



## Iran Crisis Update, December 1

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**Protesters in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province rhetorically defended prominent Sunni cleric Moulana Abdol Hamid against the regime on December 1, underscoring the dilemma the regime faces in its protest crackdown.** Protesters gathered and erected a large poster of Abdol Hamid in a city square.<sup>1</sup> The poster read that Abdol Hamid is the protesters' "red line," implying that they will not tolerate the regime arresting him or suppressing his message. The protesters may be responding to the purported internal regime memo that the Black Reward hacker group released on November 30.<sup>2</sup> The memo reported that Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei tried to discredit and threatened to arrest Abdol Hamid for his role in inspiring protests, although CTP cannot verify these claims. Abdol Hamid's message is seemingly resonating with a growing number of Iranians, especially in the Iranian Sunni community. Any regime action to silence him risks inflaming protests and anti-regime frustrations further. The regime may target individuals close to Abdol Hamid as a less escalatory step to silence him. The protestors today posed an additional dilemma for the regime, however, since failure to act against Abdol Hamid after the erection of the poster could make it appear that the regime was daunted by the protester threats and thus encourage similar defiance and threats elsewhere.

**The Raisi administration may be conducting a purge of local officials across Iran to install more loyal cadres.** Parliamentarian Jalal Mahmoud Zadeh accused President Ebrahim Raisi and Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi of conducting this purge in some towns such as Mahabad, West Azerbaijan Province on December 1.<sup>3</sup> Raisi has historically used his authorities in different regime positions to purge political opponents.<sup>4</sup> Mahmoud Zadeh represents Mahabad in Parliament and has previously criticized the security forces' crackdown there.<sup>5</sup> The Islamic

Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) deployed conventional ground units to violently suppress protesters in Mahabad on November 19, as CTP previously reported.<sup>6</sup>

The Raisi administration may be trying to remove local officials who opposed the brutality of the regime crackdown. IRGC-affiliated *Fars News Agency* reported on October 19 that two percent of arrested protesters were government employees.<sup>7</sup>

### **Key Takeaways**

- **Protesters in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province rhetorically defended prominent Sunni cleric Moulana Abdol Hamid against the regime.**
- **The Raisi administration may be conducting a purge of local officials across Iran to install more loyal cadres.**
- **At least five protests took place in four cities across four provinces.**
- **Neighborhood youth groups disseminated instructions on how to prevent state security services from collecting intelligence on protesters in preparation for the planned protests on December 5-7.**

### **Anti-Regime Protests**

**At least five protests took place in four cities across four provinces on December 1.** CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the following locations:

#### **Esfahan City, Esfahan Province<sup>8</sup>**

- Size: Medium
- Demographic: Mourners
- Notes: Commemoration ceremony for Arshiya Imam Ghloi Zadeh, a 16-year-old boy who reportedly killed himself after being arrested and released for participating in anti-regime protests.

#### **Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province<sup>9</sup>**

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Al Zahra Hospital medical students and professors

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

- Size: Small
- Demographic: Sunni Cleric Moulana Abdol Hamid supporters
- Notes: Protesters stood adjacent to a banner including Abdol Hamid and the slogan “Abdol Hamid is our red line.”

CTP assesses with low confidence that protests occurred in the following locations on December 1:

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

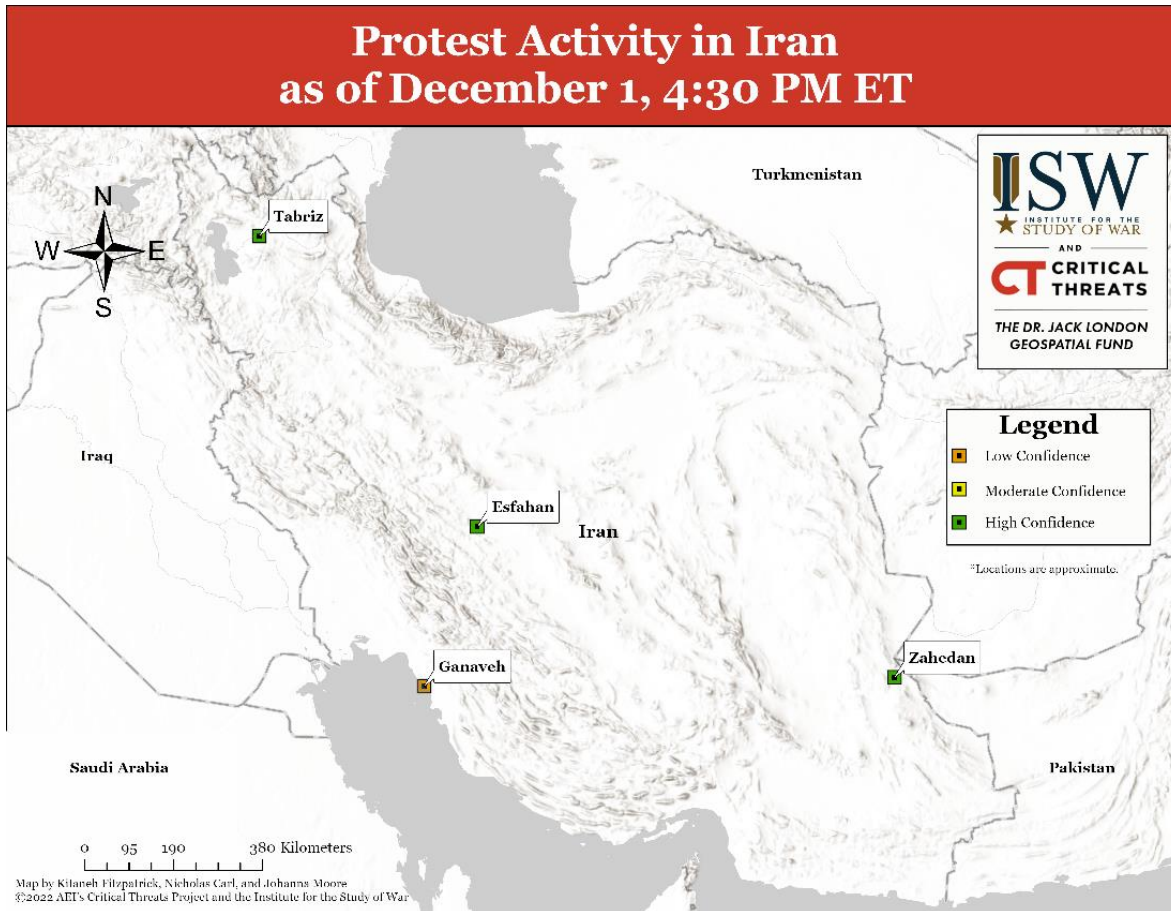
- Size: Small
- Demographic: Esfahan University of Technology Students

#### **Ganaveh, Bushehr Province<sup>12</sup>**

- Size: Small

- Demographic: Workers
- Notes: Possibly old footage; only one clip of protest circulating on social media

**Note: CTP defines small protests as fewer than 100 individuals, medium protests as between 100 and 1,000, and large protests as over one thousand.**



**Neighborhood youth groups disseminated instructions on how to prevent state security services from collecting intelligence on protesters in preparation for the planned protests on December 5-7.** The Karaj group advised protesters to clear their cellphones and electronic devices of information related to the protests and relevant contacts, place their cellphones on airplane mode, and password-protect their Instagram accounts.<sup>13</sup> The Mashhad Neighborhood Youth called on its “operational teams” to destroy CCTV cameras to prevent the state security services from using them to identify protesters.<sup>14</sup> The Mashhad Neighborhood Youth has repeatedly issued guidance and instructions to these operational teams since November 2022, implying some level of organization within this particular group.<sup>15</sup>

**President Ebrahim Raisi traveled to Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province and met with local religious leaders, among others, on December 1.**<sup>16</sup> His visit suggests that Raisi and his administration concluded that the unrest in Sanandaj had subsided enough to allow a safe trip. Raisi’s travel is his first to Kurdistan Province since protests began on September 16.

