



Iran Crisis Update, December 7

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

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

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

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

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

Key Takeaways

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

Anti-Regime Protests

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

Esfahan, Esfahan Province⁹

Size: Small

Najafabad, Esfahan Province¹⁰

Size: Medium

Ghazvin City, Ghazvin Province¹¹

Size: Undetermined

Kerman City, Kerman Province¹²

Size: Small to medium

Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province¹³

Size: Medium

Demographic: Ferdowsi University students

Regime Repression: Security forces attacked protesters

Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province¹⁴

Size: Small

Protester Activity: Fire lit in street

Yasouj, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province¹⁵

Size: Small

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

Regime Repression: Audible sound of gunfire

Ghorveh, Kurdistan Province¹⁶

Size: Medium

Regime Repression: Audible sounds of gunfire in some clips

Notes: Silent protest

Boumehen, Tehran Province¹⁷

Size: Small

Protester Activity: Fires lit in street

Regime Repression: Security cars ran over protesters, tear gas

Tehran City, Tehran Province¹⁸

Size: Medium

Demographic: Tehran University students

Regime Repression: Clashes with protesters

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

Tehran City, Tehran Province¹⁹

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

Demographic: Amir Kabir University of Technology students

Tehran City, Tehran Province²⁰

Size: Undetermined

Demographic: Pars Higher Education Institute of Art and Architecture students

Tehran City, Tehran Province²¹

Size: Small

Demographic: Allameh Tabataba'i University students

Tehran City, Tehran Province²²

Size: Medium

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

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

Tehran City, Tehran Province²³

Size: Small to medium

Demographic: Tarbiat Modares University students

Ardakan, Yazd Province²⁴

Size: Medium

Protester Activity: Fire lit in street

Regime Repression: Shots

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

Darreh Shahr, Ilam Province²⁵

Size: Undetermined

Protester Activity: Fire set to Basij statue in town square

Regime Repression: Audible sounds of gunfire or teargas

Baneh, Kurdistan Province²⁶

Size: Small

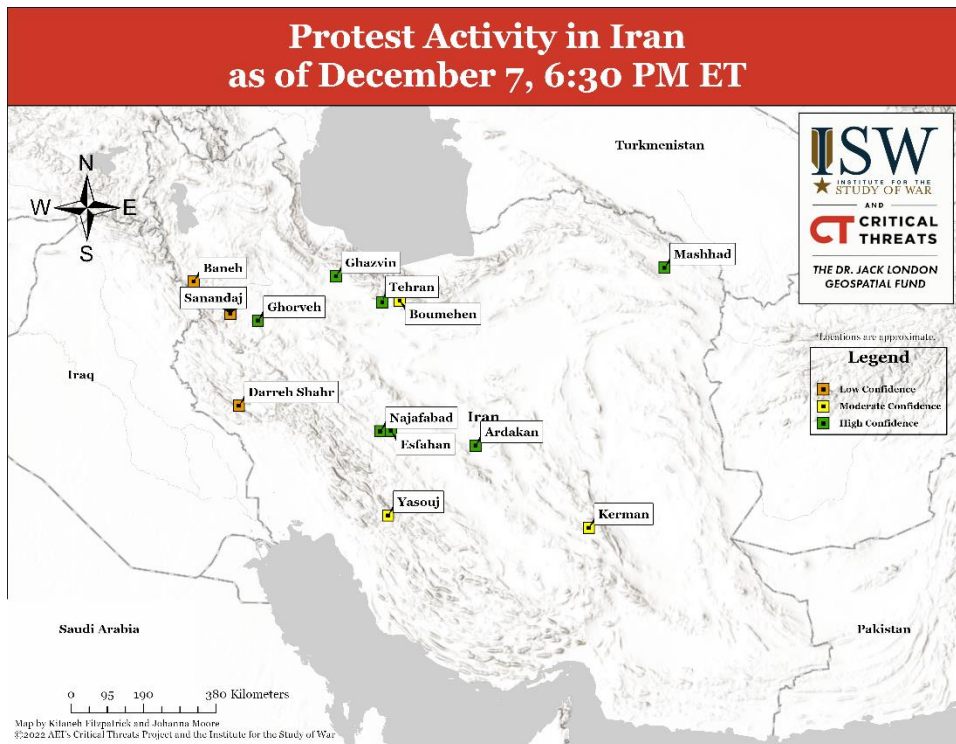
Protester Activity: Fire lit in street

Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province²⁷

Size: Small

Protester Activity: Fire lit in street

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



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

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

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

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

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

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

There was nothing significant to report today.

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

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

³ https://twitter.com/khoshnevisnaser/status/1600474993237819393?s=20&t=TbtLhNM2nSS4L5QS82Ce_w ;
https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1600528402536189952?s=20&t=TbtLhNM2nSS4L5QS82Ce_w ;
https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1600492943424606209?s=20&t=TbtLhNM2nSS4L5QS82Ce_w ;
https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1600505946651992066?s=20&t=TbtLhNM2nSS4L5QS82Ce_w

⁴ https://twitter.com/mamadporii/status/1600604378569838593?s=20&t=TbtLhNM2nSS4L5QS82Ce_w

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

⁶ <https://twitter.com/IranWireEnglish/status/1600502681394716672?s=20&t=r7Z6a0lz68TW3YgXld6nsQ> ;
https://twitter.com/IranIntl_En/status/1600483511001124864 ;
<https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1600546051609726978?s=20&t=r7Z6a0lz68TW3YgXld6nsQ>

