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Iran Crisis Update, October 15

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October 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](#).

A major fire broke out at the Evin prison in Tehran on October 15, and the regime used live rounds and tear gas against prisoners and nearby protestors. Iranian state media made the unsubstantiated claim that inmates started the fire.¹ Regime security forces used violence against prisoners and nearby protesters during the fire.² Persian-language social media accounts reported that security forces have blocked roads to the prison and fired live rounds and tear gas.³ Social media users and western media outlets reported explosions and gunshots around Evin Prison.⁴

The regime uses Evin Prison to hold political prisoners and individuals detained on security-related charges, among others.⁵ Prison guards and security officials harshly abuse and mistreat inmates there.⁶ The judiciary manages the prison, but the Intelligence and Security Ministry and IRGC Intelligence Organization control some parts of the facility as well.⁷ The regime holds several dual nationals at Evin Prison, including US-Iranian citizens Siamak Namazi and Emad Shargi.⁸

Social media users have suggested without substantiation that the regime intentionally started the fire, possibly to justify the killing of arrested protesters at the prison.⁹ Yasser Hashemi Rafsanjani—the son of late President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani—claimed that Iranian authorities advised his brother not to return to Evin Prison on October 15 when his brother was scheduled to return from a furlough.¹⁰ CTP cannot validate these rumors.

Key Takeaways

- **A major fire broke out at the Evin prison in Tehran on October 15, and the regime used live rounds and tear gas against prisoners and nearby protestors.**
- **Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 22 cities in 16 provinces, although this number is almost certainly higher.**
- **A Persian-language social media account tweeted a political manifesto, calling for a peaceful transition to establish a democratic, secular Iranian government.**
- **IRGC-affiliated Telegram channels claimed that unidentified militants fired six rockets at the al Omar oilfield, which houses US servicemembers, in eastern Syria.**

Anti-Regime Protests

Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 22 cities in 16 provinces on October 15, although the number of protests is almost certainly higher. Open-source information on protest activity on October 15 is likely delayed by news of the fire and violence at Evin Prison. Protest organizations called for countrywide protests on October 15, again demonstrating their ability to coordinate large-scale unrest. The regime disrupted internet services on the morning of October 15.¹¹ CTP assess that protests occurred in the following locations:

- Karaj, Alborz Province (violence reported)
- Aderbil City, Ardabil Province (violence reported)
- Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province (violence reported)
- Esfahan City, Esfahan Province
- Shahin Shahr, Esfahan Province
- Rasht, Gilan Province
- Hamedan City, Hamadan Province
- Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan Province
- Kerman City, Kerman Province
- Kermanshah City, Kermanshah Province (violence reported)
- Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province
- Boukan, Kurdistan Province (violence reported)
- Marivan, Kurdistan Province
- Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province
- Saghez, Kurdistan Province (violence reported)
- Khorram Abad, Lorestan Province (violence reported)
- Arak, Markazi Province
- Amol, Mazandaran Province

- Tehran City, Tehran Province
- Mahabad, West Azerbaijan Province (violence reported)
- Ourmia, West Azerbaijan Province
- Yazd City, Yazd Province (violence reported)



A Persian-language social media account tweeted a political manifesto on October 14, calling for a peaceful transition to establish a democratic, secular Iranian government.¹² The anonymous authors proposed establishing a transitional government that would provide amnesty to arrested protesters, investigate the regime crackdown, integrate the IRGC into the Artesh, resolve the nuclear negotiations, and improve the economy. The authors expressed support for the protests and emphasized the importance of women's rights, preserving Iran's territorial integrity, and promoting the freedoms of assembly, association, press, and privacy. The authors welcomed the participation of current regime members and stated that they reserve the right of legitimate defense against repression. A journalist from the *Independent* tweeted without

details or substantiation that male and female political activists in Tehran drafted the statement.¹³

State-aligned media outlets are propagating divergent—and often contradictory--narratives of the regime's response to ongoing unrest. IRGC-affiliated Tasnim News Agency denied reports that Iranian security forces killed a high school girl in Ardabil City and even claimed that there had been no protest-related deaths or injuries in Ardabil Province.¹⁴ Some state-aligned outlets, including Tasnim, later circulated purported footage from the deceased student's uncle, who claimed that the student had died from heart disease.¹⁵ The footage implicitly suggests that a high school did indeed die, contradicting Tasnim's initial story. State-affiliated outlets had similarly discordant coverage of the fire and reported violence at Evin Prison, Tehran City. IRGC-affiliated Fars News Agency reported clashes between prisoners and security personnel while other outlets claimed that clashes were limited to being between prisoners.¹⁶

A prominent Iranian cleric and reporter diverged from the regime's official narrative downplaying ongoing protests. A senior cleric in Sistan and Baluchistan Province—where the regime has pursued particularly violent protest suppression tactics—defended protestors and criticized some clerics' comments blaming anti-regime demonstrations on the economy.¹⁷ A reformist outlet similarly circulated an interview from a prominent Iranian journalist criticizing the regime that same day.¹⁸

The Law Enforcement Command reportedly issued a complaint over four parliamentarians' views on Mahsa Amini's death and the morality police, which could also signal broader disagreements about protest responses within the regime.¹⁹

President Joe Biden reiterated his support for the Iranian protesters on October 14.²⁰ Biden called on the regime to end its crackdown.

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

IRGC-affiliated Telegram channels reported that unidentified militants fired six rockets at the al Omar oilfield, which houses US servicemembers, in eastern Syria.²¹ CTP cannot verify this reporting. US CENTCOM has not confirmed the attack occurred. IRGC-affiliated Telegram accounts often claim false attacks on US positions. The IRGC may have ordered its proxies to attack the oilfield if the reporting is true to retaliate for the perceived US role in stoking the protests.

¹ https://twitter.com/FarsNews_Agency/status/1581361781703786498

² <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iranian-protesters-defy-crackdown-with-nationwide-demonstrations-2022-10-15/>

³ <https://twitter.com/AtenaDaemi/status/1581385124905914368>

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- ⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-63271817>;
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<https://twitter.com/IHRights/status/1581387213392482304?s=20&t=sTUZI659eM5hdIPILSXrIQ>
- ⁵ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/rights-group-233-killed-in-iran-protests-enter-fifth-week/2022/10/15/aaba6e92-4ca4-11ed-8153-96ee97b218d2_story.html
- ⁶ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/08/iran-leaked-video-footage-from-evin-prison-offers-rare-glimpse-of-cruelty-against-prisoners/>
- ⁷ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/08/iran-leaked-video-footage-from-evin-prison-offers-rare-glimpse-of-cruelty-against-prisoners/>
- ⁸ <https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/12/politics/siamak-namazi-prison-iran/index.html>;
<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/emad-shargi-iran-hostage-biden-appeal/>
- ⁹ <https://twitter.com/GissouNia/status/1581362226237124608>
- ¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/KavehGhoreishi/status/1581385348977856512>
- ¹¹ <https://twitter.com/netblocks/status/1581204583208038400?s=20&t=MydoqxEAwulC6F8xHPWCyQ>
- ¹² <https://twitter.com/MahsaAmini40/status/1580986579417698305>
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https://twitter.com/IRNA_1313/status/1581328455924297728
- ¹⁶ https://twitter.com/FarsNews_Agency/status/1581361781703786498;
https://twitter.com/IRNA_1313/status/1581374904905379840?s=20&t=kImqbLLwSOFwgJIT9L9BmQ
- ¹⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/14/world/middleeast/iran-zahedan-crackdown.html>;
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- ¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/EtemadOnline/status/1581295399192494080?s=20&t=MydoqxEAwulC6F8xHPWCyQ>
- ¹⁹ https://twitter.com/Tasnimnews_Fa/status/1581256248715931648
- ²⁰ <https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/14/politics/joe-biden-iran-protests/index.html>
- ²¹ <https://t.me/sabreenS1/61995>; <https://t.me/maymun5/11347>

IRAN CRISIS UPDATE, OCTOBER 16

Oct 16, 2022 - [Press ISW](#)



Zachary Coles, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, and Frederick W. Kagan

October 16, 5:00 PM ET

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The IRGC may resume attacks against targets in Iraqi Kurdistan in the coming days. IRGC and Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) media outlets blamed Kurdish militants' presence in Iraqi Kurdistan for ongoing, anti-regime protests on October 16. LH-owned Al Ahed News recirculated an IRGC-owned media outlet article that claimed that Mossad agents have been working with Kurdish Komala militants to establish sabotage networks in Iran since 2021.[1] IRGC Telegram channels also posted an October 16 statement from the chief of the Iranian Armed Forces General Staff, Mohammad Bagheri, warning that the IRGC will resume attacks into Iraqi Kurdistan if the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) fails to "deport or disarm the local militias." [2]

LH and IRGC rhetoric coincides with reports that the KRG refused Iran's demands to disarm and remove anti-Iranian regime militants from Iraqi Kurdistan.[3] Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian made the demand in a meeting with KRG Interior Minister Rebar Ahmed in Tehran on October 16. Iran International claimed on October 16 that KRG envoy to Iran Nazim Dabbagh admitted that the KRG had warned anti-regime Kurdish militants prior to IRGC attacks.[4]

Recent progress in forming an Iran-friendly government in Baghdad has lowered the risk that renewed attacks would harm Iran's political influence over the Iraqi government. The IRGC paused attacks into Iraqi Kurdistan on October 8 likely in part to avoid undermining Iran-aligned Iraqi political factions' efforts to form a government.[5] Iran-backed political factions made significant progress on government formation by installing officials favored by the Iran-backed Shia Coordination Framework as the new Iraqi president and the new Iraqi Prime Minister on October 13.[6] Newly installed Iraqi Prime Minister and Iran-backed Shia Coordination Framework official Mohammad al-Sudani announced that he expects to finish forming a cabinet weeks ahead of his November 12 deadline.[7]

Key Takeaways

- The IRGC may resume attacks against positions in Iraqi Kurdistan in the coming days.
- Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 14 cities in 12 provinces on October 16.
- Iranian state-run outlets have struggled to cohere a unified narrative following reports of violence at Evin Prison in Tehran.
- Iranian security forces are increasingly targeting high schools in an attempt to quell unrest, which could reinvigorate ongoing protests.
- Iranian officials are increasingly describing ongoing protests as being revolutionary in nature and acknowledge that recent demonstrations target the foundation of the regime.

Anti-Regime Protests

Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 14 cities in 12 provinces on October 16. CTP assesses with moderate or high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

- Karaj, Alborz Province
- Ardabil, Ardabil Province
- Shahr-e Kord, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province

Iranian officials are increasingly describing ongoing protests as being revolutionary in nature. Tehran Governor Mohsen Mansouri acknowledged that recent unrest has evolved from focusing on the morality police and mandatory veiling to targeting the regime on October 16.[19] A provincial official in Semnan Province echoed Mansouri's rhetoric that same day and implied that recent demonstrations aimed to overthrow the Islamic Republic.[20] Both officials blamed the US for inciting and directing anti-regime protests.

[9] [https://www.mizan.net/news/4476655/%d8%af%d8%b1-%d8%a2%d8%aa%d8%b4-%d8%b3%d9%88%d8%b2%db%8c-%d8%af%db%8c%d8%b4%d8%a8-%d8%b2%d9%86%d8%af%d8%a7%d9%86-%d8%a7%d9%88%db%8c%d9%86-4-%d8%b2%d9%86%d8%af%d8%a7%d9%86%db%8c-%d8%a8%d8%b1-%d8%a7%
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[23] https://t.me/sepah_pasdaran/114555

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Protest Map - 16 OCT.png

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Iran Crisis Update, October 17

Nicholas Carl, Zachary Coles, Dana Alexander Gray, and Frederick W. Kagan
October 17, 6:30 PM ET

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The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) began a three-day military exercise along the Iran–Azerbaijan border on October 17 likely to threaten Azerbaijan for allegedly hosting Israeli intelligence agents.^[1] The IRGC is using this exercise to demonstrate its capability to attack Azerbaijan and strike targets in Azerbaijani territory. The exercise includes artillery, helicopters, tanks, and missiles.^[2] The IRGC announced plans to practice bridging the river that divides Iran and Azerbaijan for the first time during this exercise.^[3] The IRGC is using the *Fateh-360* short-range ballistic missile, which has a reported operational range of 120 kilometers, in this exercise.^[4] IRGC-affiliated media boasted that the IRGC has previously used these missiles for cross-border attacks into Iraqi Kurdistan.^[5] An IRGC-affiliated journalist tweeted that the exercise signals the readiness of the IRGC to confront Azerbaijan.^[6]

Iranian officials and state media assert that Israel is using Azerbaijan as an intelligence base to instigate protests.^[7] IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami attended the exercise and accused Israel of operating in countries north of Iran, implying Azerbaijan.^[8]

Tensions between Iran and Azerbaijan have flared over Armenia in recent months, which also likely informed the regime decision to conduct the exercise. Iran opposes Azerbaijani efforts to connect Azerbaijan proper to the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic by a land corridor, arguing that doing so would block Iranian economic access to European and Russian markets.^[9] The IRGC is likely conducting the exercise partly to signal its opposition to these Azerbaijani efforts.

Salami warned Saudi Arabia against using its media influence to stoke protests during the exercise.^[10] Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and senior Iranian political and security officials have repeatedly accused the US, Israel, and Saudi Arabia of stoking and coopting the protests to undermine the Islamic Republic.^[11] The IRGC Quds Force could use the Houthis or Iranian proxies in Iraq to conduct drone and missile attacks into Saudi Arabia in retaliation for Riyadh's perceived role in fomenting the popular unrest.

The IRGC could redeploy the troops involved in the military exercise to violently suppress planned protests in northwestern Iran called for on October 20. Persian-language social media accounts have called for protests in the northwestern city of Tabriz and other nearby cities on October 20—the same day that the three-day military exercise ends.^[12] The main IRGC combat elements in the area are the 2nd Imam Zaman Mechanized Brigade and the 31st Ashoura Mechanized Division, which are likely participating in the exercise.^[13] The IRGC would likely use these units to apply extreme force against protests.

Key Takeaways

- The IRGC threatened Azerbaijan and Saudi Arabia for their alleged roles in stoking the ongoing, anti-regime protests.
- The IRGC could use the troops it mobilized for the military exercise to violently suppress planned protests in northwestern Iran on October 20.
- Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 10 cities in 9 provinces.
- The *New York Times* reported that the regime may have deployed special forces from the IRGC Ground Forces in recent days to suppress protests in Tehran and other major cities.
- Several reformist politicians proposed reforms to end the current crisis.
- The *Jerusalem Post* reported that the IRGC is using members of Lebanese Hezbollah and Iraqi proxies to suppress protests in Iran, citing unidentified sources.

Anti-Regime Protests

Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 10 cities in 9 provinces on October 17. CTP assesses with moderate or high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

- Ardabil, Ardabil Province (*At least 50 medical students protesting at a hospital; plainclothed regime forces beat and arrested protesters*)[14]
- Bushehr, Bushehr Province (*Dozens of Bushehr Persian Gulf University students chanting “students, workers, unity, strikes”*)[15]
- Shahr-e Kord, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province (*100–200 Islamic Azad University students chanting “freedom, freedom”*)[16]
- Najafabad, Esfahan Province (*100–200 Azad University of Najafabad students chanting “tank cannon explodes, mullahs must get lost”*)[17]
- Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan Province (*Several hundred protesters in Bandar Abbas streets*)[18]
- Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province (*100–200 high school students protesting in Sanandaj streets; undetermined number of protesters lighting fires in Sanandaj streets*)[19]
- Babol, Mazandaran Province (*Several hundred University of Mazandaran students protesting on campus*)[20]
- Tehran, Tehran Province (*Students protesting from Tehran Medical Sciences University and Shahid Beheshti University; Dozens of protesters in Tehran streets and near Evin prison*)[21]

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

- Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province (*Undetermined number of high school students protesting inside a school*)[22]
- Esfahan, Esfahan Province (*Undetermined number of college students protesting possibly on campus; protesters burning down Fuladshahr seminary with Molotov cocktails*)[23]

NB: CTP has started to offer brief characterizations of major protest activities, including chants when audible and noteworthy, rough estimates of crowd size based on available videos, regime security force posture and activities, and other significant events. Actual crowd sizes may be larger, even considerably larger, depending on how much video evidence emerges and whether videos cover all protest activities in a given location or only some.



The *New York Times* reported on October 17 that the regime may have deployed special forces from the IRGC Ground Forces in recent days to suppress protests in Tehran and other major cities.[24] These special forces units are often called *Saberin* forces. They are highly trained military personnel who specialize in airborne and heliborne assault, hostage rescue, sniping, and raiding.[25] The IRGC has previously used its Saber units for combat operations in Syria.[26] The use of the Saber forces could indicate that regime security forces are either increasingly stretched, are preparing to use more extreme force against protesters, or both. The reporting on the deployment of Saber personnel is consistent with CTP's previous assessment that the IRGC Ground Forces has adopted a larger role in the crackdown.[27]

Several reformist politicians proposed reforms to end the current crisis on October 17.^[28] Mohammad Ali Abtahi, Ahmad Mazani, and Rasoul Montajab Nia gave interviews with the Iranian Students News Agency, wherein they called for improving the legal framework for Iranians to express grievances. They claimed the regime does not uphold Iranians' rights to peaceful protest and that Iranians want to reform the Islamic Republic but are driven to protest because they lack political channels to express criticism. Mazani called for the suspension of morality police patrols pending a parliamentary review of their conduct.^[29]

Neighborhood youth groups circulated instructions on how to confront and intimidate security forces and block roads on October 16.^[30] The instructional graphic resembled the graphic a neighborhood youth group published on how to ambush security forces on October 14.^[31]

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

The *Jerusalem Post* reported on October 16 that the IRGC is using members of Lebanese Hezbollah and Iraqi proxies to suppress protests in Iran, citing unidentified sources.^[32] The regime may be using these proxies to mitigate the security forces' bandwidth constraints. Incorporating foreign militias into the internal security forces likely serves two primary functions: reinforcing the security apparatus with additional manpower and mitigating the risk of widespread dissent among the state security services.^[33] Iranian leaders fear disloyalty and insubordination among security personnel asked to repress their fellow citizens. Foreign proxy fighters are less prone to insubordination because they lack the personal connections to Iran's neighborhoods that the native IRGC and LEC members have. CTP cannot verify this reporting and has not seen protest videos of security forces with Levantine or Iraqi accents in Iran.

Lebanese Hezbollah (LH)-owned Al Ahed News rebroadcasted regime threats against foreign interference in Iranian internal affairs. Al Ahed published an article that quoted Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Nasser Kanaani's warning to unspecified "foreign actors" that there will be consequences for instigating unrest in Iran.^[34]

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^[2] <https://twitter.com/IranDefense/status/1582085916193353730>

^[3] <https://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/07/25/2789253>

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^[5] <https://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/07/25/2789526>

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^[8] <https://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/07/25/2789417>

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^[11] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-6>

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[21] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1581958250735751169?s=20&t=xjOoYk88sRsfXH1kalEjZg>; <https://twitter.com/ManotoNews/status/1581989687992135680?s=20&t=IXxxk3ba4nqb5Z6Cfrv8Ug>; <https://twitter.com/ManotoNews/status/1581985936627634176?s=20&t=IXxxk3ba4nqb5Z6Cfrv8Ug>

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[29] <https://www.isna.ir/news/00062062987>

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[31] https://twitter.com/javanane_k/status/1580928320941985792?s=20&t=4aiW4oLWtEMIVwn96DEMWg

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Iran Crisis Update, October 18

Nicholas Carl, Zachary Coles, Johanna Moore, and Frederick W. Kagan
October 18, 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](#).

Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei’s refusal to concede on the mandatory hijab law is likely driving fissures among the political elite. Retired Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) general Hossein Alaei expressed sympathy for some protester grievances and suggested abolishing the morality patrol on October 18.¹ Alaei’s statement follows several moderate and reformist politicians taking similarly sympathetic position in recent days. Three reformists separately proposed reforms to address public frustrations on October 17, as CTP previously reported.² Former Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani stated that the Law Enforcement Command (LEC) and Basij Organization should not be responsible for enforcing the mandatory hijab law on October 12.³ Khamenei has shown no indication that he will remove the hijab requirement or offer a similar concession to the people and has instead taken a hard line toward the protests in his recent speeches.⁴ Khamenei has thus taken a position that some members of the regime—even the most ideological—may not be willing to defend.

Alaei previously published a letter in 2012 criticizing the regime and Khamenei for repressing the 2009 Green Movement.⁵ Senior IRGC commanders responded at the time, condemning Alaei and visiting his home to discuss the letter.⁶ The IRGC leadership seemingly convinced Alaei to stop criticizing the regime and Khamenei publicly, but his latest remarks indicate that he is again breaking from the political and security establishments.

The ongoing crackdown demonstrates how heavily the regime has begun using advanced and emerging technologies to impose social control. The *Wall Street Journal* reported on October 18 that the regime is using drones to surveil protests and public cameras and food-delivery services to track and identify protesters.⁷ Iranian

leaders have built an increasingly adaptive and sophisticated police and surveillance state in recent years to secure their hold on power.⁸ They have observed how technology can secure other autocratic governments, looking to China as a model, and seek to emulate it.⁹ The regime is accordingly developing technologies such as artificial intelligence, facial recognition, and their national intranet to identify and monitor dissidents and assert greater control over the information space.¹⁰ The regime's years-long efforts to create these capabilities have shown remarkable limitations in the face of the current protest wave—something these capabilities were explicitly and clearly intended to prevent.

Key Takeaways

- **Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's refusal to concede on the mandatory hijab law is likely driving fissures among the political elite.**
- **The ongoing crackdown demonstrates how heavily the regime has begun using advanced and emerging technologies to impose social control.**
- **Anti-regime protests occurred in at least nine cities in eight provinces.**
- **Worker strikes expanded to new locations and economic sectors.**
- **Protest organizations called for demonstrations in West Azerbaijan, Ilam, Kermanshah, and Kurdistan provinces on October 19.**
- **A Persian-language Telegram account posted instructions for protesters on how to use handguns.**
- **Iran may attack Saudi Arabia in retaliation for the perceived Saudi role in stoking the protests.**

Anti-Regime Protests

Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 9 cities in 8 provinces on October 18. CTP assesses with moderate or high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

- Karaj, Alborz Province (*100-200 high school students protesting outside a girls' school; undetermined number of high school students protesting in Karaj streets*)¹¹
- Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province (*100-200 Tabriz Islamic Art University students protesting on campus and chanting "my spirit, soul, and body for my homeland"*)¹²
- Rasht, Gilan Province (*At least 100 Gilan University of Medical Sciences students protesting on campus and chanting "no headscarf, no turban for freedom and equality"*)¹³
- Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province (*Several dozen high school students protesting in Sanandaj streets; protesters throwing Molotov cocktails at a Basij station*)¹⁴

- Saghez, Kurdistan Province (*100-200 protesters chanting “death to the dictator” and setting fires in Saghez streets*)¹⁵
- Babol, Mazandaran Province (*50-100 Mazandaran students chanting “if one person is killed, a thousand people will be killed” on campus*)¹⁶
- Tehran, Tehran Province (*Several hundred students from at least four universities in Tehran holding sit-ins on campuses or protesting in Tehran streets*)¹⁷

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

- Bushehr, Bushehr Province (*Undetermined numbers of oil and gas refinery workers on strike; extrapolating from October 17 Bushehr strike footage suggests possibly as many as several hundred workers went on strike and protested on October 18*)¹⁸
- Mahabad, West Azerbaijan Province (*Dozens of protesters lighting fires and clashing with security force in Mahabad streets*)¹⁹



Worker strikes expanded to new locations and economic sectors on October 18. Natural gas and petrochemical labor strikes either began or gained momentum at seven facilities in Bushehr, Hormozgan, and Khuzestan provinces in southwestern Iran.²⁰ Steel workers in Fars province and tire factory workers in Tehran began strikes on October 17.²¹ Footage from natural gas and petrochemical labor strikes features protesters chanting typical anti-regime slogans. Workers at the tire factory in Tehran began striking on October 17 to protest not receiving their medical benefits since July 2022.²² Workers' increasingly diversified motivations for striking suggests more workers in new economic sectors may join the strikes, intensifying economic pressure on the regime and further straining the bandwidth of security forces.

Protest organizations called for demonstrations in West Azerbaijan, Ilam, Kermanshah, and Kurdistan provinces on October 19.²³ Some of these same organizations have called for protests in East Azerbaijan, Ardabil, and Zanjan provinces on October 20 as well, as CTP previously reported.²⁴

A Persian-language Telegram account posted instructions for protesters on how to use handguns.²⁵ Other accounts have claimed that protesters have taken handguns from security officers.²⁶

Persian-language social media account Shirin tweeted a revised version of its political manifesto—named the “Charter of Iran”—on October 18.²⁷ Shirin stated that it updated the document based on feedback on the initial draft it published on October 14. Shirin reaffirmed its desire to establish a democratic, secular Iranian republic and commitment to civil liberties and women's rights in the new draft. Shirin called for referendums on whether to maintain the Islamic Republic and what should replace it. The group also proposed establishing a two-year transitional council and reiterated its readiness to welcome willing members of the current regime. Shirin changed its initial proposal of integrating the IRGC into the Artesh and instead called for creating a new professional military. Shirin stated in a separate tweet that it is not affiliated with any political organization.²⁸ It added that “most” of its members are in Iran.

