



Home Office

Country Bulletin

Iran: Protests of December 2025 to January 2026

Reference number: IRN-001-02-26

February 2026

Summary: Mass protests in Iran December 2025/ January 2026 – development of the protests and state treatment of protesters

Contents

Summary	3
Country information	4
1. Availability of information	4
1.1 Communications blackout	4
1.2 Sources of information	7
2. Protests	9
2.1 Cause(s).....	9
2.2 Number, size and locations	10
2.3 End of the protests	13
3. State treatment	15
3.1 State rhetoric	15
3.2 Use of force, injuries and deaths/extra-judicial killings	17
3.3 Arrests, detentions and charges	23
3.4 Death sentences and executions	26
4. Demonstrations in the UK.....	28
Research methodology	30
Bibliography	31
Sources cited	31
Sources consulted but not cited	34
Version control and feedback	35
Feedback to the Home Office	35
Independent Advisory Group on Country Information	35

Summary

The latest wave of protests in Iran began on 28 December 2025 inside markets in Tehran, with merchants closing their shops and speaking out against continued increases to inflation rates and the plummeting value of the Iranian rial.

The protests quickly became anti-regime in tone and spread both geographically and demographically. Hundreds of protests have taken place across 200 towns and cities in all 31 of Iran's provinces, becoming the largest wave of protests in Iran since 1979. Iranians reportedly protested en masse, chanting slogans against the regime and the Supreme Leader, reaching a peak on 8 January 2026

A near-total communications blackout was imposed by the Iranian authorities since 8 January 2026, when they blocked the internet and telephone lines, restricting information about the protests from being shared within, and outside of, Iran.

Limited information has been obtained through videos and accounts sent by a small number of Iranians via Starlink satellite equipment (which is illegal in Iran), outbound telephone calls which resumed from 13 January 2026, and the eyewitness accounts of those who have since left Iran.

The Iranian authorities responded forcefully, implementing a violent crackdown to suppress the protests. Verified video has shown the use of lethal force by the security forces including the use of batons and firearms. The crackdown was successful in suppressing the protests, with much smaller numbers being recorded between 11 and 13 January 2026, and only one protest recorded since 14 January 2026, as of 28 January 2026.

The estimated number of deaths, predominantly of protesters, numbered between approximately 12,000 and 20,000 by mid-January 2026. One human rights news agency reported that as of 28 January 2026, there were 6,221 confirmed deaths (including 5,858 protesters), with a further 17,091 deaths under investigation, and more than 11,000 people severely injured.

The same human rights news agency additionally recorded 42,324 arrests, 261 cases of forced confessions being broadcast, and 11,026 people to have been summoned to security institutions as of 28 January 2026. The agency reports that the authorities are on a 'large-scale arrest campaign' in the aftermath of the protests.

Sources report the sentencing to death of more than 800 protesters whose executions were halted after US threats of intervention. It is not clear whether Iran intends to carry out protest-related death sentences.

In addition to the protests inside Iran, several protests against the Iranian regime have taken place in the UK between 3 and 17 January 2026, each with between approximately 100 and 1,000 protesters.

All cases must be considered on their individual facts, with the onus on the person to demonstrate they face persecution or serious harm.

[Back to Contents](#)

Country information

This bulletin contains publicly available or disclosable country of origin information (COI) which has been gathered, collated and analysed in line with the [research methodology](#). It provides the basis for the summary.

The topic, structure and content are designed to provide a summary the situation in Iran during the mass protests that took place from late December 2025 to January 2026, including the development of the protests and state treatment of protesters.

This document is intended to be comprehensive but not exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned this does not mean that the event did or did not take place or that the person or organisation does or does not exist.

The COI included covers the period from 28 December 2025 to 28 January 2026. Any event taking place or report published after this date will not be included.

Decision makers must use relevant COI as the evidential basis for decisions.

This bulletin has been developed with assistance from Artificial Intelligence (AI). Where AI has been used, it has been reviewed by a human editor.

NOTE: The use of any maps are not intended to reflect the UK Government's views of any boundaries.

1. Availability of information

1.1 Communications blackout

- 1.1.1 An article published by Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), an organisation which aims 'to promote democratic values by providing accurate, uncensored news'¹, on 8 January 2026 stated: 'As demonstrations entered a 12th day on January 8 [2026], social media users in major cities like Tehran, Karaj, Isfahan, Shiraz, Mashhad, and Tabriz reported slow Internet connections. Experts have noted a marked decline in the speed of broadband and mobile Internet. Amir Rashidi, head of digital rights and security at the US-based Miaan Group, told Radio Farda that the authorities are preparing to shut down the Internet entirely.'²
- 1.1.2 An article published by The New York Times on 8 January 2026 stated: 'As the protests grew, internet connectivity data showed an abrupt and near-total drop in connection levels in Iran on Thursday afternoon, according to NetBlocks, an internet monitoring group, and the Georgia Institute of Technology's Internet Outage Detection and Analysis database. The data indicates that the country is almost completely offline.'³
- 1.1.3 According to Reporters Without Borders (RSF) in an article published on 9 January 2026, it was not only internet access that was cut 'overnight' on 8 January 2026, but telephone lines as well⁴. The article stated that since the evening of 8 January 2026, '... almost no calls to or from Iran have been possible via applications or telephone lines ... News websites and Telegram news channels operating from Iran have also been prevented from

¹ RFE/RL, [About RFE/RL](#), no date

² RFE/RL, [Bigger And Bolder: How Iran's Protests Are Gaining Momentum](#), 8 January 2026

³ The New York Times, [Iran Is Cut Off From Internet as Protests ... Intensify](#), 8 January 2026

⁴ RSF, [Media blackout in Iran: journalists isolated ...](#), 9 January 2026

continuing their work ... Online applications commonly used by Iranians to circumvent [online] restrictions are also no longer functioning.⁵ The article further noted that, '[p]lunged into a blackout, journalists inside the country are now unable to communicate with the outside world.'⁶

- 1.1.4 The RSF article added that 'In the days leading up to 8 January [2026], at least six media professionals received threats from the intelligence service of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, according to RSF. These independent journalists, who wish to remain anonymous, were warned not to publish information on the wave of protests over the deteriorating economic situation that has been shaking the Islamic Republic since 28 December 2025, failing which they face imprisonment.'⁷
- 1.1.5 An article published by CNN World, a US-based cable news organisation⁸, on 13 January 2026 referred to the communications blackout being of an 'unprecedented scale'. It stated: 'For days, Iran became nearly impossible to reach from the outside world. Even SpaceX's Starlink satellite internet terminals, used by Iranians to circumvent the restrictions, were jammed using what experts describe as military-grade technology.'⁹
- 1.1.6 An article published on 13 January 2026 by Iran International, a privately-owned, London-based media outlet that provides news for Iranians both in and outside of Iran¹⁰, opined that the blackout was '... aimed not only at security control but at concealing the truth.'¹¹ The article went on to state that, '[m]edia outlets inside the country have been shut down. Hundreds of national and local newspapers, an unprecedented development in the history of Iran's press, have fallen silent since Thursday [8 January 2026]. Today [13 January 2026], aside from the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), only a handful of news websites remain active inside the country, and they too operate under censorship and the direct control of security institutions.'¹²
- 1.1.7 A BBC News article published on 14 January 2026 stated: '... On Tuesday [13 January 2026], Iranian intelligence forces said they had seized a large consignment of Starlink kits allegedly intended for "espionage and sabotage operations" inside the country.'¹³
- 1.1.8 An article published RFE/RL on 15 January 2026, stated: 'Netblocks noted that the "online information vacuum is resulting in the amplification of pro-regime accounts, AI fakes, and other agendas."¹⁴
- 1.1.9 BBC News articles published on 15 and 16 January 2026 respectively, noted that international human rights groups have no direct access to Iran¹⁵, while international media, including the BBC, is barred from reporting inside Iran¹⁶.

⁵ RSF, [Media blackout in Iran: journalists isolated ...](#), 9 January 2026

⁶ RSF, [Media blackout in Iran: journalists isolated ...](#), 9 January 2026

⁷ RSF, [Media blackout in Iran: journalists isolated ...](#), 9 January 2026

⁸ CNN World, [About CNN Worldwide](#), no date

⁹ CNN World, [Iran makes high-tech additions to ... playbook for crushing protests](#), 13 January 2026

¹⁰ Iran International, [About Us](#), no date

¹¹ Iran International, [At least 12,000 killed in Iran crackdown during internet blackout](#), 13 January 2026

¹² Iran International, [At least 12,000 killed in Iran crackdown during internet blackout](#), 13 January 2026

¹³ BBC News, [Starlink reportedly made free in Iran ...](#), 14 January 2026

¹⁴ RFE/RL, [US Sanctions Iranian Officials Over Brutal Crackdown ...](#), 15 January 2026

¹⁵ BBC News, [Iran authorities demanding large sums for return of ... bodies ...](#), 15 January 2026

¹⁶ BBC News, ['I was hit in the face by pellets': Iranians on border describe ...](#), 16 January 2026

- 1.1.10 On 16 January 2026, Al Jazeera, a Qatari state-owned news organisation, published an article which stated:
- ‘Most of Iran’s 90 million-strong population remains cut off from the rest of the world more than one week after an unprecedented, state-imposed communications blackout ... After the start of the blackout, it took authorities several days to restore an intranet designed to provide access to local websites and services. It is unclear when or to what extent access to the global internet will be restored. Local phone services have been restored but SMS text messages remain blocked.’¹⁷
- 1.1.11 A BBC News article published on 17 January 2026 stated: ‘On Saturday [17 January 2026] overall connectivity remained at about 2% of ordinary levels, according to cyber monitor NetBlocks.’¹⁸
- 1.1.12 An article published by RFE/RL on 19 January 2026 stated: ‘Watchdog Netblocks said on January 19 [2026] that access to the Internet remained blocked, though some messages occasionally got through, “suggesting that the regime is testing a more heavily filtered Intranet.” Hossein Afshin, Iran’s vice president for science, technology and the knowledge economy, said on state television on January 19 [2026] that the Internet would “gradually return to normal operations this week.”’¹⁹
- 1.1.13 An article published by RFE/RL on 20 January 2026 stated:
- ‘Iranians are living through one of the longest Internet shutdowns in history ... While the authorities have quelled the weeklong demonstrations [see [End of the protests](#)] against Iran’s clerical rulers with the use of unprecedented brute force [see [Use of force, injuries and deaths](#)], it remains unclear when they will restore access to the Internet. Even when services resume, Iranians could be permanently cut off from the global Internet as the authorities force its citizens to use a domestically designed “intranet,” ... [T]he news website IranWire reported on January 15 [2026] that government spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani told journalists that international web access would not be available until at least the Persian New Year in March.’²⁰
- 1.1.14 On 27 January 2026, the Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA), a US-registered press association of human rights advocates, reporting daily on human rights violations in Iran²¹, published an update regarding the protests and their aftermath which stated:
- ‘Following the aftermath of the protests, the “digital blackout” and severe restrictions on internet access continue to be reported as one of the main axes of controlling and managing the public sphere ... [E]ven in cases where some networks have become “globally visible,” this does not mean a return to normal internet access, and public connectivity remains blocked or highly unstable. Within this framework, reports have emerged of entering the nineteenth day of a “complete internet shutdown,” alongside the formation of quota-based access mechanisms for certain groups. Among these, holders of commercial cards have reportedly been granted only limited and short-

¹⁷ Al Jazeera, [Iran in limbo: What’s next for country under internet blackout?](#), 16 January 2026

¹⁸ BBC News, [Iran supreme leader acknowledges thousands killed ...](#), 17 January 2026

¹⁹ RFE/RL, [Iran Mulls Return Of Internet As Extent Of Deadly Crackdown ...](#), 19 January 2026

²⁰ RFE/RL, [Iran Is Still Offline. Will Access To The Global Internet ... Be Restored?](#), 20 January 2026

²¹ HRANA, [About Us](#), no date

term access (approximately 20 minutes per day) at chambers of commerce and under supervision, a situation that effectively transforms the internet from a public service into a security-administrative privilege.

