Esfahan University students

Notes: Chants against the regime execution of protesters

Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province[14]

Size: Small

Demographic: Energy workers



The IRGC claimed to have thwarted a plot to assassinate Mashhad Friday Prayer Leader Ahmad Alam ol Hoda on December 9.[15] The IRGC attributed the plot to a group called Jaish al Zalm and claimed to have arrested some of its members.

Expediency Discernment Council Chairman Sadegh Amoli Larijani optimistically discussed the regime in a meeting with Sharif University students on December 10.[16] Larijani stated that the regime has the capacity to correct problems and reform itself to address protester grievances. He also stated that the regime must punish lawbreakers. Larijani is the brother of former Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani. The two brothers were prominent political players within the regime for many years but have become increasingly marginalized since 2019.[17]

The United Neighborhood Youth released a 43-point political manifesto on December 11.[18] The group emphasized equality and personal freedoms and called for the establishment of a democratic, popular government. The group celebrated ethnic, gender, political, and religious diversity. The United Neighborhood Youth—an umbrella organization of around 30 protest organizations—announced its formation on December 4 “to coordinate planning to advance the revolution to victory and also create the necessary infrastructure to manage the country’s affairs during the critical periods of the transition of power.”[19]

Protest coordinators and organizations continued trying to divide state security services in support of the protesters on December 11. The Tehran Neighborhood Youth called for personnel from the state security services to join the protests on December 11.[20] The group stated that security officers who join the protests soon will be forgiven. The Iran Charter protest organization similarly stated on October 14 that it would welcome willing members of the regime in the democratic and secular political system it seeks to establish.[21]

The Iranian rial dropped to a new all-time low against the US dollar on December 11. The dollar sold for around 370,000 rials among currency traders.[22] The dollar sold for around 317,000 rials when protests began on September 16.[23]

The regime held a funeral for Rostam Ghassesemi on December 11.[24] Ghassesemi was the former roads and urban development minister and an IRGC brigadier general who died of cancer on December 8. Senior political and security officials attended the ceremony, including President Ebrahim Raisi, Vice President for Economic Affairs IRGC Major General Mohsen Rezaei, IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami, and former IRGC Commander Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, among others.[25]

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

There was nothing significant to report today.

[1] <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/iran-s-former-minister-in-khatami-s-cabinet...>
<https://www.radiofarda.com/a/iran-mulla-executions/32171562.html>; www.abdollahamid.net/persian/2022/12/09/13109

[2] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-8>

[3] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-18;>
<https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-2>

- [4] https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-november-4#_...
- [5] https://t.me/javanane_ka/306
- [6] https://twitter.com/iran_javanan/status/1602014841312509953
- [7] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/briefs/iran-file/iran-file-october-21-2019>
- [8] <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-55285301>
- [9] https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1602027239092150272; <https://twi...>
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<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1601969103325069320>
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https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1601935694238302211;
<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1601845961243910145>
- [13] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1601989089821073408>
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- [15] [www.irna dot ir/news/84965588](http://www.irna.ir/news/84965588)
- [16] [https://www.entekhab dot ir/fa/news/706452](https://www.entekhab.ir/fa/news/706452)
- [17] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/US-must-be-wary-as-irans-parlia...>
- [18] https://t.me/United_Youth_of_Iran/13
- [19] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-4>
- [20] https://t.me/teh_javanan/70
- [21] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-18>
- [22] [www.bonbast dot com/historical/usd/2022/12](http://www.bonbast.com/historical/usd/2022/12)
- [23] [www.bonbast dot com/historical/usd/2022/09](http://www.bonbast.com/historical/usd/2022/09)
- [24] [https://www.isna dot ir/news/1401092013077](https://www.isna.ir/news/1401092013077)
- [25] [www.president dot ir/fa/141291](http://www.president.ir/fa/141291)

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IRAN CRISIS UPDATE, DECEMBER 12

Dec 12, 2022 - [Press ISW](#)



Iran Crisis Update, December 12

Nicholas Carl, Zachary Coles, Johanna Moore, and Frederick W. Kagan

December 12, 5:00 pm ET

The Iran Crisis Updates are produced by the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute with support from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW). To receive Iran Crisis Updates via email, please subscribe [here](#).

