



Iran Crisis Update, January 12, 2023

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CTP recorded no protests in Iran for the second consecutive day on January 12, 2023. Some protest organizers called for demonstrations to commemorate executed protesters, but CTP did not record indications that these demonstrations materialized.¹ Regular expressions of anti-regime sentiment are continuing throughout Iran, however.² Protest groups have also called for demonstrations on January 19–20, which coincide with scheduled university exams. Gathering students in-person to take the tests could catalyze demonstrations. Regime officials have discussed issuing localized or possibly countrywide internet shutdowns on these dates ostensibly to prevent cheating on the exams, as CTP previously reported, and could use such measures to facilitate protest suppression.³

The judiciary may have executed Alireza Akbari—a former deputy defense minister and British-Iranian dual national. Iranian state media outlet, Jam-e Jam, reported that the regime hanged him the morning of January 12.⁴ No other state-run outlets or officials have confirmed this report at the time of this writing. The judiciary previously announced on January 11 that it had sentenced Akbari to death on espionage charges.⁵ IRGC-affiliated Tasnim News Agency published an article detailing accusations that Akbari provided information to British intelligence services.⁶ The article also implied that Akbari provided the information that helped Mossad assassinate senior Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhri Zadeh outside Tehran in November 2020.

There is a growing number of indications that some elements of the state security services are coopting Akbari's case to remove Ali Shamkhani as Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) secretary. Akbari was a deputy to Shamkhani when the latter was defense minister from 1997 to 2005, and some UK-based outlets have reported that the Akbari's sentencing was meant to politically damage Shamkhani.⁷ IRGC outlets speculated on January 12 that Shamkhani will soon leave his post.⁸ Nour News Agency—an Iranian outlet affiliated with the SNSC and Shamkhani—

published an article claiming that some officials are using Akbari's arrest to advance their own political agendas.⁹ The article also argued that one should not connect Akbari to his former colleagues, implying Shamkhani.

Key Takeaways

- **CTP recorded no protests in Iran for the second consecutive day on January 12, 2023.**
- **The judiciary may have executed Alireza Akbari—a former deputy defense minister and British-Iranian dual national.**
- **There is a growing number of indications that some elements of the state security services are coopting the case of Akbari to remove Ali Shamkhani as Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) secretary.**
- **Prominent Sunni cleric Moulana Abdol Hamid announced that he is engaging the regime on how to address his grievances.**
- **Unidentified gunmen clashed with the LEC at a checkpoint around Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province, killing one police officer and injuring two others.**

Anti-Regime Protests

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

January 13¹⁰

- Type: commemoration ceremony for killed protesters
- Location: Karaj, Alborz Province

January 19-20¹¹

- Type: demonstrations
- Location: countrywide

Prominent Sunni cleric Moulana Abdol Hamid announced on January 11 that he is engaging the regime on how to address his grievances.¹² He denied rumors that he sent a “negotiating team” to Tehran but stated that he sent “a few friends to Tehran to get a lawyer.” It is unclear to which rumors Abdol Hamid was referring. Abdol Hamid also emphasized the need for dialogue and negotiations and reiterated his criticism that the regime discriminates against its Baloch and Sunni citizens. He made these remarks during a meeting with local leaders from Zahedan and Khash. Abdol Hamid has become an increasingly outspoken regime critic in recent months and has used his weekly Friday sermons in Zahedan to inspire protests.

Unidentified gunmen clashed with the LEC at a checkpoint around Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province on January 12, killing one police officer and injuring two others.¹³

Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei discussed the protests in a meeting with eulogists and poets on January 12.¹⁴ Khamenei repeated his accusation that the US and its allies incited the protests to destabilize and divide Iran. Khamenei also claimed that foreign enemies sought to stoke infighting among regime officials.

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

Foreign Affairs Hossein Amir Abdollahian discussed cooperation against terrorism in a phone call with Acting Afghan Taliban Foreign Affairs Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi on January 12.¹⁵ Abdollahian condemned the Islamic State attacks in Shiraz in October 2022 and more recently in Kabul on January 11.

¹ https://t.me/javanane_a/65

² <https://twitter.com/ICHR/status/1613587621950771200?s=20&t=nEvptfP24HjX8ZeE1tJbFA>

³ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-january-4-2023>

⁴ <https://t.me/JamejamDaily/135540>

⁵ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-january-11-2023>

⁶ www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1401/10/22/2835977

⁷ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-january-11-2023>

⁸ <https://t.me/SEPAHCYBERY/60086>

⁹ www.nournews.ir/fa/news/125171

¹⁰ https://t.me/javanane_ka/524

¹¹ https://twitter.com/Javanan_gilan/status/1613173107316908032?s=20&t=oZsy55H foM3VXhy 9xNA

¹² www.abdolhamid.net/persian/2023/01/12/13256

¹³ <https://www.farsnews.ir/news/14011021001255>

¹⁴ www.farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=51746

¹⁵ www.irna.ir/news/84996908