'... Security measures targeting alternative means of internet access have also intensified. Reports indicate the discovery and confiscation of dozens of Starlink devices, explicitly described as "anti-security goods," demonstrating that information control is not limited to cutting off official networks and that alternative communication routes have also become targets of security policies.'²²

- 1.1.15 For more information about internet and other types of communication restrictions generally imposed by the Iranian authorities, including surveillance of online activities, see Country Policy and Information Note, [Iran: Social media, surveillance and sur place activities](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

1.2 Sources of information

- 1.2.1 A BBC News article published on 14 January 2026 stated: 'Before the blackout came into force on 8 January [2026], hundreds of videos from the protests were posted on social media. Iranians regularly spoke to foreign-based journalists to provide eyewitness accounts of the protests.'²³
- 1.2.2 The New York Times article of 8 January 2026 noted that it obtained accounts from more than a dozen witnesses via telephone interviews²⁴.
- 1.2.3 RSF, in its 9 January 2026 article, stated:
'Only the telegram channel Tasnim - affiliated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the armed branch of the regime under the power of Iran's supreme leader Ali Khamenei - has been publishing news since 9 January [2026] at noon. It has notably only shared official state propaganda regarding the protests ... Only limited connectivity via the Starlink satellite network remains available in certain parts of the country, but according to reports it is slow and unstable.'²⁵
- 1.2.4 A BBC News article published on 12 January 2026 noted that it obtained information via testimonies and video being sent to BBC Persian, which it stated, '... are mainly from larger cities such as Tehran, nearby Karaj, Rasht in the north, Mashhad in the north-east, and Shiraz in the south. These areas have greater access to the internet via the Starlink satellite network. Information from small towns - where many early casualties occurred - is scarce as their access to Starlink is very limited.'²⁶
- 1.2.5 CBS News, the BBC's US partner²⁷, published an article on 13 January 2026 which referred to video footage that was posted online by an Iranian activist and blogger who said it was sent to him from a source who travelled approximately 600 miles to upload the video amid the communications blackout²⁸.

²² HRANA, [Thirty-First Day Since the Start of the Protests ...](#), 27 January 2026

²³ BBC News, [Why are there protests in Iran and what has Trump said ...?](#), updated 14 January 2026

²⁴ The New York Times, [Iran Is Cut Off From Internet as Protests ... Intensify](#), 8 January 2026

²⁵ RSF, [Media blackout in Iran: journalists isolated ...](#), 9 January 2026

²⁶ BBC News, ['They just kept killing': Eyewitnesses describe deadly crackdown ...](#), 12 January 2026

²⁷ BBC News, [Iran supreme leader acknowledges thousands killed ...](#), 17 January 2026

²⁸ CBS News, [Over 12,000 feared dead after Iran protests ...](#), 13 January 2026

- 1.2.6 A BBC News article, updated on 14 January 2026, stated: ‘Some Iranians are managing to use Elon Musk’s Starlink satellite internet service to counter the shutdown, but the terminals are banned in Iran and authorities are reportedly attempting to trace them.’²⁹
- 1.2.7 The BBC News article published on 14 January 2026 stated: ‘Since ... [the blackout started on 8 January 2026], the flow of videos has been significantly reduced, and it has become extremely difficult to speak to people inside. [However, a] minority of Iranians have access to Starlink, and have been posting a few videos of the latest developments. Some have also managed to momentarily connect to the internet and share their observations with journalists, friends and family members living abroad.’³⁰
- 1.2.8 A BBC News article published on 14 January 2026 stated:
 ‘The director of an organisation that helps Iranians get online ... told BBC Persian that Starlink had been made free ... Since the internet was shut down, it has become one of the last, if not the last, remaining channels for Iranians to communicate with the outside world ... Mahsa Alimardani, who works as ... associate director for technology, threats and opportunities [for human rights organisation, Witness], says the Iranian authorities have tried “aggressively jamming” Starlink to stop people accessing the internet but it has not been successful. “That’s why they are resorting to physical confiscations,” she adds.’³¹
- 1.2.9 The 16 January 2026 Al Jazeera article stated: ‘Since Tuesday [13 January 2026], only outgoing international phone calls have been reconnected.’³²
- 1.2.10 The Institute for the Study of War (ISW), ‘a policy think tank based in Washington, D.C. that seeks to inform US military strategy’³³, and the Critical Threats Project (CTP), ‘project run by the US think tank American Enterprise Institute (AEI)’³⁴, published a daily ‘Iran Update’ which, citing various sources, covered the protests in Iran beginning on 28 December 2025. Its update of 18 January 2026 stated: ‘The Iranian regime has [now] allowed Iranians access to domestic websites on the internet as part of the phase planned to resume internet access.’³⁵
- 1.2.11 On 19 January 2026, ABC News, a US-owned mainstream media source³⁶, published an article in which it stated: ‘... [A]ccounts are emerging from people now able to use phone lines, those few with access to working Starlink satellite terminals and Iranians who have recently left the country ... an Iranian activist based in Washington, D.C., says he has helped send in hundreds of Starlink terminals to citizen journalists and others in Iran to help get around the government blackout.’³⁷
- 1.2.12 A BBC News article published on 21 January 2026 stated: ‘Despite the blackout entering its third week, a small number of people have managed to get some information out ... Some Iranians have been posting the names of

²⁹ BBC News, [Why are there protests in Iran and what has Trump said ...?](#), updated 14 January 2026

³⁰ BBC News, [Why are there protests in Iran and what has Trump said ...?](#), updated 14 January 2026

³¹ BBC News, [Starlink reportedly made free in Iran ...](#), 14 January 2026

³² Al Jazeera, [Iran in limbo: What’s next for country under internet blackout?](#), 16 January 2026

³³ Ecol.net, [Source description: Institute for the Study of War \(ISW\)](#), 30 May 2023

³⁴ Ecol.net, [Source description: Critical Threats Project \(CTP\)](#), 26 January 2023

³⁵ ISW and CTP, [Iran Update, January 18, 2026](#), 18 January 2026

³⁶ Media Bias / Fact Check, [ABC News](#), no date

³⁷ ABC News, [Bloody crackdown appears to have quelled Iran protests for now](#), 19 January 2026

victims killed by security forces when they manage to connect to the internet through Starlink or even using networks from neighbouring countries, though these opportunities are incredibly rare.^{'38}

[Back to Contents](#)

2. Protests

2.1 Cause(s)

2.1.1 On 29 December 2025, RFE/RL published an article which stated:

'Protests in Iran over a plummeting currency and inflation fears continued for a second day in the capital ... RFE/RL's Radio Farda reported on December 29 [2025] that crowds of people were seen chanting slogans about the economic situation and against the government at gatherings at the Grand Bazaar - where many merchants had closed their shops - and elsewhere in central Tehran. Amid signs of the economy collapsing under the weight of international sanctions, Iran's currency plummeted to record lows on foreign exchange markets ... There were [also] ... reports of crowds chanting "death to the dictator," ...'³⁹

2.1.2 A BBC News article published on 6 January 2026 stated:

'The demonstrations initially began as a backlash against what they say is the government's mismanagement of the country's struggling economy, which has increasingly floundered under the weight of international sanctions. Officials have also been accused of widespread corruption.

'But in recent days the demonstrations have taken an anti-state tone, with protesters in numerous locations chanting slogans against Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and the clerical establishment that has been ruling the country since the 1979 Islamic revolution. Verified videos have also shown chants in support of Reza Pahlavi, the exiled son of the Shah of Iran, and the pre-1979 revolution Pahlavi dynasty.'⁴⁰

2.1.3 An article published by RFE/RL on 7 January 2026 stated: 'According to Mahmudian [Mehdi Mahmudian, a Tehran-based political activist and human rights defender], protesters are no longer calling for reforms to the clerically dominated political system but are demanding fundamental change.'⁴¹

2.1.4 The 13 January 2026 CBS News article stated: 'The protests ... were sparked in late December [2025] by anger over a new spike in the cost of living in Iran's sanctions-hobbled economy.'⁴²

2.1.5 An article published on 17 January 2026 by RFE/RL stated: 'The protests erupted in late December 2025 amid mounting public anger over economic hardship, soaring inflation, and the sharp depreciation of the Iranian rial. Initial demonstrations over living costs and economic mismanagement quickly ... evolved into broader antiestablishment protests ...'⁴³

[Back to Contents](#)

³⁸ BBC News, [Photos leaked to BBC show faces of hundreds killed ...](#), 21 January 2026

³⁹ RFE/RL, [Iranians Clash With Police During Second Day Of Protests ...](#), 29 December 2025

⁴⁰ BBC News, [Iran anti-government protests spread to majority of provinces ...](#), 6 January 2026

⁴¹ RFE/RL, [Inside Iran, Activists Call For Internal Change ...](#), 7 January 2026

⁴² CBS News, [Over 12,000 feared dead after Iran protests ...](#), 13 January 2026

⁴³ RFE/RL, [Iranian Doctors, Witnesses Describe Heavy Casualties After Protests](#), 17 January 2026