The Iranian regime executed a protester for the second time since the Mahsa Amini protests began as part of the regime effort to deter protest turnout and instill terror among the public. The Judiciary publicly executed 23-year-old Majid Reza Rahnavard on December 12 for “waging war against God” after he killed two security officers.[1] Judiciary Chief Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei defended the regime’s decision to execute arrested prisoners and instructed judges and judicial authorities to ignore critics on December 12.[2] Ejei’s remarks reaffirm his commitment to conducting these brutal executions despite some political and religious figures condemning the executions in recent days.[3] The Judiciary previously executed a protester on December 8.[4]

The Judiciary allowed the mother of Majid Reza Rahnavard to visit him in prison the day before his execution, possibly as a psychological terror tactic against the protest movement.[5] The Judiciary did not inform Rahnavard or his mother about the imminent execution. This tactic is possibly meant to keep arrested protesters and their families in constant fear.

Protest coordinators and organizations called for snap demonstrations in response to the execution of Majid Reza Rahnavard and seemingly succeeded in generating turnout on short notice. The neighborhood youth groups in Tehran, Karaj, Mashhad called for snap protests after the execution, and small demonstrations occurred in each city. CTP cannot confirm that the neighborhood youth groups and their calls were solely responsible for the demonstrations, however.

The ineffectiveness and brutal nature of the regime protest crackdown has continued to fragment the Iranian political elite. Mohammad Sarafaraz—the former president of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) from 2014-16—criticized the crackdown in a video posted to YouTube on December 10.[6] IRIB is a prominent state-run media corporation, the head of which is directly appointed by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. Sarafaraz reportedly resigned as IRIB president in 2016 over conflicts with Mojtaba Khamenei—the son of the supreme leader.[7] Sarafaraz in the YouTube video condemned the abuse, arrest, and killing of protesters and the inability of the regime to provide for its people. He specifically blamed Mojtaba Khamenei for the regime’s oppressive policies. Sarafaraz added that he has prepared his will because “some kind of accident. . . may happen to [him]. . . for saying these words.”[8] Sarafaraz is currently a member of the Supreme Cyberspace Council—a regime policy body responsible for internet regulations and state censorship. CTP previously assessed that the ineffectiveness of the crackdown is allowing and encouraging some in the political and religious establishments to criticize and debate more openly.[9]

Key Takeaways

- **The Iranian regime executed a protester for the second time since the Mahsa Amini protests began as part of the regime effort to deter protest turnout and instill terror among the public.**
- **Protest coordinators and organizations called for demonstrations in response to the execution of Majid Reza Rahnavard and seemed to have limited success in generating**

turnout on short notice.

- The ineffectiveness and brutal nature of the regime protest crackdown has continued to fragment Iranian political elite.
- At least seven protests occurred in four cities across four provinces.

Anti-Regime Protests

At least seven protests occurred in four cities across four provinces on December 12. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Karaj, Alborz Province[10]

- Size: Small
- Protester Activity: Protesters participated in a silent march during evening demonstrations against the regime for executing Majid Reza Rahnavaard.

Shiraz, Fars Province[11]

- Size: Undetermined
- Demographic: Students
- Protester Activity: Protesters demonstrated against the regime for executing Majid Reza Rahnavaard.

Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province[12]

- Size: Small
- Protest Activity: Protesters held demonstrations against the regime for executing Majid Reza Rahnavaard.

Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province[13]

- Size: Small
- Protest Activity: Protesters held evening demonstrations against the regime for executing Majid Reza Rahnavaard.

Tehran City, Tehran Province[14]

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Allameh Tabatabaei University students
- Protester Activity: Protesters demonstrated against the regime for executing Majid Reza Rahnavaard.

Tehran City, Tehran Province[15]

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Shahid Beheshti University students

Tehran City, Tehran Province[16]

- Size: Small
- Protester Activity: Protesters held evening demonstrations against the regime for executing Majid Reza Rahnavaard.
- Area: Ekbatan and Chitgar neighborhoods of Tehran.



A special clerical court in Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province summoned Sunni cleric Maulvi Abdol Ghaffar Naghshbandi, according to a local Iranian media outlet *Haalvsh* on December 10.

[17] Naghshbandi is the Sunni Friday prayer leader for Rask, Sistan and Baluchistan Province who had previously confirmed reports that a local Law Enforcement Command officer raped a 15-year-old girl in September 2022. The summons may be part of the regime effort to discredit and intimidate Sunni clerics, including Moulana Abdol Hamid, who have fueled protests among Iranian Baloch in recent months. It is unclear why a Mashhad court summoned Naghshbandi given the relative distance from Rask.

Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Ground Forces Commander Brigadier General Mohammad Pak Pour met with Artesh Ground Forces Commander Brigadier General Kiomars Heydari to discuss unspecified cooperation on December 12.**[18]** It unclear whether Pak Pour and Heydari discussed protest suppression.

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

The Iraqi central government and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) are continuing border security cooperation in response to Iranian demands.**[19]** Iraqi Interior Minister Abdul Shammari met with KRG Interior Minister Rebar Ahmed in Erbil to discuss Border Guard deployments along Iraq's borders with Iran and Turkey on December 12. Iraqi Border Guard Commander Major General Mohammad Sukkar stated that Erbil and Baghdad are allocating additional human and material resources to support future deployments. The Iraqi Interior Ministry recently announced plans to open volunteer applications to the public in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region, however, Kurdish volunteer and regular troops will likely comprise the only Border Guard forces present in Iraqi Kurdistan.**[20]**

Al Quds* published a report claiming that Iran paused financial transfers to some Palestinian militias in September 2022.*[21]** Unidentified officials from unspecified militia factions told *Al Quds* that the pause in funding has created a financial crisis for many militias, especially for those operating in the Gaza Strip.**[22]** The officials also claimed the pause "may be related to the internal events taking place in [Iran]."**[23]** *Al Quds* is a heavily circulated Palestinian news outlet based in Jerusalem.

[1] <https://www.sharghdaily.com/%D8%A8%D8%AE%D8%B4-%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA-6/864223-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%85%D8%AC%DB%8C%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%B6%D8%A7-%D8%B1%D9%87%D9%86%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%AF-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85>

[2] <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1401/09/21/2820291>

[3] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-11>

[4] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-8>

[5] <https://twitter.com/yashar/status/1602413902419005441>

[6] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qva-dN8DY7E>

[7] <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/32172444.html>

[8] <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/32172444.html>

- [9] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-11>
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- [16] https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1602392352030588934?s=20&t=JEq5SY...; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1602383814092791808?s=20&t=t8m4r0q...>
- [17] www.haalvsh dot org/2022/12/1011078
- [18] www.defapress dot ir/fa/news/561016
- [19] [https://shafaq\(dot\)com/ar/%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%80%D9%86/%D9%82%D8%A7-%D8%AF-%D9%82%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%82-%D9%85%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84-%D9%82%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A8%D8%B4-%D9%86-%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%83-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%AF-%D9%85%D8%B9-%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%AF](https://shafaq(dot)com/ar/%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%80%D9%86/%D9%82%D8%A7-%D8%AF-%D9%82%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%82-%D9%85%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84-%D9%82%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A8%D8%B4-%D9%86-%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%83-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%AF-%D9%85%D8%B9-%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%AF)
- [https://www\(dot\)kurdistan24.net/ar/story/33335-%D9%88%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AE%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%8A-%D9%8A%D8%B5%D9%84-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%B1%D8%A3%D8%B3-%D9%88%D9%81%D8%AF-%D8%B1%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B9](https://www(dot)kurdistan24.net/ar/story/33335-%D9%88%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AE%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%8A-%D9%8A%D8%B5%D9%84-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%B1%D8%A3%D8%B3-%D9%88%D9%81%D8%AF-%D8%B1%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B9)
- [20] <https://twitter.com/socialmoigoviq/status/1600865015791165440>
- [21] <https://www dot alquds dot com/posts/f657791f-f870-4d98-8013-08434258ef65>
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- [23] <https://www dot alquds dot com/posts/f657791f-f870-4d98-8013-08434258ef65>

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Iran Crisis Update, December 13

Nicholas Carl, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Johanna Moore, and Frederick W. Kagan
December 13, 5:00 pm ET

The Iran Crisis Updates are produced by the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute with support from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW). To receive Iran Crisis Updates via email, please subscribe [here](#).

The Iranian regime has replaced key clerics responsible for indoctrinating a significant portion of the security forces, possibly to improve efforts to ideologically control security officers. Senior Iranian cleric Abdollah Hajji Sadeghi appointed three new clerics to key leadership posts in the Basij Organization on December 13.¹ Hajji Sadeghi is responsible for representing Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei to the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC). He appointed:

- Ali Rezaei as supreme leader representative to the Basij Organization;
- Karim Sararfaraz as supreme leader deputy representative to the Basij Organization; and
- Mahmoud Mohammadi Shahrودي as Basij Professors, Students, and Clerics Organization chief.