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

Iran may attack Saudi Arabia in retaliation for the perceived Saudi role in stoking the protests. Iranian proxy media circulated Iranian officials' threats against Saudi Arabia on October 18. Lebanese Hezbollah (LH)-owned Al Ahed News republished an October 17 statement from IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami accusing Saudi Arabia of provoking riots against the regime.²⁹ Salami warned that the regime would impose a cost on Saudi Arabia. An Iraqi proxy Telegram channel published a similar threat from Iranian Interior Minister Brigadier General Ahmad Vahidi warning

that actions affecting Iranian internal security would also “endanger the security of the entire Gulf.”³⁰

Iraqi proxy media repeated Iranian officials’ assertions that protests are quickly shrinking and entirely driven by external actors. An Iraqi proxy Telegram channel posted a statement from Interior Minister Vahidi claiming that Iranian security forces had arrested rioters and curtailed protests.³¹ Vahidi announced that the regime would pardon arrested individuals who confess that foreign actors influenced and manipulated them.³² The regime is offering conditional pardons to protesters likely to discredit the protest movement with false confessions that affirm foreign involvement. Iraqi proxy media released a statement from former IRGC Commander Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari blaming foreign actors for ongoing protests and claiming that the US seeks to “seize the heart of West Asia.”³³

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- ¹ <https://www.jamran dot news/%D8%A8%D8%AE%D8%B4-%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA-12/1570652-%DA%86%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AF%DB%8C%D8%B4%DB%8C-%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%AD%D9%84-%D8%B1%DB%8C%D8%B4%D9%87-%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%AA>
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<https://twitter.com/Javanmardi75/status/1582307938555035649?s=20&t=dc6LcNAYpmv9zCjLuiMWmQ>
- ¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/Aurora28927364/status/1582461475196932097?s=20&t=TeDqUr7w-AgHWbmVgvEggQ;>
<https://twitter.com/Aurora28927364/status/1582461475196932097?s=20&t=40vY696TLb-s5wbhC8DhzA>
- ¹⁹ https://twitter.com/NikoOmidi/status/1582425601981394945?s=20&t=Fx_qRM8mADC4dxRbMds8FQ
- ²⁰ <https://www.iranintl.com/202210182107;>
<https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1582291764500926471?s=20&t=Uvt3EwO99dWZ7LEq4LX0GA;>
https://twitter.com/OutFarsi/status/1582263773615706113?s=20&t=bmrV_OvpqwobALctSrjoTg
- ²¹ <https://twitter.com/mootalae/status/1582295733943664641?s=20&t=xoa7IPwFqi29H2iw-J4IHQ;>
<https://www.iranintl.com/202210182107>
- ²² <https://www.iranintl.com/202210182107>
- ²³ https://twitter.com/iran_javanan/status/1582084434307690496;
<https://twitter.com/RyIZ2022/status/1582223761297711104>
- ²⁴ https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-17#_edn00205000fc2f0dd0855153e48df7e78012
- ²⁵ <https://twitter.com/borzou/status/1582034747089637376>
- ²⁶ <https://twitter.com/borzou/status/1582034747089637376>
- ²⁷ <https://twitter.com/MahsaAmini40/status/1582363947520622592>
- ²⁸ <https://twitter.com/MahsaAmini40/status/1582340206426206208>
- ²⁹ <https://www dot alahednews dot com dot lb/article dot php?id=46831&cid=116>

³⁰ <https://t.me/Tura313/34225>

³¹ <https://t.me/maymun5/11716>

³² <https://t.me/maymun5/11717>

³³ <https://t.me/maymun5/11718>



Iran Crisis Update, October 19

Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Johanna Moore, Nicholas Carl, and Frederick W. Kagan

Contributor: Amin Soltani

October 19, 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](#).

Anti-regime protests have subsided in extent and scale in recent days but may increase on October 20 and 26. Many instances of recent protest activity include fewer than 20 demonstrators and therefore do not meet CTP's threshold for reporting. The Tehran Neighborhood Youth called for protests on October 22 and October 26, the latter being the 40th day since the Iranian morality patrol killed Mahsa Amini.¹ Iranians commonly hold a commemoration on the 40th day after a person's death. Protest organizations may seek to use the 40th-day commemoration to reignite widespread demonstrations.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) continued to threaten Azerbaijan militarily for allegedly hosting Israeli intelligence agents on October 19. The IRGC Ground Forces constructed a bridge over the Aras River near the Iran-Azerbaijan border at the end of its three-day military exercise, which began on October 17.² IRGC armored and engineering elements crossed the bridge.³ CTP cannot assess whether IRGC forces entered Azerbaijani territory because the exact location of the exercise is unclear. The IRGC likely sought to use the exercise to signal its capability to attack Azerbaijan and strike targets in Azerbaijani territory, however. CTP previously reported that Iranian officials and state media assert that Israel is using Azerbaijan as an intelligence base to instigate protests.⁴ Tensions between Iran and Azerbaijan have flared over Armenia in recent months, which also likely informed the regime decision to conduct the exercise.⁵

Key Takeaways

- **Anti-regime protests have subsided in size and scale in recent days but may increase on October 20 and 26.**
- **Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 10 cities in 8 provinces on October 19.**
- **The IRGC continued to threaten Azerbaijan militarily for allegedly hosting Israeli intelligence agents on October 19.**

- Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei gave a speech praising Iranian academics in a meeting with Iranian university science students and faculty members on October 19.
- IRGC-affiliated Fars News Agency reported that most arrested protestors are younger than 35.

Anti-Regime Protests

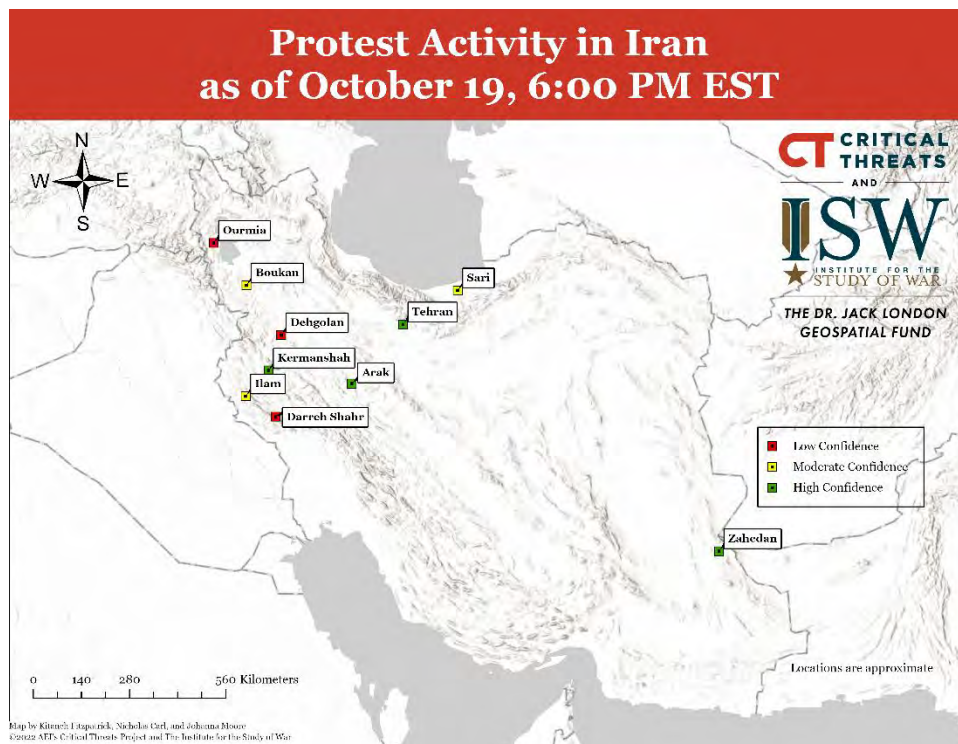
Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 10 cities in eight provinces on October 19.

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

- Ilam City, Ilam Province (*undetermined number of protestors gathering at an intersection*)⁶
- Kermanshah City, Kermanshah Province (*dozens of Razi University students protested, chanting “As long as the clergy is shrouded, this country isn’t a country,” and “get lost Basij members”*)⁷
- Arak, Markazi Province (*dozens of protestors demonstrating on the street*)⁸
- Sari, Mazandaran Province (*over a hundred protestors demonstrating on the street*)⁹
- Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province (*dozens of Zahedan University Medical Science students engaging in a sit-down protest*)¹⁰
- Tehran City, Tehran Province (*several protests throughout the city at different times of the day, cumulatively totaling hundreds of protestors. Security forces reportedly teargassed protestors in Ekbatan Town in Western Tehran*).¹¹
- Boukan, West Azerbaijan Province (*dozens of students protesting on the city streets*)¹²

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

- Darreh Shahr, Ilam Province (*dozens of protestors demonstrating on the street*)¹³
- Dehgolan, Kurdistan Province (*undetermined number of protestors setting tires on fire to reportedly deter security forces from entering the protest area. This activity suggests that more protestors were present or may join the protest at a later time.*)¹⁴
- Ourmia, West Azerbaijan Province (*reports of clashes between security forces and officials, no footage available*)¹⁵



Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei praised Iranian academics in a meeting with university science faculty and students on October 19.¹⁶ Khamenei described universities as a “key pillar” of the Islamic Republic and a fundamental challenge to Iran’s adversaries. Khamenei dismissed Western reporting that ongoing unrest would collapse the regime. Khamenei did not make any other reference to the protests.

Truck drivers and petrochemical and steel workers continued strikes across Bushehr, Fars, Hormozgan, and Khuzestan provinces on October 19.¹⁷ Haft Tappeh sugarcane workers joined the countrywide strikes on October 18.¹⁸ An Iranian labor activist claimed that the workers ignored factory managers’ attempts to financially encourage them to return to work.¹⁹

Iranian sport climber Elnaz Rekabi returned to Iran after competing in the International Federate of Sport Climbing Asian Championships in South Korea without a wearing a headscarf on October 16.²⁰ The Islamic Republic requires female Iranian athletes to remain veiled in international athletic competitions.²¹ BBC Persian reported that Iranian authorities seized Rekabi’s passport and telephone on October 18.²² Hundreds gathered at the Imam Khomeini international airport cheering for Rekabi as she landed in Tehran on October 19.²³ Rekabi claimed she did not intentionally compete without a veil during an interview with state media.²⁴ Many social media users have compared the interview to a forced confession.²⁵ Sports Minister Hamid Sajjadi stated that his ministry would investigate the incident on October 19.²⁶ Rekabi could become an emblem of courageous defiance around which protestors rally in the coming days.

IRGC-affiliated Fars News Agency reported that most arrested protestors are younger than 35. Fars News stated that 42 percent of arrested protestors were under the age of 20, 48 percent were between ages 20 and 35, and 10 percent were over the age of 35. Fars News added that two percent of total detainees were government employees.²⁷ Iranian Finance Minister Ehsan Khandouzi announced that the regime will increase government employee salaries within one to two weeks, possibly to placate disaffected government employees.²⁸

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

There was nothing significant to report.

¹ https://twitter.com/javanane_t/status/1582726896868917250

² https://t.me/Sepah_Ir/71045

³ https://t.me/Sepah_Ir/71044

⁴ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-17>

⁵ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-17>

⁶ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1582829947776684033?s=20&t=H6Glet5UQOFvkPC0VvbFBw>

⁷ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1582707544782303232?s=20&t=XcQYQG4jfd20AkvwZEJ-w;>

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⁸ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1582751462785892353?s=20&t=oiY28UTjbhD5iXCfNULIPA>

⁹ <https://twitter.com/FarashgardFdn/status/1582821264707579905?s=20&t=PJvFFyBrEHuKG5onyPjOMQ>

¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1582698437341896706?s=20&t=UqrzUzOltNf6zLhMe7a3bA>

¹¹ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1582716979584327686?s=20&t=XcQYQG4jfd20AkvwZEJ-w;>

<https://twitter.com/ManotoNews/status/1582814352633384960?s=20&t=BjWRLjY6FUHFjzgtYEEEnWQ;>

<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1582842925188120576?s=20&t=BjWRLjY6FUHFjzgtYEEEnWQ;>

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¹² <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1582750464466042881?s=20&t=kjlz9JJkmEo2K1UPHh4MNw>

¹³ <https://twitter.com/HengawO/status/1582812917191233536?s=20&t=DU0EHrsLf4f3jZi6W-W8QQ>

¹⁴ https://twitter.com/1500tasvir_en/status/1582782755708227590?s=20&t=35NBx0My4NGs4YloHEHqXw

¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/etelaf10/status/1582821445969022976?s=20&t=kjlz9JJkmEo2K1UPHh4MNw>

¹⁶ <https://farsi.khamenei dot ir/news-content?id=51177>

¹⁷ <https://twitter.com/AtenaDaemi/status/1582425331704528896?s=20&t=kjlz9JJkmEo2K1UPHh4MNw>

¹⁸ <https://iranwire.com/fa/news-1/108695-%D8%A8%D8%B1%DA%AF%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%B1%DB%8C-%D8%AA%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B6%DB%8C-%DA%A9%D8%A7%D8%B1%DA%AF%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%87%D9%81%D8%AA-%D8%AA%D9%BE%D9%87-%D8%A8%D8%A7-%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%88%D8%AF-%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B4%D9%87%D8%A7-%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D9%84%D8%BA%D9%88/>

¹⁹ https://twitter.com/bakhshi_esmaeil/status/1582378686443323393

²⁰ https://twitter.com/IranIntl_En/status/1581720920833814529?s=20&t=3TEetF7vxCfhEfVph-yHhA

²¹ <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/iranian-athlete-who-competed-without-hijab-returns-to-tehran>

²² <https://www.bbc.com/persian/iran-63310328>

²³ https://twitter.com/IranWireEnglish/status/1582633978749587457?s=20&t=oY6hSjeVIU8ty2M_oeWbtA;

https://twitter.com/ksadijadjpour/status/1582536637203947520?s=20&t=oY6hSjeVIU8ty2M_oeWbtA

²⁴ https://twitter.com/maziarbahari/status/1582616791234347008?s=20&t=oY6hSjeVIU8ty2M_oeWbtA

²⁵

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²⁶ <https://twitter.com/IranIntlbrk/status/1582699996541059074?s=20&t=li9XarbO7Wx5t1oPBsbKgg>

²⁷ [https://www.entekhab dot ir/fa/news/699577/%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%B1%DA%AF%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%B1%DB%8C-%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B3-%DB%B4%DB%B1-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%B5%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B2%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B4%D8%AA-%D8%B4%D8%AF%DA%AF%D8%A7%D9%86-%5B%D8%AD%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%AB-%D8%A7%D8%AE%DB%8C%D8%B1%5D-%DA%A9%D9%85%D8%AA%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%DB%B2%DB%B0-%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%B3%D9%86-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%86%D8%AF-%DB%B1%DB%B0-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%B5%D8%AF-%D9%87%D9%85-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%DB%8C-%DB%B3%DB%B5-%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%AF-%DB%B2-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%B5%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%DA%A9%D9%84-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B2%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B4%D8%AA-%D8%B4%D8%AF%D9%87%E2%80%8C%D9%87%D8%A7-%DA%A9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%AA-%D9%87%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%AF](https://www.entekhabdot.ir/fa/news/699577/%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%B1%DA%AF%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%B1%DB%8C-%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B3-%DB%B4%DB%B1-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%B5%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B2%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B4%D8%AA-%D8%B4%D8%AF%DA%AF%D8%A7%D9%86-%5B%D8%AD%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%AB-%D8%A7%D8%AE%DB%8C%D8%B1%5D-%DA%A9%D9%85%D8%AA%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%DB%B2%DB%B0-%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%B3%D9%86-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%86%D8%AF-%DB%B1%DB%B0-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%B5%D8%AF-%D9%87%D9%85-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%DB%8C-%DB%B3%DB%B5-%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%AF-%DB%B2-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%B5%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%DA%A9%D9%84-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B2%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B4%D8%AA-%D8%B4%D8%AF%D9%87%E2%80%8C%D9%87%D8%A7-%DA%A9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%AA-%D9%87%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%AF)

²⁸ [https://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/07/27/2790410/%D9%88%D8%B2%DB%8C%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%85%DB%8C%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B1%DB%8C%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B2%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%B4-%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82-%DA%A9%D8%A7%D8%B1%DA%A9%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AA%D8%A7-%D8%AF%D9%88-%D9%87%D9%81%D8%AA%D9%87-%D8%A2%DB%8C%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%87-%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C%DB%8C-%D8%B4%D9%88%D8%AF](https://www.tasnimnewsdotcom/fa/news/1401/07/27/2790410/%D9%88%D8%B2%DB%8C%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%85%DB%8C%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B1%DB%8C%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B2%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%B4-%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82-%DA%A9%D8%A7%D8%B1%DA%A9%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AA%D8%A7-%D8%AF%D9%88-%D9%87%D9%81%D8%AA%D9%87-%D8%A2%DB%8C%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%87-%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C%DB%8C-%D8%B4%D9%88%D8%AF)



Iran Crisis Update, October 20

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

October 20, 4:30 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](#).

Anti-regime protests continued to subside in extent and scale on October 20 but may increase on October 22 and 26. CTP noted protest activity in five cities in five provinces on October 20—a notably low level of protest activity given the calls for protests on October 20 and protesters' previous successes in coordinating countrywide demonstrations. Protest organizations had called for demonstrations specifically in Ardabil, East Azerbaijan, and Zanjan provinces.¹ Protest organizations have also called for protests throughout Iran on October 22 and 26—the latter being the 40th day since Mahsa Amini died.²

The regime may have used the forces it previously mobilized for a military exercise to deter and/or suppress protests in northern Iran. The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Ground Forces conducted an exercise around the Iran-Azerbaijan border from October 17 to 20 in part to threaten Azerbaijan and also possibly to prepare to suppress nearby protests.³ Iranian social media users reported severe internet disruptions in Tabriz on October 20.⁴ The IRGC military exercises that occurred in the vicinity of Tabriz may have facilitated the regime's ability to restrict protest organizers' internet and telecommunication access and establish a security presence in the city. The main IRGC combat elements in the area are the 2nd Imam Zaman Mechanized Brigade and the 31st Ashoura Mechanized Division, which likely participated in the exercise.⁵

Key Takeaways

- **Anti-regime protests continued to subside in extent and scale, occurring in at least five cities in five provinces on October 20.**
- **Protests may increase on October 22 and 26.**
- **Salafi Jihadi militant group Jaish al Adl published a video threatening to overthrow the regime and expressing support for Iranian protestors.**

Anti-Regime Protests

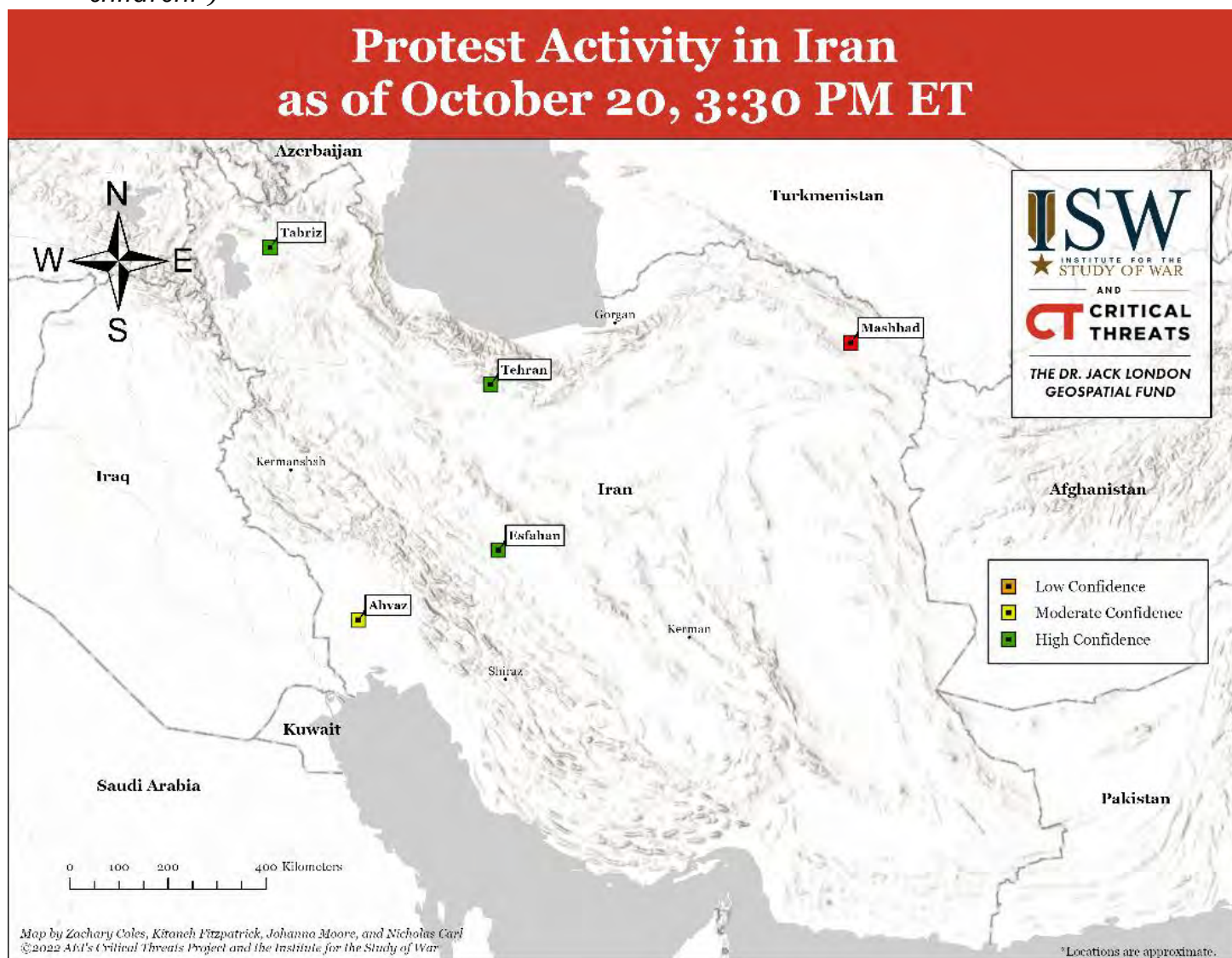
Anti-regime protests occurred in at least five cities in five provinces on October 20. Many instances of recent protest activity include fewer than 20 demonstrators and therefore do not meet

CTP's threshold for reporting. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

- Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province (*dozens of protestors, reported internet disruptions and violence*)⁶
- Esfahan City, Esfahan Province (*over 50 protestors demonstrating on the street*)⁷
- Ahvaz, Khuzestan Province (*undetermined number of Shahid Chamran University students*)⁸
- Tehran City, Tehran Province (*over 50 protestors chanting anti-regime slogans in the street in Ekbatan Town, Western Tehran*)⁹

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

- Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province (*undetermined number of hospital workers, possibly under 20, protesting in front of a medical facility chanting “we don’t want a regime that kills children.”*)¹⁰



Salafi Jihadi militant group Jaish al Adl published a video expressing support for anti-regime protestors and threatening to conduct attacks in the Iranian homeland. Jaish al Adl criticized Iranian security forces for killing dozens of protestors in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province on September 30 and announced that it would overthrow the regime. The video shows roughly 200 to 300 armed fighters standing in formations in an unknown location.¹¹ One formation of around

50 fighters wore all-white uniforms, resembling the uniforms of the suicide bombers of the Afghan Taliban. The US State Department designated Jaish al Adl as a terrorist organization in July 2019.¹²

A social media user purporting to be an Iranian protestor circulated footage threatening to use a flame thrower on security personnel.¹³ CTP cannot authenticate this footage.

Axis of Resistance

Lebanese Hezbollah-owned Al Ahed News promoted regime talking points discouraging protests at universities. Al Ahed news published a segment from Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei October 20 speech warning that closing universities for protests “serves the enemy’s goals.”¹⁴

¹ https://twitter.com/iran_javanan/status/1581988702019997697

² https://twitter.com/javanane_t/status/1582726896868917250

³ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-19>; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-17>

⁴ [https://twitter.com/khoshnevisnaser/status/1583118130330894342?s=20&t=XTMQ1y8NzD0FpOoCJwl3IQ](https://twitter.com/khoshnevisnaser/status/1583118130330894342?s=20&t=XTMQ1y8NzD0FpOoCJwl3IQ;);
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⁵ <https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Irans-Reserve-of-Last-Resort.pdf>

⁶ [https://twitter.com/javanane_t/status/1583169080546115584?s=20&t=XPIJcUnkhQowyyv6oF3AjYQ](https://twitter.com/javanane_t/status/1583169080546115584?s=20&t=XPIJcUnkhQowyyv6oF3AjYQ;);
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[https://twitter.com/RealMaHastim/status/1583082715188166657?s=20&t=XPIJcUnkhQowyyv6oF3AjYQ](https://twitter.com/RealMaHastim/status/1583082715188166657?s=20&t=XPIJcUnkhQowyyv6oF3AjYQ;);
<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1583199919975714817?s=20&t=XPIJcUnkhQowyyv6oF3AjYQ>

⁷ [https://twitter.com/javanane_t/status/1583189203114168320?s=20&t=XPIJcUnkhQowyyv6oF3AjYQ](https://twitter.com/javanane_t/status/1583189203114168320?s=20&t=XPIJcUnkhQowyyv6oF3AjYQ;);

<https://twitter.com/OutFarsi/status/1583192451837108224?s=20&t=XPIJcUnkhQowyyv6oF3AjYQ>

⁸ <https://twitter.com/begoonah1/status/1583101496744284162?s=20&t=hm9vyvaLT9oSAGld7mMRReQ>

⁹ [https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1583184563932909568?s=20&t=zrdN80jFDo4eppL0oWnSmg](https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1583184563932909568?s=20&t=zrdN80jFDo4eppL0oWnSmg;);

<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1583207207591895040?s=20&t=zrdN80jFDo4eppL0oWnSmg>

¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1583123307703939072?s=20&t=XPIJcUnkhQowyyv6oF3AjYQ>

¹¹ <https://twitter.com/khorasandiary/status/1583000129606684672?s=46&t=ytBL5z8n8141oFXp8WTa4g>

¹² <https://www.state.gov/executive-order-13224/>

¹³ <https://twitter.com/rkzasafari/status/1582479852279455744?s=20&t=zrdN80jFDo4eppL0oWnSmg>

¹⁴ <http://alahednews dot com dot lb/article dot php?id=46897&cid=116>



Iran Crisis Update, October 21

Nicholas Carl, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Johanna Moore, and Frederick W. Kagan
October 21, 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 regime's use of extreme violence against protesters in Sistan and Baluchistan Province is likely entrenching long-term frustration against the political establishment there. One of Iran's most senior Sunni clerics—Maulvi Abdol Hamid—criticized the regime on October 21 for its brutal suppression of protests in Zahedan on September 30.¹ Abdol Hamid stated that Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei was responsible for the crackdown, which may have killed over 90 protesters.² Hamid is the Sunni Friday prayer leader in Zahedan. Large-scale protests erupted in Zahedan on October 21 in part to commemorate the three-week anniversary of the crackdown.³ Salafi jihadi militant group Jaish al Adl published a video on October 20, expressing support for the protesters and threatening to attack the regime, as CTP previously reported.⁴ There is no evidence to suggest that Jaish al Adl was involved in the October 21 protests.