2.2 Number, size and locations

- 2.2.1 An article published on 22 January 2026 by HRANA stated: '... [G]atherings and strikes by shopkeepers and bazaar merchants began in Tehran on Sunday, December 28 [2026], and after two days spread beyond markets and commercial centers ...'⁴⁴
- 2.2.2 An RFE/RL article that was published on 30 December 2025, showed that the protests spread quickly to other areas: 'Demonstrations were reported in several cities, with markets and shops shuttered and students holding rallies at universities, on December 30 [2025].'⁴⁵
- 2.2.3 A BBC News article published on 30 December 2025 stated: 'Since ... [protests began on Sunday 28 December 2025] videos verified by BBC Persian have shown demonstrations in the cities of Karaj, Hamedan, Qeshm, Malard, Isfahan, Kermanshah, Shiraz and Yazd.'⁴⁶
- 2.2.4 A BBC article that was updated on 1 January 2026 stated: 'The protests have been the most widespread since an uprising in 2022 ... But they have not been on the same scale.'⁴⁷
- 2.2.5 The ISW and CTP Iran update of 2 January 2026 stated: 'The rate and geographic scope of protests in Iran increased on January 1 and 2 [2026]. ISW-CTP recorded 56 protests on January 1 and 70 protests on January 2, compared to 31 protests on December 31 [2025]. Protests took place in 17 out of Iran's 31 provinces between December 28 and 31 and have since spread to five additional provinces ... Protests have also spread to a greater number of cities within individual provinces ... Protests have primarily taken place in small and medium-sized towns instead of in major cities. ISW-CTP has not observed significant protest activity in provinces with large Kurdish populations, such as Kurdistan and West Azerbaijan Province. The lack of protest activity in these provinces thus far is notable, given that a significant portion of protests during the Mahsa Amini movement took place in Kurdistan and West Azerbaijan provinces ... Several funerals for killed protesters transformed into anti-regime protests on January 2.'⁴⁸
- 2.2.6 On 6 January RFE/RL reported that protests were taking place 'in dozens of cities and towns'⁴⁹, while a BBC News article published on the same date noted protests to '... have broken out in at least 17 of Iran's 31 provinces ...'⁵⁰ The BBC News article went on to state 'The BBC's analysis of protests includes only those for which we have verified video footage - the true number is almost certainly far higher. There are reports of protests in a further 11 provinces ... Verified footage from the last 10 days shows evidence of anti-government demonstrations and gatherings in more than 50 towns and cities across the country, including in several regions previously perceived as being highly loyal to the state.'⁵¹
- 2.2.7 An article published by Human Rights Watch (HRW) on 6 January 2026 referred to the protests as having '... rapidly spread to at least 27 provinces

⁴⁴ HRANA, [Nationwide Protests: Report on the Arrest of 11 Citizens ...](#), 22 January 2026

⁴⁵ RFE/RL, [Iran In 'New Phase Of Turmoil' As Protests Spread Beyond Capital](#), 30 December 2025

⁴⁶ BBC News, [Protests spread across Iran for third day after currency ...](#), 30 December 2025

⁴⁷ BBC News, [Iran security force member killed during protests, officials say](#), updated 1 January 2026

⁴⁸ ISW and CTP, [Iran Update, January 2, 2026](#), 2 January 2026

⁴⁹ RFE/RL, [Iranian Protester Recounts Security Forces 'Shooting Directly' At Crowds](#), 6 January 2026

⁵⁰ BBC News, [Iran anti-government protests spread to majority of provinces ...](#), 6 January 2026

⁵¹ BBC News, [Iran anti-government protests spread to majority of provinces ...](#), 6 January 2026

across the country.^{'52}

- 2.2.8 The ISW and CTP Iran update of 7 January 2026 stated: 'Protests have continued to primarily take place in western Iran and in smaller, less populated areas. CTP-ISW has recorded 19 protests in Tehran City since its last data cutoff, however. CTP-ISW has also recorded 14 medium-sized protests since its last data cutoff, which CTP-ISW defines as protests with more than 100 [but fewer than 1,000⁵³] participants.'⁵⁴
- 2.2.9 The article published by RFE/RL on 8 January 2026 stated:
'Protests against Iran's clerical establishment are spreading, drawing in new cities and towns, social groups, and symbols ... What began as scattered demonstrations ... is now visible on the streets and in shuttered bazaars across the country of some 92 million people ... Over the past 48 hours, protests have spread to more parts of the capital, Tehran, and the northeastern city of Mashhad, the country's second-largest, as well as to a growing list of provincial centers and small cities, including Abadan in the southwest and Borujen in central Iran.'⁵⁵
- 2.2.10 The ISW and CTP Iran update of 8 January 2026 stated 'Protest activity in Iran has expanded dramatically in both rate and magnitude since January 7 [2026], including in major cities like Tehran and in northwestern Iran ... The individual protests are also much larger than those prior to January 8 and include 60 medium-sized protests (over 100 [but fewer than 1,000⁵⁶] participants) throughout the country.'⁵⁷
- 2.2.11 A BBC News article, updated on 9 January 2026, stated: 'It was the 12th consecutive day of unrest [8 January 2026] ... and has spread to more than 100 cities and towns across all 31 of Iran's provinces, according to human rights groups ... The protests are seen as the biggest since 2009, when millions of Iranians took to the streets of major cities'⁵⁸
- 2.2.12 The ISW and CTP Iran update of 9 January 2026 stated: 'ISW has recorded 116 protests across 22 provinces since ... January 8. Twenty of these protests were large protests, which CTP-ISW defines as protests with more than 1,000 participants. CTP-ISW's protest data since its last data cutoff likely reflects only part of the protest activity ...'⁵⁹
- 2.2.13 On 10 January 2026, a BBC News article stated: 'What footage is emerging from Iran shows protesters in Tehran taking to the streets en masse on Friday [9 January 2026] night ... [F]ormer UK ambassador to Iran Sir Simon Gass ... noted the protests were "a much wider movement" than previous flare-ups ...'⁶⁰
- 2.2.14 The ISW and CTP Iran update of 10 January 2026 stated: 'CTP-ISW has recorded 60 protests across 15 provinces since ... January 10 [2026], 25 of which were medium-sized and eight of which were large. CTP-ISW defines

⁵² HRW, [Iranian Authorities Brutally Repressing Protests](#), 6 January 2026

⁵³ ISW and CTP, [Iran Update, January 10, 2026](#), 10 January 2026

⁵⁴ ISW and CTP, [Iran Update, January 7, 2026](#), 7 January 2026

⁵⁵ RFE/RL, [Bigger And Bolder: How Iran's Protests Are Gaining Momentum](#), 8 January 2026

⁵⁶ ISW and CTP, [Iran Update, January 10, 2026](#), 10 January 2026

⁵⁷ ISW and CTP, [Iran Update, January 8, 2026](#), 8 January 2026

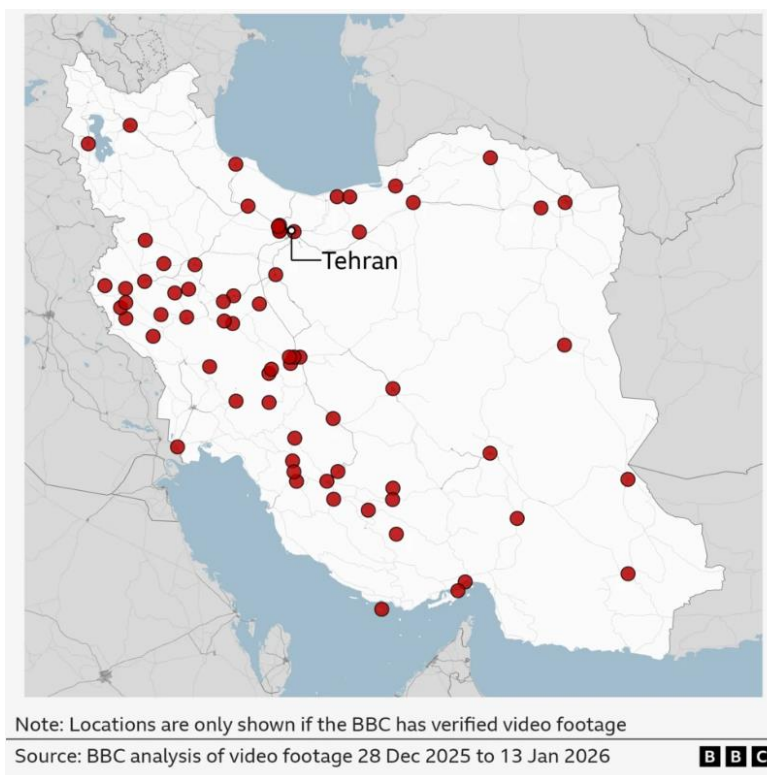
⁵⁸ BBC News, [Huge anti-government protests in Tehran and other Iranian cities ...](#), 8 January 2026

⁵⁹ ISW and CTP, [Iran Update, January 9, 2026](#), 9 January 2026

⁶⁰ BBC News, [... medics describe hospitals overwhelmed with dead and injured ...](#), 10 January 2026

medium protests as protests with between 100 and 1,000 participants and large protests as protests with more than 1,000 participants.’⁶¹

- 2.2.15 The ISW and CTP Iran update of 11 January 2026 stated: ‘CTP-ISW recorded a lower rate of protest activity [22 protests in 9 provinces] across Iran on January 11 [2026] compared to recent days.’⁶²
- 2.2.16 The 13 January 2026 CBS News article stated that protests that began in late December 2025, ‘... quickly grew into mass rallies in all of Iran’s 31 provinces, with tens of thousands of people chanting for the downfall of the country’s Islamic rulers.’⁶³
- 2.2.17 The CNN News Article of 13 January 2026 stated: ‘By Monday [12 January 2026], there were signs that protests in Tehran were not as big as they had been over the weekend, following the massive regime crackdown, though gauging the true scale is all but impossible given the ongoing communications blackout.’⁶⁴
- 2.2.18 BBC News articles, both published on 14 January 2026, noted that while verified videos showed that protests had spread to more than 68 towns and cities, the true figure was likely much higher⁶⁵, and that reports were that the protests had spread to more than 180 towns and cities across all 31 provinces of Iran⁶⁶.
- 2.2.19 Another BBC News article, also published on 14 January 2026, included a map of Iran, showing the verified locations of protests between 28 December 2025 and 13 January 2026⁶⁷:



⁶¹ ISW and CTP, [Iran Update, January 10, 2026](#), 10 January 2026

⁶² ISW and CTP, [Iran Update, January 11, 2026](#), 11 January 2026

⁶³ CBS News, [Over 12,000 feared dead after Iran protests ...](#), 13 January 2026