Khamenei maintains a network of clerical representatives, such as Hajji Sadeghi, who oversee every echelon of the state security services and act as political commissars.² They control the security services' ideological-political training (i.e., indoctrination), the dissemination of propaganda, the spiritual commitment of security personnel, and seek to ensure the services' subordination to the will of the supreme leader.

It is unclear why Hajji Sadeghi ordered these changes now, although they may be related to the protest crackdown. He may have sought to install new figures to reinforce the ideological commitment of Basij security officers. The Islamic Republic has experienced small-scale defections and insubordinations among security personnel during protest crackdowns throughout its history, and Iranian authorities likely seek to mitigate that risk.³ The new supreme leader representative to the Basij Organization, Ali Rezaei, is particularly well-positioned to oversee these efforts in the Basij given his experience. Rezaei managed ideological education and training in the Basij before his promotion.⁴

It is noteworthy that Hajji Sadeghi passed over Mahmoud Mohammadi Shahrودي for both the roles of supreme leader representative and deputy representative to the Basij. Shahrودي was the supreme leader deputy representative to the Basij before the latest appointments and would therefore have been a logical candidate to become the new overall supreme leader representative to the Basij. Hajji Sadeghi

instead appointed Shahroudi to head the Basij Professors, Students, and Clerics Organization, which Hajji Sadeghi may have meant as a demotion. Hajji Sadegh's decision to clean house likely reflects his desire to significantly change the regime approach to indoctrinating and monitoring Basij personnel.

Ensuring the ideological subordination and loyalty of Basij personnel is essential to sustaining the regime protest crackdown. The Basij operates quasi-professional paramilitary units that the regime uses to violently suppress dissent and support the Law Enforcement Command (LEC) against protests.⁵ These units receive varying levels of ideological-political training and instruction in civil defense, counterinsurgency, and security operations. Losing the loyalty of these security personnel would deprive the regime of a key instrument in its repressive toolkit and possibly strengthen the protest movement if any significant number of those officers provide demonstrators their expertise and support.

The broad mission set of the Basij Organization may complicate regime efforts to find effective commanders and managers for it. The Basij penetrates every segment of Iranian society, with duties that include organizing and recruiting regime supporters, indoctrinating its members, producing state propaganda, conducting moral policing, and suppressing political opposition in addition to its role within the security forces.⁶

Protest coordinators and organizations have planned more anti-regime demonstrations in the coming days. Social media account 1500 Tasvir stated that protesters will commemorate the execution of Mohsen Shekari in Tehran on December 14.⁷ The Karaj Neighborhood Youth called for protests on December 15 to commemorate the 40th day since the regime killed protester Mehdi Hazrati.⁸ The United Neighborhood Youth called for countrywide protests on December 20-21 in response to the execution of arrested protesters.⁹

Key Takeaways

- The Iranian regime appointed key clerics responsible for indoctrinating a significant portion of the security forces, possibly to improve efforts to ideologically subordinate security officers.
- Protest coordinators and organizations have planned more anti-regime demonstrations in the coming days.
- At least eight protests occurred in five cities across five provinces on December 13.
- Tehran Prosecutor General Ali Alghasi Mehr announced that 400 detained protesters were assigned prison sentences.
- The LEC Intelligence Organization announced the arrest of an unspecified number of actors for targeting trucks.
- The Parliamentary Judiciary and Legal Committee approved three articles of a bill that would establish a police force for children and adolescents.

Anti-Regime Protests

At least eight protests occurred in five cities across five provinces on December 13. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province¹⁰

- Size: Medium
- Demographic: Tabriz University of Medical Sciences students
- Protester Activity: Silent march, threw nooses into a pile and colored the pile with red dye
- Note: Protesting execution of Mohsen Shakari and Majid Reza Rahnava

Javanroud, Kermanshah Province¹¹

- Size: Medium
- Note: Occurred in the early morning of December 13, protesting arrest of local teacher and cleric

Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province¹²

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Mourners
- Protester Activity: Gathered for funeral service at local mosque
- Regime Repression: Locked the doors to local mosque
- Note: Mourning the execution of Majid Reza Rahnava

Ahvaz, Khuzestan Province¹³

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Highschool students

Tehran City, Tehran Province¹⁴

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Soore University students

CTP assesses with low confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province¹⁵

