

Iran Crisis Update, November 14

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Protest activity and strikes will likely increase from November 15 to 17. Protest coordinators and organizers have reiterated their calls for protests and countrywide strikes on these days and also urged citizens to not pay their utility bills.[1] Social media accounts published videos on November 14 claiming to depict protesters traveling from Tabriz, East Azerbaijan to Tehran to demonstrate and “conquer” Tehran.[2] Other protesters have used similar rhetoric in recent days, calling for citizens to conquer a main Tehran highway during the upcoming protests, as CTP previously reported.[3]

Social media accounts are increasingly framing the ongoing protests as the culmination of past protest waves in Iran, which could increase protest turnout. Protest videos circulating on social media have connected the planned protests on November 15 to previous events, especially protest waves, in the Islamic Republic’s history, such as the regime’s mass execution of political prisoners in 1988 and the crackdowns on the student protests in 1999, the Green Movement in 2009, and the Bloody Aban protests in 2019.[4] This broadening message could resonate across the many different socio-economic classes and communities that have led past protest movements in Iran.

Former reformist President Mohammad Khatami called for reform in an Instagram post on November 14.[5] Khatami stated that the current governance in Iran is “wrong and erroneous” and called on Iranian authorities to empathize with and understand protester demands, especially the demands of the Iranian youth. Khatami stated that the collapse of the Islamic Republic is “not possible nor desirable” but warned that the regime failing to reform could lead to “social collapse.” The Instagram post is Khatami’s first major comment about the protests after he briefly criticized violence following the Shiraz attack on October 26.[6] The regime has banned state media from mentioning Khatami since at least 2010 to censor him and diminish his public presence.[7]

The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) resumed attacks on anti-regime Kurdish militants in Iraqi Kurdistan on November 14 in retaliation for their perceived role in stoking protests. The IRGC conducted a drone and missile attack on the Zirgwez region of Sulaymaniyah Province, reportedly killing at least two Kurdish militants and injuring several others.[8] IRGC-affiliated media referenced the IRGC statement from September 28 vowing to attack Kurdish militant positions until they no longer threaten the regime in its reporting on the attack.[9] IRGC Ground Forces Commander Brigadier General Mohammad Pak Pour reiterated the regime claim that Kurdish militants in Iraqi Kurdistan are stoking the protests and conducting terrorist attacks in Iran on November 14.[10] The IRGC previously attacked Kurdish militant positions in Iraqi Kurdistan for 12 consecutive days from September 27 to October 7.[11]

Key Takeaways

- **Protest activity and strikes will likely increase from November 15 to 17.**
- **Social media accounts are increasingly framing the ongoing protests as the culmination of past protest waves in Iran, which could increase protest turnout.**
- **Former reformist President Mohammad Khatami called for reform in an Instagram post.**
- **The IRGC resumed attacks on anti-regime Kurdish militants in Iraqi Kurdistan in retaliation for their perceived role in stoking protests.**
- **At least 10 protests took place in nine cities across nine provinces.**
- **Hardline parliamentarian Morteza Mahmoudvand criticized the 227 parliamentarians who signed a letter calling for the harsh and rapid prosecution of arrested protesters.**
- **The *New York Times* published an article detailing human rights violations that the regime is committing against arrested children.**

Anti-Regime Protests

At least 10 protests took place in nine cities across nine provinces on November 14. Protests will likely increase in size and scale on November 15. CTP assesses with moderate to high confidence that protests occurred in the locations below.

Note: CTP is using asterisks to denote protests that included mourners commemorating killed protesters.

