



## **Iran Crisis Update, December 16**

**Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Johanna Moore, Zachary Coles, and Frederick W. Kagan  
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**Protest organizations and coordinators are increasingly promoting consistent and sustainable acts of anti-regime defiance as the Mahsa Amini protest movement enters its fourth consecutive month.** The United Neighborhood Youth of Iran circulated a translated, two-page text attributed to American author Robert Greene on December 16 that encouraged protesters to continue anti-regime demonstrations and overthrow the regime.<sup>1</sup> The text called on protesters to remain united and engaged in anti-regime activity. It is unclear where this text originated from, although it was likely adapted from Greene's December 7 Youtube video on the Mahsa Amini movement.<sup>2</sup> The Neighborhood Youth Group of Karaj also circulated the translated text and issued a five-point plan that incorporated Greene's recommendations. The group framed the plan as a progressive and natural next step of the protest movement.<sup>3</sup> The Karaj group called for regular acts of anti-regime defiance to sustain the protest movement, including:

- Chanting anti-regime slogans every night;
- Writing anti-regime slogans throughout the city;
- Distributing written calls to protests and other information pertaining to protest activity to reach populations that are less active on social media;
- Thinking of new and innovative ways to demonstrate against the regime;
- Engaging in new protest activity in crowded and well-known areas.<sup>4</sup>

The Neighborhood Youth of Karaj Group's plan, if successfully implemented, would likely pose a challenge to local security personnel attempting to quell acts of unrest throughout different areas of the city. The group's emphasis on non-protest related acts of anti-regime defiance could also invite participation from broader segments of the Iranian population.

**Increased calls for non-protest related acts of anti-regime dissent do not mean that protests will entirely subside, however.** Social media users circulated calls for countrywide strikes and protests on December 19, 20, and 21, as CTP reported on December 14.<sup>5</sup> Protest

organizations have recently demonstrated the capability to coordinate large-scale, country-wide strikes and increased protest activity from December 5, 6, and 7 as well.<sup>6</sup>

**Iranian Parliament and the Supreme Cultural Revolution Council did not release an opinion on the mandatory veiling law--or how the regime chooses to police this law--on December 16.** Prosecutor General Mohammad Javad Montazeri had stated on December 1 that Iranian officials were examining mandatory veiling and would release their findings by December 16.<sup>7</sup>

### **Key Takeaways**

- **Protest organizations and coordinators are increasingly promoting consistent and sustainable acts of anti-regime defiance as the Mahsa Amini protest movement enters its fourth consecutive month.**
- **The Iranian Parliament and the Supreme Cultural Revolution Council did not release an opinion on the mandatory veiling law or how the regime chooses to police that law on December 16.**
- **At least eight protests took place in six cities across four provinces.**
- **Prominent Sunni Cleric Moulana Abdol Hamid condemned the regime for sentencing arrested protesters to death in his weekly Friday sermon in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province.**
- **A pro-Iran Iraqi official stated that former Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi would be arrested in connection with IRGC-Quds Force Commander Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis' deaths.**

### **Anti-Regime Protests**

**At least eight protests took place in six cities across four provinces on December 16.** CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

#### **Dehghan, Kurdistan Province<sup>8</sup>**

- Size: Medium
- Demographic: Mourners
- Notes: Killed protester Shademan Ahmadi's seven-day commemoration ceremony

#### **Rask, Sistan and Baluchistan Province<sup>9</sup>**

- Size: Medium

#### **Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province<sup>10</sup>**

- Size: Medium
- Notes: Followed Prominent Sunni Cleric Moulana Abdol Hamid's weekly Friday sermon

#### **Tehran City, Tehran Province<sup>11</sup>**

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Mourners
- Notes: Killed protester Ali Rouzbahani's 40-day commemoration ceremony

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

### **Kermanshah City, Kermanshah Province<sup>12</sup>**

- Size: Undetermined
- Demographic: High school students

### **Chabahar, Sistan and Baluchistan Province<sup>13</sup>**

- Size: Medium

### **Tehran City, Tehran Province<sup>14</sup>**

- Size: Undetermined
- Area: Chitgar

### **Tehran City, Tehran Province<sup>15</sup>**

- Size: Undetermined
- Notes: Seemingly spontaneous protest, reportedly little to no security presence in said area