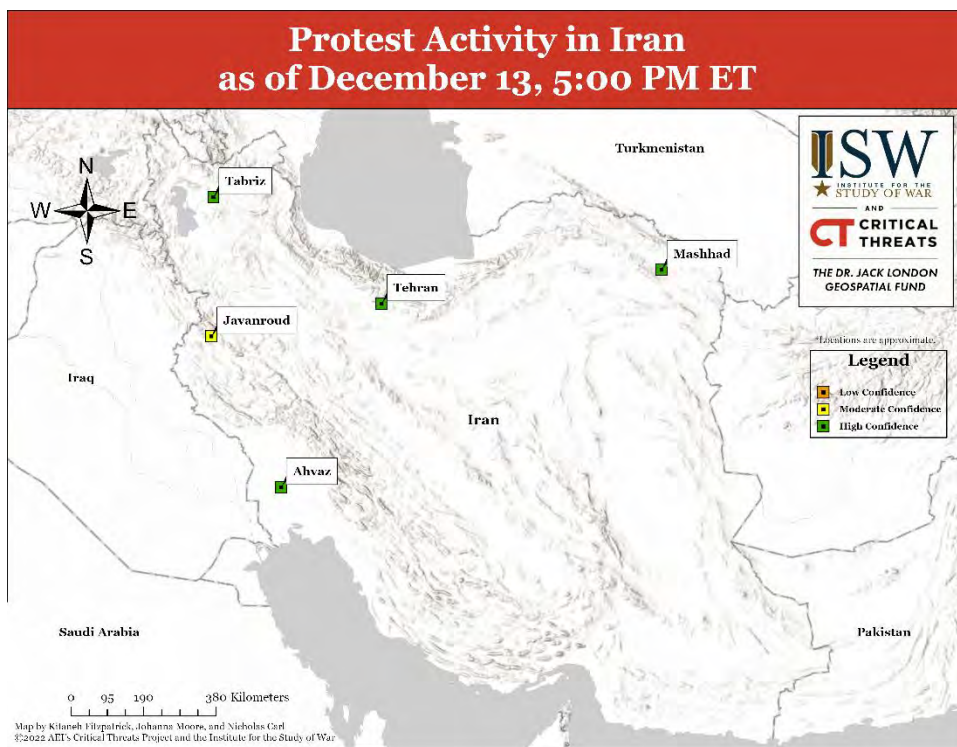
- Size: Undetermined
- Demographic: Al-Zahra University of Mashhad students

Tehran City, Tehran Province¹⁶

- Size: Small
- Area: Chitgar

Tehran City, Tehran Province¹⁷

- Size: Small
- Area: Ekbatan



Tehran Prosecutor General Ali Alghasi Mehr announced that 400 detained protesters were assigned prison sentences. Alghasi Mehr stated that the Tehran judicial branch sentenced 160 protesters to five-to-ten-year prison sentences; 80 protesters to two-to-five-year prison sentences; and 160 to up to two-year prison sentences. Alghasi Mehr added that the judiciary had fined 70 protesters charged with minor offenses.¹⁸ The regime has thus far executed two protesters for participating in anti-regime protests.¹⁹ Anti-regime protest documentation social media user 1500Tasvir warned its followers that the number of arrested protesters and protesters sentenced to death was so high that “we still cannot even cover one percent of them” on December 13.²⁰

The LEC Intelligence Organization announced the arrest of an unspecified number of actors for targeting trucks. The announcement claimed that it identified over 87 instances of individuals throwing stones at trucks and 20 incidents of shooting at trucks. It is unclear where these incidents occurred.²¹ Anti-regime demonstration groups called on protesters to target commercial actors who failed to participate in strikes scheduled from December 5-7, as CTP previously reported.²²

The Parliamentary Judiciary and Legal Committee approved three articles of a bill that would establish a police force for children and adolescents. The police force would exist under Iran’s law enforcement command within the interior ministry.²³ Some human rights organizations estimate that security personnel have killed at least 68 children in their protest crackdown since anti-regime demonstrations began on September 16.²⁴ The establishment of a police force dedicated to children and adolescents will likely take several months to create and may suggest that the regime views protests among Iranian youth as a long-term threat.

Social media accounts reported that protesters set fire to a telecommunications facility in Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province.²⁵

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

There was nothing significant to report today.