Key Takeaways

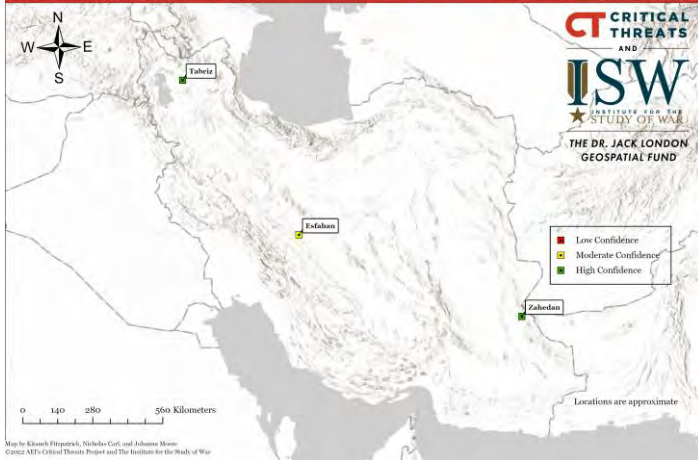
- The regime's use of extreme violence against protesters in Sistan and Baluchistan Province is likely entrenching long-term frustration against the political establishment there.
- Anti-regime protests occurred in at least three cities in three provinces.
- Unknown hackers claimed to have hacked the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran.

Anti-Regime Protests

Anti-regime protests occurred in at least three cities in three provinces on October 21. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

- Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province (*undetermined number of protestors burning items on street, could be fewer than 20 people participating but unclear from footage*)⁵
- Esfahan, Esfahan Province (*undetermined number of protestors*)⁶
- Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province (*hundreds of protestors at different locations throughout Zahedan chanting "I will kill whoever killed my brother" and "From Zahedan to Tehran, I will sacrifice my life for Iran." Reports of regime snipers on roofs in surrounding areas but no reports of violence.*)⁷

Protest Activity in Iran as of October 21, 5:30 PM EST



Commented [KF1]: <https://criticalthreats.imeetcentral.com/ctp-iswresearch/folder/WzlwLDE1NzEwODU5XQ/WzlsODM1Njk3NTBd/>

Unknown hackers claimed to have hacked the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran on October 21.⁸ The hackers stated that they will release sensitive information about the Iranian nuclear program if the regime does not release all political prisoners arrested in the recent protests by October 22.

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

Iranian political partners and proxies are trying to capture key Iraqi security institutions as Prime Minister-designate Mohammad Shia al Sudani assembles his cabinet. The Shia Coordination Framework—the umbrella coalition for Iranian-backed parties in Iraq—called for the exemption of the usually Sunni-controlled Defense Ministry and usually Iranian proxy-controlled Interior Ministry from Iraq’s traditional ethno-sectarian quota system for determining cabinet appointments.⁹ Iran-aligned parties are likely trying install one of their members to control these ministries under the next government.

Iran’s Iraqi proxies have seemingly entered a negotiation with one another to divide the spoils of their successful designation of a preferred Iraqi prime ministerial candidate. Iranian proxy Asaib Ahl al Haq (AAH) offered to forgo its share of ministerial posts in exchange for controlling the Iraqi National Security Service (INSS) and Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS).¹⁰ The INIS is largely not infiltrated by Iranian proxies following the tenure of current Prime Minister Mustafa al Kadhimi, who has run the agency since 2016. Another Iranian proxy, Kataib Hezbollah, reportedly rejected AAH’s proposal and demanded that it control the INIS.¹¹ Kadhimi attempted to limit Iranian influence in several Iraqi security institutions during his tenure as prime minister, angering Iran’s Iraqi proxies.¹² Sudani could allow Iranian proxies to reassert and increase Iranian and proxy influence over these sensitive security agencies in exchange for their support in forming his government.

¹ <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/32042577.html>

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

³ <https://twitter.com/FarashgardFdn/status/1583433424936660993?s=20&t=6OL2KDHFL1JAcnYalDOFXQ>;
<https://twitter.com/Javanmardi75/status/1583466176285667328?s=20&t=6OL2KDHFL1JAcnYalDOFXQ>;
<https://twitter.com/FarashgardFdn/status/1583432491113017344?s=20&t=6OL2KDHFL1JAcnYalDOFXQ>;
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⁴ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-20>

⁵ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1583509215066599426?s=20&t=GHjQEYayWuQH1ucUKGpbmA>;
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⁶ https://twitter.com/etelaf10/status/1583548328255852544?s=20&t=icUDwWOI_xuPISJqiV7Uhg;
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⁷ <https://twitter.com/FarashgardFdn/status/1583433424936660993?s=20&t=6OL2KDHFL1JAcnYalDOFXQ>;
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⁸ <https://twitter.com/anonymousopiran/status/1583543782611378176>

⁹ <https://t.me/sabreenS1/62447>
[https://shafaq\(dot\)com/ar/%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A9/%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%82%D9%8A-%D9%8A%D9%81%D9%88%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AE%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%AA%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%AB%D9%86%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AE%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%B5%D8%B5%D8%A9](https://shafaq(dot)com/ar/%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A9/%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%82%D9%8A-%D9%8A%D9%81%D9%88%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AE%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%AA%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%AB%D9%86%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AE%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%B5%D8%B5%D8%A9)

¹⁰ <https://www.shafaq dot com/en/Iraq-News/Exclusive-Shiite-factions-fight-over-sensitive-security-posts-consider-dismissing-al-Fayyadh>

¹¹ <https://www.shafaq dot com/en/Iraq-News/Exclusive-Shiite-factions-fight-over-sensitive-security-posts-consider-dismissing-al-Fayyadh>

¹² <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/kadhimi-commander-chief-first-steps-iraqi-security-sector-reform>



Iran Crisis Update, October 22

Zachary Coles, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Dana Alexander Gray, and Nicholas Carl

October 22, 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](#).

Anti-regime protests in Iran occurred in at least 24 cities in 18 provinces on October 22—a significant increase from the protest activity in recent days. Protest organizations called for countrywide demonstrations on October 22 as CTP previously reported.¹ Protestors are continuing to organize demonstrations despite ongoing and severe internet and telecommunications censorship. The protest organizations have called for additional demonstrations on October 26—the 40th day since the morality patrol killed Mahsa Amini.²

Some marginalized segments of the reformist faction are continuing to criticize the regime crackdown.

The reformist son of former President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani suggested amending the constitution to address popular grievances on October 22.³ Reformist politician Abbas Ahmad Akhoundi called on the Iranian clerical establishment to publicly support the protesters and condemn crackdowns on October 22.⁴ Akhoundi was a senior cabinet official under both Rafsanjani and former President Hassan Rouhani.⁵ Akhoundi's comments follow unconfirmed reports of rifts between the regime and some members of its clerical establishment as CTP previously reported.⁶ Persian-language media outlet *Zeitoon* published a statement allegedly from students and teachers at the Tehran, Mashhad, and Qom seminaries on September 30, condemning Khamenei and the regime crackdown on the protests.⁷ Other senior clerics such as Ayatollah Mustafa Mohaghegh Damad, Ayatollah Asadollah Bayat Zanjani issued statements on criticizing state security services for the death of Mahsa Amini on September 17.⁸ One of Iran's most senior Sunni clerics—Maulvi Abdol Hamid—similarly criticized the regime on October 21 for its brutal suppression of protests in Zahedan on September 30.⁹

Key Takeaways

- **Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 24 cities in 18 provinces on October 22—a significant increase from the protest activity in recent days.**
- **Some marginalized segments of the reformist faction are continuing to criticize the regime crackdown.**

- Anti-regime hacker group Black Reward published 50 gigabytes of documents related to the Iranian nuclear program.
- The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and regime media channels claimed a new separatist movement has formed in Azerbaijan's autonomous Nakhchivan region.

Anti-Regime Protests

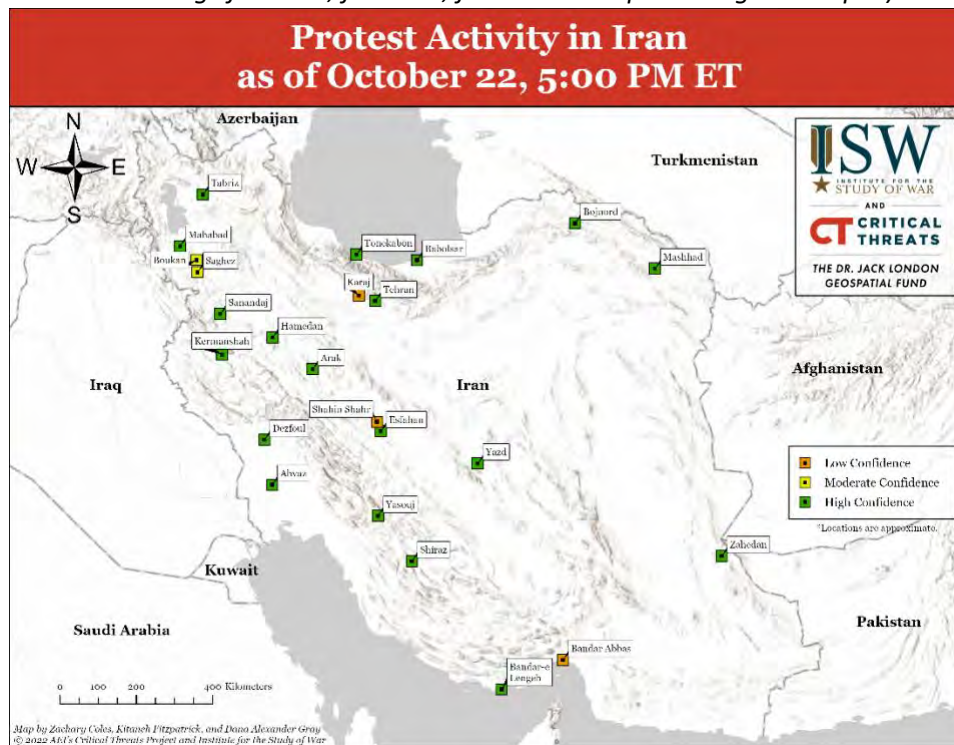
Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 24 cities in 18 provinces on October 22. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

- Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province (*Hundreds of Tabriz University students protesting in Tabriz streets; protesters lighting fires in the street*)¹⁰
- Esfahan City, Esfahan Province (*Over 100 Mohajer University students holding a sit-in on campus*)¹¹
- Shiraz, Fars Province (*Several dozen protesters chanting "this is no longer a protest, it's a revolution."*)¹²
- Hamedan City, Hamedan Province (*50-100 Hamedan University of Medical Sciences students protesting on campus*)¹³
- Bandar-e Lengeh, Hormozgan Province (*Dozens of protesters in Bandar-e Lengeh streets, reported clashes between security forces and protesters*)¹⁴
- Kermanshah City, Kermanshah Province (*100-200 Razi University students chanting "zealous students, support, support" in Kermanshah streets*)¹⁵
- Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province (*Security forces reportedly using live ammunition against protesters in Mashad streets*)¹⁶
- Ahvaz, Khuzestan Province (*Undetermined number of Jondishapour University students protesting on campus*)¹⁷
- Dezfoul, Khuzestan Province (*Undetermined number of protesters demonstrating in Dezfoul streets*)¹⁸
- Yasouj, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer Ahmed Province (*Several dozen Yasouj University students demonstrating on campus*)¹⁹
- Saghez, Kurdistan Province (*Undetermined number of protesters demonstrating in Karimabad neighborhood*)²⁰
- Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province (*Undetermined number of protesters lighting fires in Sanandaj streets; security forces targeting protesters with tear gas and reportedly live ammunition*)²¹
- Arak, Markazi Province (*Dozens of protesters chanting "women, life, freedom" in Arak streets; clashes between protesters and security forces*)²²
- Babolsar, Mazandaran Province (*Undetermined number of Mazandaran University students protesting on campus*)²³
- Tonekabon, Mazandaran Province (*Dozens of protesters tearing down a Law Enforcement Command (LEC) billboard and setting fire to a morality police facility*)²⁴
- Bojnord, North Khorasan Province (*Undetermined number of Bojnord University students protesting on campus*)²⁵
- Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province (*Roughly 50 Zahedan University of Medical Sciences students protesting on campus and chanting "zealous students, support, support."*)²⁶

- Tehran City, Tehran Province (*Hundreds of students and faculty protesting from Tehran Technology Institute, Shahid Beheshti, Tehran, Allameh Tabatabai, and Sharif Universities; undetermined number of electricity workers and protesters chanting “death to the dictator” in Lalezar; protesters possibly attempting to set the IRIB radio station on fire*)²⁷
- Boukan, West Azerbaijan Province (*Undetermined number of protesters in Boukan streets*)²⁸
- Mahabad, West Azerbaijan Province (*25-50 protesters lighting fires and protesting in Mahabad streets*)²⁹
- Yazd City, Yazd Province (*Several dozen Yazd University students demonstrating on campus*)³⁰

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

- Karaj, Alborz Province (*Undetermined number of protesters in Karaj streets*)³¹
- Shahin Shahr, Esfahan Province (*Undetermined number of protesters in Shahin Shahr streets*)³²
- Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan Province (*Undetermined number of Hormozgan University students chanting “freedom, freedom, freedom” and protesting on campus*)³³



Anti-regime hacker group Black Reward published 50 gigabytes of documents related to the Iranian nuclear program on October 22. The group posted a video that reportedly depicted the Bushehr nuclear facility’s reactor room.³⁴ It also posted links to documents containing private discussions between Iranian and International Atomic Energy Agency officials, contracts with foreign and domestic entities related to atomic development, strategic planning documents for the Iranian nuclear industry, and passports and visas for Russian and Iranian technicians cooperating on work in the Bushehr facility.³⁵

Black Reward first announced a series of cyberattacks against regime institutions and media outlets after emerging online on September 25.³⁶ The group claims to belong to a larger Iranian hacker community that

intends to destroy the “clerical criminal regime for women, life, [and] freedom.”³⁷

Social media users documented anti-regime strikes among merchants and workers in 10 cities in seven provinces on October 22, including:

- Karaj, Alborz Province³⁸
- Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province³⁹
- Rezvanshahr, Esfahan Province⁴⁰
- Marvdasht, Fars Province⁴¹
- Salas-e Babajani, Kermanshah Province⁴²
- Marivan, Kurdistan Province⁴³
- Saghez, Kurdistan Province⁴⁴
- Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province⁴⁵
- Boukan, West Azerbaijan Province⁴⁶
- Mahabad, West Azerbaijan Province⁴⁷

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and regime media channels claimed a new separatist movement has formed in Azerbaijan’s autonomous Nakhchivan region. IRGC Telegram channels and regime-affiliated Sahar Azeri TV reported the emergence of a separatist movement that intends to return Nakhchivan to Iran.⁴⁸ IRGC Telegram channels posted the videos with a message that warned those “who think they can play with the national security of others should be aware that many hearts in the region are with Iran.”⁴⁹ These announcements may be part of the Iranian effort to threaten Azerbaijan. The IRGC conducted a three-day military exercise along the Iran-Azerbaijan border from October 17-19, as CTP previously reported, threatening to attack Azerbaijan in part for allegedly hosting Israeli intelligence agents⁵⁰ An open-source analyst claimed to geolocate an image from the exercises to a section of the Aras River that divides Iran from Nakhchivan⁵¹

Lebanese Hezbollah-owned media continued echoing Iranian regime rhetoric intended to discredit university protests. Al Ahed News published an article that discouraged Iranians from demonstrating on university campuses. The article included IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami’s October 22 claim that the US and Israel are inciting protests at universities to stifle Iranian technological progress.⁵²

¹ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-20>

² https://twitter.com/javanane_t/status/1583016004174589953?s=20&t=CoA9bLu7E-mqTjiBcfwhAA

³ <https://www.etemadonline.com/%D8%A8%D8%AE%D8%B4-%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%B3%DB%8C-9/578905-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%87%D9%85%D9%87-%D9%BE%D8%B1%D8%B3%DB%8C-%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%85>

⁴ <https://www.ettelaat.com/archives/648974>

⁵ <https://www.ettelaat.com/archives/648974>

⁶ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-2>

⁷ www.zeitoons.com/105642

⁸ <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/32037877.html>

⁹ <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/32042577.html>

¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1583819131240869888?s=20&t=HwgVE4fHmV75DCIXDbhcJQ>;
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¹¹ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1583804127024275456?s=20&t=HwgVE4fHmV75DCIXDbhcJQ>;
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¹² <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1583820910620200960>
¹³ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1583800093740011520?s=20&t=HwgVE4fHmV75DCIXDbhcJQ>
¹⁴ https://twitter.com/chawshin_83/status/1583879897021550593?s=20&t=s10Fweg8NeqSDN1HXV9OPg;
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¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1583793574751383553?s=20&t=HwgVE4fHmV75DCIXDbhcJQ>
¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1583819874694221824?s=20&t=HwgVE4fHmV75DCIXDbhcJQ>;
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¹⁷ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1583773586288185345?s=20&t=HwgVE4fHmV75DCIXDbhcJQ>
¹⁸ https://twitter.com/chawshin_83/status/1583837855906136064?s=20&t=HwgVE4fHmV75DCIXDbhcJQ
¹⁹ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1583798080264056832?s=20&t=HwgVE4fHmV75DCIXDbhcJQ>
²⁰ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1583834150984785920?s=20&t=HwgVE4fHmV75DCIXDbhcJQ>
²¹ <https://twitter.com/PanahiRafiq/status/1583841282522173440?s=20&t=HwgVE4fHmV75DCIXDbhcJQ>;
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²² https://twitter.com/chawshin_83/status/1583870272624504832?s=20&t=s10Fweg8NeqSDN1HXV9OPg;
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²³ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1583772756365410306?s=20&t=HwgVE4fHmV75DCIXDbhcJQ>;
²⁴ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1583904800017899520?s=20&t=AoNloSnzEVxzDyors-P1kQ>
²⁵ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1583794394800742400?s=20&t=HwgVE4fHmV75DCIXDbhcJQ>
²⁶ <https://twitter.com/KhosroKalbasi/status/1583852842627964929?s=20&t=Onvcf81lkgO4B1S8qpSfA>;
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²⁷ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1583824832357367811?s=20&t=HwgVE4fHmV75DCIXDbhcJQ>;
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²⁸ https://twitter.com/chawshin_83/status/1583841337064845312?s=20&t=HwgVE4fHmV75DCIXDbhcJQ
²⁹ <https://twitter.com/IranNW/status/1583842749488730114?s=20&t=HwgVE4fHmV75DCIXDbhcJQ>;
<https://twitter.com/FarashgardFdn/status/1583908733285171201?s=20&t=s10Fweg8NeqSDN1HXV9OPg>
³⁰ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1583785253906178048?s=20&t=HwgVE4fHmV75DCIXDbhcJQ>
³¹ <https://twitter.com/Javanmardi75/status/1583856143700750336?s=20&t=Onvcf81lkgO4B1S8qpSfA>;
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³² https://twitter.com/chawshin_83/status/1583757574951747585?s=20&t=HwgVE4fHmV75DCIXDbhcJQ
³³ <https://twitter.com/IranIntlbrk/status/1583781534997262336?s=20&t=wnnXJOjWyw9oplgXx9EQpw>
³⁴ https://t.me/black_reward/34
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⁴⁰ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1583738306004590592?s=20&t=HwgVE4fHfMV75DCIXDbhcJQ>
⁴¹ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1583719607159836673?s=20&t=HwgVE4fHfMV75DCIXDbhcJQ>
⁴² <https://twitter.com/HengawO/status/1583828294881140737?s=20&t=Onvcf81lLkgO4B1S8qpSfA>
⁴³ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1583725604431884288?s=20&t=HwgVE4fHfMV75DCIXDbhcJQ>
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⁴⁷ <https://twitter.com/ICHRI/status/1583847580609679363?s=20&t=wnnXJOjWyw9oplXx9EQpw>
⁴⁸ https://t.me/Sepah_Ir/71153
⁴⁹ https://t.me/sepah_pasdaran/114794
⁵⁰ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-17>
⁵¹ https://twitter.com/khalfaguliyev/status/1583156444488028160?s=20&t=_6dm2L36Ba_MNLNUFjwSGA
⁵² <http://alahednews dot com. dot lb/article dot php?id=46984&cid=116>



Iran Crisis Update, October 23
Kitaneh Fitzpatrick and Nicholas Carl
October 23, 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](#).

Iranian university and high school students are sustaining the momentum of the ongoing anti-regime protest movement, leading the demonstrations into their 37th consecutive day. Iranian students led 15 of 16 documented protests on October 23.¹ Some students are challenging regime regulations within academic spaces. Sharif University students reportedly repelled Iranian security forces trying to enforce gender segregation on campus on October 23, for instance.² The surge in student protest activity on October 23 compared to recent days suggests that students remain capable of successfully coordinating countrywide demonstrations despite intensifying regime censorship and disruptions to telecommunications.

Some Iranian teachers are publicly supporting student protesters. Iranian teachers in at least nine cities in five provinces participated in strikes condemning the regime's detention of and violence toward high school protesters on October 23.³ The Iranian Educators Trade Union Organization called for additional countrywide strikes on October 24.⁴

Iranian officials are increasingly framing educational institutions as the nuclei of anti-regime sentiment and the ongoing unrest. An Iranian parliamentarian stated that Iran's enemies are using Iranian schools to foment unrest on October 23, echoing Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's address on October 19.⁵ Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Commander Major General Hossein Salami similarly framed Iranian schools as an ideological battlefield on October 16.⁶

A senior Iranian Sunni cleric—Maulvi Abdol Hamid—may emerge as a local protest leader in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province. Abdol Hamid is a historically vocal regime critic and the Sunni religious leader in Zahedan. Abdol Hamid and regime officials have rhetorically clashed in recent days over the regime's brutal protest crackdown in Zahedan on September 30.⁷ Abdol Hamid criticized Khamenei during a Friday sermon on October 21 after which hundreds of protesters took to the streets in Zahedan.⁸ The IRGC and Interior Ministry separately accused Abdol Hamid of instigating the protests during his sermon.⁹ Abdol Hamid responded to the IRGC and Interior Ministry on October 23, reaffirming his support for the protesters and calling for the arrest of the individuals responsible for the crackdown.¹⁰ Abdol Hamid also criticized President Ebrahim Raisi for ignoring the people's demands and refusing to sympathize.¹¹ Abdol Hamid could instigate future anti-regime demonstrations and sentiment in Zahedan as the countrywide protest wave continues.

Key Takeaways

- **Iranian university and high school students are sustaining the momentum of the ongoing protest movement, leading the demonstrations into their 37th consecutive day.**

- A senior Iranian Sunni cleric—Maulvi Abdol Hamid—may emerge as a local protest leader in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province.
- Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 16 cities in 13 provinces.
- Iranian state media and proxy Telegram channels reported that unidentified militants launched four rockets at the al Omar oilfield, which houses US forces, in eastern Syria.