**Prominent Sunni Cleric Moulana Abdol Hamid condemned the regime for sentencing arrested protesters to death in his weekly Friday sermon in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province.** Abdol Hamid stated that the Islamic Republic was managed by “weak leadership” and that the Iranian population was united in their grievances against the regime.<sup>16</sup> Abdol Hamid additionally praised deceased Khash city Sunni Friday Prayer Leader Moulavi Abdol Vahed Rigi and stated that “they [killed] him” without specifying who “they” were. Unidentified assailants kidnapped, shot, and killed Khash city Sunni Friday Prayer Leader Moulavi Abdol Vahed Rigi in the vicinity of Khash, Sistan and Baluchistan Province on December 8. State-affiliated media outlets and social media users framed Rigi as a pro-regime actor and described him as a “martyr.”<sup>17</sup>

**A local Sunni cleric in Rask, Sistan and Baluchistan Province is reportedly missing and cannot be reached.** Malouvi Abdol Ghafar Naghshbandi's father stated that his son's whereabouts were currently unknown after he had had been summoned to a special clerical court in Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province.<sup>18</sup> Social media users claimed that the IRGC Intelligence Organization had additionally summoned and interrogated Naghshbandi's brother.<sup>19</sup> Rask residents were documented expressing support for Naghshbandi on December 16.<sup>20</sup> Naghshbandi had previously confirmed the rape of a 15-year-old Baloch girl by the Chabahar, Sistan and Baluchistan LEC Commander on September 27. He was the first Sunni cleric to confirm the rape.

**IranWire reported that Iranian security personnel tortured and killed Tehran doctor Aida Rostami for treating wounded protesters on December 12.**<sup>21</sup> Protesters have established informal medical networks to avoid hospitals and clinics where security forces frequently infiltrate, as CTP has previously reported.<sup>22</sup>

### Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

**Iran-affiliated Iraqi State of Law Coalition official Fadel Mowat al-Zarijawi stated that former Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi would be arrested in connection with IRGC-Quds Force Commander Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis' deaths.**<sup>23</sup> Iranian officials have alleged that Kadhimi facilitated the US airstrike and have issued calls to prosecute Kadhimi.<sup>24</sup> The Iraqi Integrity Commission has pursued former Kadhimi officials on corruption charges in a likely retaliatory campaign.

<sup>1</sup> [https://twitter.com/UYI\\_fa/status/1603794408465383426?s=20&t=pReWj4wZB7\\_wqN3mcysZsg](https://twitter.com/UYI_fa/status/1603794408465383426?s=20&t=pReWj4wZB7_wqN3mcysZsg)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fr4FTI9PqqM>

<sup>3</sup> [https://twitter.com/javanane\\_k/status/1603816214899236864?s=20&t=pReWj4wZB7\\_wqN3mcysZsg](https://twitter.com/javanane_k/status/1603816214899236864?s=20&t=pReWj4wZB7_wqN3mcysZsg)

<sup>4</sup> [https://t.me/javanane\\_ka/344](https://t.me/javanane_ka/344)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-14>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-5>; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-6>; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-7>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-4#\\_edn712830a6473a4a81f0de7cc0d12b1ac24](https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-4#_edn712830a6473a4a81f0de7cc0d12b1ac24)

<sup>8</sup> [https://twitter.com/ICHRI/status/1603823719817805826?s=20&t=NRjRgHAzH\\_GLEr-qxxjS2Q](https://twitter.com/ICHRI/status/1603823719817805826?s=20&t=NRjRgHAzH_GLEr-qxxjS2Q) ;

[https://twitter.com/iranwire/status/1603728798129717251?s=20&t=NRjRgHAzH\\_GLEr-qxxjS2Q](https://twitter.com/iranwire/status/1603728798129717251?s=20&t=NRjRgHAzH_GLEr-qxxjS2Q) ;

[https://twitter.com/hra\\_news/status/1603658585417961473?s=20&t=NRjRgHAzH\\_GLEr-qxxjS2Q](https://twitter.com/hra_news/status/1603658585417961473?s=20&t=NRjRgHAzH_GLEr-qxxjS2Q) ;

