



Iran Crisis Update, October 4

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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).

University and high school students have begun largely leading the ongoing protest movement in Iran—at least for the moment. Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 17 cities in 14 provinces on October 4, primarily around universities and high schools. Students expressed frustration with the regime and Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.

The student protesters are a generation younger than the youth who played a prominent role in the Green Movement in 2009, during which Iranians took to the streets to protest the fraud-plagued reelection of then-President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. These protests will likely influence this younger generation's formative years in a fashion similar to the way the Green Movement affected the Iranian youth at the time. It will be interesting to observe how the experiences in those earlier demonstrations of the parents of young people protesting today shape both generations.

It is unclear how long the university and high school students will sustain their protests. The regime may not use the same brutality and force that it has previously used throughout the crackdown against young people. The continuation of the student demonstrations could afford the other segments of the protest movement time to rest before returning to the streets, however.

Key Takeaways

- **Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 17 cities in 14 provinces.**
- **Senior Iranian political and security officials overwhelmingly echoed Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's hard line on the protests.**

- **The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) continued attacking anti-regime Kurdish militant positions in Iraqi Kurdistan for the ninth consecutive day.**
- **Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) promoted a conspiracy theory alleging Mahsa Amini committed suicide to trigger civil unrest in Iran.**

Supreme Leader Succession

There was nothing significant to report today.

Anti-Regime Protests

Anti-regime protests occurred in at least 17 cities in 14 provinces on October

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

- Karaj, Alborz Province
- Bushehr City, Bushehr Province
- Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province
- Esfahan City, Esfahan Province
- Shiraz, Fars Province
- Rasht, Gilan Province
- Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province
- Marivan, Kurdistan Province
- Saghez, Kurdistan Province
- Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province
- Babol, Mazandaran Province
- Tehran City, Tehran Province
- Urmia, West Azerbaijan Province
- Yazd City, Yazd Province
- Zanzan City, Zanzan Province

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

- Najafabad, Esfahan Province
- Ahvaz, Khuzestan Province



Senior Iranian political and security officials overwhelmingly echoed Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei’s talking points on the protests. These individuals include President Ebrahim Raisi, Parliament Speaker Brigadier General Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Judiciary Chief Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei, Interior Minister Brigadier General Ahmad Vahidi, Expediency Discernment Council Chairman Sadegh Amoli Larijani, Guardian Council Secretary Ahmad Jannati, and Armed Forces General Staff Chief Major General Mohammad Bagheri.¹

These individuals all accused the US and Israel of coopting and stoking the protests against the regime—in line with Khamenei’s remarks from October 3. They framed the protesters as rioters and seditionists. Bagheri, Vahidi, and Amoli Larijani praised the state security services and framed them as heroes and victims of the protests. All these officials expressed little to no sympathy for the protesters and their grievances—a departure from the somewhat more conciliatory tone that Bagheri and IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami have been using.

Anti-regime militant group Jaish al Adl vowed to retaliate against the regime for killing protesters in Sistan and Baluchistan Province. The group stated on October 1 that it will “enter the field with all its power to hold the regime accountable.” The group also denied its involvement in the deadly clashes between protests and regime security forces in Zahedan on September 30. Jaish al Adl operates around the Iran-Pakistan border region and regularly conducts attacks against regime security forces.

The IRGC Intelligence Organization released a statement on October 2 vowing to avenge the security forces personnel who died in the deadly clashes in Zahedan.² The IRGC Intelligence Organization condemned “separatist groups” in the statement, alluding to Jaish al Adl. Intelligence and Security Minister Esmail Khatib threatened on October 2 to retaliate against the “terrorists” responsible for the clashes as well.³

President Joe Biden issued a statement condemning the regime crackdown and expressing support for the protesters.⁴ Biden stated that the US is “making it easier for Iranians to access the Internet, including through facilitating greater access to secure, outside platforms and services.” Biden also stated that the US will impose “further costs.”

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

The IRGC continued attacking anti-regime Kurdish militant positions in Iraqi Kurdistan for the ninth consecutive day. The IRGC attacked a village near Sidekan, Soran District, Erbil Province.⁵ The IRGC attacked the village with a Mohajer-6 drone, which is capable of carrying glide bombs and anti-armor guided munitions.⁶ IRGC attacks targeting Sidekan have not included drones since September 26.

Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) promoted a conspiracy theory alleging Mahsa Amini committed suicide to trigger civil unrest in Iran. LH-affiliated Al Manar aired a segment that discussed and elaborated on Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei’s October 3 statement that Mahsa Amini died under “mysterious circumstances.” Al Manar pundit Abdo Laqis reiterated Khamenei’s claim that Iranian security forces did not harm Amini and claimed that Amini plotted with Israeli agents to commit suicide while in Iranian Law Enforcement Command custody.⁷

¹ <http://www.president.ir/fa/139993>; <http://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1401/07/12/2783717>; <http://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1401/07/12/2783546>; <http://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1401/07/12/2783700>; <https://www.irna.ir/news/84904318>; <http://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1401/07/12/2783563>; <http://www.nournews.ir/fa/news/110636/>

² <http://www.defapress.ir/fa/news/548488/>

³ <http://www.defapress.ir/fa/news/548411>

⁴ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/10/03/statement-by-president-biden-on-the-violent-crackdown-in-iran/>

⁵ <https://shafaq.com/ar/%D9%83%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%AF%D8%B3%D9%80%D9%80%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D9%84%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8011-%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B5%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84-%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D9%8A%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%AF%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B4%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%84>

⁶ <http://www.nournews.ir/fa/news/110655>;
https://twitter.com/IranIntlbrk/status/1577292126378987521?s=20&t=KJHzy0KT02qckFpO_FJrtg;
<https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/irans-drone-inventory-and-potential-sales-to-russia>
⁷ <http://program.almanar.com.lb/episode/240979/2>;
<https://twitter.com/alaa86ala/status/1577164032250769408>