¹ <https://www.hawzahnews dot com/news/1058835>

² <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/supreme-leader-and-guard-civil-military-relations-and-regime-survival-iran>

³ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Whatever-it-takes-to-end-it.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.irna dot ir/news/84821211>

⁵ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Whatever-it-takes-to-end-it.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Whatever-it-takes-to-end-it.pdf>

⁷ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1602587891758239745>

⁸ https://twitter.com/javanane_k/status/1602392664762040320?s=20&t=bbznMwhyAdAKYquhhNgG8g

⁹ www.listed dot to/@UYI

¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1602679044297957378>

https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1602673452346916864

¹¹ <https://twitter.com/KurdistanHRN/status/1602441471214473217?s=20&t=6HG6OD3dKAiXiTzTCPXqnw> ;
<https://twitter.com/Kolbarnews/status/1602426978233192451?s=20&t=luf2KRN8KMrmO0NrvOUBXg>

¹² <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1602594314919579649>

<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1602566290228580352>

<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1602601353926279169>

<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1602653563087364101>

¹³ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1602708115945914369> ;

<https://twitter.com/Vahid/status/1602699756710543363?s=20&t=6HG6OD3dKAiXiTzTCPXqnw> ;

https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1602727891552313345?s=20&t=6HG6OD3dKAiXiTzTCPXqnw

¹⁴ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1602652216678031361>

https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1602664998676975618

¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1602652502218133504>

¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1602772417918681088?s=20&t=Aaw9g0WGr85SeNvTnfWjsg>

¹⁷ <https://twitter.com/FattahiFarzad/status/1602764274392145920?s=20&t=Ot34n0geoDCv3GiKXEchuw>

¹⁸ <http://mehrnews dot com/xZ4VP>

¹⁹ https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1600885220521410562?s=20&t=DoBWpHbidl6NgVTMQ3_DEA ;

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/12/iran-public-execution-of-majidreza-rahnavaard-exposes-authorities-revenge-killings/>

²⁰ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1602686020696383490?s=20&t=bbznMwhyAdAKYquhhNgG8g>

²¹ <https://www.ilna dot ir/fa/tiny/news-1308589>

²² https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-5#_edn6e47a6d17ba76155892763d455e78356111

²³ <https://www.irna dot ir/news/84969442/%D9%BE%D9%84%DB%8C%D8%B3-%D9%88%DB%8C%DA%98%D9%87-%D8%A7%D8%B7%D9%81%D8%A7%D9%84-%D9%88-%D9%86%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AA%D8%B4%DA%A9%DB%8C%D9%84-%D9%85%DB%8C-%D8%B4%D9%88%D8%AF>

²⁴ https://twitter.com/HRANA_English/status/1602439454131720196?s=20&t=lb61wP81450ZRrkwQvcl9Q

²⁵ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1602682403847344129>



Iran Crisis Update, December 14

Nicholas Carl, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Johanna Moore, and Frederick W. Kagan
December 14, 5:00 pm ET

The Iran Crisis Updates are produced by the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute with support from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW). To receive Iran Crisis Updates via email, please subscribe [here](#).

The Iranian economy appears to be entering a period of potentially significant disruption. Protester coordinators and other social media users have called on Iranians to urgently withdraw their bank account savings and buy gold in recent days.¹ Social media accounts reported many Iranians doing so on December 14, although CTP cannot verify this reported bank run nor is it prepared to assess the scale.² These reports coincide with the continued devaluation of the Iranian rial, which hit a new all-time low of around 385,000 to the US dollar on December 14.³ A public relations official in the Raisi administration acknowledged that the protests have increased economic uncertainty and thus fueled this fiscal crisis.⁴

Iranian media has reported an uptick in some business executives and officials resigning or being arrested or fired in recent weeks. These executives include prominent individuals in the construction, financial services, and steel industries.⁵ The Raisi administration replaced the Central Bank of Iran official responsible for the foreign exchange department on December 14 as well.⁶ At least some of these changes are likely tied to the fiscal crisis.

CTP is not prepared to assess how this fiscal crisis may affect the Iranian economy or whether the regime will successfully manage it. This crisis may nevertheless encourage protest coordinators and organizations to consider further strikes and other means of economic pressure against the regime.

President Ebrahim Raisi met with officials from the Khatam ol Anbia Construction Headquarters on December 14, likely to discuss cooperation toward addressing the fiscal crisis.⁷ This headquarters is a prominent civil engineering and construction firm controlled directly by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC). It is involved in large swaths of the Iranian economy, including but not limited to port services, oil and gas, drilling, construction, telecommunications, and financial services.