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

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

- <sup>1</sup> [https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/159832555128143873?s=20&t=99mUNZNkzFma8WL\\_VKrU6Q](https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/159832555128143873?s=20&t=99mUNZNkzFma8WL_VKrU6Q)
- <sup>2</sup> <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-november-30>
- <sup>3</sup> <https://eslahatnews dot com/%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%AA-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A7%D8%AE%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AC-%DA%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%87-%D9%86%DB%8C%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%B4%D9%87%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C-%DA%A9%D9%88%DA%86%DA%A9-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA>
- <sup>4</sup> <https://www.criticalthreats.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Whatever-it-takes-to-end-it.pdf>
- <sup>5</sup> [https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-november-21#\\_edn4c076172923f4af20320503a7d210f978](https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-november-21#_edn4c076172923f4af20320503a7d210f978)
- <sup>6</sup> <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-november-19>
- <sup>7</sup> <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-19>
- <sup>8</sup> <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/159838511128571911?s=20&t=x3JSUniNfegNb3Vv2CCwOg> ; [https://twitter.com/RadioFarda\\_/status/1598412314465763329?s=20&t=x3JSUniNfegNb3Vv2CCwOg](https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1598412314465763329?s=20&t=x3JSUniNfegNb3Vv2CCwOg) ; [https://twitter.com/Mojtabapacino/status/1597500883926818816?s=20&t=IGQy\\_bZmc5kQWNYVoLH35W](https://twitter.com/Mojtabapacino/status/1597500883926818816?s=20&t=IGQy_bZmc5kQWNYVoLH35W)
- <sup>9</sup> [https://twitter.com/RadioFarda\\_/status/1598338165626048513?s=20&t=99mUNZNkzFma8WL\\_VKrU6Q](https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1598338165626048513?s=20&t=99mUNZNkzFma8WL_VKrU6Q) ; <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1598329133125304321?s=20&t=MWGx3KUzzemL3z2tJhTIWw>
- <sup>10</sup> [https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/159832555128143873?s=20&t=99mUNZNkzFma8WL\\_VKrU6Q](https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/159832555128143873?s=20&t=99mUNZNkzFma8WL_VKrU6Q) ; [https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1598286684000378880?s=20&t=99mUNZNkzFma8WL\\_VKrU6Q](https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1598286684000378880?s=20&t=99mUNZNkzFma8WL_VKrU6Q) ; <https://twitter.com/IranIntl/status/1598316257752875009?s=20&t=IER-IqboGcFm59Yhvz2h1w>
- <sup>11</sup> [https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1598327086095237120?s=20&t=IoFaMa\\_nNLe5g62K8Pfrlg](https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1598327086095237120?s=20&t=IoFaMa_nNLe5g62K8Pfrlg) ; <https://twitter.com/VOAfarsi/status/1598393493444886528?s=20&t=yRvsnaOp3DHTC1S60Rc-uQ>
- <sup>12</sup> [https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1598372721519431690?s=20&t=99mUNZNkzFma8WL\\_VKrU6Q](https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1598372721519431690?s=20&t=99mUNZNkzFma8WL_VKrU6Q)
- <sup>13</sup> [https://twitter.com/javanane\\_k/status/1598340102085918720](https://twitter.com/javanane_k/status/1598340102085918720)
- <sup>14</sup> [https://twitter.com/Javanan\\_mashhad/status/1598287820690333699](https://twitter.com/Javanan_mashhad/status/1598287820690333699)
- <sup>15</sup> [https://twitter.com/search?q=%D8%AA%DB%8C%D9%85%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C%20%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%AA%DB%8C%20javanan&src=typed\\_query](https://twitter.com/search?q=%D8%AA%DB%8C%D9%85%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C%20%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%AA%DB%8C%20javanan&src=typed_query)
- <sup>16</sup> <http://www.president dot ir/fa/141119>; <http://www.president dot ir/fa/141111>