[https://twitter.com/SrwaZand/status/1603828380658434051?s=20&t=NRjRgHAzH\\_GLEr-qxxjS2Q](https://twitter.com/SrwaZand/status/1603828380658434051?s=20&t=NRjRgHAzH_GLEr-qxxjS2Q)

<sup>9</sup> <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1603698262002761728?s=20&t=aUrNZx3jCaGzzg7lwXkmhg> ;

<https://twitter.com/iranwire/status/1603760179828465665?s=20&t=aUrNZx3jCaGzzg7lwXkmhg> ;

[https://twitter.com/hra\\_news/status/1603697685994913794?s=20&t=aUrNZx3jCaGzzg7lwXkmhg](https://twitter.com/hra_news/status/1603697685994913794?s=20&t=aUrNZx3jCaGzzg7lwXkmhg)

<sup>10</sup> <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1603715308497391621?s=20&t=RX5O-hfRFngTR1A5SdRMkQ> ;

<https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1603694669224886272?s=20&t=YWw7C4jHqFpwQhPcdc444Q>

; <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1603696630514999299?s=20&t=RX5O-hfRFngTR1A5SdRMkQ>

<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1603699360918900736?s=20&t=RX5O-hfRFngTR1A5SdRMkQ>

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<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1603822472943599617?s=20&t=RX5O-hfRFngTR1A5SdRMkQ>

<sup>11</sup> <https://twitter.com/1500tasvir/status/1603712222601285633?s=20&t=RX5O-hfRFngTR1A5SdRMkQ> ;  
<https://twitter.com/Vahid/status/1603768468897161217?s=20&t=RX5O-hfRFngTR1A5SdRMkQ> ;  
<https://twitter.com/Vahid/status/1603771516579155969?s=20&t=RX5O-hfRFngTR1A5SdRMkQ> ;  
<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1603777316357918722?s=20&t=RX5O-hfRFngTR1A5SdRMkQ>

<sup>12</sup> <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1603736091391033344?s=20&t=RX5O-hfRFngTR1A5SdRMkQ>  
<sup>13</sup> <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1603707138747994112?s=20&t=RX5O-hfRFngTR1A5SdRMkQ> ;  
<https://twitter.com/SedayeShahrivar/status/1603830901300875264?s=20&t=KWAmx2NtLcCskOqPpna-lQ>

<sup>14</sup> <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1603862513384316936?s=20&t=GQrkApTfxvVkeTsYI69YIQ>

<sup>15</sup> <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1603772967342727170?s=20&t=RX5O-hfRFngTR1A5SdRMkQ>

<sup>16</sup> <https://t dot co/7Dd3NAKe3O>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-december-9>

<sup>18</sup> [https://twitter.com/avatoday\\_news/status/1603754886348283904?s=20&t=lf8d p7nhTahDYPwkJRNw](https://twitter.com/avatoday_news/status/1603754886348283904?s=20&t=lf8d p7nhTahDYPwkJRNw)

<sup>19</sup> <https://twitter.com/IranIntlbrk/status/1603740034674352128?s=20&t=RX5O-hfRFngTR1A5SdRMkQ>

<sup>20</sup> <https://twitter.com/shabnam68284948/status/1603710201793757184?s=20&t=uOOSdnQTuOwgnMeR4IBtTA>

<sup>21</sup> <https://iranwire.com/en/politics/111407-tehran-doctor-tortured-and-killed-for-treating-wounded-protesters/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-30>

<sup>23</sup> <https://twitter.com/najahmalii/status/1603762459210235904>

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[https://www\(dot\)alrabiaa.tv/article/40095/%D8%B5%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%81%D8%A9-%D8%A5%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%AF%D8%AB-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%84-%22%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B8%D9%85%D9%8A%22-%D8%A8%D8%AA%D9%87%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D8%BA%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%87%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%B3-40095](https://www(dot)alrabiaa.tv/article/40095/%D8%B5%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%81%D8%A9-%D8%A5%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%AF%D8%AB-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%84-%22%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B8%D9%85%D9%8A%22-%D8%A8%D8%AA%D9%87%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D8%BA%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%87%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%B3-40095)

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/452938/Iran-calls-on-Iraq-to-pursue-Soleimani-assassination-case>

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/154858/Iran-to-legally-pursue-case-of-US-assassination-of-Lt-Gen-Soleimani>