UN Economic and Social Council member states voted to expel Iran from the UN Commission on the Status of Women on December 14. Twenty-nine members voted in favor,

sixteen abstained, and eight voted against the US-backed resolution.⁸ US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield stated that the resolution signaled that the international community would hold Iran accountable for its human rights abuses while expressing solidarity with Iranian women and girls, stating: “we are here for you, we’ve got your back, and we’re going to stand with you.”⁹ Several regime actors and state-affiliated outlets condemned the vote and criticized the US for “imposing its will” on other nations.¹⁰ Social media users documented Saghez, Kurdistan Province residents and other Iranians in undisclosed locations celebrating the UN vote.¹¹

Key Takeaways

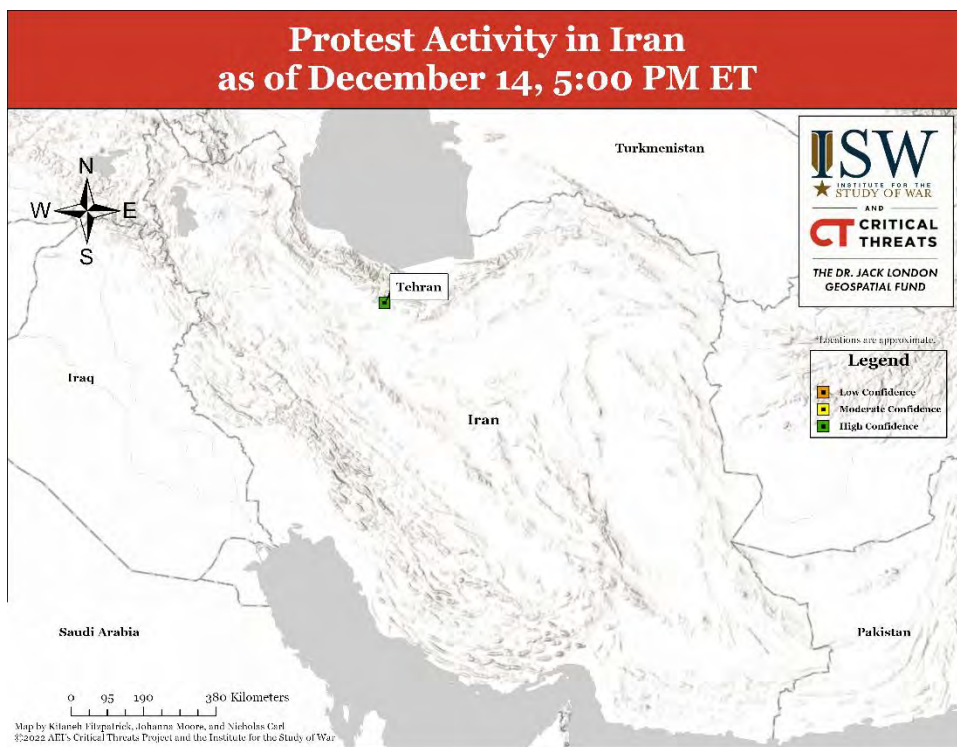
- The Iranian economy appears to be entering a period of potentially significant disruption.
- UN member states voted to expel Iran from the UN Commission on the Status of Women.
- At least one protest occurred.
- Social media users circulated calls for countrywide strikes and protests on December 19, 20, and 21.
- Iran-affiliated leadership from Lebanon and Iraq met in Baghdad.

Anti-Regime Protests

At least one protest occurred on December 14. Limited protest activity aligns with limited calls for anti-regime demonstrations on December 14; CTP did not observe significant calls to protest or strike on this date. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Tehran City, Tehran Province¹²

- Size: Small
- Protester Activity: Chanted anti-regime slogans



Social media users circulated calls for countrywide strikes and protests on December 19, 20, and 21.¹³ Social media users specifically called on merchants, truck drivers, and doctors to participate in strikes on these dates. These reports coincide with the Shiraz Neighborhood Youth's call for strikes and anti-regime demonstrations from December 17-21.¹⁴

Hardline Parliamentarian Mostafa Mir Salim expressed support for death sentences and executions for arrested protesters on December 14. Mir Salim additionally advocated to decrease the length of time between arrest and execution to 10 days.¹⁵

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

Israel conducted an airstrike on an IRGC weapons shipment in eastern Syria on December 14.¹⁶ Local sources reportedly heard three explosions in the vicinity of an IRGC training center while fighter jets were identified flying in the area.¹⁷ Israel Times Channel 12 released a report claiming that IRGC forces delivered a weapons shipment to the training center on the morning of December 14.¹⁸

Iran-affiliated leadership from Lebanon and Iraq met in Baghdad on December 14.¹⁹ The Director General of Lebanese General Security Major General Abbas Ibrahim reportedly met with Iraqi and Iranian-proxy leadership, as well as some non-Iran aligned individuals, to discuss cooperation and aid to Lebanon.