Anti-Regime Protests

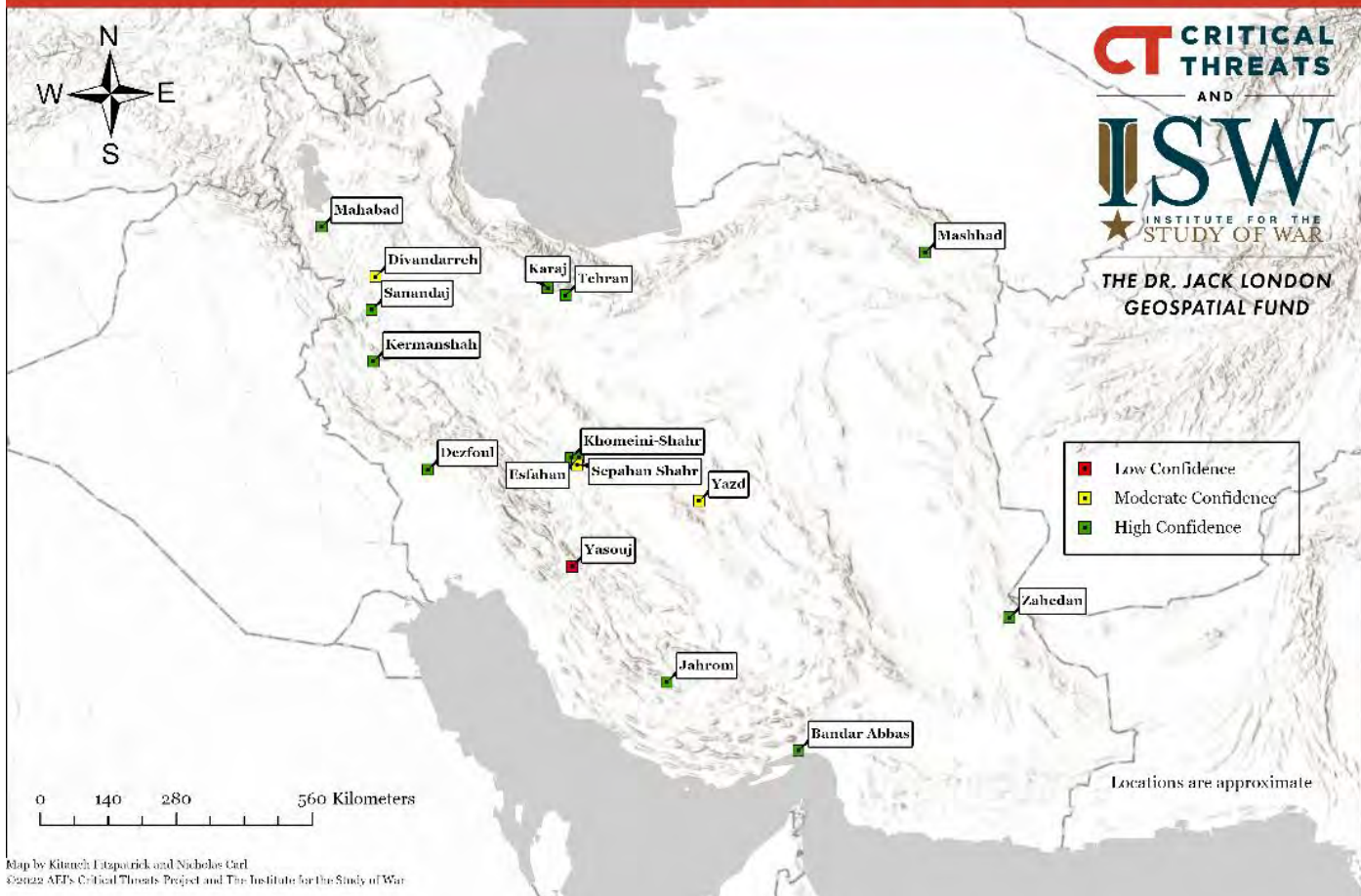
Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 16 cities in 13 provinces on October 23. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

- Karaj, Alborz Province (*Over 100 Azad Alborz University students chanting “support [us], support [us]”*)¹²
- Esfahan City, Esfahan Province (*Esfahan University Arts, Architecture and Urban Planning students holding hands and stomping feet. Dozens of high school students chanting anti-regime slogans on campus*)¹³
- Khomeinishahr, Esfahan Province (*Over 100 Azad Khomeinishahr University students chanting “shameless, shameless”*)¹⁴
- Sepahan Shahr, Esfahan Province (*Roughly 50 Ashrafi Esfahani students protested on campus*)¹⁵
- Jahrom, Fars Province (*Dozens of Jahrom University students*)¹⁶
- Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan Province (*Undetermined number of Azad Bandar Abbas University students chanting “support [us], support [us]”*)¹⁷
- Kermanshah City, Kermanshah Province (*Undetermined number of Razi University student protesters. Kermanshah high school student protesting on campus*)¹⁸
- Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province (*dozens of Ferdowsi University protesters*)¹⁹
- Dezful, Khuzestan Province (*Over 100 Azad Dezful University students chanting “support [us], support [us]”*)²⁰
- Divandarreh, Kurdistan Province (*unspecified number of protesters gathered on street*)²¹
- Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province (*Iranian security forces shot at student protesters to disperse demonstrations on the street*)²²
- Tehran City, Tehran Province (*Over 100 Sharif University students protested and broke gender segregation rules on campus, reportedly successfully repelling security forces. Over 100 Allameh Tabatabaei students clashed with pro-regime protesters. Undetermined number of Tehran University Social Science students and Amir Kabir University students protested on their respective campuses*)²³
- Mahabad, West Azerbaijan Province (*Dozens of student protesters on city streets*)²⁴
- Yazd City, Yazd Province (*Over 50 Yazd University Art and Architecture students protesting on campus. Footage could be from 22 October.*)²⁵
- Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province (*Roughly 50 Zahedan University Medical Sciences students chanting “our money is in Lebanon, our youth in prison” on campus*)²⁶

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

- Yasouj, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer and Ahmad Province (*Reports of Yasouj University student protests, no footage available*)²⁷

Protest Activity in Iran as of October 23, 4:30 PM ET



The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) confirmed on October 23 that the Black Reward group hacked the email server of one of the AEOI subsidiaries.²⁸ The AEOI is the regime entity responsible for overseeing Iran's nuclear facilities and program. The AEOI accused an unidentified foreign country of responsibility for the hack.²⁹ The AEOI was responding to Black Reward publishing 50 gigabytes of documents related to the Iranian nuclear program on October 22, as CTP previously reported.³⁰

The Artesh Ground Forces announced that its 164th Mobile Assault Brigade began conducting a military exercise around Piranshahr, West Azerbaijan Province on October 22.³¹ The Artesh may use this exercise to signal its readiness to crackdown on protesters in northwestern Iran. The Artesh could also use this exercise as a cover for a partial mobilization to prepare for violent protest suppression. Cities and towns surrounding Piranshahr, such as Boukan, Mahabad, and Saghez, experienced protests on October 22.³²

The IRGC Ground Forces announced the death of a member of its 57th Abol Fazl Independent Brigade on October 22.³³ The IRGC Ground Forces stated that the individual died during a mission in northwestern Iran but did not provide further details.³⁴ The IRGC member may have died in clashes with anti-regime Kurdish militants or protesters. The 57th Brigade is headquartered in Khorramabad, Lorestan Province.³⁵ The presence of the 57th Brigade in northwestern Iran may indicate that the regime deployed units there from elsewhere around Iran to suppress the continuous protests among the Kurdish communities in West Azerbaijan and Kurdistan provinces.

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

Iranian state media and proxy Telegram channels reported that unidentified militants launched four rockets at the al Omar oilfield, which houses US forces, in eastern Syria on October 22.³⁶ CTP cannot verify this reporting. US CENTCOM has not confirmed the attack occurred. Iranian state media and proxy Telegram channels often claim false attacks on US positions. The IRGC may have ordered its proxies to attack the oilfield if the reporting is true to retaliate for the perceived US role in stoking the protests. The IRGC may have also sought to retaliate for the Israeli airstrike on a likely Iranian or Iranian-backed position near Damascus on October 21.³⁷ The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that Israel targeted an Iranian drone-assembly facility in the airstrike.³⁸

¹ <https://twitter.com/Javanmardi75/status/1584156999721197568?s=20&t=qGHW8qM7su8o840s7YniRg;>
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<https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1584148622551093248?s=20&t=qGHW8qM7su8o840s7YniRg;>
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<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584163496308006912?s=20&t=qGHW8qM7su8o840s7YniRg;>
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<https://twitter.com/IranIntlbrk/status/1584152206722314240?s=20&t=r6Yqj5nHTLp8FaY7Ljw-PA>

² <https://twitter.com/IranIntlbrk/status/1584153545070194689;> <https://twitter.com/IranIntlbrk/status/1584133890310303744;>
<https://twitter.com/KhosroKalbasi/status/1584155119738056705;>
<https://twitter.com/KhosroKalbasi/status/1584156880187768832>

³ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/irans-labor-strikes-give-protest-movement-added-momentum-11666532352;>
<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584154593914949632?s=20&t=r6Yqj5nHTLp8FaY7Ljw-PA;>
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⁴ <https://twitter.com/IranIntlbrk/status/1583700619688562688?s=20&t=wnnXJOjWyw9oplgXx9EQpw>

⁵ <https://www.borna dot news/%D8%A8%D8%AE%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%87%D8%A7-11/1389706-%D9%86%DB%8C%D8%AA-%D8%AF%D8%B4%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%A7-%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D9%88%D9%82%D9%81%D9%87-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%DA%A9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C%DB%8C-%D9%85%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B3-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B4%DA%AF%D8%A7%D9%87-%D9%87%D8%A7-%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%82%D9%81-%D9%BE%DB%8C%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%AA-%DA%A9%D8%B4%D9%88%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA;> <https://farsi.khamenei dot ir/news-content?id=51177>

⁶ <https://www.irna dot ir/news/84913847/%D8%B3%D8%B1%D9%84%D8%B4%DA%A9%D8%B1-%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%DB%8C-%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B4-%D8%A2%D9%85%D8%B1%DB%8C%DA%A9%D8%A7-%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%AC%D8%A7%DB%8C%DB%8C-%D8%B5%D8%AD%D9%86%D9%87-%D9%86%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D9%85%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B3-%D9%88-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B4-%D8%A2%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%86>

⁷ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-september-30>

⁸ https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-21#_edn1ce83e9ee9b158a4222bb338ce7043d31

⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/irans-guards-warn-cleric-over-agitating-restive-southeast-2022-10-22;>
www.jahannews dot com/news/816247

¹⁰ <https://abdolhamid dot net/persian/2022/10/21/12821/>

¹¹ <https://abdolhamid dot net/persian/2022/10/21/12821/>

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- ¹² <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1584133288326676480?s=20&t=qGHW8qM7su8o840s7YniRg>;
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- ¹³ https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584225841801674754?s=20&t=4OkH4_vxzxrl0srNPXjr6A;
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- ¹⁴ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584163496308006912?s=20&t=qGHW8qM7su8o840s7YniRg>;
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- ¹⁵ https://twitter.com/hra_news/status/1584221139349315586
- ¹⁶ https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584213485113987076?s=20&t=4OkH4_vxzxrl0srNPXjr6A
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- ¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584152961562726400?s=20&t=qGHW8qM7su8o840s7YniRg>;
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- ¹⁹ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584151840056176641?s=20&t=qGHW8qM7su8o840s7YniRg>
- ²⁰ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1584168386736508930?s=20&t=qGHW8qM7su8o840s7YniRg>;
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- ²¹ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584270969363128320?s=20&t=QibuRuDVZO3oLMSGnk-5NA>
- ²² <https://twitter.com/HengawO/status/1584167215707758593?s=20&t=qGHW8qM7su8o840s7YniRg>;
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- ²³ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1584148622551093248?s=20&t=qGHW8qM7su8o840s7YniRg>;
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- ²⁴ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584161298736386053?s=20&t=f2slvQi2H6hNCi03YQwQ3w>
- ²⁵ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584152365229539328?s=20&t=QibuRuDVZO3oLMSGnk-5NA>;
- ²⁶ <https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1584251149443481600?s=20&t=QibuRuDVZO3oLMSGnk-5NA>
- ²⁷ <https://twitter.com/IranIntlbrk/status/1584152206722314240?s=20&t=r6Yqj5nHTLp8FaY7Ljw-PA>
- ²⁸ <https://www.farsnews dot ir/news/14010801000458>
- ²⁹ <https://www.farsnews dot ir/news/14010801000458>
- ³⁰ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-22>
- ³¹ <https://t.me/SEPAHCYBERY/54677>
- ³² <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-22>
- ³³ <http://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/07/30/2792164>
- ³⁴ <http://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/07/30/2792164>
- ³⁵ <https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Irans-Reserve-of-Last-Resort.pdf>
- ³⁶ https://twitter.com/isna_farsi/status/1583918417039413248; <https://t.me/sabreenS1/62506>
- ³⁷ <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/syria-reports-israeli-airstrikes-suburbs-damascus-91885225>
- ³⁸ <https://www.syriahr.com/en/272927/>

Iran Crisis Update, October 24

Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Zachary Coles, Johanna Moore, Dana Alexander Gray, Amin Soltani, Nicholas Carl, and Frederick W. Kagan

October 24, 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 social media users are invoking the November 2019 gasoline protests as the ongoing, anti-regime protests enter the Persian calendar month of *Aban* (October 23–November 21, 2022). Some Persian-language accounts have described the ongoing protests as the continuation of the gasoline protests, which are often referred to as the *Aban* protests since they occurred primarily from November 15–19, 2019.^[1] Estimates of civilians killed by the state security services in November 2019 range from 304 to 1,500.^[2]

Iranian security forces reportedly searched and beat several students attending the Sadr vocational high school in Tehran on October 24.^[3] The Education Ministry denied reports of violent clashes between security forces and students but acknowledged that school faculty searched and seized some students' cellphones and that some students experienced blood pressure drops and required medical attention.^[4] The Education Ministry and the Law Enforcement Command (LEC) denied reports of student deaths.^[5] The LEC blamed reports of unrest on clashes between "thugs" in the vicinity of the Sadr high school.^[6] Anti-regime outlet *Iran International* reported a heavy security presence at the Loghman hospital in Tehran, where a Sadr student is reportedly being treated after she was hospitalized for her injuries.^[7]

University students chanted anti-regime slogans at a senior Raisi administration official attempting to engage student protestors on October 24. Raisi Administration Spokesperson Ali Bahadori Jahromi gave a speech at the Khajeh Nasir Tousi University of Technology in Tehran but left the premises after students continued to chant anti-regime slogans during his address.^[8] President Ebrahim Raisi had previously endorsed engaging with disaffected students on October 23.^[9]

Key Takeaways

- Some Iranian social media users are invoking the November 2019 gasoline protests as the ongoing, anti-regime protests enter the Persian calendar month of *Aban*.
- Iranian security forces reportedly searched and beat several students attending the Sadr vocational high school in Tehran
- Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 17 cities in 11 provinces.
- Iranian teachers continued to strike in solidarity with student protesters.
- A Tehran water official stated that Tehran Province may face water shortages within the next 100 days.
- An Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Telegram channel advertised a fake VPN service on October 24 likely to monitor and identify protesters trying to circumvent the regime's internet restrictions.

Anti-Regime Protests

Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 17 cities in 11 provinces on October 24. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

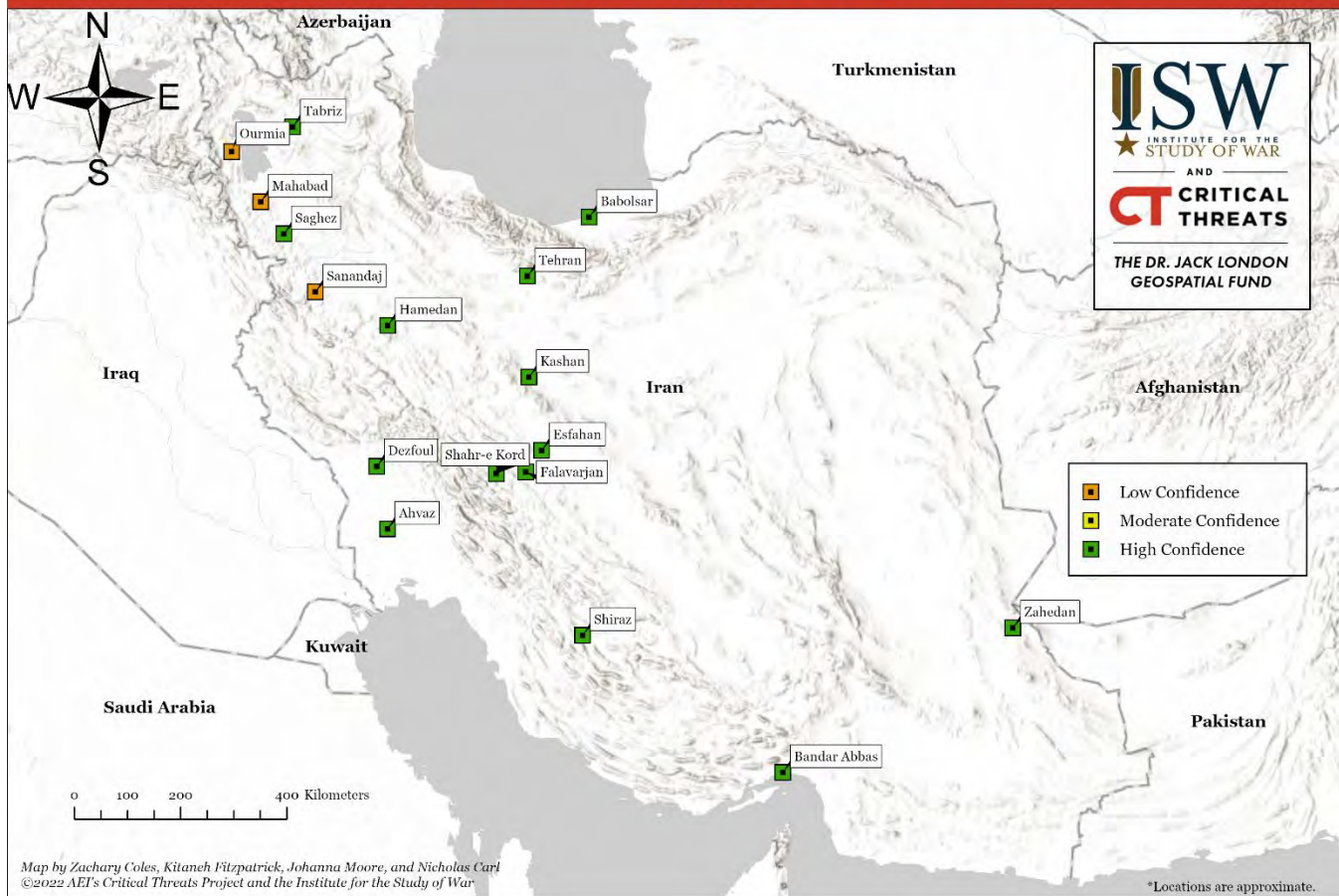
- Shahr-e Kord, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province (*Several dozen Shahr-e Kord University students protesting on campus*)^[10]

- Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province (25–50 Tabriz University of Islamic Arts students protesting on campus)[11]
- Esfahan City, Esfahan Province (100–200 Azad Esfahan University, Esfahan University of Medical Sciences, and Esfahan University of Technology students protested gender segregation on their campuses)[12]
- Falavarjan, Esfahan Province (25–50 Falavarjan Azad University students protesting on campus)
- Shiraz, Fars Province (Several dozen doctors protesting at an undetermined location in Shiraz; security forces reportedly opened fire on the doctors)[13]
- Kashan, Esfahan Province (Several dozen Kashan University of Medical Sciences students holding a sit-in on campus)[14]
- Hamedan City, Hamedan Province (100–200 Hamedan University of Technology students protesting on campus; 50–100 Hamedan Azad University students protesting on campus; several dozen Boali Sina Hamedan University students holding a mixed-gender sit-in; security forces reportedly clashed with Hamedan Azad University protesters)[15]
- Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan Province (Fewer than a dozen youth lighting fires in Bandar Abbas streets)[16]
- Ahvaz, Khuzestan Province (50–100 Chamran University students protesting on campus)[17]
- Dezfoul, Khuzestan Province (Several dozen Dezfoul Azad University students protesting on campus)[18]
- Saghez, Kurdistan Province (Several dozen high school students protesting in their school)[19]
- Babolsar, Mazandaran Province (Mazandaran University security director threatening an undetermined number of protesting students that “the force is waiting for you.”)[20]
- Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province (50–100 Zahedan University of Medical Sciences students protesting on campus)[21]
- Tehran City, Tehran Province (50–100 Khajeh Nasir al-Din University students, several dozen Amir Kabir University students, 50–100 Azad Tehran University of Medical Sciences, 50–100 Sharif University, 50–100 al-Zahra University, and hundreds of Yadgar University of Tehran students protested on their respective campuses; Tehran University students also held a sit-in on campus; Security forces reportedly beat Sadr high school students protesting on campus)[22]

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

- Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province (Undetermined number of youth lighting fires in Sanandaj streets)[23]
- Mahabad, West Azerbaijan Province (Undetermined number of youth protesting and constructing barricades in Mahabad streets)[24]
- Ourmia, West Azerbaijan Province (Fewer than a dozen youth lighting fires and protesting in Ourmia streets)[25]

Protest Activity in Iran as of October 24, 3:30 PM ET



Iranian teachers continued to strike in solidarity with student protesters.[\[26\]](#) Iranian teachers participated in strikes in at least nine cities in five provinces on October 24.[\[27\]](#) The Education Ministry announced Ardabil Province school closures due to an “influenza outbreak.”[\[28\]](#) Some schools in Ardabil Province may have closed due to teacher shortages amid the countrywide teacher strikes.

A Tehran water official stated that Tehran Province may face water shortages within the next 100 days on October 23.[\[29\]](#) The official’s office later released a statement denying the possibility of local water issues on October 24.[\[30\]](#) Water shortages have sparked previous anti-regime protest waves in Iran and could compound with the ongoing protests to fuel anti-regime sentiment and unrest.

An Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Telegram channel advertised a fake VPN service on October 24 likely to monitor and identify protesters trying to circumvent the regime’s internet restrictions.[\[31\]](#)

IRGC Telegram channels echoed regime rhetoric slandering protesters’ motivations. An IRGC Telegram channel reposted allegations that Sharif University students damaged property and assaulted security officials while protesting on campus.[\[32\]](#) Another IRGC Telegram channel denounced protests during Raisi Administration Spokesperson Ali Bahadori Jahromi’s press conference as “hooliganism.”[\[33\]](#) The regime Iranian proxy media continued to downplay the magnitude of protests and dismiss the notion that protests are a threat to the regime’s stability.[\[34\]](#)

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

There was nothing significant to report today.

- [1] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1584150279146307584?s=20&t=TCP033Td40Yyk1oLU0-VGA>; <https://twitter.com/Sonofthebeach33/status/1584583456989663233?s=20&t=O5qaEfdlZfrBHPfw-CMAzQ>; https://twitter.com/anahita_00/status/1584572788320309248?s=20&t=O5qaEfdlZfrBHPfw-CMAzQ; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1576069804779503616?s=20&t=TCP033Td40Yyk1oLU0-VGA>
- [2] <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/05/iran-details-released-of-304-deaths-during-protests-six-months-after-security-forces-killing-spree>; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-protests-specialreport/special-report-irans-leader-ordered-crackdown-on-unrest-do-whatever-it-takes-to-end-it-idUSKBN1YR0QR>
- [3] https://twitter.com/IranIntl_En/status/158455132242226950?s=20&t=kCrYlozGAeZPPRneDOSoHw
- [4] https://twitter.com/IranIntl_En/status/1584608335181058053?s=20&t=kCrYlozGAeZPPRneDOSoHw
- [5] https://twitter.com/IranIntl_En/status/1584609191804735496?s=20&t=riRqVvKRBzlwHDQiw_W_Bw
- [6] <https://www.iranintl.com/202210240567>
- [7] https://twitter.com/IranIntl_En/status/1584611252436930581?s=20&t=kCrYlozGAeZPPRneDOSoHw
- [8] <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1401/08/02/2793007/%D8%B3%D8%AE%D9%86%DA%AF%D9%88%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%AA-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%B9-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%AC%D9%88%DB%8C%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AC%D9%85%D9%87%D9%88%D8%B1%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%DB%8C-%D9%87%D9%85%DB%8C%D8%B4%D9%87-%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%82-%D8%A2%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%AF%DB%8C-%D9%85%DB%8C-%DA%A9%D9%88%D8%B4%D8%AF-%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D9%87%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%84-%D9%BE%DB%8C%DA%AF%DB%8C%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D9%85%D9%87%D8%B3%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%85%DB%8C%D9%86%DB%8C-%D8%A8%D9%88%D8%AF>; <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584639278365126656?s=20&t=7RZnIRh56JLrppfHPCjWlw>; <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584624514230779912?s=20&t=7RZnIRh56JLrppfHPCjWlw>
- [9] <https://president.ir/fa/140317>
- [10] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1584509640817410049?s=20&t=twBCyYfITS4SPPIKb6dg>
- [11] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584609938596564993?s=20&t=TCP033Td40Yyk1oLU0-VGA>
- [12] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1584518331360743425?s=20&t=twBCyYfITS4SPPIKb6dg>; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1584530572281774080?s=20&t=twBCyYfITS4SPPIKb6dg>; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1584531332536750081?s=20&t=twBCyYfITS4SPPIKb6dg>
- [13] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1584505879226826752?s=20&t=twBCyYfITS4SPPIKb6dg>
- [14] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1584531906560856065?s=20&t=twBCyYfITS4SPPIKb6dg>
- [15] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1584528977963921408?s=20&t=twBCyYfITS4SPPIKb6dg>; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1584513617537699840?s=20&t=twBCyYfITS4SPPIKb6dg>; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1584511201135841281?s=20&t=twBCyYfITS4SPPIKb6dg>; <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584523305469366272?s=20&t=twBCyYfITS4SPPIKb6dg>
- [16] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584629039746420736?s=20&t=TCP033Td40Yyk1oLU0-VGA>
- [17] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1584512104207618049?s=20&t=twBCyYfITS4SPPIKb6dg>; <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584528733813497856?s=20&t=twBCyYfITS4SPPIKb6dg>
- [18] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1584506616816160768?s=20&t=twBCyYfITS4SPPIKb6dg>

[19] https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1584562784980926467?s=20&t=TCP033Td40Yyk1oLU0-VGA

[20] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1584518883951529984?s=20&t=twBCyYfITS4SPPIKb6dg>

[21] https://twitter.com/chawshin_83/status/1584615158772830209?s=20&t=5F0sCsfznSFetIZHF8VuPQ

[22] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1584521217284878342?s=20&t=twBCyYfITS4SPPIKb6dg>; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1584520287508660224?s=20&t=twBCyYfITS4SPPIKb6dg>; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1584517308696842240?s=20&t=twBCyYfITS4SPPIKb6dg>; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1584515299482947588?s=20&t=twBCyYfITS4SPPIKb6dg>; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1584512692265840641?s=20&t=twBCyYfITS4SPPIKb6dg>; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1584510515388518400?s=20&t=twBCyYfITS4SPPIKb6dg>; <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584527533428838400?s=20&t=twBCyYfITS4SPPIKb6dg>; <https://twitter.com/IranIntlbrk/status/1584544298569240577?s=20&t=twBCyYfITS4SPPIKb6dg>;

[23] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584615660067651584?s=20&t=cDaSel2PMSDfmKuQtyRvEA>

[24] https://twitter.com/OutFarsi/status/1584591662885453824?s=20&t=Clk1j_oCFizf-2lXgTuy-w

[25] https://twitter.com/chawshin_83/status/1584615158772830209?s=20&t=TCP033Td40Yyk1oLU0-VGA

[26] https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-23#_edn05123728ae607a5b2ca1bd98eb5dfdd13

[27] https://twitter.com/hra_news/status/1584470244642672641
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<https://twitter.com/IranIntlbrk/status/1584449592304668672>

[28] <https://twitter.com/IranIntlbrk/status/1584572433595408384>

[29] https://www.instagram.com/p/CkC_lvRo-tF/?igshid=MDJmNzVkMjY%3D

<https://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/08/02/2793177/> تکفیب‌السلام-ذخیره‌ای فوری-100-روز آینده

[30] <https://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/08/02/2793177/> تکفیب‌السلام-ذخیره‌ای فوری-100-روز آینده
<https://www.isna dot ir/news/1401080201377/%D8%AA%DA%A9%D8%B0%DB%8C%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%B0%D8%AE%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%B1-%D8%A2%D8%A8%DB%8C-%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AA%D8%A7-%DB%B1%DB%B0%DB%B0-%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B2-%D8%AF%DB%8C%DA%AF%D8%B1>

[31] https://t.me/Sepah_Ir/71267
https://t.me/s/Nordd_Vpn

[32] https://t.me/Sepah_Ir/71270

[33] https://t.me/Sepah_Ir/71291

[34] <https://t.me/SEPAHCYBERY/54711>



Iran Crisis Update, October 25

**Nicholas Carl, Zachary Coles, Johanna Moore, and Frederick W. Kagan
October 25, 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 will likely increase—possibly significantly—on October 26 to commemorate the 40th day since the regime killed Mahsa Amini. Protest organizations such as the neighborhood youth groups have continued to call for countrywide demonstrations on October 26.¹ Many protest organizations continue to use revolutionary rhetoric in describing the planned demonstrations.² Iranians commonly hold a commemoration on the 40th day after a death. Anti-regime protests similarly erupted 40 days after security forces killed Neda Agha Soltan—a young Iranian protester—during the Green Movement in 2009.³ Security forces killed Agha Soltan on June 20, 2009, and the commemoration was on July 30, 2009.⁴

The regime has likely prepared to preempt and crush the planned protests on October 26, especially given their potential to strengthen the protest movement. The regime will likely disrupt internet services and telecommunications in the early morning throughout Iran to stymie protester coordination and organization. The regime will also likely deploy security forces ostentatiously throughout major cities to deter and intimidate demonstrators and use force if the protests gain traction.