⁶⁴ CNN World, [Iran makes high-tech additions to ... playbook for crushing protests](#), 13 January 2026

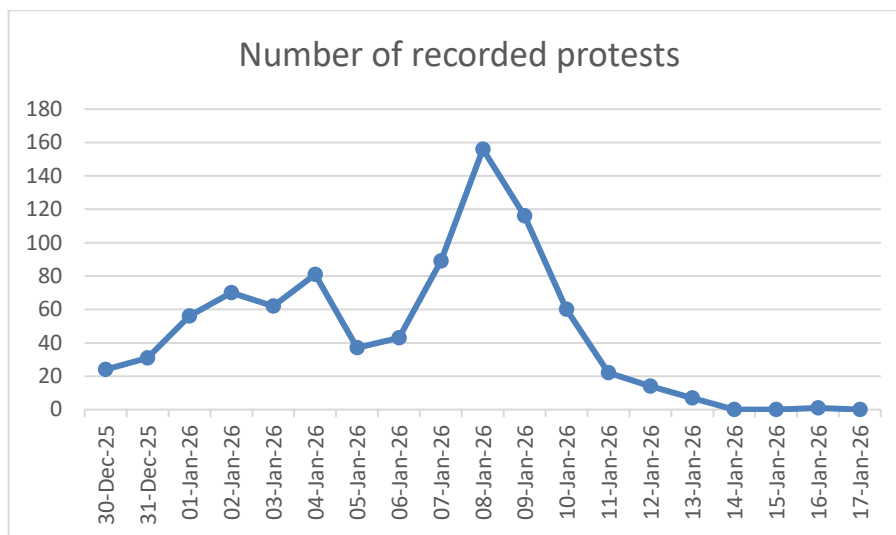
⁶⁵ BBC News, [Tehran morgue videos show the brutality of Iran's crackdown ...](#), 14 January 2026

⁶⁶ BBC News, [... Iranian protester who reportedly had execution postponed ...](#), 14 January 2026

⁶⁷ BBC News, [... BBC hears stories of protesters killed in Iran](#), 14 January 2026

2.2.20 A RFE/RL article published on 15 January 2026 stated: ‘Iran has witnessed the biggest protests against the country’s clerical rulers since the Islamic Revolution in 1979.’⁶⁸

2.2.21 The below graph, which shows the number of recorded protests in Iran by date, was produced by CPIT using data recorded and published by ISW and CTP in their ‘Iran Updates’ between 30 December 2025 and 17 January 2026, the last date that it recorded no protests to have taken place⁶⁹:



2.2.22 The above graph shows an overall increase in the number of protests in Iran from late December 2025 until a spike, and the peak of the protests, on 8 January 2026. The graph shows that the peak was followed by a sharp decrease between 9 and 11 January 2026, tailing off to zero protests from 14 January 2026 (with one isolated protest recorded to have occurred on 16 January 2026). It should be noted that in some of its updates, ISW and CTP noted that protests are likely to have occurred beyond what was recorded, due to the limiting of information by the Iranian authorities (see [Communications blackout](#))^{70 71}.

For maps showing the locations of the recorded protests, see the [ISW and CTP Iran updates](#) published from 29 December 2025 to 13 January 2026, and on 16 January 2026.

2.2.23 By 21 January 2026, BBC News reported that BBC Verify had tracked the protests to have taken place across 71 towns and cities, though it again noted that the true number of areas was likely much higher⁷².

2.2.24 HRANA’s update of 27 January 2026 included aggregated statistics up to the end of that day (the 31st day since the protests began). HRANA noted there had been 656 gatherings or protests across 201 cities (without duplication), in all 31 provinces⁷³.

[Back to Contents](#)

2.3 End of the protests

⁶⁸ RFE/RL, [... Iran’s Mass Protests Are A ‘Social Revolution’ Against Clerical Rulers](#), 15 January 2026

⁶⁹ ISW and CTP, [Research Library \(Iran updates\)](#), no date

⁷⁰ ISW and CTP, [Iran Update, January 9, 2026](#), 9 January 2026

⁷¹ ISW and CTP, [Iran Update, January 12, 2026](#), 12 January 2026

⁷² BBC News, [Photos leaked to BBC show faces of hundreds killed ...](#), 21 January 2026

⁷³ HRANA, [Thirty-First Day Since the Start of the Protests ...](#), 27 January 2026

- 2.3.1 A BBC News article published on 12 January 2026 stated: ‘Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told diplomats in Tehran today that “the situation is now under total control”. Outside, in the bright light of day, the streets of Tehran were filled with the crowds the government called on to come out and reclaim the streets from protesters.’⁷⁴
- 2.3.2 The ISW and CTP Iran updates of 12 and 13 January 2026 noted that it recorded 14 protests across 6 provinces on January 12⁷⁵ and 7 protests across 6 provinces on 13 January 2026⁷⁶.
- 2.3.3 The information provided by the ISW and CTP was broadly consistent with information provided in an RFE/RL article published on 13 January 2026, which stated that a ‘... doctor in southern Iran said the protests have “died down” ...’⁷⁷
- 2.3.4 A BBC News article, updated on 14 January 2026, stated:
‘On 14 January [2026], Araghchi's ministry cited him as telling his counterpart from the United Arab Emirates that “calm has prevailed (in Iran) thanks to the vigilance of the people and law enforcement forces”. His comments echoed those of the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who had told supporters at state-organised rallies across the country on 12 January [2026] that they had “neutralised the plans by foreign enemies that were meant to be performed by domestic mercenaries”.’⁷⁸
- 2.3.5 Citing information provided to BBC Persian by a person living near Tehran with access to the Starlink satellite service, a BBC News article published on 14 January 2026, in the immediate aftermath of the protests, stated that, ‘... there were “checkpoints in every block”, where cars and the phones of their occupants were being inspected by security forces.’⁷⁹
- 2.3.6 The ISW and CTP Iran update of 15 January 2026 stated: ‘An individual in Tehran ... told a Paris-based journalist on January 15 [2026] that the regime has deployed tanks in Tehran. CTP-ISW has not observed any images or videos to corroborate this report ...’⁸⁰
- 2.3.7 The 16 January 2026 Al Jazeera article stated: ‘The streets of Tehran and other cities across the country have been relatively quiet in the aftermath of the deadly protests ... There is a heavy presence of security forces on the streets, where countless checkpoints and armed patrols have been set up.’⁸¹
- 2.3.8 The BBC News article published on 16 January 2026 stated:
‘Iran's regime has treated these protests as an existential threat. Its crackdown [see [State treatment](#)] seems to be working, and protesters are now thought to be largely staying at home, for fear of being shot or arrested ... But several people ... [at the Bashmaq border crossing between Iran and Iraqi Kurdistan] told us that demonstrations had continued, at least into this week [commencing 12 January 2026] ... The BBC has seen no hard

⁷⁴ BBC News, [Lyse Doucet: ... rulers face biggest challenge since 1979 revolution](#), 12 January 2026

⁷⁵ ISW and CTP, [Iran Update, January 12, 2026](#), 12 January 2026

⁷⁶ ISW and CTP, [Iran Update, January 13, 2026](#), 13 January 2026

⁷⁷ RFE/RL, [Iranian Doctor Says Security Forces ‘Shooting Inside’ Hospitals](#), 13 January 2026

⁷⁸ BBC News, [Why are there protests in Iran and what has Trump said ...?](#), updated 14 January 2026

⁷⁹ BBC News, [Trump vows ‘very strong action’ if Iran executes protesters](#), 14 January 2026

⁸⁰ ISW and CTP, [Iran Update, January 15, 2026](#), 15 January 2026

⁸¹ Al Jazeera, [Iran in limbo: What's next for country under internet blackout?](#), 16 January 2026

evidence that street protests are still continuing.⁸²

- 2.3.9 The ISW and CTP Iran update of 16 January 2026 stated: ‘There are reports of a new protest in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province, on January 16 [2026]. Protest activity in Zahedan is unique and may not reflect a resurgence in protest activity across Iran, however. A small group of protesters reportedly chanted anti-regime slogans, such as “Khamenei is a murderer” and “his rule is invalid.”’⁸³
- 2.3.10 The BBC News article published on 17 January 2026 stated: ‘There have been fewer reports of unrest in recent days but with internet access still restricted developments on the ground remain unclear. A woman in Shiraz, south-western Iran, told BBC Persian that “security forces are still patrolling on motorbikes to keep the situation under control, but overall things have gone back to normal”.’⁸⁴
- 2.3.11 The ABC News article stated:
‘An extraordinarily violent crackdown by Iranian security forces [see [Use of force, injuries and deaths](#)] appears to have succeeded for now in driving protesters from the streets, according to activists and analysts who managed to speak with people inside the country despite the information blackout ... [P]eople describe an eerie calm over Iran's cities, where heavily armed security forces are deployed on the streets enforcing what many are describing as a de-facto curfew. “Unfortunately, the crackdown has been so severe the protests have pretty much come to a halt,” ... [a Washington DC-based Iranian activist] told ABC News on Thursday [15 January 2026]. “There are security forces everywhere - there is a state of fear,” [he] said ...’⁸⁵
- 2.3.12 While the ABC News article reported that the protests had largely been ‘quelled’ over the days up to 19 January 2026, it also stated that, ‘... in the past few days there are still signs of dissent - people were heard chanting anti-regime slogans from windows. In some neighborhoods groups of youths have also gathered and shouted slogans, before quickly fleeing when security forces arrive.’⁸⁶
- 2.3.13 The ISW and CTP Iran updates of 14, 15 and 17 January 2026 all recorded zero protests, and no further protests have been reported by ISW and CTP in their Iran updates since 18 January 2026 (as of their most recent update, published on 28 January 2026)⁸⁷.