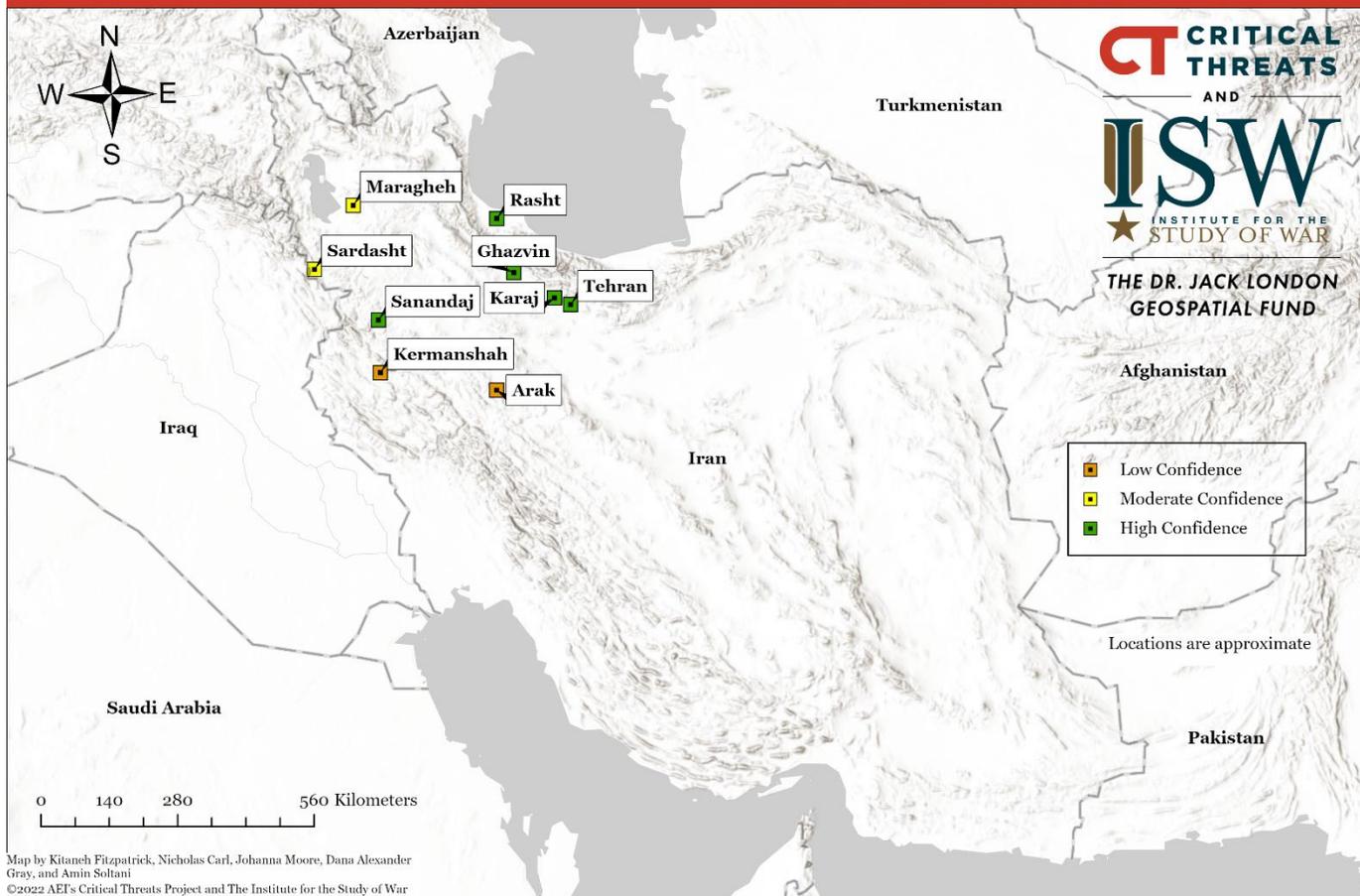
Karaj, Alborz Province (population: approximately 1,970,000)