Protesters may coordinate further demonstrations against the Islamic Republic for the 40-day commemorations of other secular martyrs, such as Nika Shakarami and Sarina Esmail Zadeh, in this protest movement.⁵ Forty days after Shakarami disappeared is October 30, and 40 days after Esmail Zadeh died is November 2.

Key Takeaways

- **Protest activity will likely increase—possibly significantly—on October 26 to commemorate the 40th day since the regime killed Mahsa Amini.**
- **Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 13 cities in 11 provinces.**
- **University students heckled a senior Raisi administration official attempting to engage student protesters for the second consecutive day.**
- **The IRGC announced that unidentified militants killed one IRGC member and one Basij member in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province.**

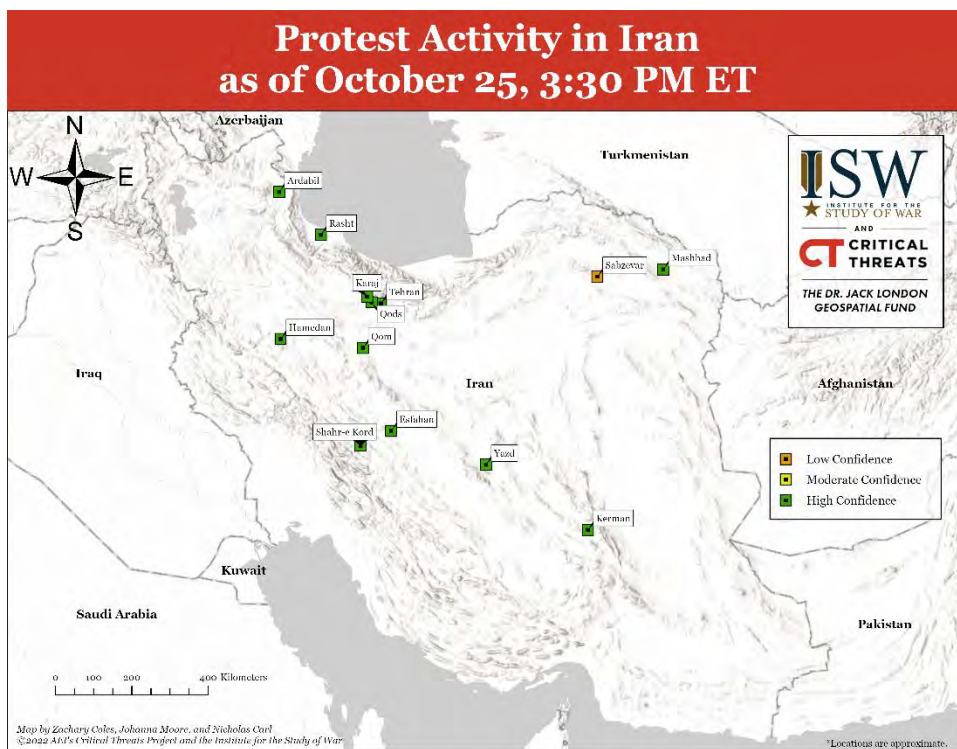
Anti-Regime Protests

Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 13 cities in 11 provinces on October 25. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

- Karaj, Alborz Province (*Several dozen Karaj Technical and Vocational Girls' University students protested on campus and chanted "students are in prison, our professors are suffering"*)⁶
- Ardabil City, Ardabil Province (*A dozen Ardabil University of Medical Sciences students chanted "freedom, freedom, freedom" in the university cafeteria*)⁷
- Shahr-e Kord, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province (*50-100 Shahr-e Kord University students protested on campus*)⁸
- Esfahan City, Esfahan Province (*100-200 Azad University of Esfahan students protested on campus and chanted "Sanandaj and Zahedan [are] the eye and lamp of Iran"*)⁹
- Rasht, Gilan Province (*Several dozen high school students protested and chanted "freedom, freedom, freedom" in Rasht streets*)¹⁰
- Hamedan, Hamedan Province (*Several dozen Bou Ali Sina University and Hamedan University of Medical Sciences students protested on campus; security forces reportedly beat Bou Ali Sina University students who removed their headscarves*)¹¹
- Kerman City, Kerman Province (*Several dozen Azad University of Kerman students protested on campus and chanted "neither Gaza nor Lebanon, I sacrifice my life for Iran"*)¹²
- Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province (*Mashhad firefighters protested against low pay in Mashhad streets; 50-100 Mashhad University students protested on campus and chanted "it's not the only day, it's going to be every day"*)¹³
- Qom City, Qom Province (*Qom University students heckled a regime spokesperson speaking on campus and chanted "freedom, freedom, freedom"; plainclothed security forces reportedly clashed with protesters*)¹⁴
- Tehran City, Tehran Province (*50-100 Azad University of Tehran students protested in Tehran streets; a dozen Allameh University students protested on campus; several dozen Soroor University students protested on campus; 50-100 Markaz University students chanted "freedom, freedom, freedom" on campus*)¹⁵
- Qods, Tehran Province (*50-100 Azad University of Qods students protested on campus and chanted "freedom, freedom, freedom"*)¹⁶
- Yazd City, Yazd Province (*100-200 Yazd University students protested gender segregation and chanted "woman, life, freedom" in the campus cafeteria*)¹⁷

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

- Sabzevar, Khorasan Razavi Province (*Undetermined number of Hakim Sabzevari University students protesting on campus*)¹⁸



University students heckled a senior Raisi administration official attempting to engage student protesters for the second consecutive day. Khajeh Nasir Tousei University of Technology students chanted anti-regime slogans while Raisi Administration Spokesperson Ali Bahadori Jahromi attempted to deliver a speech on October 24.¹⁹ Qom University students heckled Jahromi while he attempted to deliver a similar speech on October 25.²⁰

The IRGC announced that unidentified militants killed one IRGC member and one Basij member in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province on October 25.²¹ It is unclear whether protesters or anti-regime insurgents killed the security officers.

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

IRGC Telegram channels reported anti-government protests in Baku calling for regime change and improved human rights in Azerbaijan on October 25.²² CTP cannot verify these reports. Local Azerbaijani media reported that the Azerbaijani Popular Front Party (AXCP) organized protests in Baku on October 24 and 25.²³

Tensions have increased between Iran and Azerbaijan in recent weeks over the latter allegedly hosting Israeli agents and trying to establish a land corridor connecting Azerbaijan proper to its Nakhchivan autonomous enclave.²⁴ An IRGC Telegram account called for the regime to economically and militarily support separatist movements in the Nakhchivan republic to join Iran on October 23.²⁵

An IRGC Telegram channel advertised a new VPN service on October 25 likely to identify and monitor individuals seeking to circumvent regime internet restrictions.²⁶

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- ¹ https://twitter.com/javanane_t/status/1584861495287873538;
<https://twitter.com/MahsaAmini40/status/1584823046644584449>
- ² https://twitter.com/javanane_t/status/1584861495287873538
- ³ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8176961.stm>; <https://www.latimes.com/archives/blogs/babylon-beyond/story/2009-07-31/iran-footage-emerges-from-demonstrations-across-the-country>
- ⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/23/world/middleeast/23neda.html>
- ⁵ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-1>
- ⁶ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584905771459944448?s=20&t=l1Rd-tKt1V8zSWrkfzwBjQ>;
<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584870736342429696?s=20&t=gr7vOPLLjhw2lXqGyyCpxQ>
- ⁷ <https://www.iranintl.com/202210255191>;
<https://twitter.com/Mojahedineng/status/1584882466212413441?s=20&t=MCdfFPcbEqLbcVmcVJcoYw>
- ⁸ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584958559225548800?s=20&t=gr7vOPLLjhw2lXqGyyCpxQ>;
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- ⁹ <https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1584918502145761282?s=20&t=CvGZNU3bFB7ge2371OQS7Q>;
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- ¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/Mojahedineng/status/1584898824094601217?s=20&t=-EVY6GVlp0GWB2mtB5Ynw>;
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- ¹¹ https://twitter.com/freedommesenger/status/1584930127535915015?s=20&t=tpN7MghTXEHuFQEtEW3_QjQ;
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- ¹² <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584945408014716928?s=20&t=gr7vOPLLjhw2lXqGyyCpxQ>;
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- ¹³ https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584838419192369152?s=20&t=ebRNx0dB3B_saTtzY_Jzzw;
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- ¹⁴ <https://twitter.com/Victorysours/status/1584928163989458944?s=20&t=8qE0SdG-ni-codBUubG-Zg>;
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- ¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584908056277688323?s=20&t=mDofqIniOQbnOC6cGZm5nA>;
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- ¹⁷ <https://www.iranintl.com/202210255191>;
<https://twitter.com/ICHRI/status/1584931495525117953?s=20&t=MCdfFPcbEqLbcVmcVJcoYw>;
https://twitter.com/Omid_M/status/1584928791658319872?s=20&t=MCdfFPcbEqLbcVmcVJcoYw
- ¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/158483791917222977?s=20&t=gr7vOPLLjhw2lXqGyyCpxQ>
- ¹⁹ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-24>;
- ²⁰ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1584830598073700352?s=20&t=gr7vOPLLjhw2lXqGyyCpxQ>;
<https://twitter.com/ksadjadpour/status/1584904707335675906?s=20&t=GwnAGyd2CnN5heNNeZ2ypg>
- ²¹ www.mehrnews.com/news/5616901
- ²² <https://t.me/SEPAHCYBERY/54812>
- ²³ https://t.me/Sepah_Ir/71366
- ²⁴ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-19>
- ²⁵ https://t.me/sepah_pasdaran/114852
- ²⁶ https://t.me/Sepah_Ir/71366



Iran Crisis Update, October 26

Nicholas Carl, Zachary Coles, Johanna Moore, Amin Soltani, Brian Carter, and Frederick W. Kagan

October 26, 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 ongoing, anti-regime protests in Iran expanded significantly on October 26, occurring in at least 33 cities in 23 provinces. These protests are the most reported in a single day since CTP began publishing daily protest updates on September 28.¹ Thousands of Iranians took to the streets to commemorate the 40th day since the regime killed Mahsa Amini.² Protesters shot and killed an IRGC intelligence officer in Maleyer, Hamedan Province, raising the death toll of security forces members to at least 33 since this protest wave began on September 16.³

The largest gathering occurred in Saghez, Kurdistan Province—Mahsa Amini’s hometown and resting place. Iranian state media reported that around 10,000 individuals gathered in Saghez to commemorate Mahsa Amini, although the actual number could be higher.⁴ The regime blocked roads around Saghez to prevent protests.⁵ Videos on social media depict mourners and protesters traveling on foot to the cemetery in Saghez, walking along roads and through fields.⁶ Security forces attacked and arrested protesters at the cemetery.⁷

Protest organizations have called on disaffected citizens to sustain this large-scale turnout daily.⁸ Some protest organizations have called for demonstrators to commemorate on October 27 the 40th day since Nika Shakarami died.⁹ These protest organizations have also noted that Cyrus the Great Day is October 29—another date around which protesters could rally.¹⁰ The regime has long sought to incorporate historical Persian nationalism into its ideology, and protest calls such as this one are part of an effort to reclaim pride in Persian history for the anti-regime movement.

The regime will likely exploit a militant attack on a Shia shrine in Shiraz, Fars Province to deflate the protests. At least one gunman entered the Shah Cheragh Mosque in Shiraz and shot worshippers on October 26, killing around 15 and injuring around 40, according to Iranian state media.¹¹ The Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack although it is very unlikely that the Islamic State was directly involved in it.¹²

The regime will use this attack to redirect Iranian public attention away from the protests and channel anger toward foreign adversaries such as the Islamic State and Saudi Arabia. Outlets affiliated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) reported that the gunman was a non-Iranian Wahhabist.¹³ An IRGC-affiliated journalist claimed that Saudi Arabia ordered the attack and called on the IRGC to retaliate.¹⁴ The regime may attack Islamic State positions abroad or Saudi Arabia in retaliation for the militant attack in Shiraz. The regime conducted ballistic missile attacks against Islamic State targets in eastern Syria after the group claimed responsibility for attacks in Iran in June 2017 and September 2018.¹⁵ The regime could do so again to draw public attention away from the protests. The regime also seeks to retaliate against Saudi Arabia for its alleged role in stoking the protests as CTP previously reported.¹⁶

The regime may also use this attack to justify more violent protest suppression. Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf accused protesters of enabling anti-regime militants to conduct the attack.¹⁷

The Islamic State is trying to capitalize on the shrine attack and protests to stoke instability and sectarian conflict in Iran. The Islamic State likely claimed responsibility for the attack opportunistically without having ordered or directly enabled it.¹⁸ The attack does not match the typical Islamic State attack pattern, suggesting that the group may not have explicitly directed the attack. The attacker was not wearing a suicide vest and was captured wounded but alive--a very unusual occurrence for Islamic State terrorists. Islamic State statements claiming credit for the attack were also confused, offered no details other than those already available in the media when they were released and lacked the specificity that is common in claims of credit for attacks that the Islamic State actually directs. The Islamic State has previously claimed attacks opportunistically such as the Las Vegas shooting in October 2017.¹⁹ The Islamic State Khorasan Province expressed support for protesters fighting the regime on October 26 as well likely to further stoke sectarian divides.²⁰ The effort to fuel sectarian violence has been a hallmark of the Islamic State and its predecessor, al Qaeda in Iraq, distinguishing it from al Qaeda affiliates that are usually more reluctant to stoke sectarian hostilities directly.

White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre and National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby stated that Russia may be advising the Iranian regime's protest crackdown on October 26.²¹ Moscow has extensive experience in protest crackdowns domestically and abroad. The Kremlin advised and supported the suppression of protests in Belarus in late 2020 and Kazakhstan in early 2022.²² Russian security personnel participated directly in both of those crackdowns, but CTP has not yet observed indications that Russians are in Iran actively helping the regime crack down at the moment.

Key Takeaways

- **The ongoing, anti-regime protests in Iran expanded significantly on October 26, occurring in at least 33 cities in 23 provinces.**

- The regime will likely exploit a militant attack on a Shia shrine in Shiraz, Fars Province to contain the protests.
- The Islamic State is trying to capitalize on the shrine attack and protests to stoke instability and sectarian conflict in Iran.
- US officials stated that Russia may be advising the Iranian regime's protest crackdown.
- IRGC-affiliated media continued to spread disinformation to downplay protests and discredit frustrated citizens

Anti-Regime Protests

Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 33 cities in 23 provinces on October 26. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

- Karaj, Alborz Province (*50-100 Karaj Azad University students protested on campus; undetermined number of protesters set fire to a statue of General Soleimani*)²³
- Ardabil City, Ardabil Province (*100-200 Mohaghegh Ardabil University students protested on campus*)²⁴
- Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province (*100-150 University of Tabriz students protested on campus*)²⁵
- Shahinshahr, Esfahan Province (*Security forces reportedly fired tear gas at protesters gathered outside Fars Medical Clinic; several dozen protesters set fires and protested in Shahinshahr streets*)²⁶
- Esfahan City, Esfahan Province (*100-150 female Isfahan University students protested on campus; several dozen protesters gathered in Esfahan streets*)²⁷
- Najafabad, Esfahan Province (*150-300 Najafabad University students protested on campus and stomped on pictures of Khamenei*)²⁸
- Shiraz, Fars Province (*150-300 Shiraz Azad University students protested on campus*)²⁹
- Rasht, Gilan Province (*100-200 Gilan University students protested on campus and chanted “neither Gaza nor Lebanon, I sacrifice my life for Iran”; protesters set fires in Rasht streets and chanted “freedom, freedom, freedom”*)³⁰
- Lahijan, Gilan Province (*Several dozen protesters set fires and demonstrated in Lahijan streets; protesters reportedly ambushed security forces and set fire to their motorcycle*)³¹
- Gorgan, Golestan Province (*One or two dozen protesters demonstrated in Gorgan streets; protesters set fire to a Basij base*)³²
- Hamedan, Hamedan Province (*150-300 Islamic Azad University of Hamedan and Boali Sina University students protested on their respective campuses*)³³
- Ilam City, Ilam Province (*50-100 protesters demonstrated in Ilam streets and chanted “Death to the dictator” and “woman, life, freedom”; security forces reportedly used tear gas against protesters inside a pharmacy*)³⁴
- Kerman City, Kerman Province (*50-150 Bahnar University of Kerman and Islamic Azad University of Kerman students protested on campus and chanted “students die, do not accept humiliation”*)³⁵

- Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province (*Several dozen Ferdowsi University of Mashhad students protested on campus; Underdetermined number of protesters marched through Mashhad streets*)³⁶
- Sabzevar, Khorasan Razavi Province (*150-300 Hakim University and Sabzevar University students protested on their respective campuses; Sabzevar University students chanted “1500 people killed in our Bloody November”*)³⁷
- Ahvaz, Khuzestan Province (*50-100 Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz and Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz students protested on campus*)³⁸
- Saghez, Kurdistan Province (*10,000 protesters or more traveled from multiple cities in Iran to attend Mahsa Amini’s funeral at the Aichi Mausoleum*)³⁹
- Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province (*50-100 Kurdistan University in Sanandaj students protested on campus; several dozen protesters set fires in the Sanandaj streets and threw Molotov cocktails at security forces; security forces reportedly used live ammunition against protesters*)⁴⁰
- Marivan, Kurdistan Province (*Undetermined number of protesters set fires in Marivan streets; security forces reportedly used live ammunition against protesters*)⁴¹
- Boroujerd, Lorestan Province (*Several dozen Boroujerd University students protested on campus and chanted “death to the dictator”*)⁴²
- Arak, Markazi Province (*50-100 Arak University students protested on campus and marched through Arak streets*)⁴³
- Babol, Mazandaran Province (*Several dozen Noshirvani University of Babol protested on campus; security forces reportedly prevented students from exiting or entering the university*)⁴⁴
- Qazvin City, Qazvin Province (*50-100 Qazvin University students protested in the Qazvin streets; security forces used live ammunition against protesters*)⁴⁵
- Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province (*Several dozen Zahedan University of Medical Sciences students protested on campus and chanted “death to the dictator”; security forces prevented students from exiting or entering the university and reportedly stormed the women’s dormitory to stifle protests*)⁴⁶
- Shahriar, Tehran Province (*Several dozen protesters chanted “death to the dictator” in Shahriar streets; security forces reportedly employed tear gas against protesters*)⁴⁷
- Tehran City, Tehran Province (*An undetermined number of students and faculty protested at Tehran Technical College; 50-100 university students protest at Khajeh Nasir University; an undetermined number of students gathered at Tehran Azad Dental Facility; security forces reportedly attacked about a dozen protesters in Amirabad; 150-300 protesters held a sit in at Beheshti University of Medical Sciences; 50-100 protesters gathered on Abuzar street and were seen burning objects; 50-100 protesters were seen gathering in Tehran’s metro*)⁴⁸
- Boukan, West Azerbaijan Province (*Security forces reportedly clashed with high school students in Boukan streets; one or two dozen protesters set fires in Boukan streets*)⁴⁹
- Mahabad, West Azerbaijan Province (*Several dozen protesters chanting “woman, life, freedom” and lighting fires in Mahadbad streets*)⁵⁰

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

- # Protest Activity in Iran as of October 26, 5:00 PM ET
-
- ISW**
INSTITUTE FOR THE
STUDY OF WAR
AND
CT CRITICAL
THREATS
THE DR. JACK LONDON
GEOSPATIAL FUND
- High Confidence
Moderate Confidence
Low Confidence
- 0 100 200 400 Kilometers
- Map by Zachary Coles, Johanna Moore, and Nicholas Carl
©2022 AI's Critical Threats Project and the Institute for the Study of War
- *Locations are approximate.

Iranian social media users documented anti-regime strikes among merchants and industrial workers in 10 cities in six provinces on October 26, including:⁵⁶

- Esfahan City, Esfahan Province
- Rasht, Gilan Province
- Lahijan, Gilan Province
- Javanroud, Kermanshah Province
- Saghez, Kurdistan Province
- Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province
- Marivan, Kurdistan Province
- Tehran City, Tehran Province
- Boukan, West Azerbaijan Province
- Mahabad, West Azerbaijan Province

IRGC-affiliated media continued to spread disinformation to downplay protests and discredit frustrated citizens on October 26. IRGC-affiliated media dismissed reports that security forces attacked protesters and denied that the regime blocked roads around Saghez.⁵⁷ IRGC-affiliated media also denied that Mahsa Amini's family planned to commemorate the 40th day since her death.⁵⁸ IRGC Telegram accounts reported that Nika Shakarami committed suicide to obfuscate the fact that security forces killed her in Tehran around September 20.⁵⁹

The Artesh Ground Forces plan to conduct an electronic warfare (EW) exercise around Esfahan on October 27.⁶⁰ Iranian state media reported that the Artesh Ground Forces will practice offensive and defensive EW operations. The regime could use these exercises to disrupt electronic and satellite communications systems to further limit the free flow of information within and out of Iran.

Senior Iranian Sunni cleric Maulvi Abdol Hamid reiterated his support for the protesters in a private meeting with his inner circle on October 24, according to Reuters.⁶¹ Abdol Hamid also called for the regime to recognize the rights of Iranian Baloch and Sunnis. CTP previously assessed that Abdol Hamid may emerge as a local protest leader in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province.⁶² Hamid has criticized Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and the regime crackdown in recent days.⁶³ Iranian security officials have accused Abdol Hamid of instigating protests in Zahedan.⁶⁴

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

There was nothing significant to report today.

¹ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-updates>

² www.isna dot ir/news/1401080402843

³ <http://www.irna dot ir/news/84924522>; <https://twitter.com/Alfoneh/status/1585359267892457472>

⁴ www.isna dot ir/news/1401080402843

⁵ <https://twitter.com/KhosroKalbasi/status/1585157172979122176>

⁶ <https://twitter.com/KhosroKalbasi/status/1585189523238969344>;

<https://twitter.com/KhosroKalbasi/status/1585157172979122176>

⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iranian-security-forces-shoot-people-gathered-aminis-grave-witness-2022-10-26/>

⁸ https://twitter.com/iran_javanan/status/1585326099302477825; https://twitter.com/javanane_t/status/1585349189122170881

⁹ https://twitter.com/iran_javanan/status/1585377305190277120; https://twitter.com/javanane_t/status/1585349189122170881

¹⁰ https://twitter.com/javanane_t/status/1585349189122170881

¹¹ <https://www.mashreghnews dot ir/news/1429983/> زخمی-تروریست-۴۰-شہید-۱۵-شیراز-با-شاہچراغ-شیراز-۱۵-شہید-۴۰-زخمی-تروریست

¹² https://twitter.com/Rita_Katz/status/1585352001608552448?s=20&t=DPL5AFsAs3f_ReEhDhWYOW;%20https://twitter.com/TracTe
[rrorism/status/1585347448830308352?s=20&t=DPL5AFsAs3f_ReEhDhWYOW](https://twitter.com/TracTerrorism/status/1585347448830308352?s=20&t=DPL5AFsAs3f_ReEhDhWYOW)

¹³ <https://twitter.com/nournewsen/status/1585306372950077441>; <http://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/08/04/2794303>;
<http://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/08/04/2794291>

¹⁴ <https://twitter.com/HosseinDalirian/status/1585294314900705280>;
<https://twitter.com/HosseinDalirian/status/1585334093407191040>

¹⁵ <http://www.tehrantimes dot com/news/414399>; <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/01/world/middleeast/iran-isis-missile-syria.html>

¹⁶ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-18>

¹⁷ <http://www.irna dot ir/news/84924513>; <http://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/08/04/2794330>

¹⁸ https://twitter.com/Rita_Katz/status/1585352001608552448?s=20&t=DPL5AFsAs3f_ReEhDhWYOW;
https://twitter.com/TracTerrorism/status/1585347448830308352?s=20&t=DPL5AFsAs3f_ReEhDhWYOW

¹⁹ <https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/las-vegas-shooting/las-vegas-shooting-isis-claim-responsibility-sign-desperation-say-experts-n807076>

²⁰ https://twitter.com/khorasandary/status/1585186985592770560?s=46&t=LYIPdKz_HJcZFL1xl-xZcQ

²¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/26/politics/white-house-russia-iran-protests/index.html>

²² <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/belarus-warning-update-kremlin-begins-security-forces-support-lukashenko-following>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/explainers-59894266>

²³ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1585153634668773378>
https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585208286957441025?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA

²⁴ https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585228627373064193?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA
https://twitter.com/beybun_rojihat/status/1585252498356736001?s=20&t=w9V11bPPH42E1mPf1MO6TA

²⁵ https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585228139935907842?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA
https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585293947261407234?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA
<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1585259121863168002?s=20&t=6beYKmvxNsl35GA1ecmrDQ>

²⁶ https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585203891548827648?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA
https://twitter.com/no_itsmyturn/status/1585212182240919552?s=20&t=w9V11bPPH42E1mPf1MO6TA
https://twitter.com/agnos_pharmos/status/1585375113360596992?s=20&t=yzol0-gBhJADK-SXt1hFMg

²⁷ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1585136701659176960>
<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1585345359211270144>

²⁸ https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585209465988874248?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA
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https://twitter.com/no_itsmyturn/status/1585204992574734336?s=20&t=w9V11bPPH42E1mPf1MO6TA

²⁹ https://twitter.com/Omid_M/status/1585261262757597184?s=20&t=w9V11bPPH42E1mPf1MO6TA
https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585220170787991552?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA

³⁰ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1585338728049913856>; <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1585203359128358912>

³¹ https://twitter.com/no_itsmyturn/status/1585378937378639874?s=20&t=yzol0-gBhJADK-SXt1hFMg;
<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1585329340862324736>