[Back to Contents](#)

3. State treatment

3.1 State rhetoric

- 3.1.1 An article published by RFE/RL on 31 December 2025 stated: ‘Iran's prosecutor-general said on December 31 [2025] that while the protests gripping the country were legitimate, any attempt to create insecurity would

⁸² BBC News, [‘I was hit in the face by pellets’: Iranians on border describe ...](#), 16 January 2026

⁸³ ISW and CTP, [Iran Update, January 16, 2026](#), 16 January 2026

⁸⁴ BBC News, [Iran supreme leader acknowledges thousands killed ...](#), 17 January 2026

⁸⁵ ABC News, [Bloody crackdown appears to have quelled Iran protests for now](#), 19 January 2026

⁸⁶ ABC News, [Bloody crackdown appears to have quelled Iran protests for now](#), 19 January 2026

⁸⁷ ISW and CTP, [Research Library \(Iran updates\)](#), no date

be met with a “decisive response.”⁸⁸

- 3.1.2 The BBC News article published on 6 January 2026 stated: ‘Iran’s judiciary chief, Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei, said authorities ... would “deal firmly with those who seek to exploit the situation, incite riots, and undermine the security of the country and the people”. The powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) has also issued warnings to protesters in Lorestan province that they will no longer tolerate street gatherings.’⁸⁹
- 3.1.3 The HRW article of 6 January 2026 stated: ‘As during previous protests, authorities, including senior officials, have vilified protesters by labeling them as “rioters” and threatened a harsher response if they continue to take to the streets. On January 3 [2026], Ali Khamenei, Iran’s supreme leader, said: “There is no use in talking to rioters; rioters must be put in their place.”’⁹⁰
- 3.1.4 The New York Times article of 8 January 2026 stated: ‘Ebrahim Azizi, the head of the Parliament’s national security and foreign policy committee, said in a post on social media that ... Israel ... was behind the protests ... As the protest movement has spread to cities across the country, the head of Iran’s judiciary, Gholam-Hossein Mohseni-Eje’i, told Iranian media that the protests were plotted by the country’s enemy and the government would show no mercy. “This time it’s different. This time there are no excuses left,” he said. “The enemy has officially announced its support. I tell the people and the families that this time no one will be spared.”’⁹¹
- 3.1.5 An article published on 9 January 2026 by RFE/RL stated: ‘Tehran’s prosecutor Ali Salehi described protesters who burn public property and clash with security forces as “terrorists” who will be charged with “moharebeh,” or waging war against God, which can carry the death penalty.’⁹²
- 3.1.6 An article published by RFE/RL on 11 January 2026 stated: ‘Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei - the ultimate power in the country - addressed supporters of the regime on January 9 [2026], saying that “saboteurs, agitators” had “destroyed the country’s buildings to please” [US President, Donald] Trump.’⁹³
- 3.1.7 A BBC News article published on 12 January 2026 stated: ‘Legal language has ... hardened in this time – “vandals” will be charged with “waging war against God” and face the death penalty.’⁹⁴
- 3.1.8 The CNN World article of 13 January 2026 stated: ‘The increasingly paranoid government now frames the latest wave of domestic unrest as the “thirteenth day of war” with Israel, painting protesters as foreign agents that need to be “dealt with.”’⁹⁵
- 3.1.9 The ISW and CTP Iran update of 14 January 2026 stated: ‘The regime has abandoned any effort it made in the beginning of this protest movement to

⁸⁸ RFE/RL, [Iran Protests Intensify Amid Rial Free Fall ...](#), 31 December 2025

⁸⁹ BBC News, [Iran anti-government protests spread to majority of provinces ...](#), 6 January 2026

⁹⁰ HRW, [Iranian Authorities Brutally Repressing Protests](#), 6 January 2026

⁹¹ The New York Times, [Iran Is Cut Off From Internet as Protests ... Intensify](#), 8 January 2026

⁹² RFE/RL, [Unrest In Iran Grows Despite Moves By Authorities To Stifle Dissent](#), 9 January 2026

⁹³ RFE/RL, [Iranian Protesters Remain On Streets ...](#), 11 January 2026

⁹⁴ BBC News, [Lyse Doucet: ... rulers face biggest challenge since 1979 revolution](#), 12 January 2026

⁹⁵ CNN World, [Iran makes high-tech additions to ... playbook for crushing protests](#), 13 January 2026

distinguish between legitimate economic protests and illegitimate anti-regime protests. Iranian media and officials, including those who expressed sympathy for protesters in the beginning of this protest movement, are categorically describing protesters as “terrorists.”⁹⁶

3.1.10 The 16 January 2026 Al Jazeera article stated:

‘The state continues to send many one-way text messages to people across the country daily, urging them not to fall victim to ploys by “enemies” and to report any suspicious activity ... [O]fficials claim “terrorists” and “elements” trained and armed by the US, Israel and their allies are behind all of the mass killings as well as the “riots” that saw government buildings attacked, and public property burned across the country.

‘... The government has also organised massive counter-demonstrations across the country during the past several days and has held public funerals for the killed security forces in many cities, including Tehran.

‘State television has referred to those participating in these displays “the real people of Iran” while Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei proclaimed that Iranians participating in state-organised demonstrations “diffused the plot by foreign enemies that was to be implemented by local mercenaries”.

‘... In his first interview with state television early this week to address the people after the protests, President Masoud Pezeshkian chose to focus on condemning violent “terrorists” and engaging in economic reform, making no mention of the fact that the entire country remained gripped by a state-imposed digital blackout.’⁹⁷

3.1.11 HRANA’s update of 27 January 2026 stated: ‘Official authorities have attempted to focus attention on the damages caused by the protests ... At the same time, the government spokesperson, Fatemeh Mohajerani, referred to “collective mourning” and the state’s responsibility toward those affected, while also stressing a distinction between “legitimate protesters” and “deviant currents.” Such formulaic statements have repeatedly been used by state institutions to justify their conduct in suppressing protesters.’⁹⁸

[Back to Contents](#)

3.2 Use of force, injuries and deaths/extra-judicial killings

3.2.1 The RFE/RL article, published on 29 December 2025, stated: ‘Videos showed clashes with security forces using batons and tear gas.’⁹⁹

3.2.2 An article published on 1 January 2026 by RFE/RL stated: ‘Domestic news agencies and international rights groups on January 1 [2026] reported at least six deaths related to the protests.’¹⁰⁰

3.2.3 Numerous reports were made of a rising number of protester deaths over the

⁹⁶ ISW and CTP, [Iran Update, January 14, 2026](#), 14 January 2026

⁹⁷ Al Jazeera, [Iran in limbo: What’s next for country under internet blackout?](#), 16 January 2026

⁹⁸ HRANA, [Thirty-First Day Since the Start of the Protests ...](#), 27 January 2026

⁹⁹ RFE/RL, [Iranians Clash With Police During Second Day Of Protests ...](#), 29 December 2025

¹⁰⁰ RFE/RL, [Several Protesters Reported Dead In Iran As Anger Builds ...](#), 1 January 2026

following days^{101 102 103 104 105 106 107} and the ISW and CTP Iran update of 2 January 2026 stated: ‘The protests in Iran have become more violent since January 1 [2026], primarily in less populated and more rural areas.’¹⁰⁸

3.2.4 The BBC News article published on 6 January 2026 stated: ‘While the latest response by police and security forces initially appeared to be more restrained, verified footage has shown officers ramping up the use of force since Saturday [3 January 2026]. This change in approach coincided with Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei’s first public reaction to the protests on that day, in which he said that “rioters must be put in their place”.’¹⁰⁹ For more information on the public reactions of Iranian officials, see [State rhetoric](#).

3.2.5 The HRW article of 6 January 2026 stated: ‘Reports by the media and Iranian human rights organizations show that security forces have used lethal force, including military grade weapons and metal pellets fired from shotguns, as well as tear gas and batons against unarmed protesters. Violent repression has included security force raids on Imam Khomeini Hospital in Ilam on January 4 and 5 [2026] in an apparent attempt to arrest injured protesters and confiscate the bodies of those killed.’¹¹⁰

3.2.6 An article jointly published by Amnesty International (AI) and HRW on 8 January 2026 claimed they had:

‘... found that protesters have been largely peaceful. While the organizations have reviewed some footage and reports indicating that some protesters have engaged in acts of violence, in all the incidents of shootings investigated by the organizations, there was no imminent threat to life or serious injury justifying the use of firearms.

‘... The organizations documented large-scale harm from the widespread use of metal pellets fired from shotguns, including head and eye injuries, as well as injuries caused by beatings and gunfire from rifles.

‘... The organizations found that the presence of security forces at hospitals has deterred many injured protesters from seeking medical care, increasing the risk of death.’¹¹¹

3.2.7 The BBC News article, updated on 9 January 2026, stated: ‘On Wednesday [7 January 2026], there were violent clashes between protesters and security forces in several cities and towns in western Iran, as well as other regions. [Norway-based monitor, Iran Human Rights] IHR said it had been the deadliest day of the unrest, with 13 protesters confirmed to have been killed across the country.’¹¹²

3.2.8 Citing the Director of IHR, Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam, the same BBC

¹⁰¹ RFE/RL, [Trump Tells Iranian Protesters US Supports Them ...](#), 2 January 2026

¹⁰² HRW, [Iranian Authorities Brutally Repressing Protests](#), 6 January 2026

¹⁰³ BBC News, [At least 36 people killed during Iran protests, rights group says](#), 6 January 2026

¹⁰⁴ AI and HRW, [Iran: Deaths and injuries rise ...](#), 8 January 2026

¹⁰⁵ RFE/RL, [A Boxer, A Truck Driver, And A Hip-Hop Artist: The Protesters Killed ...](#), 9 January 2026

¹⁰⁶ RFE/RL, [Iranian Protesters Remain On Streets ...](#), 11 January 2026

¹⁰⁷ BBC News, [‘They just kept killing’: Eyewitnesses describe deadly crackdown ...](#), 12 January 2026

¹⁰⁸ ISW and CTP, [Iran Update, January 2, 2026](#), 2 January 2026

¹⁰⁹ BBC News, [Iran anti-government protests spread to majority of provinces ...](#), 6 January 2026

¹¹⁰ HRW, [Iranian Authorities Brutally Repressing Protests](#), 6 January 2026

¹¹¹ AI and HRW, [Iran: Deaths and injuries rise ...](#), 8 January 2026

¹¹² BBC News, [Huge anti-government protests in Tehran and other Iranian cities ...](#), 8 January 2026

News article stated: “The evidence shows that the scope of crackdown is becoming more violent and more extensive every day,” ...¹¹³