- *Dozens of protesters chanted "death to the dictator" on a Karaj city street.[12]*
- Maragheh East Azerbaijan Province (population: approximately 175,255)**
- *Over 100 Maragheh University students chanted anti-regime slogans including "woman, life, freedom" on the university campus.[13]*
- Ghazvin City, Ghazvin Province (population: approximately 402,748)**
- *Dozens of Ghazvin University of Medical Sciences protesters chanted arrested Iranian activist Hossein Ronaghi's name in a protest on campus.[14]*
- Rasht, Gilan Province (population: approximately 679,995)**
- *Dozens of protesters, likely teenagers, chanted "death to the dictator" on Bistoun Street in Rasht.[15]*
- *Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province (population: approximately 414,069)**
- *Over 100 protesters chanted "death to the traitor" at the 40-day commemoration ceremony of Matin Nasri. Security forces killed 19-year-old Nasri for participating in anti-regime protests. Some social media accounts reported that security forces killed Nasri, a soldier, for refusing to suppress protests, defecting, and joining anti-regime demonstrations. CTP cannot corroborate these reports and it is unclear of what military institution Nasri may have been a member.[16]*
- *Tehran City, Tehran Province (population: approximately 8,700,000)**
- *Over 100 mourners chanted anti-regime slogans at Yalda Agha Fazli's funeral in a mosque in Saadat Abad in northern Tehran. Security forces detained Agha Fazli for participating in anti-regime protests. Agha Fazli committed suicide after being released. Protesters chanted "You took away our Yalda and brought back her corpse." Security forces reportedly fired tear gas, paint balls, pepper spray, and sound bombs into or in the vicinity of the mosque to disperse crowds.[17]*
 - *An undetermined number of protesters chanted "death to the dictator" in Saadat Abad in northern Tehran this evening. Protesters appear to have lit a fire on the street. These protests were likely connected to or spurred by Yalda Agha Fazli's funeral. [18]*
- *Sardasht, West Azerbaijan Province (population: approximately 68,165)**
- *An undetermined number of protesters chanted anti-regime slogans at the third-day commemoration ceremony of Heyman Hamzeh. Over 100 protesters later marched on a city street in Sardasht county in Hamzeh's memory.[19]*

CTP assesses with low confidence that protests occurred in the locations below.

- Kermanshah City, Kermanshah Province (population: approximately 946,651)**
- *Undetermined number of protesters chanted "death to the dictator" on a city street. It is unclear from the available footage if this event meets CTP's threshold for protest activity.[20]*
- Arak, Markazi Province (population: approximately 520,944)**
- *An undetermined number of protesters chanted "death to the dictator" on a city street. It is unclear from the available footage if this event meets CTP's threshold for protest activity.[21]*

Protest Activity in Iran as of November 14, 5:00 PM ET



Qom Seminary Cultural Groups Coordination Council Secretary Mahmoud Moghaddami issued a statement on October 17 criticizing other senior clerics in Qom for supporting the protests, according to anti-regime outlet *IranWire*.^[22] Moghaddami specifically criticized Ayatollah Asadollah Bayat Zanjani and Ayatollah Alavi Karaji. Bayat Zanjani previously criticized security forces for the death of Mahsa Amini on September 17, as CTP previously reported.^[23] Karaji has similarly criticized the regime crackdown on protests. If true, this *IranWire* report further highlights the political divisions in Qom that the protest wave has exacerbated.

A Basij Organization member died on November 14 after unidentified gunmen shot him in Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province on October 14.^[24] The Basij member was hospitalized and later succumbed to his injuries.

Hardline parliamentarian Morteza Mahmoudvand criticized the 227 parliamentarians who signed a letter calling for the harsh and rapid prosecution of arrested protesters on November 13.^[25] Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf cut off Mahmoudvand's microphone while he voiced his criticisms during a parliamentary session.^[26] Mahmoudvand represents Chegani and Khorramabad, Lorestan Province in Parliament. Mahmoudvand is at least the third parliamentarian representing a border province to criticize the parliamentary letter or the regime crackdown in recent weeks.^[27]

The *New York Times* published an article on November 14 detailing human rights violations that the regime is committing against arrested children.^[28] Iranian security forces have reportedly sent 500 to 1,000 minors to detention centers, many of which might be adult detention centers. The regime is forcing children in juvenile detention centers to complete behavioral therapy under the supervision of a cleric and psychologist, who tell the arrested children to accept that they have committed acts of sin. Children who resist treatment are given psychiatric drugs. Education Minister Yousef Nouri previously stated on October 11 that the regime has sent arrested high schoolers to "psychological centers" to educate and reform them, as CTP previously reported.^[29]

A high-ranking delegation dispatched by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei continued to meet with local leaders in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province on November 14. Friday Prayer Leader Policy Council

Chief Mohammad Javad Haj Ali Akbari stated that Khamenei considered protesters who were killed as a result of “human error” to be martyrs in a meeting with local Zahedan tribal leaders and clerics.[30] Meeting participants reportedly professed their loyalty to the Islamic Republic and repeated regime rhetoric blaming foreign actors for organizing anti-regime protests.[31] It is unclear if prominent Sunni cleric Moulana Abdol attended the meeting.

