



**Iran Crisis Update, October 7**  
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**October 7, 5:00 pm ET**

**The Iran Crisis Updates are produced by the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute with support from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW).**

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**Regime disinformation about protester deaths may further stoke anti-regime sentiment and even revitalize anti-regime demonstrations.** The regime released a report on October 8 alleging that Mahsa Amini died from an underlying illness, refuting evidence that she died from police brutality.<sup>1</sup> Iranian authorities are trying to deflect blame for Amini's death. Regime-affiliated media outlets and officials similarly claimed that Sarina Esmail Zadeh and Nika Shakarami—two teenage protesters brutally killed by security forces--committed suicide.<sup>2</sup> Iranian social media users are increasingly commemorating Esmail Zadeh and Shakarami, who are serving as secular martyrs around whom protesters can rally.<sup>3</sup>

**This blatant disinformation could increase turnout for planned university protests on October 8.** Iranian students and some faculty members planned demonstrations on university campuses throughout Iran.<sup>4</sup> Social media users circulated calls for unrest on October 8, and protests could easily expand to include other disaffected citizens.<sup>5</sup>

### **Supreme Leader Succession**

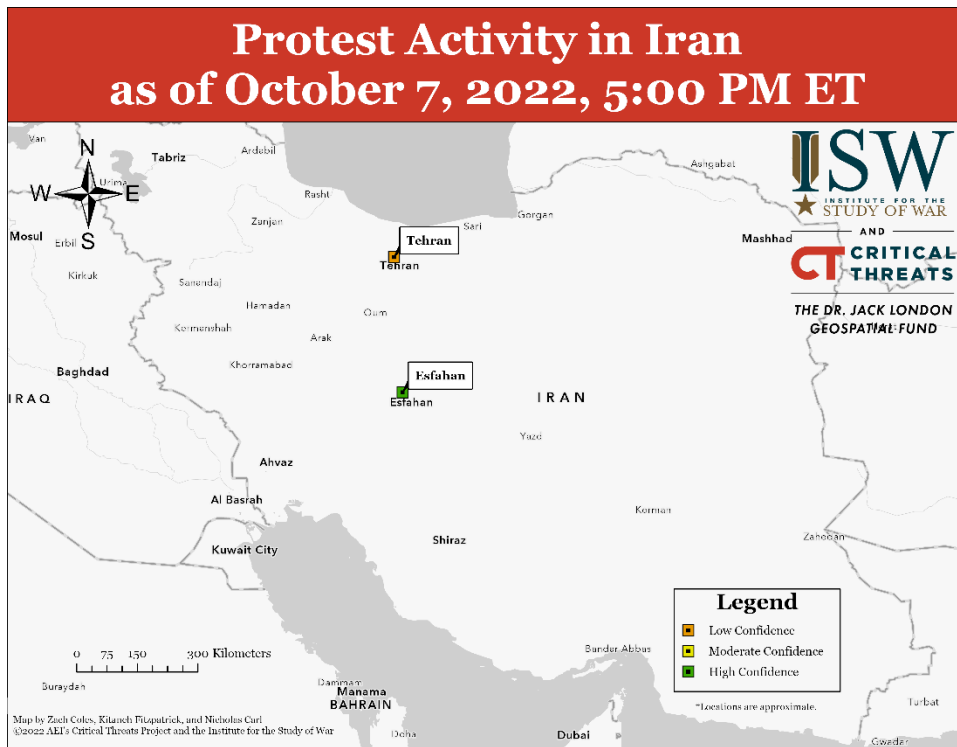
**There was nothing significant to report today.**

### **Anti-Regime Protests**

**Anti-regime protests occurred in at least two cities in two provinces on October 7.** The regime's ongoing internet and telecommunication restrictions are severely limiting the open-source information available on anti-regime demonstrations. CTP assesses that protests occurred in the following locations:

1 Critical Threats Project at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War 2022.

- Esfahan City, Esfahan Province
- Tehran City, Tehran Province



**Law Enforcement Commander Brigadier General Hossein Ashtari met with senior Iranian cleric Ayatollah Naser Makarem Shirazi in Qom to discuss the protests.**<sup>6</sup> Shirazi largely condemned the protests but noted that some demonstrators have legitimate economic grievances. Shirazi is a prominent religious leader among the Iranian clerical establishment.