³² <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1585322105515581440>;
<https://twitter.com/IranNewsUpdate1/status/1585361771283755008?s=20&t=yzol0-gBhJADK-SXt1hFMg>

³³ https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585241371128266753?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA;
<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1585204308705878017>

³⁴ <https://twitter.com/Majid25Heyran/status/1585335719836651522?s=20&t=yzol0-gBhJADK-SXt1hFMg>;
<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1585345061398597632>

³⁵ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1585184114176839680>;
https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585225026265309184?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA;
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https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585203176340606976?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA

³⁶ https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585187292876271621?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA;
https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585197843219763200?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA;
<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1585197700894466048>

³⁷ [https://twitter.com/arminarefi/status/1585200453708414976?s=20&t=gD1tux9RbL-rXqegYEtVMw](https://twitter.com/arminarefi/status/1585200453708414976?s=20&t=gD1tux9RbL-rXqegYEtVMw;);
https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585218703704338432?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA

³⁸ https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585242851968851969?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA;
https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585190299860873216?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA

³⁹ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1585220439026323458?s=20&t=jVspzmgOnZw9QTyKcaLyAA>;
<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1585157794659184640?s=20&t=RpxhbAhnoez3YRu8tULjdA>;
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<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1585159018204364800?s=20&t=0XEVDtEJZhYxCpKyyFv5yA>;
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<https://twitter.com/HengawO/status/1585207167992221696?s=20&t=0FUTa30Scf-D1b7lKt6ApQ>

⁴⁰ https://twitter.com/MaRizanti/status/1585348359334039552?s=20&t=TnaJe1QpBRoefG-wxX_nta;
<https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585271592489304067>;
https://twitter.com/Hengaw_English/status/1585273742682382337?s=20&t=w9V11bPPH42E1mPf1MO6TA;
<https://twitter.com/OutFarsi/status/1585317250357088256?s=20&t=YfXesqcSKGrLQy32KJ3zg>;
https://twitter.com/Foad_Loreso/status/1585337152799657985?s=20&t=lcEkapvAOWAX4yWX-9HVeQ

⁴¹ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585284063966920710>;
https://twitter.com/Hengaw_English/status/1585325225360560129?s=20&t=p3ZRcpdhKxGByzExL7QZzg;
https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1585321971302031360?s=20&t=Ugh4blh6aU875th-_OUfBQ

⁴² <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1585235781886480384>;
https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585226616103665665?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA

⁴³ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585295567684452353>;
<https://twitter.com/DeepaParent/status/1585185548112494593?s=20&t=w9V11bPPH42E1mPf1MO6TA>;
https://twitter.com/HRANA_English/status/1585271775092510720?s=20&t=w9V11bPPH42E1mPf1MO6TA;
https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585212620075778048?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA

⁴⁴ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585285504672595969>;
https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585240907213049858?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA

⁴⁵ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585273502797647872>; <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1585198239783227393>;
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https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585186127136186368?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA

⁴⁶ https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585239812780732416?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA;
<https://twitter.com/farzinkadkhodae/status/1585253054844018688?s=20&t=DFhYJnJnvTkbd-GTOX0pjQ>;
https://twitter.com/SyrianMeds/status/1585287508513923074?s=20&t=2SECTI9TP_J6gluhbym2lw

⁴⁷ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1585226113856307202>;
<https://twitter.com/SedayeShahrivar/status/1585294154703294465>;
<https://twitter.com/Mojahedineng/status/1585291410785411074>

⁴⁸ https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585184052835160064?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA;
https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585186787630411777?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA;
https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585187808062210049?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA;
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<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1585189861602230272>
<https://twitter.com/MohamadAhwaze/status/1585356616915877894?s=20&t=lu8DMytM8Z8ScUjaMhxRrQ>
<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1585312559095508993>
⁴⁹ <https://twitter.com/IranNewsUpdate1/status/1585293656763899905?s=20&t=w9V11bPPH42E1mPf1MO6TA;>
<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1585220148700409856>
⁵⁰ https://twitter.com/Hengaw_English/status/1585342148534149120?s=20&t=yzol0-gBhJADK-SXt1hFMg;
<https://twitter.com/PAKenglishh/status/1585365475433017345?s=20&t=yzol0-gBhJADK-SXt1hFMg>
⁵¹ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585296292661821440;>
<https://twitter.com/gordyyaenn/status/1585347958551482368?s=20&t=yzol0-gBhJADK-SXt1hFMg;>
<https://twitter.com/khoshnevisnaser/status/1585315096682958848?s=20&t=yzol0-gBhJADK-SXt1hFMg;>
<https://twitter.com/YasamanFlower/status/1585336882769993728?s=20&t=yzol0-gBhJADK-SXt1hFMg>
⁵² https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585210678423392256?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA;
https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585233795694809088?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA
⁵³ https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1585244176438132736?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA
⁵⁴ https://twitter.com/HengawO/status/1585187061988225024?s=20&t=SnUDpM--xHhoAtP_5CdFRA;
https://twitter.com/Hengaw_English/status/1585316386523742208?s=20&t=yzol0-gBhJADK-SXt1hFMg
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CRITICAL THREATS

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INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES



IRAN CRISIS UPDATES

September 28, 5:00 pm ET

Nicholas Carl
Kitaneh Fitzpatrick
Zachary Coles
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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).

Circumstantial evidence suggests that Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei is at least temporarily unable to perform his normal duties. Khamenei has been unusually absent in recent days amidst countrywide, anti-regime protests, which began on September 16. Rumors have circulated that Khamenei's health has deteriorated significantly since early September.¹ CTP cannot verify these rumors about Khamenei's health, and such reports should be treated with skepticism. There are indications that Khamenei is ill or incapacitated, however. Regime power centers are behaving as if succession is either imminent or underway. President Ebrahim Raisi—a prominent frontrunner to succeed Khamenei—is positioning himself to become the next supreme leader with support from senior officers from the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC).

The ongoing Mahsa Amini protests are straining the regime's capability and willingness to crack down but are not yet existential to the regime. Protests began on September 16 in response to the regime's brutal killing of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini.² Protests have concentrated primarily in ethnically Kurdish regions of Iran, where Amini lived, and Tehran but spread rapidly to other locations and demographics.³ State security services have launched a bloody crackdown against the ongoing protests but have struggled with bandwidth constraints and exhaustion according to some Iranian media outlets.⁴ Tehran security officials reported that 185 Basij members were injured in the protests with five in critical condition.⁵ The Basij is a paramilitary branch of the IRGC responsible for civil defense and social control. These protests do not appear close to collapsing the regime at this time, however.

The IRGC may assess that anti-regime Kurdish militants operating around the Iran-Iraq-Turkey border are arming and stoking the protests. The IRGC has conducted five consecutive days of attacks involving artillery, drones, and missiles into Iraqi Kurdistan.⁶ Iranian state media have claimed that anti-regime Kurdish groups are fomenting instability against the regime.⁷ CTP cannot verify these allegations. The most recent round of IRGC attacks on September 28 killed an American citizen, Omar Mahmoudzadeh, in Iraqi Kurdistan.⁸

The regime's brutal crackdown and continuing IRGC attacks are stoking unrest in Kurdish communities throughout the region. Demonstrations expressing solidarity with the Iranian protesters occurred in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah in Iraqi Kurdistan and Qamishli in northern Syria on September 28.⁹

Key Takeaways

- **Circumstantial evidence suggests that Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei is at least temporarily unable to perform his normal duties.**
- **Regime power centers are behaving as if succession is either imminent or underway.**
- **The ongoing Mahsa Amini protests may be challenging the regime's capability and willingness to crackdown but do not appear close to collapsing the regime.**

- The IRGC may assess that anti-regime Kurdish militants operating around the Iran-Iraq-Turkey border are arming and stoking the protests.
- The IRGC conducted a large-scale attack into Iraqi Kurdistan on September 28, killing one American.

Supreme Leader Succession

Circumstantial evidence suggests that Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei is at least temporarily unable to perform his normal duties. Khamenei canceled his planned attendance at the annual meeting of the Assembly of Experts—the regime body constitutionally responsible for selecting the supreme leader—on September 7.¹⁰ Khamenei has historically given speeches at these meetings. The *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* both reported that Khamenei’s health has declined rapidly in recent weeks, prompting him to cancel meetings and public appearances.¹¹ The *New York Times* reported that he underwent surgery for a bowel obstruction in early September, citing unidentified sources inside and outside of Iran.

CTP cannot verify these rumors about Khamenei’s health, but circumstantial evidence indicates that Khamenei may indeed be ill or incapacitated. He has been abnormally silent about the ongoing countrywide, anti-regime protests, which began on September 16. Khamenei gave speeches on September 17 and 21 but did not address the protests.¹² Khamenei has never failed to address a major protest wave and responded previously to such protest waves within days of their initiations. He commented five days after countrywide protests erupted in December 2017 and two days after countrywide protests erupted in November 2019.¹³ It is unclear why he did not comment on September 17 or 21, but his continued absence as the protests have expanded and become more dangerous strongly suggests that he is at least temporarily unable to address them publicly.

Regime power centers are behaving as if succession is either imminent or underway. President Ebrahim Raisi gave a televised address on September 28 boasting of his accomplishments since taking office in August 2021.¹⁴ He mentioned the ongoing Mahsa Amini protests at the end of his speech, reiterating that the regime will crack down on the demonstrations. His address was remarkably tone-deaf given the protests raging across the country and sounded more like an appeal to key regime constituencies for support in a succession struggle than like a president attempting to calm massive and violent demonstrations.

Twenty-four current and former IRGC leaders signed an open letter publicly praising Raisi for his speech to the UN General Assembly on September 21.¹⁵ The letter signatories include Iran’s most high-ranking and influential officers who control most of the Iranian armed forces, such as Armed Forces General Staff Major General Mohammad Bagheri, Khatam ol Anbia Central Headquarters Commander Major General Gholam Ali Rashid, IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami, and IRGC Quds Force Commander Brigadier General Esmail Ghaani. Many of these officers are part of a human network of IRGC leaders who have maintained close ties with one another for decades and periodically intervene in domestic politics to promote their hardline agenda.¹⁶ This IRGC network publishes such letters extremely rarely and uses them to signal its political position on critical issues to the rest of the regime. The timing of this letter indicates that the IRGC network likely seeks to signify its endorsement of Raisi as supreme leader, particularly since there was nothing particularly remarkable about Raisi’s

UN speech to have called forth such an unusual and rare response. The participation of Ali Shamkhani and Yahya Rahim Safavi in this letter was especially significant as they are both in Khamenei's inner circle. Shamkhani is the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, which advises the supreme leader on defense and foreign policies. Safavi is Khamenei's senior military adviser.

Numerous unverifiable social media rumors are circulating online regarding Khamenei's status and health. Some have claimed that Khamenei is dead.¹⁷ Others have reported an ongoing power struggle among different regime factions.¹⁸ These rumors are neither sufficiently detailed nor sufficiently credible to report in detail at this time. CTP will continue to monitor the situation.

Anti-Regime Protests

Popular, anti-regime protests have erupted throughout Iran since September 16. The Iranian morality patrol arrested and brutally killed 22-year-old Mahsa Amini for failing to adhere to regime veiling standards in Tehran on September 16, sparking widespread unrest.¹⁹ Demonstrations initially concentrated in northwestern Iran—specifically Kurdistan Province, where Amini lived—and Tehran, but have since spread countrywide. Protests are now occurring in over 93 cities and towns in 31 of Iran's 32 provinces as of September 25. Demonstrations have transcended criticism of the morality patrol and mandatory veiling, and some protesters have called for the overthrow of the Islamic Republic.

September 2022: Anti-Regime Protests Sweep Iran



As of September 25, 2022 2:00 PM ET

Map: AEI's Critical Threats Project • Source: Author's Research • Created with Datawrapper

The regime has violently suppressed protests and sustained casualties among its security forces in recent days. State broadcaster IRIB reported 41 people including security personnel have died in the ongoing protests as of September 25.²⁰ Recent estimates place protest-related deaths at 76.²¹ A Tehran Province Basij official today announced that 185 Basij members have been wounded—five of whom are in critical condition—in violent clashes with protestors. The official claimed that some protestors were armed.²² Iranian state-affiliated media and officials have similarly confirmed the deaths of several security officials throughout the country.²³

Iranian reporting and statements from senior judiciary and security officials suggest that the regime fears losing its capability to crack down on ongoing unrest. This is a low-confidence assessment. Social media users circulated purportedly leaked footage of Judiciary Chief Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei discussing protest suppression efforts, stating that Iranian security personnel suffered from low morale and had not slept in several days.²⁴ IRGC-affiliated media similarly circulated footage of Iranian Law Enforcement Command (LEC) Commander Hossein Ashtari encouraging police officers to continue quashing unrest, likely corroborating Ejei's comments about low morale among security personnel.²⁵ Reformist Ham Mihan Newspaper reported that Ashtari discussed security force bandwidth constraints and exhaustion with IRGC Commander Hossein Salami and Intelligence and Security Minister Esmail Khatib.²⁶ Ham Mihan removed this report shortly after its publication.

Some hardline officials have sympathized with Mahsa Amini's death—and subsequent demonstrations—and called on the regime to heed their demands. Iranian media and officials have largely framed ongoing protests as riots organized by foreign actors and vowed to suppress further unrest.²⁷ Other officials, however, notably a hardline Shia cleric, have intimated that the protestors have legitimate grievances. Grand Ayatollah Hossein Nouri Hamedani released a statement urging Iranian authorities to address protestors' concerns on September 25.²⁸

Amini's death has ignited unrest among historically marginalized ethnic groups within and outside of Iran's borders. Amini was an Iranian Kurd who lived in Kurdistan Province. Amini's death likely ignited preexisting anti-regime sentiment among Iranian Kurds and possibly other minorities, such as Iranian Baloch in Sistan and Baluchistan Province.²⁹ Footage circulating on social media suggests that most protests were initially concentrated among Kurdish communities in northwestern Iran.³⁰

Protests have spread to Kurdish communities throughout the region. Demonstrations against the Iranian regime began on September 24 in Erbil City, Erbil Province and September 28 in Sulaymaniyah City, Sulaymaniyah Province.³¹ Videos of the protests circulated on Twitter suggest several hundred Iraqi Kurds attended the demonstrations. Hundreds of Syrian Kurds staged similarly large protests in Qamishli, Hasakah Province on September 28.³²

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

The IRGC has conducted large-scale artillery, drone, and missile attacks against anti-regime Kurdish militias in Iraqi Kurdistan since September 24. The IRGC Ground Forces targeted Kurdish groups such as Komala, Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran, the Free Life Party of Kurdistan, and Kurdistan Freedom Party positions.³³ The most recent IRGC attack on September 28 included 73 rockets and ballistic missiles as well as kamikaze drones, killing at least nine and injuring 32 civilians.³⁴ The IRGC killed an American citizen, Omar Mahmoudzadeh, in the attack.³⁵

The Iranian regime and its proxies are framing these attacks as retaliation for anti-regime Kurdish militants stoking tensions in Iran. Iranian state media have claimed that these Kurdish groups are arming and supporting protesters.³⁶ Iran-backed proxy Telegram channels parroted this narrative and

described the Kurdish militias as international terrorist organizations.³⁷ The IRGC may have sought to degrade Kurdish militias' capability to logistically and materially support protesters.

US forces downed an Iranian Mohajer-6 drone that the US assessed posed a threat to US personnel.³⁸ It is unclear whether the IRGC meant to target US positions with the drone or whether it was part of the attack on anti-regime Kurdish targets.

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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).

Circumstantial evidence suggests that Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei is at least temporarily unable to perform his normal duties. Khamenei has been unusually absent in recent days amidst countrywide, anti-regime protests, which began on September 16. Rumors have circulated that Khamenei's health has deteriorated significantly since early September.¹ CTP cannot verify these rumors about Khamenei's health, and such reports should be treated with skepticism. There are indications that Khamenei is ill or incapacitated, however. Regime power centers are behaving as if succession is either imminent or underway. President Ebrahim Raisi—a prominent frontrunner to succeed Khamenei—is positioning himself to become the next supreme leader with support from senior officers from the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC).

The ongoing Mahsa Amini protests are straining the regime's capability and willingness to crack down but are not yet existential to the regime. Protests began on September 16 in response to the regime's brutal killing of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini.² Protests have concentrated primarily in ethnically Kurdish regions of Iran, where Amini lived, and Tehran but spread rapidly to other locations and demographics.³ State security services have launched a bloody crackdown against the ongoing protests but have struggled with bandwidth constraints and exhaustion according to some Iranian media outlets.⁴ Tehran security officials reported that 185 Basij members were injured in the protests with five in critical condition.⁵ The Basij is a paramilitary branch of the IRGC responsible for civil defense and social control. These protests do not appear close to collapsing the regime at this time, however.

The IRGC may assess that anti-regime Kurdish militants operating around the Iran-Iraq-Turkey border are arming and stoking the protests. The IRGC has conducted five consecutive days of attacks involving artillery, drones, and missiles into Iraqi Kurdistan.⁶ Iranian state media have claimed that anti-regime Kurdish groups are fomenting instability against the regime.⁷ CTP cannot verify these allegations. The most recent round of IRGC attacks on September 28 killed an American citizen, Omar Mahmoudzadeh, in Iraqi Kurdistan.⁸

The regime's brutal crackdown and continuing IRGC attacks are stoking unrest in Kurdish communities throughout the region. Demonstrations expressing solidarity with the Iranian protesters occurred in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah in Iraqi Kurdistan and Qamishli in northern Syria on September 28.⁹

Key Takeaways

- **Circumstantial evidence suggests that Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei is at least temporarily unable to perform his normal duties.**
- **Regime power centers are behaving as if succession is either imminent or underway.**
- **The ongoing Mahsa Amini protests may be challenging the regime's capability and willingness to crackdown but do not appear close to collapsing the regime.**

- The IRGC may assess that anti-regime Kurdish militants operating around the Iran-Iraq-Turkey border are arming and stoking the protests.
- The IRGC conducted a large-scale attack into Iraqi Kurdistan on September 28, killing one American.

Supreme Leader Succession

Circumstantial evidence suggests that Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei is at least temporarily unable to perform his normal duties. Khamenei canceled his planned attendance at the annual meeting of the Assembly of Experts—the regime body constitutionally responsible for selecting the supreme leader—on September 7.¹⁰ Khamenei has historically given speeches at these meetings. The *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* both reported that Khamenei’s health has declined rapidly in recent weeks, prompting him to cancel meetings and public appearances.¹¹ The *New York Times* reported that he underwent surgery for a bowel obstruction in early September, citing unidentified sources inside and outside of Iran.

CTP cannot verify these rumors about Khamenei’s health, but circumstantial evidence indicates that Khamenei may indeed be ill or incapacitated. He has been abnormally silent about the ongoing countrywide, anti-regime protests, which began on September 16. Khamenei gave speeches on September 17 and 21 but did not address the protests.¹² Khamenei has never failed to address a major protest wave and responded previously to such protest waves within days of their initiations. He commented five days after countrywide protests erupted in December 2017 and two days after countrywide protests erupted in November 2019.¹³ It is unclear why he did not comment on September 17 or 21, but his continued absence as the protests have expanded and become more dangerous strongly suggests that he is at least temporarily unable to address them publicly.

Regime power centers are behaving as if succession is either imminent or underway. President Ebrahim Raisi gave a televised address on September 28 boasting of his accomplishments since taking office in August 2021.¹⁴ He mentioned the ongoing Mahsa Amini protests at the end of his speech, reiterating that the regime will crack down on the demonstrations. His address was remarkably tone-deaf given the protests raging across the country and sounded more like an appeal to key regime constituencies for support in a succession struggle than like a president attempting to calm massive and violent demonstrations.

Twenty-four current and former IRGC leaders signed an open letter publicly praising Raisi for his speech to the UN General Assembly on September 21.¹⁵ The letter signatories include Iran’s most high-ranking and influential officers who control most of the Iranian armed forces, such as Armed Forces General Staff Major General Mohammad Bagheri, Khatam ol Anbia Central Headquarters Commander Major General Gholam Ali Rashid, IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami, and IRGC Quds Force Commander Brigadier General Esmail Ghaani. Many of these officers are part of a human network of IRGC leaders who have maintained close ties with one another for decades and periodically intervene in domestic politics to promote their hardline agenda.¹⁶ This IRGC network publishes such letters extremely rarely and uses them to signal its political position on critical issues to the rest of the regime. The timing of this letter indicates that the IRGC network likely seeks to signify its endorsement of Raisi as supreme leader, particularly since there was nothing particularly remarkable about Raisi’s

UN speech to have called forth such an unusual and rare response. The participation of Ali Shamkhani and Yahya Rahim Safavi in this letter was especially significant as they are both in Khamenei's inner circle. Shamkhani is the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, which advises the supreme leader on defense and foreign policies. Safavi is Khamenei's senior military adviser.

Numerous unverifiable social media rumors are circulating online regarding Khamenei's status and health. Some have claimed that Khamenei is dead.¹⁷ Others have reported an ongoing power struggle among different regime factions.¹⁸ These rumors are neither sufficiently detailed nor sufficiently credible to report in detail at this time. CTP will continue to monitor the situation.

Anti-Regime Protests

Popular, anti-regime protests have erupted throughout Iran since September 16. The Iranian morality patrol arrested and brutally killed 22-year-old Mahsa Amini for failing to adhere to regime veiling standards in Tehran on September 16, sparking widespread unrest.¹⁹ Demonstrations initially concentrated in northwestern Iran—specifically Kurdistan Province, where Amini lived—and Tehran, but have since spread countrywide. Protests are now occurring in over 93 cities and towns in 31 of Iran's 32 provinces as of September 25. Demonstrations have transcended criticism of the morality patrol and mandatory veiling, and some protesters have called for the overthrow of the Islamic Republic.

September 2022: Anti-Regime Protests Sweep Iran



As of September 25, 2022 2:00 PM ET

Map: AEI's Critical Threats Project • Source: Author's Research • Created with Datawrapper

The regime has violently suppressed protests and sustained casualties among its security forces in recent days. State broadcaster IRIB reported 41 people including security personnel have died in the ongoing protests as of September 25.²⁰ Recent estimates place protest-related deaths at 76.²¹ A Tehran Province Basij official today announced that 185 Basij members have been wounded—five of whom are in critical condition—in violent clashes with protestors. The official claimed that some protestors were armed.²² Iranian state-affiliated media and officials have similarly confirmed the deaths of several security officials throughout the country.²³

Iranian reporting and statements from senior judiciary and security officials suggest that the regime fears losing its capability to crack down on ongoing unrest. This is a low-confidence assessment. Social media users circulated purportedly leaked footage of Judiciary Chief Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei discussing protest suppression efforts, stating that Iranian security personnel suffered from low morale and had not slept in several days.²⁴ IRGC-affiliated media similarly circulated footage of Iranian Law Enforcement Command (LEC) Commander Hossein Ashtari encouraging police officers to continue quashing unrest, likely corroborating Ejei's comments about low morale among security personnel.²⁵ Reformist Ham Mihan Newspaper reported that Ashtari discussed security force bandwidth constraints and exhaustion with IRGC Commander Hossein Salami and Intelligence and Security Minister Esmail Khatib.²⁶ Ham Mihan removed this report shortly after its publication.

Some hardline officials have sympathized with Mahsa Amini's death—and subsequent demonstrations—and called on the regime to heed their demands. Iranian media and officials have largely framed ongoing protests as riots organized by foreign actors and vowed to suppress further unrest.²⁷ Other officials, however, notably a hardline Shia cleric, have intimated that the protestors have legitimate grievances. Grand Ayatollah Hossein Nouri Hamedani released a statement urging Iranian authorities to address protestors' concerns on September 25.²⁸

Amini's death has ignited unrest among historically marginalized ethnic groups within and outside of Iran's borders. Amini was an Iranian Kurd who lived in Kurdistan Province. Amini's death likely ignited preexisting anti-regime sentiment among Iranian Kurds and possibly other minorities, such as Iranian Baloch in Sistan and Baluchistan Province.²⁹ Footage circulating on social media suggests that most protests were initially concentrated among Kurdish communities in northwestern Iran.³⁰

Protests have spread to Kurdish communities throughout the region. Demonstrations against the Iranian regime began on September 24 in Erbil City, Erbil Province and September 28 in Sulaymaniyah City, Sulaymaniyah Province.³¹ Videos of the protests circulated on Twitter suggest several hundred Iraqi Kurds attended the demonstrations. Hundreds of Syrian Kurds staged similarly large protests in Qamishli, Hasakah Province on September 28.³²

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

The IRGC has conducted large-scale artillery, drone, and missile attacks against anti-regime Kurdish militias in Iraqi Kurdistan since September 24. The IRGC Ground Forces targeted Kurdish groups such as Komala, Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran, the Free Life Party of Kurdistan, and Kurdistan Freedom Party positions.³³ The most recent IRGC attack on September 28 included 73 rockets and ballistic missiles as well as kamikaze drones, killing at least nine and injuring 32 civilians.³⁴ The IRGC killed an American citizen, Omar Mahmoudzadeh, in the attack.³⁵

The Iranian regime and its proxies are framing these attacks as retaliation for anti-regime Kurdish militants stoking tensions in Iran. Iranian state media have claimed that these Kurdish groups are arming and supporting protesters.³⁶ Iran-backed proxy Telegram channels parroted this narrative and

described the Kurdish militias as international terrorist organizations.³⁷ The IRGC may have sought to degrade Kurdish militias' capability to logistically and materially support protesters.

US forces downed an Iranian Mohajer-6 drone that the US assessed posed a threat to US personnel.³⁸ It is unclear whether the IRGC meant to target US positions with the drone or whether it was part of the attack on anti-regime Kurdish targets.

