



Iran Crisis Update, January 8, 2023
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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). To receive Iran Crisis Updates via email, please subscribe [here](#).

[Correction: A previous version of this update incorrectly recorded a protest in Javanroud, Kermanshah Province on January 8. CTP mistakenly used old protest footage and is revising this update to exclude Javanroud. We have updated our text and map to fix this error.]

Protest activity increased significantly on January 8—in line with the calls from protest organizers for countrywide demonstrations to commemorate the three-year anniversary of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) shooting down of a Ukrainian civilian airplane. These protests are the most that CTP has reported in a single day since December 5, 2022.¹ Protests have seen reduced turnout in recent weeks, likely in part due to the discordant messaging and internal fissures within the protest movement.² But protest coordinators and organizations aligned at least in their calls for countrywide demonstrations on January 8, demonstrating that they can still generate substantial turnout, especially when their messaging is coherent and consistent.

The Iranian regime has reaffirmed its aggressive and hardline stance toward the protests and calls for social reform, which could enflame political dissent further. Social media accounts have reported that the Judiciary plans to execute two more protesters—one 19-years-old and the other 22-years-old—on January 9.³ Protest organizers have called for gatherings outside the Rajaei Shahr prison in Karaj, Alborz Province—where the two protesters are being held—and social media users have reported that crowds have begun to form.⁴ The Supreme Cultural Revolution separately reiterated its support for the mandatory hijab law in a long-expected statement on the subject on January 8.⁵ The council argued that veiling promotes sexual equality and condemned the West for allowing “nudity and promiscuity.” The council also repeated Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei’s argument that the regime should continue to enforce the hijab requirement but tolerate women who only veil partially.⁶ Prosecutor General Mohammad Javad Montazeri previously stated that Parliament and the Supreme Cultural Revolution Council would issue an opinion on the hijab requirement by December 16.⁷ The regime published no such opinion until now, suggesting Iranian authorities delayed

issuing their opinion in support of the mandatory hijab law until they felt that the protest movement has lost sufficient momentum to avoid public backlash.

Key Takeaways

- Protest activity increased significantly—in line with the calls from protest organizers for countrywide demonstrations to commemorate the three-year anniversary of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) shooting down of a Ukrainian civilian airplane.
- At least 26 protests occurred in 16 cities across 12 provinces. This protest count does not include the situation at the Rajaei Shahr prison in Karaj, Alborz Province, which is ongoing at the time of this writing.
- The Iranian regime has reaffirmed its aggressive and hardline stance toward the protests and calls for social reform, which could enflame political dissent further.
- Unidentified gunmen clashed with the Law Enforcement Command (LEC) in Khash, Khuzestan Province.
- An unidentified gunman shot and killed an employee of Allameh Tabatabaei University in Tehran.

Anti-Regime Protests

At least 26 protests occurred in 16 cities across 12 provinces on January 8. This protest count does not include the situation at the Rajaei Shahr prison in Karaj, Alborz Province, which is ongoing at the time of this writing. CTP will cover this item in our update on January 9. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

Karaj, Alborz Province⁸

- Size: Undetermined
- Notes: Reports of audible gunfire throughout the city

Esfahan City, Esfahan Province⁹

- Size: Small

Najaf Abad, Esfahan Province¹⁰

- Size: Medium

Ghazvin City, Ghazvin Province¹¹

- Size: Small

Bandar-e Anzali, Gilan Province¹²

- Size: Undetermined
- Demographic: Mourners

- Regime Repression: Security forces fired tear gas at protesters
- Notes: 40-day commemoration ceremony for killed protester Mehran Samak

Bandar-e Abbas, Hormozgan Province¹³

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

Dashti, Hormozgan Province¹⁴

- Size: Small

Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province¹⁵

- Size: Small
- Notes: Social media users recorded sounds of gunfire throughout the city

Saghez, Kurdistan Province¹⁶

- Size: Medium
- Demographic: Mourners
- Notes: Protesters gathered at a local cemetery to mourn the victims of downed Ukrainian civilian aircraft

Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province¹⁷

- Size: Undetermined
- Protester Activity: Fires lit in street
- Notes: Two clips show unidentified assailant throwing explosives in street