- 3.2.9 The RFE/RL article published on 13 January 2026 stated: ‘... [E]yewitness accounts have emerged that suggest the state is waging one of its deadliest-ever crackdowns on street protesters ... [after] the authorities launched a large-scale crackdown in major cities, including in Tehran, on January 8 and 9 [2026].’¹¹⁴
- 3.2.10 The same RFE/RL article stated ‘... Iranian security forces have used brute force, including firing live ammunition at protesters, according to videos verified by RFE/RL and testimony from eyewitnesses. Hospitals across Iran have been flooded with the dead and wounded, according to doctors and nurses ... Human rights organizations have documented the use of metal pellets fired from shotguns, with security forces deliberately targeting the eyes and heads of protesters.’¹¹⁵
- 3.2.11 The 10 January 2026 BBC News article stated: ‘Staff at several hospitals in Iran have told the BBC their facilities are overwhelmed with dead or injured patients, as major anti-government protests continue ... A hospital worker in Tehran described “very horrible scenes”, saying there were so many wounded that staff did not have time to perform CPR.’¹¹⁶
- 3.2.12 The RFE/RL article published on 11 January 2025 stated: ‘With the blackout now lasting more than 48 hours [see [Communications blackout](#)] there is no precise information about the number of people killed, injured, or detained across the country with widespread fears that the cut is being used to hide state violence against protesters.’¹¹⁷
- 3.2.13 A BBC News article, updated on 12 January 2026, stated: ‘... [F]ootage authenticated by BBC Persian and BBC Verify confirms that Iran’s security officers have been shooting at gatherings of protesters in several areas. They include Tehran, the western Kermanshah province, and the southern Bushehr region. Multiple verified videos filmed in the centre of the western city of Ilam last weekend also show security forces firing shots towards Imam Khomeini Hospital, where protesters were holding a rally.’¹¹⁸
- 3.2.14 A BBC News article published on 12 January 2026 stated: ‘Those who have given accounts to BBC Persian say ... the death toll reported by international media so far only represents a fraction of their own estimates ... Some local sources and eyewitnesses report very high numbers of people killed across different cities, ranging from several hundreds to thousands.’¹¹⁹
- 3.2.15 Another BBC News article published on 12 January 2026 stated: ‘Doctors’ accounts of hospitals overwhelmed by casualties, grim videos of open-air mortuaries dotted by long lines of black body bags, voice notes sent to journalists at the BBC Persian Service expressing shock and fear ... The government doesn’t deny the bloodshed; state TV is also airing images of

¹¹³ BBC News, [Huge anti-government protests in Tehran and other Iranian cities ...](#), 8 January 2026

¹¹⁴ RFE/RL, [Iranian Doctor Says Security Forces ‘Shooting Inside’ Hospitals](#), 13 January 2026

¹¹⁵ RFE/RL, [Iranian Doctor Says Security Forces ‘Shooting Inside’ Hospitals](#), 13 January 2026

¹¹⁶ BBC News, [... medics describe hospitals overwhelmed with dead and injured ...](#), 10 January 2026

¹¹⁷ RFE/RL, [Iranian Protesters Remain On Streets ...](#), 11 January 2026

¹¹⁸ BBC News, [Iran warns it will retaliate if US attacks ...](#), updated 12 January 2026

¹¹⁹ BBC News, [‘They just kept killing’: Eyewitnesses describe deadly crackdown ...](#), 12 January 2026

makeshift mortuaries, even admitting some protesters have been killed.’¹²⁰

3.2.16 The 13 January 2026 Iran International article stated:

‘After cross-checking information obtained from reliable sources, including the Supreme National Security Council and the presidential office, the initial estimate by the Islamic Republic’s security institutions is that at least 12,000 people were killed in this nationwide killing.

‘From Sunday [11 January 2026], the volume of evidence and the convergence of accounts reached a point where a relatively accurate assessment became possible.

‘... Based on these reviews, we have concluded that:

‘In the largest killing in Iran’s contemporary history – carried out largely over two consecutive nights, Thursday and Friday, January 8 and 9 [2026] – at least 12,000 people were killed.

‘In terms of geographic scope, intensity of violence, and the number of deaths in a short time span, this killing is unprecedented in Iran’s history.

‘Based on information received, those killed were mainly shot by forces of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and the Basij.

‘This killing was fully organized, not the result of “sporadic” and “unplanned” clashes.

‘Information received from the Supreme National Security Council and the presidential office indicates that the killing was carried out on the direct order of Ali Khamenei, with the explicit knowledge and approval of the heads of all three branches of government, and with an order for live fire issued by the Supreme National Security Council.

‘Many of those killed were young people under the age of 30.

‘... It is clear that, under a communications blockade and without direct access to information, confirming a final figure will require further, detailed documentation.

‘Experience in recent years shows that security institutions have consistently withheld information and avoided recording and announcing accurate figures for those killed.’¹²¹

3.2.17 The 13 January 2026 CBS News article stated:

‘A source inside Iran who was able to call out told CBS News on Tuesday [13 January 2026] that activist groups working to compile a full death toll from the protests, based on reports from medical officials across the country, believed the toll was at least 12,000, and possibly as high as 20,000 ... CBS News has not been able to independently verify the massive death toll indicated by the source, which is some many times larger than the numbers reported by most activist groups independently in recent days — though those groups have always made it clear that their tallies are likely underestimated.’¹²²

3.2.18 The same article noted that some sources estimated that approximately

¹²⁰ BBC News, [Lyse Doucet: ... rulers face biggest challenge since 1979 revolution](#), 12 January 2026

¹²¹ Iran International, [At least 12,000 killed in Iran crackdown ...](#), 13 January 2026

¹²² CBS News, [Over 12,000 feared dead after Iran protests ...](#), 13 January 2026

2,000 people had been killed since the start of the protests, though it also stated: ‘... Even the lower death toll ... if confirmed, would surpass any officially reported casualty figure from past anti-regime protests in Iran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution ...’¹²³

3.2.19 In an undated article, Sky News stated:

‘Human rights organisations estimate that thousands have died, with some of the dead being verified through videos from morgues ... showing hundreds of body bags, some with names written on them ... Most of the deaths we have verified happened on 8 January [2026] - the day the internet was shut off. And people have been killed at protests all over the country ... In almost all the cases we have reviewed, it's clear that the vast majority of victims were killed by gunfire. But our reporting also reveals inconsistencies in how the regime is officially recording how they died.’¹²⁴

3.2.20 A BBC News article, updated on 14 January 2026, stated: ‘Authorities have cracked down violently. A range of weapons including water cannon, rubber bullets and live ammunition have been reportedly used against protesters. Medics said hospitals were “overwhelmed” with dead and injured.’¹²⁵

3.2.21 On 14 January 2026, AI published an article which stated:

‘According to evidence gathered by Amnesty International, security forces positioned on the streets and rooftops, including of residential buildings, mosques and police stations, have repeatedly fired rifles and shotguns loaded with metal pellets, targeting unarmed protesters frequently in their heads and torsos ... The evidence gathered by Amnesty International [which included the analysis of dozens of videos and photographs, text and voice messages shared by human rights defenders and journalists outside Iran, and other ‘informed sources’ both inside and outside Iran] points to a coordinated nationwide escalation in the security forces’ unlawful use of lethal force against mostly peaceful protesters and bystanders since the evening of 8 January [2026] ... According to video analysis and eyewitness accounts, security forces involved in the deadly crackdown include the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), including its Basij battalions, and various divisions of Iran’s police force, known by its Persian acronym FARAJA, as well as plain-clothes agents’¹²⁶

3.2.22 The same AI article referred to eyewitness accounts of security forces in the Razavi Khorasan province having used stun grenades and tear gas against protesters, including having fired tear gas inside people’s homes¹²⁷.

3.2.23 An RFE/RL article published on 15 January 2026 stated:

‘A journalist inside Iran who managed to send a report to RFE/RL’s Radio Farda on January 13 [2026] said a taxi driver they talked to spoke of security forces attacking medical centers, kidnapping wounded protesters, and killing those who could not be transported. His claims could not be independently verified by RFE/RL, but they do match up with human rights sources and other reports from inside the country about the severity of the crackdown on

¹²³ CBS News, [Over 12,000 feared dead after Iran protests ...](#), 13 January 2026

¹²⁴ Sky News, [How the Iran Uprising Unfolded and What Happened to the Victims ...](#), no date

¹²⁵ BBC News, [Why are there protests in Iran ...?](#), updated 14 January 2026

¹²⁶ AI, [Iran: Massacre of protesters demands global diplomatic action ...](#), 14 January 2026

¹²⁷ AI, [Iran: Massacre of protesters demands global diplomatic action ...](#), 14 January 2026

the protests and the “mass killing” of protesters.’¹²⁸

- 3.2.24 The Al Jazeera article, published on 16 January 2026, reported that the December 2025 / January 2026 wave of protests have ‘almost certainly’ been the most deadly in recent years¹²⁹.
- 3.2.25 An article published by HRW on 16 January 2026 which cited witness accounts and verified footage, including from morgues and cemeteries, referred to the ‘... the state’s heavily militarized response to the protests in Tehran on January 8, 9, and 10 [2026]’ and the ‘... wide-scale, unjustified use of lethal force resulting in mass killings of protesters and bystanders ...’ in several provinces in Iran¹³⁰.
- 3.2.26 The BBC News article published on 17 January 2026 stated: ‘Iran’s supreme leader has for the first time publicly acknowledged that thousands of people were killed during recent protests. In a speech on Saturday [17 January 2026], Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said thousands had been killed, “some in an inhuman, savage manner”, and blamed the US for the deaths.’¹³¹
- 3.2.27 The RFE/RL article of 17 January 2026 stated: ‘Eyewitnesses and medical professionals speaking to RFE/RL’s Radio Farda describe hospitals overwhelmed by patients suffering from severe gunshot wounds, particularly to the head, eyes, chest, and abdomen.’¹³²
- 3.2.28 A Reuters article, published on 19 January 2026, stated: ‘An Iranian official in the region said on Sunday [18 January 2026] the authorities had verified at least 5,000 people had been killed in protests in Iran, including about 500 security personnel ... The official, who declined to be named due to the sensitivity of the issue, also told Reuters some of the heaviest clashes and highest number of deaths were in the Iranian Kurdish areas in northwest Iran ... “The final toll is not expected to increase sharply,” the official said ...’¹³³
- 3.2.29 The ABC News article stated:
- ‘There are ... allegations that during the mass killing, some severely injured protesters were removed from hospitals and executed, according to activists and analysts. The accusations are based on videos that show bodies still intubated or with catheters, but with bullet wounds to the head.
- ‘Reviewing the pictures of the bodies ... an Iranian doctor, told ABC News that hospitals in Iran never send a body to the morgue without removing all medical tools and devices.
- ‘The Toronto-based Iranian doctor said that he had been in touch with doctors inside the country who reported security forces had raided hospitals and taken injured protesters.
- ‘Their accounts match videos verified by ABC News that shows security forces raiding hospitals in Ilam, a city in west Iran, during the early days of the protests.’¹³⁴

¹²⁸ RFE/RL, [US Sanctions Iranian Officials Over Brutal Crackdown ...](#), 15 January 2026

¹²⁹ Al Jazeera, [Iran in limbo: What’s next for country under internet blackout?](#), 16 January 2026