Ashtari may have met with Shirazi as part of a regime effort to garner support among the clerical establishment. An unidentified source told *Iran International* that Ashtari conveyed plans to Shirazi to restart morality patrols around the middle of the Persian calendar month *Aban* (October 23-November 21, 2022).<sup>7</sup> The regime may seek to cultivate support among the clerical establishment as it suppresses protests and restarts morality patrols. CTP previously reported that some senior clerics have criticized the regime more openly in recent weeks, and there are rumors of dissent among the students and teachers at major seminaries.<sup>8</sup>

**President Ebrahim Raisi ordered Interior Minister IRGC Brigadier General Ahmad Vahidi to investigate the deadly clashes between protesters and security forces in Zahedan on September 30.**<sup>9</sup> Vahidi will prepare a report on the clashes. Raisi entrusting Vahidi with this task highlights the extent to which IRGC officers

will continue controlling regime narratives on the protests. Vahidi was the first commander of the IRGC Quds Force, serving from 1988 to 1998.

**The US sanctioned seven Iranian political and security officials responsible for the regime crackdown and internet censorship on October 6.**<sup>10</sup> The US targeted:

- Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi;
- Information and Communications Technology Minister Isah Zareh Pour;
- IRGC Political Affairs Deputy Yadollah Javani;
- IRGC Sarallah Operational Headquarters Deputy Commander Hossein Nejat;
- LEC Deputy Commander Hossein Sajedi Nia;
- LEC Cyber Police Chief Vahid Mohammad Naser Majid; and
- LEC Tehran Provincial Police Chief Hossein Rahimi.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland announced that plan to expand sanctions against the IRGC.<sup>11</sup> They also stated that they would ban top IRGC leaders from Canada. Freeland described the IRGC as a “terrorist organization.”

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

**Iranian proxies echoed Iranian regime narratives that denied Mahsa Amini died from injuries inflicted by security forces.** IRGC, Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) and Iraqi proxy Asaib Ahl al-Haq media channels repeated the Iranian regime’s claim that Mahsa Amini died due to complications from a prior illness.<sup>12</sup> LH media channels also emphasized Iranian regime allegations that the US and other Western countries intend to incite riots with false narratives about Amini’s death and additional sanctions against Iranian officials.<sup>13</sup>

**The IRGC attacked anti-regime Kurdish militant positions in Iraqi Kurdistan for the twelfth consecutive day.** The IRGC shelled positions near Mount Sakran, Choman District, Erbil Province.<sup>14</sup> IRGC Telegram channels also claimed the IRGC targeted anti-regime Kurdish militants with rockets in “the border areas” of West Azerbaijan Province.<sup>15</sup> Iranian state media did not corroborate the claim.

**Several dozen Iraqi protesters gathered in front of the Iranian embassy in Baghdad to protest Iranian attacks into Iraqi Kurdistan.**<sup>16</sup> The demonstration precedes the Iraqi parliament’s October 8 session to discuss the issue.

**Iran may co-opt Houthi grievances to encourage the Houthis to attack Saudi Arabia from Yemen in retaliation for the role Iranian officials claim Saudi**