Arak, Markazi Province¹⁸

- Size: Small

Babol, Mazandaran Province¹⁹

- Size: Undetermined

Shahed Shahr, Tehran Province²⁰

- Size: Medium
- Notes: Protesters held pictures of the victims of downed PS752 aircraft

Tehran City, Tehran Province²¹

- Size: Small
- Location: Sattar Khan (District 2)

Tehran City, Tehran Province²²

- Size: Small
- Location: Enghelaab Street

Tehran City, Tehran Province²³

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Tehran University students
- Regime Repression: Security forces beat and violently arrested at least one protester

Tehran City, Tehran Province²⁴

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Soureh University students

Tehran City, Tehran Province²⁵

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Shahid Beheshti University Students

Tehran City, Tehran Province²⁶

- Size: Undetermined
- Location: In a Tehran subway station

Tehran City, Tehran Province²⁷

- Size: Undetermined
- Location: Shariati Street (Districts 1, 3, and 7)

Tehran City, Tehran Province²⁸

- Size: Small
- Location: Haft Hoz, Tehran Pars (District 8)
- Regime Repression: Security forces threw tear gas at protesters

Tehran City, Tehran Province²⁹

- Size: Small
- Location: Ekbatan (District 5)

Mahabad, West Azerbaijan Province³⁰

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Mourners
- Notes: Protesters gathered at a local cemetery to mourn the victims of downed PS752 aircraft

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

Abdanan, Ilam Province³¹

- Size: Undetermined
- Protester Activity: Fires lit in street

Saghez, Kurdistan Province³²

- Size: Undetermined
- Protester Activity: Fires lit in street

Mahabad, West Azerbaijan Province³³

- Size: Undetermined
- Protester Activity: Fires lit in street

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

Unidentified gunmen clashed with the Law Enforcement Command (LEC) in Khash, Khuzestan Province on January 8.³⁴ The LEC killed two armed individuals.

An unidentified gunman shot and killed an employee of Allameh Tabatabaei University in Tehran on January 8.³⁵ Tasnim News Agency reported that unidentified individuals previously tried to assassinate the employee two months prior.

Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi denied that the regime uses plainclothes security and intelligence officers on January 8.³⁶ Vahidi asserted that security officers wear distinctive uniforms when working. Vahidi's comments contradict repeated footage documenting plainclothes officers violently arresting, beating, and shooting protesters.³⁷

Deputy Parliament Speaker Ali Nikzad blamed protesters for ongoing, regime-imposed internet restrictions on January 8.³⁸ Nikzad claimed that users who had "incorrectly" used the internet to participate in protests forced the regime to impose countrywide censorship measures. A VPN review website recently reported that Iranian internet outages in 2022 resulted in a cumulative loss of \$773 million.³⁹

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

There was nothing significant to report today.

