



**Iran Crisis Update, January 11, 2023**  
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**CTP recorded no protests in Iran on January 11, 2023 for the first time since September 16, 2022.** Protest turnout has steadily declined since December 2022. It is possible, however, that some protests occurred on January 11 that CTP did not record. The information space has become increasingly muddy since the beginning of the protest movement, partly due to expanding regime censorship. Protesters have increasingly taken to the streets without their cellphones in recent weeks as well, which may be limiting the amount of information available in the open-source environment.<sup>1</sup>

**The movement that began with the regime killing Mahsa Amini is not yet over despite the declining protest turnout.** Protest coordinators and organizations have called for more demonstrations in the coming days (detailed below). CTP will continue to monitor the situation and report on the extent to which those planned demonstrations materialize. The protest movement has furthermore begun to set conditions, developing the necessary infrastructure and networks, to sustain a protracted struggle against the regime, and citizens continue to attack regime forces. An individual threw an improvised explosive into a Basij base in Shiraz, Fars Province on January 11, for instance.<sup>2</sup>

**Regime plans to execute a former senior official may be related to infighting within the Iranian political and security establishments.** The judiciary announced on January 11 that it sentenced Alireza Akbari to death on espionage charges.<sup>3</sup> Akbari was a deputy defense minister under the reformist Khatami administration and is a British-Iranian dual national. The Intelligence and Security Ministry accused Akbari of providing information to British intelligence services, and the regime reportedly arrested him in 2019.<sup>4</sup> UK-based outlets Amwaj Media and Iran International separately reported that Iranian state security services are targeting Akbari to politically damage Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Secretary Ali Shamkhani, although CTP cannot verify these reports. Akbari was a deputy to Shamkhani when the latter was defense minister from 1997 to 2005. Rumors have circulated in recent months claiming that some regime hardliners have sought to replace Shamkhani with their preferred candidates, as CTP previously reported.<sup>5</sup> One Iranian journalist, Saeed Aganji, has made uncorroborated claims in recent days that candidates to replace Shamkhani include:<sup>6</sup>

- Khatam ol Anbia Central Headquarters Commander Major General Gholam Ali Rashid;
- Supreme Leader Representative to the SNSC Saeed Jalili;
- Interior Minister Brigadier General Ahmad Vahidi; and
- Former Defense Minister and Interior Minister Brigadier General Mostafa Mohammad Najjar.

**President Ebrahim Raisi submitted his proposed budget to Parliament on January 11, allocating significantly more funds to the military and security services and propaganda bodies.**<sup>7</sup> The regime could use these greater funds to monitor its people, suppress protests, and promote disinformation more effectively. Radio Farda reported the following budget increases:<sup>8</sup>

- Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) funding by 28 percent;
- Artesh funding by 36 percent;
- Law Enforcement Command funding by 44 percent;
- Intelligence and Security Ministry funding by 52 percent;
- State Prisons Organization by 55.5 percent;
- Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting by 42 percent; and
- Islamic Propaganda Organization funding by 53 percent.

It is unclear to what these changes amount in real purchasing power, however, given the high rate of inflation in Iran. The Statistical Center of Iran estimated that the average inflation rate for the first nine months of the Persian calendar year (March 2022-March 2023) hit 45 percent overall.<sup>9</sup> Such a sharp increase in the prices of certain goods, in addition to the continued depreciation of the Iranian rial against other currencies, may negate the impact of some of the budgetary increases. Parliament will likely amend the budget before approving it as well, meaning these allocations could still change significantly.

### **Key Takeaways**

- **CTP recorded no protests in Iran for the first time since September 16, 2022. The movement that began with the regime killing Mahsa Amini is not yet over despite the declining protest turnout, however.**
- **Regime plans to execute a former senior official may be related to infighting within the Iranian political and security establishments.**
- **President Ebrahim Raisi submitted his proposed budget to Parliament, allocating significantly more funds to the military and security services and propaganda bodies.**
- **The Hamedan and Karaj neighborhood youth groups criticized on January 11 the regime mismanagement of the energy sector that has caused natural gas shortages in Iran.**
- **The Iranian Supreme Court suspended the death sentence of 19-year-old protester Mohammad Broghani.**
- **President Ebrahim Raisi held a phone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin.**