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/16/world/middleeast/irans-supreme-leader-ayatollah-ali-khamenei-ill.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare>; <https://www.wsj.com/articles/amid-iran-protests-a-powerful-leader-emerges-from-the-shadows-11664105423>

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¹⁴ <http://www.president dot ir/fa/139919/>

¹⁵ <https://www.khabaronline dot ir/news/1677185/%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%87-%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%87%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A8%D9%84%D9%86%D8%AF-%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%AA%D8%A8%D9%87-%D8%B3%D9%BE%D8%A7%D9%87-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D8%B1%D8%A6%DB%8C%D8%B3%DB%8C>

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¹⁷ <https://twitter.com/rahar9075/status/1574577490806603776>

¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/SaeedAganji/status/1575068898352943105>

¹⁹ <https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-amini-death-head-injury-doctor/32042587.html>

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²² <https://www.tasnimnews dot com /fa/news/1401/07/06/2780838/%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%AD%D8%B3%D9%86-%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%87-185-%D8%A8%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%AC%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D8%BA%D8%AA%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%85%D8%AC%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%AD-%D8%B4%D8%AF%D9%86%D8%AF>

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%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%85-%DA%AF%D9%88%D8%B4-%D8%AF%D9%87%D9%86%D8%AF

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Iran Crisis Update, October 29

**Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Zachary Coles, Alexander Dana Gray, and Frederick W. Kagan
October 29, 6:00 PM ET**

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IRGC Commander Hossein Salami set conditions to violently escalate the suppression of ongoing, anti-regime demonstrations on October 29. Salami described the Shah Cheragh Shrine attack in Shiraz on October 26 as an extension of Western-led anti-regime protests. Salami called protestors a deluded minority and threatened to kill people who continue to participate in demonstrations.¹ Salami claimed that protestors lacked humanity or souls later that day.² IRGC-affiliated entities similarly linked anti-regime protests to the Shiraz attack. Student Basij chanted “death to rioters” at government-organized rallies for Shiraz victims, and IRGC-affiliated media commissioned graphic art which depicted the protests as a cover for ISIS on October 29.³

Increased IRGC calls to crack down on protesters coincide with increased reports of security force violence at university protests on October 29. Social media users reported that Iranian security personnel violently arrested several university student protesters in Esfahan, Khuzestan, and Khorasan Razavi Provinces and shot at high school student protesters in Kurdistan Province on October 29.⁴ Other reports suggest that Iranian authorities barricaded student protesters in campus buildings in Lorestan and Tehran Provinces.⁵ Iranian security personnel additionally fired live ammunition at medical students protesting in Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province, causing several casualties.⁶

Iranian protesters are reclaiming motifs historically leveraged by the regime, like martyrdom, to reinvigorate anti-regime demonstrations. Funerals and ceremonies commemorating protesters killed by Iranian security personnel have generated significant protest activity in recent days. Thousands of protesters gathered in Saghez, Kurdistan Province to commemorate the 40th day since the regime killed Mahsa Amini on October 26, as CTP previously reported.⁷ Large crowds have similarly gathered to commemorate killed protesters on October 27, 28, and 29.⁸ Hundreds of protesters chanted anti-regime slogans at the funeral of Mehrshad Shahidi in Markazi Province and at the 40th day commemoration ceremonies of Minou Majidi and Reza Shahparnia in Kermanshah Province on October 29.⁹ Shahparnia’s father told mourners that his son described Mahsa Amini’s death as an impetus for change and stated that “there will be no revolution until blood is shed.”¹⁰ Social media users are also increasingly describing killed protesters as martyrs.¹¹ Protesters’ use of “martyr” to describe their comrades killed by the regime has increased after the regime attempted to repurpose the protest

chant “woman, life, freedom” into “woman, life, martyrdom” at pro-regime rallies and as the regime has begun to describe those killed in the Shiraz attack as martyrs.

A leaked Iranian government report and chants observed in anti-regime demonstrations suggest that protesters are increasingly willing to risk arrest, and possibly death, to incite political change. Anti-regime outlet IranWire reported that most arrested protesters told authorities that they sought to overthrow the Islamic Republic, citing a classified Iranian government report.¹² The report allegedly identified the average age of arrested protesters as 17 and assessed that anti-regime demonstrations would continue. The report supposedly added that most protesters told interrogators that they had nothing to lose.¹³ That comment could reflect frustration with endemic economic problems in Iran, but could also reflect a change in the attitude of young Iranians that should worry the regime. Anti-regime slogans documented in recent weeks reflect a similar willingness to risk arrest and death in order to facilitate change. Protesters have been documented chanting slogans like “we will fight, we will die, we will take Iran back,” and “this is the year of blood, Khamenei will be overthrown” in recent weeks.¹⁴ These chants suggest that regime may have succeeded in its efforts to make Iranians more willing to sacrifice their lives...but not for the regime.

Key Takeaways

- **IRGC Commander Hossein Salami set conditions to violently escalate the suppression of ongoing, anti-regime demonstrations on October 29.**
- **Social media users documented increased reports of security forces violence at university protests on October 29.**
- **Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 22 cities in 14 provinces on October 29.**
- **Anti-regime outlet IranWire reported that most arrested protesters told authorities that they sought to overthrow the Islamic Republic, citing a classified Iranian government report.**
- **Iranian protesters were documented chanting slogans questioning ISIS’ responsibility for the October 26 Shiraz attack.**
- **Iraqi proxy Telegram channels repeated regime narratives blaming Saudi Arabia for the October 26 Shah Cheragh Shrine attack**

Anti-Regime Protests

Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 22 cities in 14 provinces on October 29. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

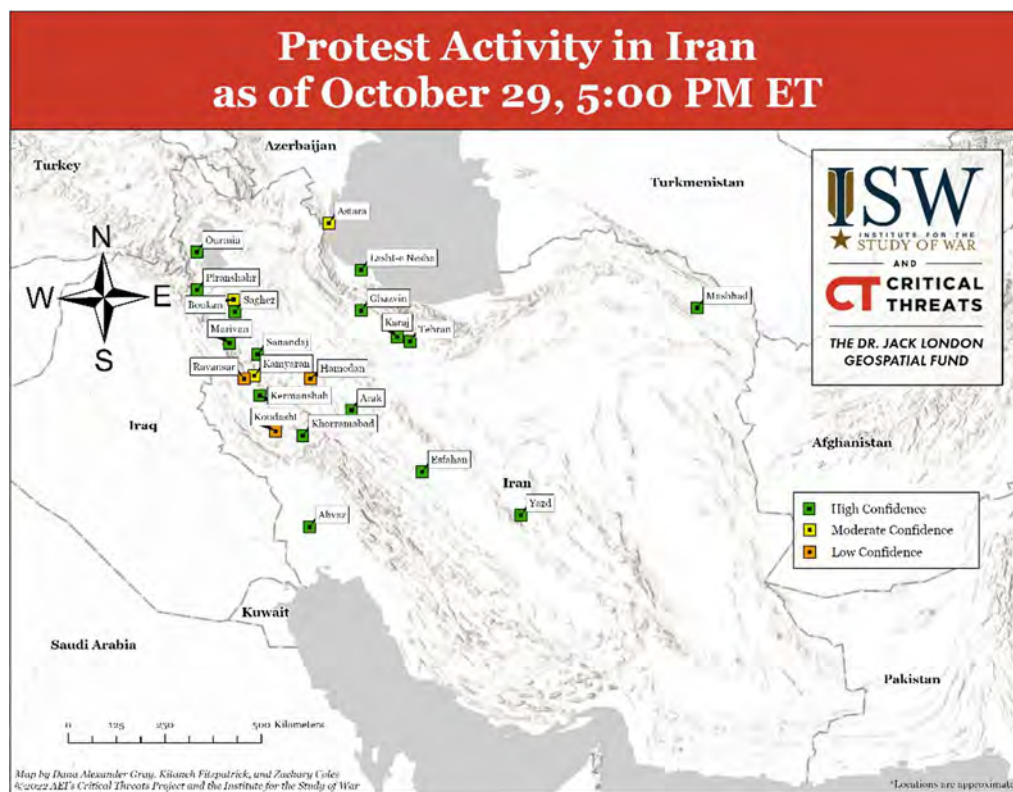
- Karaj, Alborz Province (*Over 100 Karaj Azad University student protesters gathered on campus. An undetermined number of Kharazmi University student protesters gathered on campus and chanted anti-regime slogans.*)¹⁵
- Esfahan City, Esfahan Province (*50-100 Esfahan University students protested on campus and chanted “you deserve this.” Plainclothed security forces and counterprotesters attacked students protesting on Esfahan University campus.*)¹⁶
- Ghavzin City, Ghazvin Province (*One or two dozen Imam Khomeini International University students protested on campus.*)¹⁷
- Lasht-e Nesh, Gilan Province (*An undetermined number of protesters set fires in the street. Iranian security personnel reportedly shot and killed a protester.*)¹⁸

- Astara, Gilan Province (*50-100 protesters set fires and gathered in Astara streets. An undetermined number of protesters set fire to a Basij motorcycle.*)¹⁹
- Kermanshah City, Kermanshah Province (*Large crowds attended a ceremony commemorating 40 days since Minou Majidi and Reza Shahparnia's deaths and chanted anti-regime slogans, including "this is the year of blood, Khamenei will be overthrown."*)²⁰
- Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province (*Roughly 100 Mashhad Azad University students protested on campus. Security personnel reportedly beat, tazed, and violently arrested an undetermined number of students. Over 100 Ferdowsi University student protesters gathered on campus, although this number likely includes some pro-regime counterprotesters waving the Islamic Republic's flag.*)²¹
- Ahvaz, Khuzestan Province (*Several dozen Ahvaz Medical University students clashed with security personnel on campus.*)²²
- Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province (*50-100 Sanandaj Medical University students protested on campus and chanted "it is November again, it is time for a revolution." Security forces reportedly beat protesters on the Sanandaj Medical University campus.*)²³
- Saghez, Kurdistan Province (*Security forces arrested and used tear gas, rubber bullets, and possibly live ammunition against high school girls protesting.*)²⁴
- Marivan, Kurdistan Province (*Undetermined number of protesters set fires in Marivan streets.*)^{xxv}
- Kamyaran, Kurdistan Province (*Dozens of high school students chanted "Basij, IRGC, you are our ISIS."*)²⁵
- Khorramabad, Lorestan Province (*Roughly 70 Lorestan University student protesters chanted anti-regime slogans. Iranian security personnel reportedly surrounded the campus and prevented students from entering or exiting.*)²⁶
- Arak, Markazi Province (*hundreds of people attended Mehrshad Shahidi's funeral and chanted anti-regime slogans such as "for each person killed, a thousand remain," and "I hate your religion, screw your religion." Iranian security personnel killed Shahidi for participating in anti-regime protests on October 25. Iranian security personnel reportedly tear gassed and attacked crowds attending Shahidi's funeral. Hundreds of protesters chased Iranian security personnel on the streets, likely the same crowds that attended Shahidi's funeral.*)²⁷
- Tehran City, Tehran Province (*Recorded protests at several universities, including Shahid Beheshti University, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran University, Allameh Tabataba'i University, at least one Tehran Azad University campus, and Amir Kabir University. Security personnel fired tear gas at Tarbiat Modares student protesters. Security personnel reportedly barricaded some students inside the Amir Kabir university campus. Dozens of protesters were recorded dismantling a street sign in the Shahr-e Ara neighborhood of Tehran. Iranian authorities reportedly deployed snipers to rooftops in unidentified location in Tehran.*)²⁸
- Boukan, West Azerbaijan Province (*An undetermined number of protesters set fires in Boukan streets and likely clashed with security forces.*)²⁹
- Piranshahr, West Azerbaijan Province (*One or two dozen protesters chanted "death to the dictator" in Piranshahr streets. An undetermined number of protesters established roadblocks with debris and set fires in Piranshahr streets.*)³⁰
- Ourmia, West Azerbaijan Province (*Several dozen Ourmia University protesters sang what they called is Iran's "real" national anthem on Ourmia University campus. Security forces reportedly raided an Ourmia University dormitory and beat or arrested multiple students.*)³¹

- Yazd City, Yazd Province (*An undetermined number of Yazd University students protested on campus. Basij counterprotesters reportedly also held demonstrations at Yazd University. Security forces deployed a quadcopter drone to likely surveil protesters.*)³²

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

- Hamedan City, Hamedan Province (*An undetermined number of protesters gathered in Hamedan streets.*)³³
- Ravansar, Kermanshah Province (*Footage shows fires lit in city street and reports of crowds forming, possibly signaling beginning of protests.*)³⁴
- Koudasht, Lorestan Province (*An undetermined number of protesters reportedly gathered in Koudasht streets.*)³⁵



Iranian protesters were documented chanting slogans blaming the regime for the Shah Cheragh Shrine attack on October 29. Some of these chants include:

- “Basij, IRGC, you are our ISIS”³⁶
- “Shah Cheragh is another Rex (1978 cinema massacre), this is another trick”³⁷
- “Who guides ISIS? Leadership and his IRGC”³⁸

Uncorroborated footage circulating on social media purportedly shows Iranian security personnel arguing with each other in Yazd City, Yazd Province at an unspecified date. One officer is documented cursing others: “The way you’re spinning around, [protesters] will catch all of you like they would a chicken.”³⁹

IRGC officials announced that protestors killed IRGC Lieutenant Colonel Amir Kamandi with a hand grenade at Sattar Khan Street in Tehran on October 26. Kamandi served in the Bahrestan Corps of the IRGC Seyyed ol Shahada Tehran Unit.⁴⁰

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

Lebanese Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah claimed the US helped facilitate the October 26 Shah Cheragh Shrine attack by transporting Islamic State militants to Afghanistan. Nasrallah alleged that the US has sent Islamic State militants from Iraq and Syria to Afghanistan in order to establish the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) “as an American proxy.”⁴¹ Nasrallah also repeated the Iranian regime’s accusation that the US is responsible for inciting protests across the country.⁴² A Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates spokesperson similarly claimed that the attack exemplified how the US uses ISKP to destabilize the Iranian regime.⁴³

Iraqi proxy Telegram channels repeated regime narratives blaming Saudi Arabia for the October 26 Shah Cheragh Shrine attack. A Kataib Hezbollah Telegram channel characterized the perpetrator as a “Saudi-backed ISIS” terrorist.⁴⁴ An Asaib Ahl al-Haq Telegram channel republished IRGC Commander Hossein Salami’s threat to retaliate against Saudi Arabia for the attack.⁴⁵ Iraqi proxy media networks commonly characterize Islamic State attacks as Saudi-backed, but their emphasis on Salami’s threat to retaliate suggests that Iran may direct its proxies to conduct an attack into Saudi Arabia in the coming days or weeks.

- ¹ <https://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/08/07/2795440/>؛ هشدار -شديداللعن-سر لشكر-سلامی-به-آمریکا-و-عربستان-آرامش-تان-را-می-گیریم-آرزو-هایتان-را-دفن-خواهیم-کرد
- ² <https://defapress dot ir/fa/news/552765/> دشمنان-همه-پس-انداز-شان-را-در-اغتشاشات-خرج-کردند-اما-شکست-خوردند
- ³ <https://www.irna dot ir/news/84926507/>؛ تجمع-و-عزاداری-دانشجویان-دانشگاه-های-تهران-در-محکومیت-حادثه-تروریستی-شامچراغ-ع-تصاویر <https://defapress dot ir/fa/news/552769/> واکنش-هنرمندان-حوزه-مجسمی-به-حادثه-تروریستی-حرم-شامچراغ-ع-تصاویر
- ⁴ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586379384407080960?s=20&t=S5yxsRsPjb7c-3lQwTLnhQ> ; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586314731417210880?s=20&t=S5yxsRsPjb7c-3lQwTLnhQ> ; <https://twitter.com/HengawO/status/1586294515488657409?s=20&t=gz2-GGNMy2caRdiempsYxw> https://twitter.com/BarayeEsfahan/status/1586391935945965569?s=20&t=qQD7dXa_JfJWZceUSQZ2VQ ; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586314731417210880?s=20&t=S5yxsRsPjb7c-3lQwTLnhQ> ; <https://twitter.com/HengawO/status/1586294515488657409?s=20&t=gz2-GGNMy2caRdiempsYxw>
- ⁵ https://twitter.com/daneshjo_ut/status/1586377303289782272?s=20&t=Wg_4nqPx_GCmILpM8hX2vg ; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586355975983882240?s=20&t=S5yxsRsPjb7c-3lQwTLnhQ>
- ⁶ https://twitter.com/chawshin_83/status/1586408495661850624?s=20&t=Wg_4nqPx_GCmILpM8hX2vg ; <https://twitter.com/HengawO/status/158632735571716096?s=20&t=JBB7-idL7hMRTkVQnPNceg> ; <https://twitter.com/nafisehkBBC/status/1586426077593112576?s=20&t=JBB7-idL7hMRTkVQnPNceg> ; <https://twitter.com/HengawO/status/1586287205089103873?s=20&t=S5yxsRsPjb7c-3lQwTLnhQ>
- ⁷ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-26>
- ⁸ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-27> ; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-28>
- ⁹ https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586290355724353536?s=20&t=VbunvGfQd7_T1NXf5MPM7w ; <https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1586433308275216386> ; https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586365565819670528?s=20&t=yoLeE_W1Hadr_vjFkujVUw ; https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586365565819670528?s=20&t=yoLeE_W1Hadr_vjFkujVUw ; <https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1586391360134864896?s=20&t=S5yxsRsPjb7c-3lQwTLnhQ>
- ¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1586391360134864896?s=20&t=PA4jGPIM7kuL5E6xOrBFag>
- ¹¹ https://twitter.com/1500tasvir_en/status/1586410128378847233?s=20&t=O7msu3OtgU8MR_rrUx6PYw ; https://twitter.com/Nilofarmozafari/status/1585660337935745027?s=20&t=O7msu3OtgU8MR_rrUx6PYw ; https://twitter.com/hasan_younesi/status/1586305622768697344?s=20&t=O7msu3OtgU8MR_rrUx6PYw
- ¹² <https://iranwire.com/en/politics/109121-iranwire-exclusive-government-report-says-average-age-of-arrested-protesters-is-17/>
- ¹³ <https://iranwire.com/en/politics/109121-iranwire-exclusive-government-report-says-average-age-of-arrested-protesters-is-17/>
- ¹⁴ https://twitter.com/KhosroKalbasi/status/1576935663060287493?s=20&t=O7msu3OtgU8MR_rrUx6PYw
- ¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586313383758147586?s=20&t=Vetkdy0ZoePZUlsSX6HsQ> ; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586356382508486657?s=20&t=S5yxsRsPjb7c-3lQwTLnhQ>
- ¹⁶
- ¹⁷ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586347511702249474?s=20&t=S5yxsRsPjb7c-3lQwTLnhQ>
- ¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/pouriazeraati/status/1586411170646306816?s=20&t=w1n06WfrEu39enHVCQtBfQ> ; <https://twitter.com/pouriazeraati/status/1586411088316203008?s=20&t=w1n06WfrEu39enHVCQtBfQ>
- ¹⁹ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1586450808945737730?s=20&t=980eHmSKkcD-Rs4TAiQswg> ; <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1586449834550038528?s=20&t=980eHmSKkcD-Rs4TAiQswg>
- ²⁰ <https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1586433308275216386> ; https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586365565819670528?s=20&t=yoLeE_W1Hadr_vjFkujVUw ; https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586365565819670528?s=20&t=yoLeE_W1Hadr_vjFkujVUw ; <https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1586391360134864896?s=20&t=S5yxsRsPjb7c-3lQwTLnhQ>
- ²¹ <https://twitter.com/aliizreza/status/1586447423819624448?s=20&t=6V4c7TmSP7xpRFNwGgC5EQ> ; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586341529433636864?s=20&t=bjMFPCnHKDcb5HkPKKH-ZQ> ; https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586379384407080960?s=20&t=vYUiky74vW-5wJV_rsxKbQ ; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586341529433636864?s=20&t=bjMFPCnHKDcb5HkPKKH-ZQ>
- ²² <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586314731417210880?s=20&t=S5yxsRsPjb7c-3lQwTLnhQ>

- ⁴⁰ <https://defapress dot ir/fa/news/552799/شهادت-عشق-همه-پاسداران-است>
<https://www.irna dot ir/news/84926665/شهر-تشیع-امیر-کمدی-در-نسیم-شهر-تشیع-شد>

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%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%87%DA%86%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%BA

⁴³ <https://sana dot sy/en/?p=288409>

⁴⁴ <https://t.me/Tura313/34736>

⁴⁵ <https://t.me/maymun5/13012>; <https://t.me/maymun5/13013>

Iran Crisis Update, October 30

Nicholas Carl, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, and Frederick W. Kagan
October 30, 5:00 PM ET

The regime is escalating its protest crackdown in a way that could fuel an enduring and increasingly violent uprising against the political establishment. Protests continued on October 30 despite the call from Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Commander Major General Hossein Salami for the immediate end of protests on October 29.^[1] Protest organizations have called for more demonstrations from November 1-3.^[2] The regime will likely intensify its crackdown further in the coming days as protests continue. Such an escalation will likely cause protesters to either stop demonstrating or escalate further themselves in response.

Protesters are developing the infrastructure necessary to stage a protracted struggle against the regime. NBC News reported on October 29 that protesters have established an informal medical care network for injured demonstrators—another sign of the growing coordination and organization within the movement.^[3] Physicians are treating injured protesters in private homes so that protesters can avoid clinics and hospitals. Security forces have denied medical care to some injured protesters and used hospitals to identify and track them.^[4] The Tehran Neighborhood Youth published a statement praising medical professionals who joined the protests on October 30.^[5] CTP has previously reported on protesters' impressive ability to coordinate large-scale demonstrations on specific dates and organize militant tactics against security forces.^[6] The formation of an informal medical network could facilitate other forms of logistical cooperation among disaffected citizens.

The regime's increasing violence against university and high school students will likely entrench anti-regime sentiments among its young population, which will likely last for decades. Security forces continued using violence against students for the second consecutive day on October 30, clashing with students and firing live ammunition in one instance.^[7] Security forces violently arrested students and injured high schoolers on October 12, 24, 29, as CTP previously reported.^[8] Amnesty International reported that Iranian security personnel killed at least 23 children in the Mahsa Amini protests on October 13, a figure that has almost certainly grown in recent days.^[9] This repression will likely alienate these youth from the regime for most if not all of their lives.

Repressing children may decrease the willingness of some security officers to continue cracking down, on the other hand. Less ideological security personnel may struggle to sustain this level of violence against children. CTP has not yet observed indications of insubordination among security personnel in recent days and will continue to update this assessment. The regime appears concerned about the morale of its security forces, however. Parliament approved a motion to increase the salary of military and security personnel by 20 percent on October 30, likely to mitigate the risk of defections and insubordination among the security forces.^[10]

Key Takeaways

- **The regime may inadvertently push the ongoing protests to become an enduring uprising against the political establishment.**
- **Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 22 cities in 15 provinces.**
- **Unidentified individuals killed a Law Enforcement Command officer in Iranshahr, Sistan and Baluchistan Province.**
- **The IRGC Intelligence Organization arrested three individuals who were preparing Molotov cocktails in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province.**

Anti-Regime Protests

Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 22 cities in 15 provinces on October 30. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

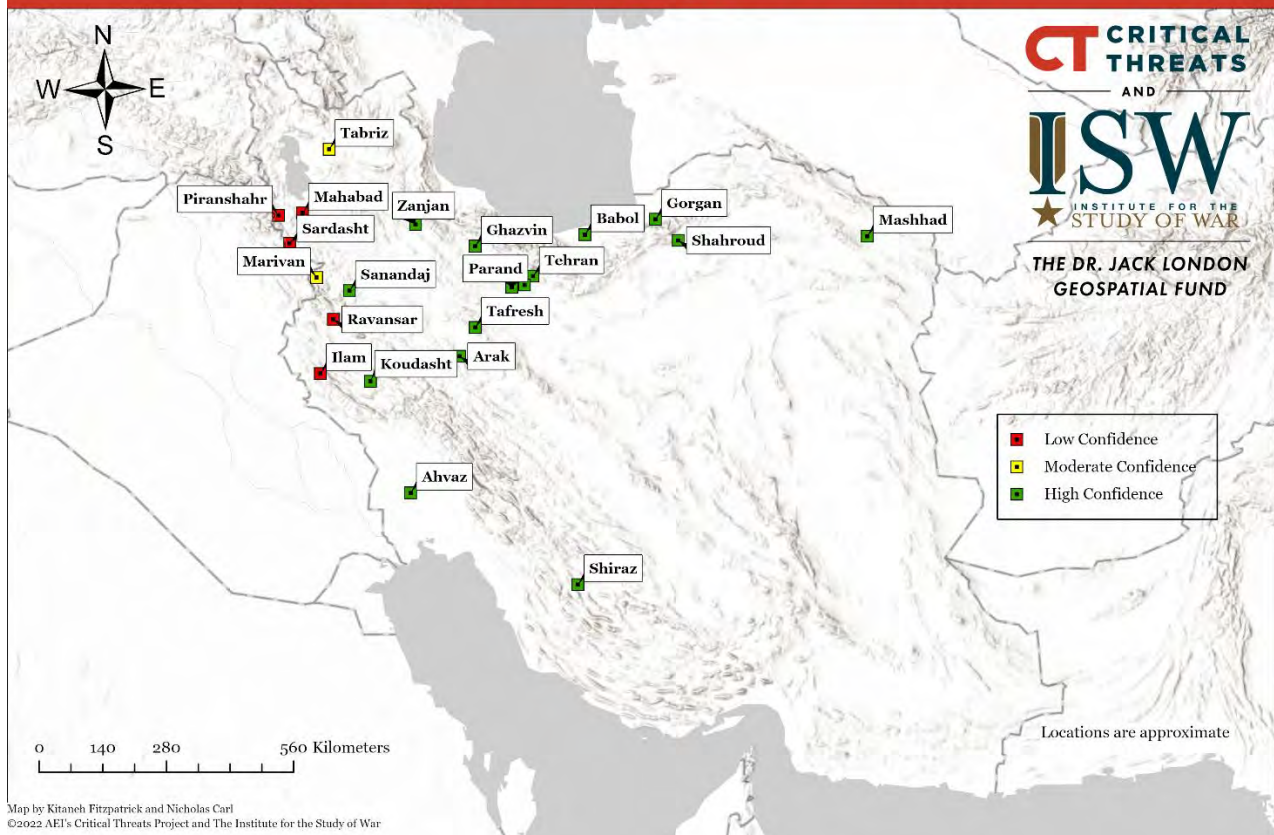
- Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province (*Undetermined number of Tabriz University students chanted “this is the year of blood, Khamenei will be overthrown.”*)[\[11\]](#)
- Shiraz, Fars Province (*Over 100 Shiraz Azad University students chanted anti-regime slogans, faced Basij counter-protesters*)[\[12\]](#)
- Ghazvin City, Ghazvin Province (*Undetermined number of Khomeini International University student protesters chanted anti-regime slogans, faced Basij counter-protesters.*)[\[13\]](#)
- Gorgan, Golestan Province (*Undetermined number of Gorgan University student protesters chanted “you’re the pervert, you’re the sleaze, I’m a woman who is free.”*)[\[14\]](#)
- Arak, Markazi Province (*Arak University students chanted slogans criticizing Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei on campus.*)[\[15\]](#)
- Tafresh, Markazi Province (*Undetermined number of Tafresh University students chanted anti-regime slogans.*)[\[16\]](#)
- Babol, Mazandaran Province (*Over 100 Babol Noshirvani University of Technology students chanted anti-regime slogans.*)[\[17\]](#)
- Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province (*Roughly 150 Montazeri Technical University of Mashhad student protesters chanted anti-regime slogans. Roughly 100 Khayyam University of Mashhad students chanted “freedom, freedom, freedom” on campus. Undetermined number of Rezvan Campus of Imam Reza International University student protesters chanted “death to the gunman, whether in Mashhad or Shiraz.”*)[\[18\]](#)
- Ahvaz, Khuzestan Province (*Over 100 Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz students chanted anti-regime slogans, including “death to the tyrant, whether they be a king or another leader.”*)[\[19\]](#)
- Marivan, Kurdistan Province (*Undetermined number of Marivan University student protesters chanted “Khamenei is a murderer, his government is invalid.”*)[\[20\]](#)
- Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province (*Hundreds of university student protesters throughout Sanandaj participated in anti-regime demonstrations. Iranian security personnel reportedly fired live ammunition at Yazdanpanah University of Sanandaj students. Kurdistan University officials and professors reportedly protested and prevented security forces from arresting students in the girls’ dormitories.*)[\[21\]](#)
- Koudasht, Lorestan Province (*Over 100 protesters chanted “death to the dictator” in a city street.*)[\[22\]](#)
- Shahroud, Semnan Province (*Undetermined number of Shahroud University of Technology student protesters chanted “fear not, we’re all in this together.”*)[\[23\]](#)
- Eslamshahr, Tehran Province (*Over 100 Eslamshahr Azad University student protesters chanting anti-regime slogans. Iranian security personnel documented attacking student protesters.*)[\[24\]](#)
- Parand, Tehran Province (*Over 100 Parand Azad University student protesters chanted anti-regime slogans on campus.*)[\[25\]](#)
- Tehran City, Tehran Province (*Hundreds of North Tehran Azad University student protesters participated in an anti-regime protest on campus. Basij counter-protesters reportedly attacked anti-regime student protesters. Iranian security personnel have reportedly fired tear gas at student protesters, locked university entrances, and are prohibiting students from leaving campus. Students pictured climbing over university walls to escape the premises. Undetermined number of Al Zahra University of Tehran student protesters clashed with Basij members participating in counter-protests. Undetermined number of Allameh Tabataba’i Literature and Foreign Language student protesters organized a sit-in protesting the expulsion and suspension of student protesters*)[\[26\]](#)