¹ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-5>

² <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-january-7-2023>

³ <https://twitter.com/KhosroKalbasi/status/1612202398813937666>

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- ⁴ https://twitter.com/javanane_t/status/1612214881402372097 ;
https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1612231953624829956?s=20&t=sOoRyWBZ-uhHS7V6hc_S1Q ;
https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1612229194389327874?s=20&t=sOoRyWBZ-uhHS7V6hc_S1Q ;
https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1612228515075686402?s=20&t=sOoRyWBZ-uhHS7V6hc_S1Q ;
https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1612227794892722178?s=20&t=sOoRyWBZ-uhHS7V6hc_S1Q
- ⁵ <http://entekhab dot ir/002ygl>
- ⁶ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-january-4-2023>
- ⁷ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-2>
- ⁸ <https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1612110652318924800?s=20&t=UmiIN9OPFeQ1bwW1KI-uQQ> ;
<https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1612123104859275292?s=20&t=UmiIN9OPFeQ1bwW1KI-uQQ> ;
<https://twitter.com/indypersian/status/1612117549440815109?s=20&t=UmiIN9OPFeQ1bwW1KI-uQQ>
- ⁹ https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1612135397919711232?s=20&t=lhYH4T_BbHJXbCo2Ajn_9w ;
<https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1612119564632096776?s=20&t=HxCV5ur1vUh7UYARGtZv7A> ;
<https://twitter.com/SamRasoulpour/status/1612142204235177985?s=20&t=aKz22mB8uLDKviegng3HJg>
- ¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1612013050860797952?s=20&t=uB-CwsUDBhoACPylFT7kqw> ;
<https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1612012158224572416?s=20&t=uB-CwsUDBhoACPylFT7kqw> ;
https://twitter.com/etelaf10/status/1612030839914741760?s=20&t=imHkkzBBnlzmYoWcAI_Rng
- ¹¹ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1612142807090593793?s=20&t=uLYYkE4brLs6jBsNpseC0A> ;
<https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1612118360711483393?s=20&t=RPRUtZyqdR0221BQ46vgyg> ;
<https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1612121872275062786?s=20&t=RPRUtZyqdR0221BQ46vgyg> ;
https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1612183398889684993?s=20&t=RPRUtZyqdR0221BQ46vgyg
- ¹² <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1612097562701340675?s=20&t=uB-CwsUDBhoACPylFT7kqw> ;
<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1612093829229826049?s=20&t=uB-CwsUDBhoACPylFT7kqw> ;
<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1612089982788796416?s=20&t=uB-CwsUDBhoACPylFT7kqw> ;
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<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1612071595631067136?s=20&t=uB-CwsUDBhoACPylFT7kqw> ;
<https://twitter.com/indypersian/status/1612123087499059200?s=20&t=Ac90OHJvs03KBamKNfIENg>
- ¹³ <https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1612162788058611712?s=20&t=uLYYkE4brLs6jBsNpseC0A> ;
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<https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1612167028625874949> ;
<https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1612184625379434496?s=20&t=NYGqlis9SCI8COaLq0iObg>
- ¹⁴ https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1612186098708398080?s=20&t=Q8jfFn7if8okg5LYH09trQ ;
<https://twitter.com/etelaf10/status/1612163720947302401?s=20&t=Q8jfFn7if8okg5LYH09trQ> ;
<https://twitter.com/kayvanrassooli/status/1612187048273711104?s=20&t=Q8jfFn7if8okg5LYH09trQ>
- ¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1612162106442366976?s=20&t=uLYYkE4brLs6jBsNpseC0A> ;
<https://twitter.com/kayvanrassooli/status/1612125940938674176?s=20&t=uLYYkE4brLs6jBsNpseC0A> ;
<https://twitter.com/etelaf10/status/1612145298159140866?s=20&t=lhAW1ShQSF4EUpiAQHm7zQ> ;
<https://twitter.com/etelaf10/status/1612133416966709250?s=20&t=lhAW1ShQSF4EUpiAQHm7zQ> ;
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¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/RadioFarda/status/1612164586291236866?s=20&t=Q8jfFn7if8okg5LYH09trQ> ;
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¹⁹ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1612162085613408262?s=20&t=uLYYkE4brLs6jBsNpseCOA> ;
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²¹ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1612122555816595457?s=20&t=uB-CwsUDBhoACPylFT7kqw> ;
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²² https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1612111371625435136?s=20&t=wIroE_CJNLwhWrgghrmHNA ;
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²³ <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1612073512079867904?s=20&t=g87A8DMu7seXaxmJluUwhA> ;
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²⁶ <https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1612145137450098690?s=20&t=uLYYkE4brLs6jBsNpseCOA> ;
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²⁷ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1612177819894747137> ;
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²⁸ <https://twitter.com/Javanmardi75/status/1612131242350374914?s=20&t=n2BaHY9u7MsfyERwe0t8Bw> ;
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²⁹ [https://twitter.com/RadioFarda /status/1612170168137809922?s=20&t=Q8jfFn7if8okg5LYH09trQ](https://twitter.com/RadioFarda/status/1612170168137809922?s=20&t=Q8jfFn7if8okg5LYH09trQ) ;
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³¹ <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1612205677535023106?s=20&t=vbNfm8VU3LxmbPQqG8fE4Q>

³² <https://twitter.com/SamRasoulpour/status/1612142973390651393?s=20&t=uLYYkE4brLs6jBsNpseC0A>

³³ <https://twitter.com/Kolbarnews/status/1612147959801544709?s=20&t=uLYYkE4brLs6jBsNpseC0A>

³⁴ <http://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1401/10/18/2833920>

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³⁷ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/iran-uses-covert-police-tech-to-crack-down-on-protests-11666104668> ;

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