



**Iran Crisis Update, January 25, 2023**

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**January 25, 2023, 6:00 pm ET**

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Grievances related to deteriorating economic conditions and essential service provision have generated most protest activity in Iran in recent days. Petrochemical and telecommunication workers and retirees have held several small-scale demonstrations throughout Iran since January 22, as CTP has previously reported.<sup>1</sup> CTP has also documented electricity cuts and natural gas shortages across the country.<sup>2</sup> The regime, particularly the Raisi administration, has appeared unable to meaningfully address these issues thus far.

These poor internal conditions will likely stoke anti-regime frustrations and could reignite the protest movement in the months and years ahead. The protest movement has largely culminated at present, as CTP previously argued, but this culmination does not mean that the anti-regime movement has ended, nor does it mean that the regime has meaningfully addressed the root causes of the movement. The protesters likely retain their anger and frustrations toward the regime. The conditions for a strong and vibrant anti-regime movement thus remain.

The pro-Pahlavi Mashhad Neighborhood Youth urged protesters to continue their struggle against the regime on January 25.<sup>3</sup> The Mashhad group called on protesters to “conduct at least one operation [against the regime] each night,” such as attacking IRGC and Basij facilities and seminaries or producing anti-regime graffiti. The Mashhad group also advised protesters to “redo plans” and “identify your strengths and weaknesses.” CTP has not observed significant support for the Pahlavi family in its coverage of the protests.

#### Key Takeaways

- Grievances related to deteriorating economic conditions and essential service provision have generated most protest activity in Iran in recent days.
- The pro-Pahlavi Mashhad Neighborhood Youth urged protesters to continue their struggle against the regime on January 25.
- At least three protests occurred in three cities across two provinces
- Prominent Sunni cleric Moulana Abdol Hamid criticized the “intensification of security atmosphere” on January 25, referencing the reported increase of security forces in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province.
- The Supreme Economic Coordination Council (SECC) convened on January 25 to discuss stabilizing the Iranian rial and operations at the Bushehr nuclear power plant.
- Iranian media outlets reported a ten-minute internet outage.
- Artesh Southwestern Regional Headquarters Commander Brigadier General Hamzeh Bidadi announced the confiscation of smuggled arms near Abadan, Khuzestan Province.
- Law Enforcement Command (LEC) Brigadier General Ahmad Reza Radan stated that the LEC is prioritizing expanding Iran’s “security umbrella” during a meeting in Khorasan Razavi Province.
- IRGC Navy Commander Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri met with newly appointed Law Enforcement Commander Brig. Gen. Ahmad Reza Radan.
- Anti-regime Black Reward hacker group leaked documents on January 25 suggesting that the regime permitted the Imam Sadegh University to engage in cryptocurrency activities, despite ongoing Iranian cryptocurrency restrictions.

#### Anti-Regime Protests

At least three protests occurred in three cities across two provinces on January 25. CTP assesses with moderate confidence that one protest occurred in the following location:

##### Karaj, Alborz Province<sup>4</sup>

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Families of prisoners sentenced to death
- Location: Gathered in front of a local prison. It is unclear if the prisoners were arrested in connection to the Mahsa Amini protest movement.

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

##### Bandar-e Imam Khomeini, Khuzestan Provinces<sup>5</sup>

- Size: Undetermined
- Demographic: Petrochemical workers
- Notes: Strike and protest

## Bandar-e Mahshar, Khuzestan Province<sup>6</sup>

- **Size:** Small
- **Demographic:** Petrochemical workers
- **Notes:** Strike and protest



Protest coordinators and organizations circulated calls for demonstrations and/or strikes on the following days:

### January 27<sup>7</sup>

- **Type:** Demonstrations in solidarity with oppressed Iranian Baloch.
- **Location:** Countrywide

Prominent Sunni cleric Moulana Abdol Hamid criticized the “intensification of security atmosphere” on January 25, referencing the reported increase of security forces in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province.<sup>8</sup> Security forces have conducted large-scale arrests and established security checkpoints around the city in recent weeks, as CTP previously reported.<sup>9</sup> Abdol Hamid added in his tweet that mass arresting citizens is stoking public frustration.

The Supreme Economic Coordination Council (SECC) convened on January 25 to discuss stabilizing the Iranian rial and operations at the Bushehr nuclear power plant. The SECC is Iran’s “economic war room” to mitigate sanctions and reach decisions on macroeconomic policies.<sup>10</sup> The council approved the Central Bank of Iran’s (CBI) request

for increased control over the value of the Iranian rial and inflation rates.<sup>11</sup> Iranian media outlets framed the approval as a restoration of the CBI's authority following the regime's decision to limit the bank's control over currency markets under the Rouhani administration.<sup>12</sup> The SECC separately discussed financing operations at the Bushehr plant.

Artesh Southwestern Regional Headquarters Commander Brigadier General Hamzeh Bidadi announced on January 25 the confiscation of smuggled arms near Abadan, Khuzestan Province. Bibadi stated that the confiscated weapons, which included 10 Kalashnikov rifles and 89 Colt guns, are "usually used in riots for killing and attacking police and security officers."<sup>13</sup> The Artesh making this announcement is noteworthy given that the IRGC and LEC are typically responsible for similar seizures.

