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Iran Protests Update: January 21–27, 2026

On December 28, 2025, protests against the Iranian regime erupted across Iran in response to the country's economic collapse. JINSA will release weekly updates covering the demonstrations as long as they continue. The update below reflects information as of January 27, 2026, at 10:30 am ET.

Overview

The Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA) has confirmed the deaths of at least [6,126](#) individuals during the protests, while [17,091](#) other alleged killings are under review. However, *Iran International* has reported that at least [36,500](#) have been killed, with many of those deaths reported as the country plunged into a nationwide internet outage on January 8 and 9. HRANA also reported that over [41,880](#) others have been detained as of January 27.

Protests

- HRANA [reported](#) that as of January 27, 651 protests have occurred across 200 cities, an increase of 26 incidents and 12 cities since the last update on January 20.
- Over the past week, protests reportedly [occurred](#) in the cities of Zahedan, Khash, and Rask.
 - » Protesters allegedly [clashed](#) with regime forces in Shiraz and Arak.
 - » Demonstrators allegedly [chanted](#) “death to [Iranian Supreme Leader Ali] Khamenei,” “death to the dictator,” “death to the Basiji (Iranian police force),” “disgraceful Basiji,” “this is the year of blood, Khamenei will be overthrown,” and “death to the disgraceful IRGC (Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps).”
- On January 24, *Iran International* [published](#) a video from the funeral of slain protester Farzaneh Tavakkoli in Arak, where attendees chanted “death to the dictator.”

Regime Retaliation

- As of January 27, [41,880 people](#) have been detained for allegedly participating in the protests.
 - » According to HRANA, regime forces have [transferred](#) over 150 women protesters to Shiraz's Adelabad Prison, where they are experiencing “severe overcrowding and lack of basic necessities.”
- On January 27, *The Guardian* [reported](#), citing eyewitness medical staff and other sources, that Iran's government has conducted mass burials of protesters killed during the crackdown in an apparent effort to obscure the actual death toll.
- On January 25, *Iran International* [reported](#) that at least 36,500 people were killed in the recent protests, with most deaths occurring on January 8 and 9.

- On January 23, Iranian parliament member Abolfazl Aboutorabi [claimed](#) that restoring citizens' social media access would be a "big mistake."
- On January 21, the Kurdistan National Army (SMK), the armed wing of the Kurdistan Freedom Party (PAK), [told](#) *Fox News* its members in eastern Iraq came under fire from Iranian drone attacks.

Regime Responses

- On January 27, Iranian diplomats, ambassadors, and Foreign Ministry officials [issued](#) a joint statement reaffirming their allegiance to Ayatollah Khamenei, according to state news agency IRNA.
- On January 27, Iran [summoned](#) Italy's ambassador after plans were announced to pursue a European Union (EU) proposal to designate the IRGC as a terrorist organization.
- On January 27, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei [warned](#) that any strike on Iran would have broader regional consequences, telling reporters that "any security breach in the region will not affect Iran only" and that insecurity would be "contagious."
- On January 24, Iranian Ayatollah Khamenei reportedly [went](#) into an underground facility in Tehran amid concerns about a potential U.S. strike on Iran.
- On January 21, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian [stated](#) that officials "must accept" that they had "made mistakes" in the way they managed the country.
- On January 21, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi [issued](#) his strongest warning yet to the United States, stating that Iran would "fire back with everything we have" if attacked.
- On January 21, Ebrahim Azizi, head of the national security committee in Iran's parliament, [urged](#) lawmakers to expand legal and welfare support for the country's police, including stronger legal protections, improved equipment, and better living conditions.
- On January 21, Qassem Mohabbali, a former director general for the Middle East and North Africa at Iran's foreign ministry, [told](#) Iranian news outlet *Eghtesadnews* that "Iran has practically lost the opportunity to negotiate" with the United States and the "chance of war is much higher than the chance of talks."

U.S. Responses

- On January 27, the U.S. Air Forces Central Command [announced](#) that its troops will conduct military exercises over the next several days "to demonstrate the ability to deploy, disperse, and sustain combat air power," throughout its area of responsibility (AOR).
- On January 26, President Donald Trump [stated](#) that the situation with Iran is "in flux" and that Iran is seeking a deal with the United States, according to an *Axios* interview.
 - » His statement came as the USS *Abraham Lincoln* [entered](#) U.S. Central Command's AOR in the Indian Ocean.
- On January 22, Trump [indicated](#) that "Iran does want to talk, and we'll talk" in an effort to diffuse tensions in the Middle East.
- On January 21, U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff [said](#) the United States is "not negotiating with [Iranian leaders] now" but had "contact with them."
- On January 21, Trump [warned](#) that the United States would "wipe [Iran] off the face of this Earth" if Tehran were to try an assassination attempt against him, adding he had given "very firm instructions" for massive retaliation.

- » Later in the evening of January 21, Trump [said](#) he hoped “there’s not going to be further action” by the United States against Iran.

International Responses

- On January 27, reports citing Agence France-Presse [indicated](#) that the EU is expected to sanction 21 senior IRGC members and entities at a meeting in Belgium.
 - » The reporting comes a day after Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani [said](#) Italy will ask EU partners to place the IRGC on the bloc’s terrorist register.
 - » Italy—along with [France and Spain](#)—had previously voiced opposition to labelling the IRGC a terror group.
- On January 26, the United Arab Emirates [said](#) it would not allow its airspace, territory, or territorial waters to be used for any military actions against Iran.
- On January 23, the United Kingdom, at the invitation of the Qatari government, [deployed](#) a squadron of Typhoon fighter jets to Qatar’s Al Udeid Air Base.
- On January 23, the United Nations Human Rights Council [condemned](#) Iran’s violent crack-down on protesters, voting to extend the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Iran’s mandate for two years.
- On January 22, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy [condemned](#) the lack of international support for the Iranian people, claiming that “the Ayatollah had already killed thousands” by the time world leaders addressed the protests.
- On January 22, Turkish President Tayyip Erdoğan [spoke](#) by phone with his Iranian counterpart, expressing opposition to foreign intervention in Iran and stating that easing tensions there would benefit Turkey.
- On January 22, Israeli President Isaac Herzog [said](#) during the World Economic Forum that the “Iranian people deserve change” and a “decent life.”