¹³⁰ HRW, [Iran: Growing Evidence of Countrywide Massacres](#), 16 January 2026

¹³¹ BBC News, [Iran supreme leader acknowledges thousands killed ...](#), 17 January 2026

¹³² RFE/RL, [Iranian Doctors, Witnesses Describe Heavy Casualties After Protests](#), 17 January 2026

¹³³ Reuters, [Iranian official says verified deaths in Iran protests ... at least 5,000](#), 19 January 2026

¹³⁴ ABC News, [Bloody crackdown appears to have quelled Iran protests for now](#), 19 January 2026

3.2.30 HRANA's update of 27 January 2026 stated:

'According to the latest aggregated data compiled by HRANA as of the end of the thirty-first day since the start of the protests, the total number of confirmed deaths has reached 6,221. Of these, 5,858 were protesters, 100 were children under the age of 18, 214 were forces affiliated with the government, and 49 were non-protester civilians. The number of deaths still under investigation has been reported as 17,091 ... The number of severely injured individuals stands at 11,017 ...'¹³⁵

[Back to Contents](#)

3.3 Arrests, detentions and charges

3.3.1 The RFE/RL article published on 1 January 2026 stated: 'Dozens of arrests were reported during the protests, although numbers could not immediately be determined. Iranian news agencies said that 30 people were detained in Tehran for "disturbing public order." Iranian authorities have yet to confirm the reports and RFE/RL's Radio Farda could not independently verify them.'¹³⁶

3.3.2 Reports of a rising number of arrests were made over the following days, with HRW reporting on 6 January 2026 that '... authorities have arrested and detained over a thousand people, including children as young as 14'¹³⁷, and BBC News reporting on the same date over 2,000 people arrested during the unrest (according to HRANA)¹³⁸.

3.3.3 The HRW article published on 6 January 2026 also stated: 'Torture and enforced disappearance have been reported.'¹³⁹ However, it did not provide any further information regarding the extent to which this was reported or may have occurred.

3.3.4 The joint AI and HRW article, published on 8 January 2026, stated:

'Security forces have arbitrarily arrested hundreds of protesters, including children as young as 14, during protest dispersals and nightly raids on homes. Some were taken from hospitals.

'The authorities subjected many to enforced disappearance and incommunicado detention, placing them at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

'The authorities have already broadcast coerced "confessions" of detainees. On 5 January 2026, Tasnim News, affiliated with the IRGC, aired "confessions" of an 18-year-old woman and 16-year-old girl, accusing them of "leading riots".'¹⁴⁰

3.3.5 An article that was updated by RFE/RL on 13 January 2026, referring to the judiciary making indictments against protesters, stated: 'Serious cases, including those charged with "waging war against God," an offense subject to the death penalty under Islamic law in Iran, would be prioritized, the

¹³⁵ HRANA, [Thirty-First Day Since the Start of the Protests ...](#), 27 January 2026

¹³⁶ RFE/RL, [Several Protesters Reported Dead In Iran As Anger Builds ...](#), 1 January 2026

¹³⁷ HRW, [Iranian Authorities Brutally Repressing Protests](#), 6 January 2026

¹³⁸ BBC News, [At least 36 people killed during Iran protests, rights group says](#), 6 January 2026

¹³⁹ HRW, [Iranian Authorities Brutally Repressing Protests](#), 6 January 2026

¹⁴⁰ AI, [Iran: Deaths and injuries rise ...](#), 8 January 2026

[Tasnim news] agency [which is close to the IRGC^{141 142}] said.¹⁴³

- 3.3.6 The CNN World article of 13 January 2026, referring to a video distributed by Iranian police, stated: ‘... [F]ootage showed a drone operator peering into residential windows to identify people chanting “death to the dictator,” followed by scenes of security officials marking buildings with warning stickers, and in some cases, arresting residents.’¹⁴⁴
- 3.3.7 The 13 January 2026 CBS News article, citing a source inside Iran, stated: ‘... [S]ecurity forces were visiting the many private hospitals across Tehran, threatening staff to hand over the names and addresses of those being treated for injuries sustained in the protests.’¹⁴⁵
- 3.3.8 A BBC News article published on 14 January 2026 stated: ‘... Iran's judiciary denied reports ... [that a] 26-year-old [Erfan Soltani, a man arrested in connection with the protests in Iran, see also paragraphs 3.4.1 to 3.4.5] was sentenced to death. Instead, the judiciary said Soltani faced security-related charges carrying prison terms only.’¹⁴⁶
- 3.3.9 A BBC News article published on 15 January 2026 stated: ‘... [A]rrests have continued across the country. Security forces and Revolutionary Guard intelligence units have detained activists, lawyers, and ordinary citizens.’¹⁴⁷
- 3.3.10 The RFE/RL article of 17 January 2026 stated:
‘Eyewitnesses and medical staff ... reported a heavy security presence at hospitals, with armed forces restricting access and, in some cases, detaining patients before treatment was completed. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi acknowledged on January 11 [2026] that some wounded individuals had been “finished off” by what he called “terrorists,” not security forces. Doctors warn that many injured protesters remain in hiding, avoiding hospitals out of fear of arrest. Untreated gunshot wounds and infections, they say, place these individuals at serious risk of death ...’¹⁴⁸
- 3.3.11 The ISW and CTP Iran update of 18 January 2026 stated: ‘The regime is conducting a large-scale arrest campaign following the protests ...’¹⁴⁹
- 3.3.12 The ABC News article of 19 January 2026, referring to the numbers of people reported by HRANA to have, at that time, been reported arrested since the protests began (24,669 including 2,107 injured protesters with serious wounds)¹⁵⁰, stated: ‘There are fears the arrests are just beginning as the regime moves to round up protesters, activists and independent analysts told ABC News. Injured people are frightened to visit hospitals or clinics because security officers are waiting for them there, according to [a Washington DC-based Iranian activist]’.¹⁵¹
- 3.3.13 An article published by HRANA on 21 January 2026 provided several

¹⁴¹ RFE/RL, [... Death Toll In Protests Mounts](#), updated 13 January 2026

¹⁴² BBC Monitoring, [Media Guide: Iran](#) (Main news agencies) (via subscription), 16 January 2025

¹⁴³ RFE/RL, [... Death Toll In Protests Mounts](#), updated 13 January 2026

¹⁴⁴ CNN World, [Iran makes high-tech additions to ... playbook for crushing protests](#), 13 January 2026

¹⁴⁵ CBS News, [Over 12,000 feared dead after Iran protests ...](#), 13 January 2026

¹⁴⁶ BBC News, [... Iranian protester who reportedly had execution postponed ...](#), 14 January 2026

¹⁴⁷ BBC News, [Iran authorities demanding large sums for return of ... bodies ...](#), 15 January 2026

¹⁴⁸ RFE/RL, [Iranian Doctors, Witnesses Describe Heavy Casualties After Protests](#), 17 January 2026

¹⁴⁹ ISW and CTP, [Iran Update, January 18, 2026](#), 18 January 2026

¹⁵⁰ ABC News, [Bloody crackdown appears to have quelled Iran protests for now](#), 19 January 2026

¹⁵¹ ABC News, [Bloody crackdown appears to have quelled Iran protests for now](#), 19 January 2026

individual examples of protesters who were reported by state media to have been arrested for setting fire to buildings in Qom, Sabzevar and Shahreza. The article stated: 'In these reports, videos of the "confessions" of two of the detainees were published, although it remains unclear under what circumstances they were recorded.'¹⁵²

- 3.3.14 The same HRANA article also stated: 'In another report, the state broadcaster announced the arrest of 162 citizens by security forces in the cities of Shiraz, Marvdasht, Kovar, Kazerun, Nourabad, Pasargad, Abadeh, Fasa, Darab, and Neyriz. This report has accused the detained individuals of damaging banks and government centers and property, including municipal buildings. These reports do not mention the identities of the detainees or their place of detention.'¹⁵³
- 3.3.15 The 22 January 2026 HRANA article reported the arrest of 11 people over 'recent days' in connection with the nationwide protests, including a lawyer in Shiraz, a 16-year-old teenager in Yasuj, and a student activist¹⁵⁴. The article stated: 'These citizens were transferred to undisclosed locations after their arrest.'¹⁵⁵ The same article noted there had been no information about the status or condition of a teacher from Izeh who was arrested more than 3 weeks prior, nor about several other individuals who had been detained for more than 2 weeks in the cities of Dehghan and Ilam¹⁵⁶.
- 3.3.16 Another HRANA article, also published on 22 January 2026, stated: 'According to Tasnim News Agency, 33 citizens, described as "active leaders affiliated with monarchist groups on Instagram and Telegram," who had issued calls on January 6, 2026, were arrested. It is also claimed that these individuals had formed 50 groups and teams in Kerman, Rafsanjan, and Sirjan, and that judicial cases have been opened against 125 people linked to these groups.'¹⁵⁷
- 3.3.17 The same HRANA article also referred to IRIB, Iran's state broadcaster, having published 'videos of forced confessions' of a further 7 individuals in Abadan and Tehran, arrested for having set fire to police stations¹⁵⁸.
- 3.3.18 A BBC News article published on 23 January 2026 stated: 'According to several health workers who spoke to the BBC, hospitals are monitored and controlled by security forces, and people with gunshot wounds in Isfahan are being arrested.'¹⁵⁹
- 3.3.19 HRANA's update of 27 January 2026 stated: 'The total number of arrests has reached 42,324 ... and 261 cases of forced confessions being broadcast have been recorded. Additionally, 11,026 people have been summoned to security institutions.'¹⁶⁰
- 3.3.20 The same HRANA updated stated:
'Aggregated reports from the days following the nationwide protests indicate

¹⁵² HRANA, [Arrest of 169 People in Various Cities Across Iran](#), 21 January 2026

¹⁵³ HRANA, [Arrest of 169 People in Various Cities Across Iran](#), 21 January 2026

¹⁵⁴ HRANA, [Nationwide Protests: Report on the Arrest of 11 Citizens ...](#), 22 January 2026

¹⁵⁵ HRANA, [Nationwide Protests: Report on the Arrest of 11 Citizens ...](#), 22 January 2026

¹⁵⁶ HRANA, [Nationwide Protests: Report on the Arrest of 11 Citizens ...](#), 22 January 2026

¹⁵⁷ HRANA, [Nationwide Protests: At Least 40 Citizens Arrested ...](#), 22 January 2026

¹⁵⁸ HRANA, [Nationwide Protests: At Least 40 Citizens Arrested ...](#), 22 January 2026

¹⁵⁹ BBC News, [... Eyewitness tells of Iran protest crackdown](#), 23 January 2026

¹⁶⁰ HRANA, [Thirty-First Day Since the Start of the Protests ...](#), 27 January 2026

that the wave of arrests and security crackdowns has continued across various cities, remaining scattered yet widespread ... [The] geographic spread, alongside the large number of cases, points to the continuation of a pattern of “post-event cleansing” (arrests carried out after street protests subside) aimed at controlling social networks and local environments.