### **Anti-Regime Protests**

**Protest coordinators and organizations have circulated calls for demonstrations and strikes on the following days:**

#### **January 12<sup>10</sup>**

- Type: protests commemorating executed protesters
- Location: countrywide

#### **January 13<sup>11</sup>**

- Type: commemoration ceremony for killed protesters
- Location: Karaj, Alborz Province

#### **January 29-30<sup>12</sup>**

- Type: demonstrations
- Location: countrywide

**The Hamedan and Karaj neighborhood youth groups criticized on January 11 the regime mismanagement of the energy sector that has caused natural gas shortages in Iran.**<sup>13</sup> Regime officials have repeatedly warned of such energy shortages and urged citizens to conserve gas in recent months.<sup>14</sup> These shortages will likely drive some popular frustration toward the regime.

**The Iranian Supreme Court suspended the death sentence of 19-year-old protester Mohammad Broghani on January 11.**<sup>15</sup> The Supreme Court is reviewing his case and will issue a decision on a potential retrial.

**Judiciary Chief Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei discussed women's affairs in a meeting with female judiciary employees on January 11.**<sup>16</sup> Ejei ordered the judiciary to "establish a structure and mechanism to improve the situation and position" of female employees. Ejei also instructed the judiciary to adjust the working hours of female employees so that "they have the necessary energy and vitality to attend to family responsibilities and other matters such as continuing education when they return home." Ejei repeated his defense of the mandatory hijab law during the meeting as well.

**President Ebrahim Raisi appointed Abdol Hossein Khosrou Panah as Supreme Cultural Revolution Council secretary on January 11.**<sup>17</sup> This council is a regime body that prepares resolutions on cultural, religious, and social affairs, which Parliament then reviews. Khosrou Panah is a philosophy and religion academic who has held various leadership positions in the Qom Seminary, Islamic Azad University, and the IRGC Baghiyatollah Socio-Cultural Headquarters.<sup>18</sup> Former IRGC Commander Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari has overseen this headquarters since 2019 and manages various indoctrination and propaganda efforts there.

### Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

**President Ebrahim Raisi held a phone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin on January 11.**<sup>19</sup> Official readouts stated that the two discussed economic cooperation, regional affairs, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

<sup>1</sup> <https://news.sky.com/story/iran-protests-teens-bravery-offers-glimmer-of-hope-as-violent-crackdown-and-internet-restrictions-continue-12769571>

<sup>2</sup> <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1613138598869475329?s=20&t=hRtF4XeV91flcyM2uzli3A>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.mizan dot news/4592141>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-64240226>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-november-18;>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-january-3-2023;>

<https://twitter.com/SaeedAganji/status/1613275221951143937>

<sup>7</sup> [www.president dot ir/fa/141831](http://www.president dot ir/fa/141831)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/iran-1402-budget-military-propaganda-security-sections-rise/32219275.html>

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.voanews.com/a/iran-s-inflation-rate-topped-48-in-december/6903564.html;](https://www.voanews.com/a/iran-s-inflation-rate-topped-48-in-december/6903564.html)

<sup>10</sup> [https://t.me/javanane\\_a/65;](https://t.me/javanane_a/65) [https://twitter.com/khiyar\\_shoor/status/1612904460006883328;](https://twitter.com/khiyar_shoor/status/1612904460006883328)

<https://twitter.com/OutFarsi/status/1612919265249599501>

<sup>11</sup> [https://t.me/javanane\\_ka/524](https://t.me/javanane_ka/524)

<sup>12</sup> [https://twitter.com/Javanan\\_gilan/status/1613173107316908032?s=20&t=oZsy55H\\_foM3VXhy\\_\\_9xNA](https://twitter.com/Javanan_gilan/status/1613173107316908032?s=20&t=oZsy55H_foM3VXhy__9xNA)

<sup>13</sup> [https://t.me/hmd\\_javanan/457;](https://t.me/hmd_javanan/457) [https://t.me/javanane\\_ka/526](https://t.me/javanane_ka/526)

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-28>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.mizan dot news/4591368>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.mizan dot news/4591368>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www dot irna dot ir/news/84996143>

<sup>18</sup> [www.farsnews dot ir/news/14011021001106](http://www.farsnews dot ir/news/14011021001106)

<sup>19</sup> [www.president dot ir/fa/141849](http://www.president dot ir/fa/141849)