**Arabia has played in stoking protests.**<sup>17</sup> The civil war truce in Yemen lapsed on October 2, though the UN is still attempting to extend the truce and the Houthis have not yet resumed drone and missile attacks into Saudi Arabia.<sup>18</sup> The Houthis have threatened to attack Saudi and Emirati oil facilities in recent days if Saudi Arabia and the UAE fail to meet the Houthis' demands to extend the truce.<sup>19</sup> Iran has previously encouraged Houthi attacks against Gulf states in response to regional dynamics, such as cooperation with Israel.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1401/07/15/2784677/%D9%BE%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%87-%D9%85%D9%87%D8%B3%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%85%DB%8C%D9%86%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D9%BE%D8%B2%D8%B4%DA%A9%DB%8C-%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86%DB%8C-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D8%B7%D9%88%D8%B1-%D8%AF%D9%82%DB%8C%D9%82-%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%B1%D8%B3%DB%8C-%D8%B4%D8%AF%D9%87-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA-%D8%AA%D8%B4%D8%B1%DB%8C%D8%AD-%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%AA-%D9%81%D9%88%D8%AA-%D9%85%D9%87%D8%B3%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%85%DB%8C%D9%86%DB%8C-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D8%B2%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%87-%D8%AA%D8%B1>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mehrnews.com/amp/5603744/; https://www.hamshahrionline.com/ir/news/710534/%D8%AF%D9%88-%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%B6%DB%8C%D9%87-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%87-%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%AA-%D9%81%D9%88%D8%AA-%D9%86%DB%8C%DA%A9%D8%A7-%D8%B4%D8%A7%DA%A9%D8%B1%D9%85%DB%8C-%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D8%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA-%DB%8C%DA%A9%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%DA%A9%D8%A7%D8%B1%DA%AF%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86>

<sup>3</sup> <https://twitter.com/SamRasoulpour/status/1578091019312168960>;  
[https://twitter.com/alikarimi\\_ak8/status/1577942493173268480](https://twitter.com/alikarimi_ak8/status/1577942493173268480);  
<https://twitter.com/Vahid/status/1577874939188854784>;  
[https://twitter.com/reza\\_shkv/status/1577862530143248384?s=20&t=PZpvYAS4dGhyinA0BsJKeA](https://twitter.com/reza_shkv/status/1577862530143248384?s=20&t=PZpvYAS4dGhyinA0BsJKeA);  
<https://twitter.com/MrMamoli/status/1577225790496059392?s=20&t=PZpvYAS4dGhyinA0BsJKeA>

<sup>4</sup> <https://twitter.com/IranIntlbrk/status/1578013814292942848>;  
<https://twitter.com/IranIntlbrk/status/1577971061160828928>

<sup>5</sup> <https://twitter.com/DTehran/status/1578372816860512257>;  
<https://twitter.com/IranNW/status/1578365912037498880>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1401/07/15/2784475>

<sup>7</sup> <https://twitter.com/IranIntlbrk/status/1578351080236150787>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-2>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.president.ir/fa/140009>

<sup>10</sup> <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0994>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/canada-ban-irans-irgc-leaders-entry-expand-sanctions-2022-10-07/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.alahednews.com/lb/article.php?id=46549&cid=116>; <https://www.almanar.com.lb/10012950>; <https://t.me/maymun5/10392>; <https://t.me/SEPAHCYBERY/53587>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.alahednews.com/lb/article.php?id=46524&cid=116>;

<sup>14</sup> <https://twitter.com/K24English/status/1578367431143088129?s=20&t=YYP7Z2kt8z07yWvs2OytMw>

<sup>15</sup> <https://t.me/SEPAHCYBERY/53582>; [https://t.me/Sepah\\_Ir/70435](https://t.me/Sepah_Ir/70435)

<sup>16</sup> <https://shafaq.com/en/Iraq-News/Dozens-protest-in-front-of-Iranian-Embassy-in-Baghdad>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-6>

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<sup>18</sup> <https://english.aawsat.com/home/article/3910831/un-chief-urges-yemen-rivals-no-new-violence-and-renew-truce> and <https://osesgy.unmissions.org/statement-un-special-envoy-negotiations-extend-and-expand-nationwide-truce-yemen>

<sup>19</sup> [https://marebpress.net/news\\_details.php?lang=arabic&sid=187684](https://marebpress.net/news_details.php?lang=arabic&sid=187684) and <https://www.alalam.ir/news/6385308> and

<https://twitter.com/army21ye/status/1576620949561954304?s=20&t=Qlry9diYvDU8P7GVBd-Xiw> and <https://twitter.com/army21ye/status/1576623634726400001?s=20&t=Qlry9diYvDU8P7GVBd-Xiw>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/january-2022-map-update-al-houthi-attacks-on-saudi-arabia-and-the-uae>