‘On a broader scale, reports have emerged of the arrest of 224 citizens, the majority of whom were detained in Qazvin. According to these reports, 219 individuals were arrested under the label of “leaders of the protests,” with additional cases reported in Qarchak and Shahroud. Alongside the arrests, there is also evidence of the detention of injured protesters, including reports indicating that some individuals were arrested while their medical treatment had not yet been completed, a pattern of conduct that violates the most fundamental human rights, including the right to medical care.

‘The holding of the “first court hearing related to the January protests” in Malard is regarded as the starting point of a broad series of trials. In this case, the subject of the court session was announced as the death of a FARJA (Law Enforcement Command) officer, and images from the hearing were also published. [A named man] has been introduced as the primary defendant in the case. The conduct of the trial, including statements by the court-appointed lawyer made against the interests of the defendant, has prompted criticism from human rights organizations over the lack of fair trial standards. This case also involves another defendant.’¹⁶¹

- 3.3.21 The HRANA update also referred to the reported arrests of several healthcare workers for providing aid to injured protesters and the threatening of others with accusations such as ‘helping injured individuals escape from the hospital’¹⁶².

[Back to Contents](#)

3.4 Death sentences and executions

- 3.4.1 The article that was updated by RFE/RL on 13 January 2026 stated: ‘... [R]ights groups said on January 13 [2026] that Iran is set to execute the first protester charged in the unrest. The groups, including Norway-based Iran Human Rights and Hengaw, quoted sources as saying that 26-year-old Erfan Soltani, charged with “waging war against God” due to his role in protests that have rocked the country since late last month, would be executed on January 14 [2026], six days after his arrest.’¹⁶³
- 3.4.2 A BBC News article published on 14 January 2026 stated: ‘On Tuesday [13 January 2026], one of Soltani’s relatives told BBC Persian that a court had issued a death sentence “in an extremely rapid process, within just two days”.’¹⁶⁴
- 3.4.3 However, the same BBC News article also stated: ‘A human rights group has said a man [Erfan Soltani] arrested in connection with protests in Iran has had his execution postponed, while the Iranian judiciary has denied reports he has been sentenced to death ... according to information obtained

¹⁶¹ HRANA, [Thirty-First Day Since the Start of the Protests ...](#), 27 January 2026

¹⁶² HRANA, [Thirty-First Day Since the Start of the Protests ...](#), 27 January 2026

¹⁶³ RFE/RL, [... Death Toll In Protests Mounts](#), updated 13 January 2026

¹⁶⁴ BBC News, [... Iranian protester who reportedly had execution postponed ...](#), 14 January 2026

through relatives, his execution was postponed.’¹⁶⁵

3.4.4 A BBC News article dated 15 January 2026 stated:

‘Trump had earlier threatened “very strong action” against Iran if the government executed protesters, after reports emerged that a 26-year-old man who had been arrested during the height of the demonstrations [Erfan Soltani] had been sentenced to death.

‘... Speaking from the White House, Trump said his administration had been told “on good authority” that “the killing in Iran is stopping, and there’s no plan for executions”.

‘When questioned by a reporter, Trump said that “very important sources on the other side” had informed him of the developments, adding that he hoped the reports were true.’¹⁶⁶

3.4.5 A RFE/RL article published on 15 January 2026 stated: ‘Iran’s judiciary said on January 15 [2026] that the charges against Soltani, who is being held at the central penitentiary in the city of Karaj, do not carry a death sentence. The Iranian Judiciary Media Center said reports Soltani faced execution were “fabricated” and that he is charged with “gathering information and colluding against the country’s internal security and propaganda activities against the regime.”’¹⁶⁷

3.4.6 The same RFE/RL article also stated: ‘On January 15 [2026], White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said that “800 executions that were scheduled and supposed to take place” were halted.’¹⁶⁸

3.4.7 The ABC News article, published on 19 January 2026, stated:

‘Trump applauded the Iranian regime for what he claims is the cancellation of over 800 scheduled hangings on Thursday [15 January 2026], according to what he said “are very important sources on the other side.” ... The head of Iran’s judiciary, Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejei, had suggested Wednesday [16 January 2026] that there would be expedited trials and executions for those who have been arrested in the nationwide protests. The Iranian government has yet to comment on Trump’s claim that the scheduled hangings have been halted.’¹⁶⁹

3.4.8 The RFE/RL article published on 19 January 2026 stated: ‘Trump ... threatened to take “very strong action” if Iran hanged protesters amid reports of impending executions.’¹⁷⁰ It also stated: ‘He subsequently said he was holding off an attack after Iran had canceled 800 executions, although Tehran has not confirmed that number or said that hangings had been permanently called off. In response, Tehran’s hard-line rulers have renewed their hostile rhetoric and threatened to hand out the “severest punishments,” potentially including executions, against the protesters.’¹⁷¹

3.4.9 The ISW and CTP Iran update of 18 January 2026 noted that, as Iran carried out a large-scale arrest campaign in the aftermath of the protests, it was ‘...

¹⁶⁵ BBC News, [... Iranian protester who reportedly had execution postponed ...](#), 14 January 2026

¹⁶⁶ BBC News, [Trump told ‘killing has stopped’ in Iran after violent ... crackdown](#), 15 January 2026

¹⁶⁷ RFE/RL, [US Sanctions Iranian Officials Over Brutal Crackdown ...](#), 15 January 2026

¹⁶⁸ RFE/RL, [US Sanctions Iranian Officials Over Brutal Crackdown ...](#), 15 January 2026

¹⁶⁹ ABC News, [Bloody crackdown appears to have quelled Iran protests for now](#), 19 January 2026

¹⁷⁰ RFE/RL, [Iran Mulls Return Of Internet As Extent Of Deadly Crackdown ...](#), 19 January 2026

¹⁷¹ RFE/RL, [Iran Mulls Return Of Internet As Extent Of Deadly Crackdown ...](#), 19 January 2026

signaling its plans to execute some of the arrested.’¹⁷²

[Back to Contents](#)

4. Demonstrations in the UK

4.1.1 An article published by The Times of Israel on 4 January 2026 stated:

‘Members of the Iranian diaspora rallied in London on Saturday [3 January 2026] in support of protesters in Iran ... Around 100 pro-democracy demonstrators gathered outside Downing Street for the rally organized by the Association of Anglo-Iranian Women in the UK, waving Iranian flags, chanting slogans and listening to speeches by speakers. A separate, similarly sized protest was held nearby in support of the late deposed Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, and his US-based son, Reza Pahlavi.’¹⁷³

4.1.2 The BBC News article, updated on 12 January 2026, stated: ‘In the UK, videos shared on social media appear to show protesters removing Iran’s flag from a balcony on its London embassy on both Saturday and Sunday [10 and 11 January 2026].’¹⁷⁴

4.1.3 On 10 January 2026, The Guardian stated:

‘A protester has climbed on to the balcony of the Iranian embassy in central London and pulled down the country’s flag during an anti-regime demonstration. Social media footage appeared to show a man replacing the flag with the pre-Islamic revolution lion and sun flag, often used by opposition groups in the country. The Iranian embassy later posted a picture on its X account of the flag back in place with the caption “Iran’s flag is flying high”. The Metropolitan police said an estimated 500 to 1,000 people attended the protest on Saturday [10 January 2026] at its peak in Kensington.’¹⁷⁵

4.1.4 On 11 January 2026, The London Standard reported, of the protests on 10 January, that: ‘Protestors ordered for the [Iranian] embassy [in London] to be closed, branding it a “terrorist factory”. Images have emerged of people throwing things towards the embassy and protestors burning pictures of Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.’¹⁷⁶

4.1.5 The article also stated: ‘Thousands of people joined a huge demonstration in London today [11 January 2026] protesting against the Iranian regime ... The rally ... started at the Iranian embassy in South Kensington before people walked to Whitehall to demand the [UK] government to be more involved.’¹⁷⁷

4.1.6 An article published on 17 January 2026 by Sky News, quoting a Met Police spokesperson, stated: ‘... “During a protest at the Iranian embassy [in London] on Friday, 16 January [2026], a protester illegally accessed private property and climbed across multiple balconies on to the terrace of the embassy and removed its flag. An effort was made by a group of protesters to prevent his lawful arrest, and dispersal tactics were used by officers to

¹⁷² ISW and CTP, [Iran Update, January 18, 2026](#), 18 January 2026

¹⁷³ The Times of Israel, [... Iranian diaspora in UK rallies to support protesters in Iran](#), 4 January 2026

¹⁷⁴ BBC News, [Iran warns it will retaliate if US attacks ...](#), updated 12 January 2026

¹⁷⁵ The Guardian, [Protester pulls down national flag from Iranian embassy ...](#), 10 January 2026

¹⁷⁶ The London Standard, [Thousands join rally in London to protest Iranian regime](#), 11 January 2026

¹⁷⁷ The London Standard, [Thousands join rally in London to protest Iranian regime](#), 11 January 2026

ensure the safety of those concerned and prevent further disorder.¹⁷⁸ The article noted that four police officers sustained minor injuries, while social media footage appeared to show that protesters were also hurt. A total of 14 people were arrested¹⁷⁹.

- 4.1.7 For more information about sur place demonstrators, including their treatment on return to Iran, see Country Policy and Information Note, [Iran: Social media, surveillance and sur place activities](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

¹⁷⁸ Sky News, [‘Violent disorder’ at Iran’s London embassy ...](#), 17 January 2026

¹⁷⁹ Sky News, [‘Violent disorder’ at Iran’s London embassy ...](#), 17 January 2026

Research methodology

The country of origin information (COI) in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual](#), 2024. Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources

Commentary may be provided on source(s) and information to help readers understand the meaning and limits of the COI.

Wherever possible, multiple sourcing is used and the COI compared to ensure that it is accurate and balanced, and provides a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of the issues relevant to this note at the time of publication.

The inclusion of a source is not, however, an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote.

Full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

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[Back to Contents](#)

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Version control and feedback

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- valid from **4 February 2026**

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

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[Back to Contents](#)

Feedback to the Home Office

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[Back to Contents](#)

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support them in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

[Back to Contents](#)