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

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

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

¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1600510153199161345?s=20&t=utjanWhup-rBEEK3K7X6og> ;
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<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1600545102212235264?s=20&t=utjanWhup-rBEEK3K7X6og>

¹¹ https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1600549728550371344?s=20&t=uAb_LsNq81AWo5vCyn_ISA ;
https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1600571324816048154?s=20&t=uAb_LsNq81AWo5vCyn_ISA

¹² <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1600570103644438546>

¹³ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1600434970220036096> ;
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https://twitter.com/hra_news/status/1600487089400942597?s=20&t=J1s-Yo2OQ57wo1gKOnfvQw

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

¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1600540178275352600?s=20&t=fPvFjn7iy3fokzdbtybs2Q> ;
<https://twitter.com/Farhad63887391/status/1600631408392916993?s=20&t=fPvFjn7iy3fokzdbtybs2Q>

¹⁶ https://twitter.com/barin_omid/status/1600460225609441281?s=20&t=gSzoixe9JllymnbXg4cc1w ;
https://twitter.com/barin_omid/status/1600442309333684225?s=20&t=gSzoixe9JllymnbXg4cc1w ;
<https://twitter.com/kayvanrassooli/status/1600448525304676352?s=20&t=gSzoixe9JllymnbXg4cc1w>

¹⁷ <https://twitter.com/iranwire/status/1600606494428434465?s=20&t=J1s-Yo2OQ57wo1gKOnfvQw> ;
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<https://twitter.com/ShahramRafizade/status/1600618409980747777?s=20&t=E2c13zshQ21th23sgXA75w>

¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1600437262352719872?s=20&t=c2W0RnDYiu1Pg6V53os9YQ> ;
<https://twitter.com/IranWireEnglish/status/1600502681394716672?s=20&t=pgLuNauv8Ksr7UvwWAFazg> ;
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<https://twitter.com/iranwire/status/1600579895641391128?s=20&t=J1s-Yo2OQ57wo1gKOnfvQw>

¹⁹ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1600423085424795648?s=20&t=bjLRcGpUvf5oIPyeWuqv5w> ;
<https://twitter.com/pouriazeraati/status/1600608481270456321?s=20&t=bjLRcGpUvf5oIPyeWuqv5w> ;
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<https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1600443647664615425?s=20&t=bjLRcGpUvf5oIPyeWuqv5w>

²⁰ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1600445265588019201?s=20&t=cFbUxOyKlFWFuCOxwzpTXg> ;
<https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1600431637623357445?s=20&t=cFbUxOyKlFWFuCOxwzpTXg>

²¹ https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1600431617658396677?s=20&t=Gt36Z_1eapdTn52dWoEOdw ;
https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1600426610624270336?s=20&t=Gt36Z_1eapdTn52dWoEOdw

²² <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1600517998439194624?s=20&t=A7O93AsqQOBI800s4I4cJA> ;
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https://twitter.com/Sima_Sabet/status/1600578707520897038?s=20&t=BnCCAQjHftKiShGc3wa1jQ

²³ https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1600467235473981440?s=20&t=ifJincaWqSq2_jvBoX_EEA ;
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https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1600475389049982976?s=20&t=ifJjncaWqSq2_jvBoX_EEA ;
²⁴ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1600533016689999877?s=20&t=BckBKSfWfaOpWCrggGbCoHg> ;
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²⁵ <https://twitter.com/HengawO/status/1600548181708009474?s=20&t=ITUVM2bGOQwLRmhlsY3iGw> ;
²⁶ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1600458540824416258?s=20&t=D60K8tmCqrhxHUDxU13Clg> ;
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²⁷ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1600520087349379072?s=20&t=EE36bpOHAwZkuFfNvsuYg> ;
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<https://twitter.com/HengawO/status/1600555136354598941?s=20&t=EE36bpOHAwZkuFfNvsuYg> ;
²⁸ https://twitter.com/IranIntl_En/status/1600594580881215504?s=20&t=ROCDvx7-g9fq_7Uhc206RQ ;
²⁹ https://twitter.com/IranIntl_En/status/1600594580881215504?s=20&t=ROCDvx7-g9fq_7Uhc206RQ ;
³⁰ <https://ali-tehrani dot com/B-KHAMENEI-AZAR-1401.pdf> ;
³¹ <https://ali-tehrani dot com/B-KHAMENEI-AZAR-1401.pdf> ;
³² <https://www.dw.com/en/iran-arrests-khameneis-niece-after-criticizing-regime/a-63908126> ;
³³ <https://irna dot ir/xjLbGx> ;
³⁴ <https://www.tabnak dot ir/fa/news/1153785/%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%AA-%D9%86%D9%85%D8%A7%DB%8C%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%87-%DA%86%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B2-%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%87-%D8%AE%D9%88%D9%86%DB%8C%D9%86-%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86> ;
³⁵ <https://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/09/16/2817887> ;
³⁶ <https://www.borna dot news/%D8%A8%D8%AE%D8%B4-%DA%AF%DB%8C%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86-88/1408287-%D9%BE%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%87-%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%88%D9%85-%D9%85%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B3%D9%85%D8%A7%DA%A9-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D8%B7%D8%B1%DB%8C%D9%82-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D9%86%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%85%DB%8C-%DA%AF%DB%8C%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%B1%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%AF%DA%AF%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA> ;