Law Enforcement Command (LEC) Brigadier General Ahmad Reza Radan stated that the LEC is prioritizing expanding Iran's "security umbrella" during a meeting in Khorasan Razavi Province on January 25. Radan also emphasized the importance of developing an "intelligent police," possibly hinting that the LEC should adopt new technologies and techniques to thwart internal unrest.<sup>14</sup>

IRGC Navy Commander Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri met with newly appointed Law Enforcement Commander Brig. Gen. Ahmad Reza Radan on January 25. Tangsiri offered support to the LEC Coast Guard, especially regarding combating the smuggling of goods, fuel, and livestock.<sup>15</sup> The specific forms of assistance the IRGC Navy could provide could include surveillance, general training, weapons, drones, and naval infantry, although the readout of the meeting offered no concrete indications about what kind of support Tangsiri and Radan discussed.

Anti-regime Black Reward hacker group leaked documents on January 25 suggesting that the regime permitted the Imam Sadegh University to engage in cryptocurrency activities, despite ongoing Iranian cryptocurrency restrictions. The group previously hacked and defaced the university's website on January 20, as CTP previously reported.<sup>16</sup> The leaked documents suggested that the regime permitted the university to conduct cryptocurrency mining at various garment factories in unspecified locations within Khorasan Razavi Province, despite ongoing cryptocurrency bans aimed at reducing strain on the Iranian electrical grid.<sup>17</sup> CTP cannot corroborate the veracity of this document and such items should be viewed with skepticism.

#### **Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments**

**There was nothing significant to report.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-january-22-2023>; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-january-23-2023>; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-january-24-2023>

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<sup>3</sup> [https://twitter.com/Javanan\\_mashhad/status/1618176699669286912](https://twitter.com/Javanan_mashhad/status/1618176699669286912)

<sup>4</sup> [https://twitter.com/RadioFarda\\_/status/1618264436283969537?s=20&t=vdYMT9\\_bPOtgaF7SqHISw](https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1618264436283969537?s=20&t=vdYMT9_bPOtgaF7SqHISw) ;  
[https://twitter.com/hra\\_news/status/1618306089392431104?s=20&t=WvVmYTWSUAK89Y0mvpDOgw](https://twitter.com/hra_news/status/1618306089392431104?s=20&t=WvVmYTWSUAK89Y0mvpDOgw) ;  
[https://twitter.com/hra\\_news/status/1618264987998343170?s=20&t=WvVmYTWSUAK89Y0mvpDOgw](https://twitter.com/hra_news/status/1618264987998343170?s=20&t=WvVmYTWSUAK89Y0mvpDOgw) ;  
<https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1618298406602170368?s=20&t=WvVmYTWSUAK89Y0mvpDOgw>

<sup>5</sup> [https://twitter.com/RadioFarda\\_/status/1618223064088707074?s=20&t=xjHxiYsz2gcMa93F-roU3w](https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1618223064088707074?s=20&t=xjHxiYsz2gcMa93F-roU3w) ;

[https://twitter.com/hra\\_news/status/1618280244472938496?s=20&t=Vw8qcp5w8Jv0fjgoG0RVvg](https://twitter.com/hra_news/status/1618280244472938496?s=20&t=Vw8qcp5w8Jv0fjgoG0RVvg)

<sup>6</sup> [https://twitter.com/hra\\_news/status/1618286438713376769?cxt=HHwWgoC-xaS8p\\_UsAAAA](https://twitter.com/hra_news/status/1618286438713376769?cxt=HHwWgoC-xaS8p_UsAAAA)

<sup>7</sup> [https://twitter.com/javanane\\_zhdm/status/1618202946277371910?s=20&t=YZJWokykBSJ0olwz\\_rKYvA](https://twitter.com/javanane_zhdm/status/1618202946277371910?s=20&t=YZJWokykBSJ0olwz_rKYvA)

<sup>8</sup> <https://twitter.com/AbdolhamidNet/status/1618319451933507585?s=20&t=nnlEkGbA9781NQMqKdu0KA>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-january-19-2023>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/iran-khamenei-economy-council/30275360.html>

<sup>11</sup> <https://president.ir/fa/142105>

<sup>12</sup> <https://ecoiran.com/%D8%A8%D8%AE%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%86%DA%A9-%D8%A8%DB%8C%D9%85%D9%87-151/28059-%D8%A7%D8%AE%D8%AA%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D8%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA-%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%AA%D9%87-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%86%DA%A9-%D9%85%D8%B1%DA%A9%D8%B2%DB%8C-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B2%DA%AF%D8%B4%D8%AA>

<sup>13</sup> <https://defapress dot ir/fa/news/569175/%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AF-%D9%82%D8%A7%DA%86%D8%A7%D9%82-%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD-%D8%AC%D9%86%DA%AF%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%B2%E2%80%8C%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%AE%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%85%D9%86%D9%87%D8%AF%D9%85-%D8%B4%D8%AF>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www irna ir/news/85009673/%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86-%DA%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%B4-%DA%86%D8%AA%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%86%DB%8C%D8%AA-%D9%85%D9%87%D9%85%D8%AA%D8%B1%DB%8C%D9%86-%D8%B1%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA-%D9%BE%D9%84%DB%8C%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.farsnews dot ir/news/14011105000058/دیدار حفر مانده خیزوی در یایی سپاه بافر مانده خراجا-سر دار جنگسیری چلیس>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-january-20>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.radiofarda.com/amp/balck-reward-imam-sadeq/32238005.html>

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