Axis of Resistance and Regional Developments

Azerbaijani security services arrested five individuals accused of spying for Iran on November 14. The Azerbaijani State Security Service claimed that five arrested Azerbaijani nationals were collecting information relating to security, including Israeli and Turkish drones, and energy infrastructure to undermine Azerbaijani defense capabilities and sovereignty.[32]

- [1] [%20https://twitter.com/iran_javanan/status/1592158983481090049](https://twitter.com/javanane_t/status/1592164634144169984)
- [2] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1592266067807989760?s=20&t=3CM9YSPn7AFtyJQkyn349w>
- [3] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-november-12>
- [4] <https://twitter.com/KhosroKalbasi/status/1592236576104656896>
- [5] <https://www.instagram.com/p/Ck7-Ru9sdgd/>
- [6] <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/32130055.html>
- [7] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/17/iranian-media-banned-from-mentioning-mohammad-khatami>
- [8] <https://www.farsnews dot ir/azarbajian-gharbi/news/14010823000159>; <https://www.rudaw dot net/sorani/kurdistan/141120228>
- [9] <https://www.farsnews dot ir/azarbajian-gharbi/news/14010823000159>
- [10] <https://www.farsnews dot ir/news/14010823000302/>
- [11] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-7>
- [12] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1592095428094611458?s=20&t=M8o9IVIqmcb6EVofOo1G-A>; https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1592102665898565640?s=20&t=P33XtMhd5oDAnftMytLXZA
- [13] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1592254382158286849?s=20&t=M8o9IVIqmcb6EVofOo1G-A>; <https://twitter.com/Lajbaz57/status/1592188483980111873?s=20&t=M8o9IVIqmcb6EVofOo1G-A>
- [14] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1592103179512320000?s=20&t=M8o9IVIqmcb6EVofOo1G-A>; <https://twitter.com/Sazari2015/status/1592128040242675713>; https://twitter.com/RadioFarda_/status/1592172439735529474?s=20&t=EMEWG-3xwIEz9lhtOUhoBw
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- [16] https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1592153211141783552?s=20&t=XG-fwDMw99_KVWWOJ50YQ; https://twitter.com/FarashgardFdn/status/1592150752113430528?s=20&t=V-CYXLrG7NfYAH5w_IzSA; <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1592149529981337607?s=20&t=M8o9IVIqmcb6EVOfoO1G-A>; https://twitter.com/VOAfarsi/status/1592183543752691713?s=20&t=ZZX_jK9I-Op2XRLZiQYzTQ
- [17] <https://twitter.com/Shahinloo0/status/1592167734380736514?s=20&t=P33XtMhd5oDAnftMytLXZA>; <https://twitter.com/Vahid/status/1592205084083261441?s=20&t=P33XtMhd5oDAnftMytLXZA>; <https://twitter.com/Vahid/status/1592175701137948675?s=20&t=P33XtMhd5oDAnftMytLXZA>; <https://twitter.com/Vahid/status/1592283271286906880?s=20&t=P33XtMhd5oDAnftMytLXZA>
- [18] https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1592196847107731459?s=20&t=oNZzDML3C_-Y4WbewgwgRA; <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1592186561751560194?s=20&t=BztaMQO2LqH82HcXULJABA>
- [19] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1592150787106672645?s=20&t=YEir4kl9fB2UdDILshQRTw>; <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1592260795538497536?s=20&t=YEir4kl9fB2UdDILshQRTw>
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- [21] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1592203478671462401?s=20&t=M8o9IVIqmcb6EVofOo1G-A>
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- [23] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-2>
- [24] <https://basijnews dot ir/fa/news/9467802>
- [25] <https://donya-e-eqtesad dot com/%D8%A8%D8%AE%D8%B4-%D8%B3%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%AA-%D8%AE%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%86-62/3917240-%D9%82%D8%B7%D8%B9-%D9%85%DB%8C%DA%A9%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%81%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B1%D9%88%DB%8C%D9%87-%D8%B4%D8%AF>
- [26] <https://twitter.com/iranworkers/status/1592122639308697600?s=20&t=dL2gSSwjzqlFScLloBTm4Q>
- [27] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-november-10>
- [28] <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/14/world/middleeast/iran-protests-children.html>
- [29] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-crisis-update-october-12>

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