- Zanzan City, Zanzan Province (*Hundreds of Zanzan University students chanting "freedom, freedom, freedom" in university cafeteria. Anti-regime student protesters chanted "this is the year of blood, Khamenei will be overthrown" in confrontation with Basij counter protesters on other area of campus.*)[\[27\]](#)

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

- Ilam City, Ilam Province (*Footage purportedly shows security personnel firing tear gas at people attending the 40-day ceremony commemorating the death of Mohsen Ghaisari. No footage of protest available.*)[\[28\]](#)
- Ravansar, Kermanshah Province (*Roughly a dozen protesters chanting "death to the dictator," possibly signaling the beginning of further protests this evening.*)[\[29\]](#)
- Mahabad, West Azerbaijan Province (*Protesters setting fire to city street, possibly preventing Iranian security personnel from entering an area where protests will occur at a later time.*)[\[30\]](#)
- Piranshahr, West Azerbaijan Province (*Fewer than a dozen protesters set fire to tires on a city street, possibly preventing Iranian security personnel from entering an area where protests will occur at a later time.*)[\[31\]](#)
- Sardasht, West Azerbaijan Province (*Some protesters set fire to tires on a city street, possibly preventing Iranian security personnel from entering an area where protests will occur at a later time*)[\[32\]](#)

Protest Activity in Iran as of October 30, 5:00 PM ET



Unidentified individuals killed a Law Enforcement Command officer in Iranshahr, Sistan and Baluchistan Province on October 30.^[33] It is unclear whether these individuals were protesters. CTP last reported protests in Iranshahr on October 28.^[34] Anti-regime militancy and drug smuggling are common around Iranshahr.

The IRGC Intelligence Organization arrested three individuals who were preparing Molotov cocktails in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province on October 30.^[35] IRGC-affiliated media described the individuals as a “sabotage team.”

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf emphasized the importance and legality of non-violent protests within the Islamic Republic on October 30.^[36] Ghalibaf stated that non-violent protests were an effective means to achieve political reform, striking a more conciliatory tone than senior IRGC officials who have called for greater crackdowns on protests in recent days.^[37] An Iranian media outlet reported that Ghalibaf and his affiliates were blaming conservative hardliners for stoking anti-regime sentiments among Iranian women and youth on October 27.^[38] Ghalibaf separately threatened Israel and Saudi Arabia on October 30 for their perceived role in inciting the October 26 Shiraz attack.

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments **There was nothing significant to report today.**

^[1] https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-29#_edn0b1a1c7a899fe8992d750a923676359b1

^[2] https://twitter.com/javanane_t/status/1586628889065000960;
https://twitter.com/iran_javanan/status/1586693228153159681

^[3] <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/facing-wave-public-anger-irans-regime-fight-long-term-survival-experts-rcna54535>

^[4] <https://twitter.com/SasanAmjadi/status/1579376369804644352> ;
<https://twitter.com/IranIntlbrk/status/1579398272174604288> ; <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/iran-news-protests-deaths-people-shot-afraid-hospital-arrest-us-doctors-help/>

^[5] https://twitter.com/javanane_t/status/1586628889065000960

^[6] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-26>;
<https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-28>

^[7] https://twitter.com/Me_Hamed_Myself/status/1586756882391502848?s=20&t=8khyVYAH2tfq-8sliP-kGg ;

<https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586651819874390016?s=20&t=DxUSEP4JD1LQLWqR3hGyqA> ;

<https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586671368808153089?s=20&t=DxUSEP4JD1LQLWqR3hGyqA> ;

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; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586667389881647104?s=20&t=nACuUIOzZ3e70MIscYR-bg>

^[8] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-26>

; https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-29#_edn0b1a1c7a899fe8992d750a923676359b1;

<https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-16>

^[9] <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/10/iran-at-least-23-children-killed-with-impunity-during-brutal-crackdown-on-youthful-protests/>

^[10] <https://www.tabnak dot ir/fa/news/1147885>

[11] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1586759122392866816?s=20&t=2uETNw8yIxQghB2Vf8FNdA>
[12] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586641499357413376?s=20&t=2Wbpqz3h-AujixWC0bMQsg>
[13] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586645415725875206?s=20&t=DxUSeP4JD1LQLWqR3hGyqA>
[14] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586679895245062145?s=20&t=DxUSeP4JD1LQLWqR3hGyqA>
[15] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586684002856992768?s=20&t=nmyOkT6cHF7W8TsDTvE1Mw>
[16] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586791015226146819?s=20&t=67-tlgo3QNQFLpuakSeH4w>
[17] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586680946769760257?s=20&t=DxUSeP4JD1LQLWqR3hGyqA> ;
<https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586684289449660418?s=20&t=DxUSeP4JD1LQLWqR3hGyqA>
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[19] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1586709177900072963?s=20&t=h-J0Caz0jt18c-zYm6ThIQ> ; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586689927160512512?s=20&t=H2M1KSQl1prJOUMoPDQB4g>
[20] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1586757694446354433?s=20&t=0ddz8-hrTKw3pIqommTVaw>

[21] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1586815879555194883?s=20&t=67-tlgo3QNQFLpuakSeH4w> ; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586651819874390016?s=20&t=DxUSeP4JD1LQLWqR3hGyqA> ; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586682947976978432?s=20&t=DxUSeP4JD1LQLWqR3hGyqA>
[22] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1586757365596053506?s=20&t=0ddz8-hrTKw3pIqommTVaw>
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[27] https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586643047110041601?s=20&t=_ibIF7jCya1rLxs6nFGOfA ; <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586683665114857473?s=20&t=DxUSeP4JD1LQLWqR3hGyqA>
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[31] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1586661005580541952?s=20&t=DxUSeP4JD1LQLWqR3hGyqA>
[32] <https://twitter.com/HengawO/status/1586790595485384705?s=20&t=XX-VtHdUSzJBqpJLfLM1Cw>
[33] <http://www.mashreghnews.ir/news/1431274>
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[35] <http://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/08/08/2796067>

[36] <http://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/08/08/2795894>

[37] <http://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/08/08/2795894>

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Iran Crisis Update, October 31

Nicholas Carl, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Dana Alexander Gray, Johanna Moore, and Frederick W. Kagan
October 31, 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 regime has begun indicting and sentencing arrested protesters as part of the increasingly harsh and uncompromising stance that the regime has adopted toward the ongoing protests. Tehran Provincial Chief Justice Ali al Ghasi Mehr announced the indictment of around 1,000 protesters on October 31.[1] Shiraz Provincial Chief Justice Asadollah Jafari announced the indictment of 70 protesters, six of whom the regime has already found guilty.[2] Mehr and Jafari both noted that the judiciary will open protester trials to the public. The regime will likely use these show trials to make an example of some arrested protesters and deter future demonstrations. If the regime shows trials, convictions, and then death sentences of teenagers, it may further fuel rather than diminish enthusiasm for demonstrations.

Regime officials have begun using increasingly harsh rhetoric toward the protests, framing the demonstrations and the Shiraz terror attack as connected and parts of the Western-led hybrid war against Iran. Judiciary Chief Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei stated that individuals who participate in multiple protests are “in the enemy’s ranks” and thus subject to more severe sentences on October 31.[3] Ejei ordered the judiciary to work with media services to identify individuals who attend multiple protests. Ejei did not provide a legal basis for this new standard of evidence, suggesting that the judiciary will prosecute some protesters as foreign agents under the presumption of guilt. Hardline parliamentarian Brigadier General Mohammad Esmail Kowsari threatened that the regime will intensify its crackdown on October 31.[4] Kowsari is a retired Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) officer who has historically supported and overseen brutal crackdowns on protesters.[5]

The regime is increasing its outreach to university students to placate student protesters. Parliament Speaker (and former IRGC Brigadier General) Mohammad Bagheri Ghalibaf met with university students to solicit criticisms and feedback on October 31.[6] Ghalibaf stated his intent to hold such a meeting again. Iranian state media reported that Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei will meet with university students on November 2 as well.[7] Khamenei will likely use the meeting to affirm the importance of students to the country and reiterate his harsh stance on the protests. These meetings come after Raisi administration spokesperson Ali Bahadori Jahromi visited universities on October 24 and 25 to discuss popular grievances, as CTP previously reported.[8] Students heckled and chanted anti-regime slogans at Jahromi on both dates.

Key Takeaways

- Regime officials have begun indicting and sentencing arrested protesters as part of the increasingly harsh and uncompromising stance that the regime has adopted toward the ongoing protests.
- Regime officials have begun using increasingly harsh rhetoric toward the protests, framing the demonstrations and the Shiraz terror attack as connected and part of the Western-led hybrid war against Iran.
- At least 30 anti-regime protests occurred in 17 cities in 14 provinces.
- Parliamentarian Mehdi Bagheri stated that the Law Enforcement Command (LEC) is not currently operating the guidance patrol (morality patrol) because of manpower shortages.
- Medical professionals in Kurdistan Province condemned the regime crackdown on October 31, according to unverified social media reports.

- Reformist-affiliated Ham Miham newspaper published an article calling on LEC officers to protect Iranian protesters from the LEC Special Units—the regime’s highly trained, anti-riot police.

Anti-Regime Protests

At least 30 anti-regime protests occurred in 17 cities in 14 provinces.

Note: CTP is changing the format of its presentation of regime activity to capture multiple protests within a single city when it can reliably distinguish different protest activities.

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

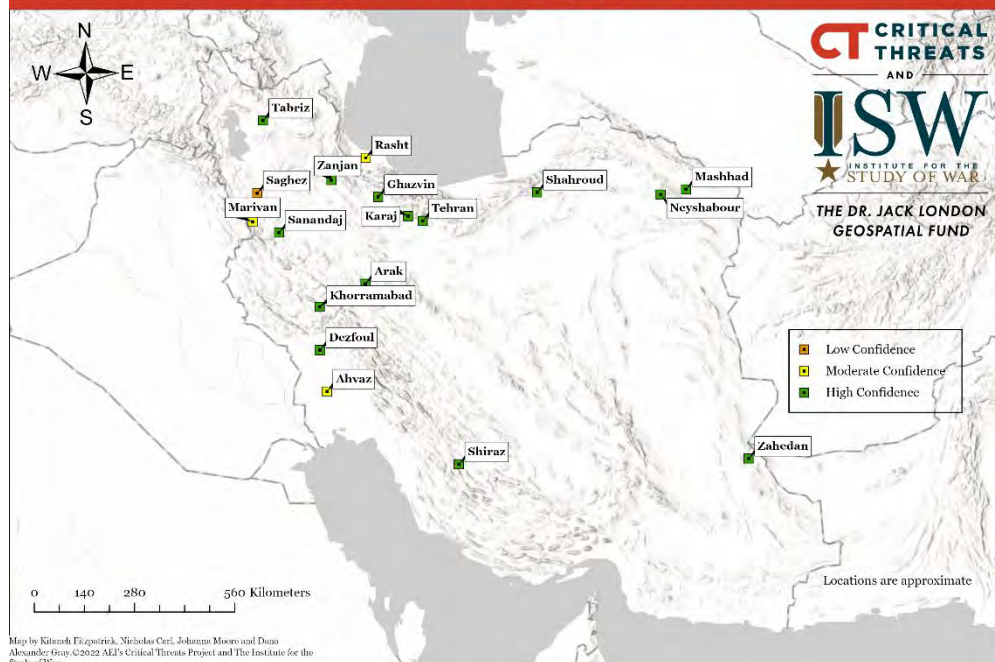
- **Karaj, Alborz Province**
 - o Undetermined number of student protesters chanted anti-regime slogans on a city street. It is unclear if protesters were university or high school students.[9]
 - o Undetermined number of Azad University of Karaj student protesters chanting anti-regime slogans, likely on a university campus.[10]
 - o Over 150 subway riders chanted anti-regime slogans at the Golshahr Metro Station.[11]
 - o Dozens of Rasam Institute for Higher Education University students chanted "killing our daughters and replacing them with brothers." [12]
- **Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province**
 - o Roughly 150 Tabriz University medical students chanting "you're the pervert, you're the sleaze, I am a free-thinking woman.[13]
 - o Over 100 protesters chanting anti-regime slogans on a city street.[14]
- **Shiraz, Fars Province**
 - o Dozens of Shiraz University student protesters gathered and chanted "freedom, freedom, freedom." [15]
 - o Undetermined number of Zand University student protesters chanted "woman, life, freedom." [16]
- **Rasht, Gilan Province**
 - o Undetermined number of Rasht Pharmacy University student protesters linked hands and participated in demonstrations.[17]
- **Ghazvin City, Ghazvin Province**
 - o Roughly 100 Imam Khomeini International University students chanted "death to the dictator" on the university campus.[18]
- **Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province**
 - o Over 70 Khayyam University student protesters chanting anti-regime slogans at the university entrance.[19]
- **Ahvaz, Khuzestan Province**
 - o Undetermined number of Chamran University student protesters chanted anti-regime slogans at pro-regime demonstrators on campus. A social media account dedicated to tracking protests alleged that most pro-regime demonstrators were not university Basij students and had been transported into the university by Iranian authorities.[20]
- **Dezfoul, Khuzestan Province**
 - o Undetermined number of Ahvaz Jondishapour University of Medical Sciences chanted "freedom, freedom, freedom." [21]
- **Marivan, Kurdistan Province**
 - o Dozens of students chanted "death to the dictator" on city streets. It is unclear if protesters were high school or university students.[22]
- **Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province**

- o Over 100 mourners gathered at the tomb of Peyman Manbari, whom security personnel shot and killed for participating in anti-regime protests on October 8. Mourners chanted “woman, life, freedom” and “martyrs don’t die.”[23]
 - o Over 100 mourners gathered at the grave of Sarina Saeidi, a 16-year-old girl whom security personnel killed for participating in acts of defiance on October 26. Mourners chanted “Kurdistan, Kurdistan, the graveyard of fascists.”[24]
 - o Undetermined number of Azad University of Sanandaj students participated in anti-regime protests. There is no footage of this protest. Footage shows security personnel entering and closing all entrances to the university. Audible sounds of gunfire.[25]
- **Khorramabad, Lorestan Province**
 - o Hundreds of Lorestan University students participated in anti-regime protests on campus.[26]
- **Neyshabour, Razavi Khorasan Province**
 - o Undetermined number of Azad University of Neyshabour protesters chanting “freedom, freedom, freedom.”[27]
- **Arak, Markazi Province**
 - o Undetermined number of Arak University student protesters chanted “be afraid, be afraid, we are all together.”[28]
 - o Footage shows security personnel firing tear gas at protesters on city street.[29]
- **Shahrour, Semnan Province**
 - o Over 100 Shahrour University of Technology student protesters chanted “freedom, freedom, freedom,” possibly facing smaller crowd of pro-regime protesters.[30]
- **Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province**
 - o Undetermined number of Sistan and Baluchistan University student protesters chanted “freedom, freedom, freedom.”[31]
- **Tehran City, Tehran Province**
 - o Hundreds—possibly over a thousand—of Shahid Beheshti University students marched and chanted “woman, life, freedom” and “we don’t want a child-killing regime.” Some professors reportedly joined the protest.[32]
 - o Over 100 mourners gathered to commemorate 40 days since security personnel killed Erfan Khazaei for participating in anti-regime protests. Mourners chanted “death to the dictator,” “One person is killed but another thousand remain,” and played “Baraaye,” a song summarizing protesters’ grievances with the regime.[33]
 - o Hundreds of Amir Kabir University of Technology students participated in anti-regime protests in a university building.[34]
 - o Roughly 50 high school students chanting anti-regime slogans in the Tehransar neighborhood.[35]
 - o Undetermined number of Azad University of South Tehran University students chanted “Sharif has become a detention center and Evin has become a university” and “we will fight, we will die, we will take Iran back.”[36]

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

- **Marivan, Kurdistan Province**
 - o Fewer than a dozen protesters set fires on a city street, possibly preventing security personnel from entering an area where protests will occur at a later time.[37]
- **Saghez, Kurdistan Province**
 - o Fewer than a dozen protesters set fires on a city street, possibly preventing security personnel from entering an area where protests will occur at a later time.[38]

Protest Activity in Iran as of October 31, 5:30 PM ET



CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that university students participated in anti-regime sit-ins in the following location:

- **Tehran City, Tehran Province**
 - o 50-70 Sharif University students participated in a sit in on the university campus.[39]
 - o Over 70 Azad University of West Tehran students participated in a sit in on the university campus.[40]
- **Zanzan City, Zanzan Province**
 - o Roughly 100 Zanzan University of Medical Sciences dental students gathered and participated in a sit-in on the university campus.[41]

Parliamentarian Mehdi Bagheri stated that the Law Enforcement Command (LEC) is not currently operating the guidance (morality) patrol because of manpower shortages on October 31.[42] Bagheri stated that the LEC is prioritizing managing the protests and cannot simultaneously operate the guidance patrol. Bagheri's remarks reflect a key vulnerability in the regime's security forces: the regime does not have enough security personnel to manage large-scale, countrywide protests.[43] CTP has previously reported on security forces facing bandwidth constraints, exhaustion, and low morale due to the extent and scale of the protests.[44]

Medical professionals in Kurdistan Province condemned the regime crackdown on October 31, according to unverified social media reports. Healthcare workers and professors from the Kurdistan University of Medical Sciences and various hospitals published open letters criticizing regime violence against students.[45] The healthcare workers called on security forces to leave hospitals, where they have reportedly deployed to arrest and identify injured protesters.[46] The professors stated that they will not hold classes until the regime ensures student safety.[47] Physicians have begun treating injured protesters in private homes so that the protesters can avoid clinics and hospitals, as CTP previously reported.[48] Growing anti-regime sentiment among Iran's medical community could lead more physicians to support protesters.

Reformist-affiliated Ham Miham newspaper published an article calling on LEC officers to protect Iranian protesters from the LEC Special Units—the regime’s highly trained, anti-riot police. The article criticized the LEC Special Units' use of indiscriminate violence against Iranians participating in anti-regime demonstrations and urged Iranian legislators to hold them accountable.[49] Ham Miham reported on Mahsa Amini’s death and has become increasingly critical of the regime’s protest suppression tactics in recent weeks.[50]

Moderate politician Abdol Nasser Hemmati tweeted criticizing President Ebrahim Raisi for his approach to the protests on October 30.[51] Hemmati stated that the Raisi administration’s failure to address social issues, improve people’s lives, and reform has caused the protests. Hemmati was the Central Bank of Iran governor in the Rouhani administration and ran against Raisi in the presidential election in June 2021.[52] Hemmati’s criticism against Raisi reflects the more conciliatory tone that Iran’s moderates and reformists have adopted in addressing the protesters.

The Tehran Neighborhood Youth repeated its calls for protests on November 1 and 2.[53]

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

There was nothing significant to report today.

[1] <https://www.irna dot ir/news/84928712>

[2] <https://www.etemadonline dot com/%D8%A8%D8%AE%D8%B4-%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%B3%DB%8C-9/580366-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%DA%A9%DB%8C%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%AE%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA-%D9%85%D8%AA%D9%87%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AC%D9%85%D9%87%D9%88%D8%B1%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%DB%8C>

[3] <https://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/08/09/2796689>

[4] <https://www.etemadonline dot com/%D8%A8%D8%AE%D8%B4-%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%B3%DB%8C-9/579892-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B1%DB%8C%D8%B3%D8%AA%DB%8C-%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%87%DA%86%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%BA-%D8%AC%D9%85%D9%87%D9%88%D8%B1%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%DB%8C>

[5] https://www.criticalthreats.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/pdf_uploadanalysisThe_IRGC_Command_Network-1.pdf

[6] www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/08/09/2796894

[7] www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/08/09/2796600

[8] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-25>

[9] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1587163673226780673?s=20&t=xhdhXIJLwh8tPyY16uTJrw>

[10] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1587148023091585025?s=20&t=xhdhXIJLwh8tPyY16uTJrw>

- [11] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1587113780718305283?s=20&t=xhdxXIJLwh8tPyY16uTJrw>
- [12] https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1587080791774961667?s=20&t=1ltX8qrT_HG2bn8x-jlg5g
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- [14] https://twitter.com/chawshin_83/status/1587160085247188992?s=20&t=ALX2d249k27LhW0Vr8vh4w ; <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1587159024138698752?s=20&t=xhdxXIJLwh8tPyY16uTJrw>
- [15] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1587040825615302656?s=20&t=zKxoeRfLx0UJbdUXBZ6Ytw>
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- [18] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1587044317192912900?s=20&t=zKxoeRfLx0UJbdUXBZ6Ytw>
- [19] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1587035791087345665?s=20&t=bUsnIUtebojRs93cHp1-jA>
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- [21] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1587048953366863877?s=20&t=eD9a0Q9fO6linpsUgZc6Qg>
- [22] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1587109041062514689?s=20&t=xhdxXIJLwh8tPyY16uTJrw>
- [23] https://twitter.com/1500tasvir_list/status/1580486862732668928?s=20&t=t0XBi9H-RjYQzdq5guBL-Q <https://twitter.com/HengawO/status/1587075724950884352?s=20&t=t0XBi9H-RjYQzdq5guBL-Q>
- [24] https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1587084854616891394?s=20&t=ImRrmclzHU2dEq4RDxegg ; <https://twitter.com/jiyargol/status/1586787502936965129?s=20&t=ImRrmclzHU2dEq4RDxegg> ; https://twitter.com/HengawO/status/1587048449282908161?s=20&t=vMJGq9W6VhdQG-aC_jRiJA
- [25] <https://twitter.com/Soranmansournia/status/1587038706262855681?s=20&t=Ulc98J3Nk5l2PSRrcW84sA>
- [26] https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1587070952831074304?s=20&t=1ltX8qrT_HG2bn8x-jlg5g
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- [30] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1587030961576984576?s=20&t=xhdxXIJLwh8tPyY16uTJrw>

[31] <https://twitter.com/farzinkadkhodae/status/1587050108994174979?s=20&t=GP5VpfMALivLfR2LuGBAVQ>

[32] https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1587074163700895746?s=20&t=7j2_gbh2sZEFKOGIkLB5SA ; https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1587034626215772160?s=20&t=ktAm_v3aLu2yodU2TM19ig

[33] https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1587066683377721344?s=20&t=F_q5FpVzMYuWHvjcm5vawg ; https://twitter.com/Vahid/status/1587089259982458883?s=20&t=F_q5FpVzMYuWHvjcm5vawg ; https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1587087693514739712?s=20&t=F_q5FpVzMYuWHvjcm5vawg ; <https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1587101331298320384?s=20&t=hVIJUX49y856TaydzX8kbA>

[34] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1587041838703296514?s=20&t=zKxoeRfLx0UJbdUXBZ6Ytw>

[35] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1587087609557286912>

[36] https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1587001340487770113?s=20&t=1ltX8qrT_HG2bn8x-jlg5g https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1587000196227125248?s=20&t=1ltX8qrT_HG2bn8x-jlg5g

[37] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1587126435692552192?s=20&t=xhdhXIJLwh8tPyY16uTJrw>

[38] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1587180525281808384?s=20&t=xhdhXIJLwh8tPyY16uTJrw>

[39] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1587042264358031361?s=20&t=RyFOPE7y5vD92WUoHMrOcw>

[40] <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1587032376961540100?s=20&t=JDxKuc8NqJihcoXoqfYtWQ>

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