¹ https://t.me/mashhad_protests/1786;
https://twitter.com/Javanan_bnd/status/1602951777313234945?s=20&t=8YRa8lkljc_ef9zqKYyXxg

² <https://twitter.com/Hashshaashin/status/1603131392086446080>; <https://twitter.com/mhlii3/status/1603029739383537665>;
<https://twitter.com/Hashshaashin/status/1603006637744492544>

³ www.bonbast.com/historical/usd/2022/12

⁴ https://twitter.com/sepehr_khalaji/status/1603024184178888711?s=20&t=Il6WGMJ7dNGxwHyAeXDcJQ

⁵ <https://www.tabnak.ir/fa/news/1154262>; <https://www.bourse24.ir/news/258645>; <https://donya-e-eqtesad.com/%D8%A8%D8%AE%D8%B4-%D9%88%DB%8C%DA%98%D9%87-%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%87-63/3925394-%D8%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA%DA%AF%DB%8C%D8%B1%DB%8C-%D9%85%D8%AF%DB%8C%D8%B1%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%84-%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%82-%D9%81%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D9%85%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1%DA%A9%D9%87>

⁶ <https://www.asriran.com/fa/news/869974>

⁷ <https://president.ir/fa/141359>

⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iran-likely-be-ousted-un-womens-body-2022-12-14/>

⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/14/world/middleeast/iran-un-womens-rights-vote.html>

¹⁰ <https://nournews.ir/Fa/News/120704> ;

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¹¹ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1603083555680264194?s=20&t=U7AFH5oB1vZ5tLjjXDbGOQ> ;

<https://twitter.com/iranwire/status/1603134228358643712?s=20&t=U7AFH5oB1vZ5tLjjXDbGOQ>

¹² https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1603108837904498688?s=20&t=Il6WGMJ7dNGxwHyAeXDcJQ

¹³ https://twitter.com/Javanmardi75/status/1603033922924937218?s=20&t=8YRa8kljc_ef9zqKYyXxg ;

<https://twitter.com/RADOCLUB/status/1602001756409446401?s=20&t=gKIJpLHhyl49x0Y7HAsxRw> ;

<https://twitter.com/OfficialToomaj/status/1602607267014213634?s=20&t=gKIJpLHhyl49x0Y7HAsxRw>

¹⁴ https://twitter.com/javanan_SHZ/status/1602705412972740614?s=20&t=gKIJpLHhyl49x0Y7HAsxRw

¹⁵ <https://www.moniban.com/news/fa/tiny/news-126475>

¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/EyeEuphrates/status/1603069164654141445>

https://twitter.com/Sada_AlSharqieh/status/1603074541370187776

¹⁷ [https://www\(dot\)syriahr.com/%d8%b7%d8%a7%d8%a6%d8%b1%d8%a9-%d9%85%d8%ac%d9%87%d9%88%d9%84%d8%a9-%d8%aa%d8%b3%d8%aa%d9%87%d8%af%d9%81-%d9%85%d9%88%d8%a7%d9%82%d8%b9-%d9%81%d9%8a-%d9%85%d8%af%d9%8a%d9%86%d8%a9-%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%85/575953/](https://www(dot)syriahr.com/%d8%b7%d8%a7%d8%a6%d8%b1%d8%a9-%d9%85%d8%ac%d9%87%d9%88%d9%84%d8%a9-%d8%aa%d8%b3%d8%aa%d9%87%d8%af%d9%81-%d9%85%d9%88%d8%a7%d9%82%d8%b9-%d9%81%d9%8a-%d9%85%d8%af%d9%8a%d9%86%d8%a9-%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%85/575953/)

[https://deirezzor24\(dot\)net/en/the-revolutionary-guard-militia-begins-establishing-new-military-headquarters-in-al-mayadeen/](https://deirezzor24(dot)net/en/the-revolutionary-guard-militia-begins-establishing-new-military-headquarters-in-al-mayadeen/)

¹⁸ [https://qudsnet\(dot\)com/post/545282/%D9%82%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%87%D8%AC%D9%88%D9%85-%D8%A5%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A3%D9%87%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%81-%D8%A5%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%82-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7](https://qudsnet(dot)com/post/545282/%D9%82%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%87%D8%AC%D9%88%D9%85-%D8%A5%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A3%D9%87%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%81-%D8%A5%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%82-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7)

¹⁹ <https://www%28dot%29alahednews.com.lb/article.php?id=48672&cid=113>