



Vatnik Soup @P_Kallioniemi

Jan 10, 2026 · 20 tweets · [P_Kallioniemi/status/2009956574534742311](#)

In this first (and maybe last?) Basiji Soup, we'll look at... the Islamic Republic of Iran, its disinformation operations, its hypocrisy, how it sells its atrocities as virtue and its repression as morality, how it serves the Kremlin, and the current protests against it.

1/20



Basijis are members of the most fanatical part of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). In a broader sense: Iranian regime loyalists & propagandists. They may be fewer than vatniks or wumaos, but the goal is the same: destabilize the West to protect a brutal regime.

2/20



The regime oppressing Iran is a “theocratic” authoritarian state around a “Supreme Leader” hiding behind religion to justify its crimes: censorship, repression, executions, torture and terror — similar to Russia and its “holy war” against Ukraine.

3/20



Vatnik Soup ✓
@P_Kallioniemi · [Follow](#)



In today's Vatnik Soup, I'll start a new series titled “Degenerate Russia”. In it, we look behind the Kremlin propaganda and see the real Russia – an authoritarian country that doesn't care about its people and desperately tries to hold on to its imperialistic past.

1/22



12:03 PM · Mar 18, 2025



♥ 6K 💬 Reply 🔗 Copy link

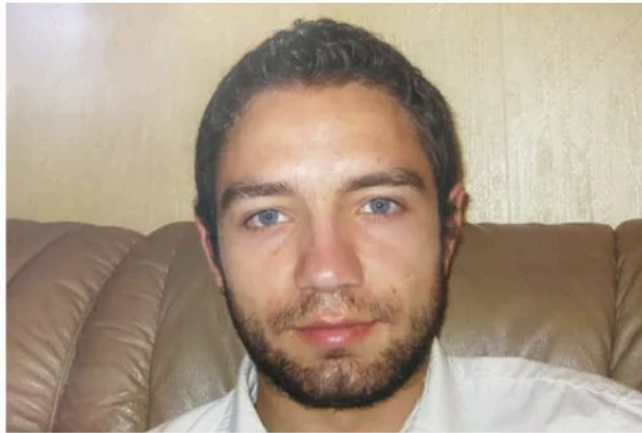
[Read 110 replies](#)



Ethnic and religious minorities like Kurds, Baluchis, Bahá'ís, Sunnis, etc. are repressed. Christians get sentenced to years in prison just for owning a Bible. Converting to Christianity can mean execution, and harsh sentences are often based on mere "personal intuition".

Arrested for Reading the Bible: Armenian Christian Sentenced to 10 Years in Iranian Prison

'Christians are being persecuted more heavily than any other religious group in the world — thus, must be a higher priority for the Church...'



📷 Hakop Gochumyan. (photo: Courtesy photo / USCIRF)

Adriana Azarian | World | July 2, 2024

An Armenian citizen will serve 10 years in an Iranian prison after being prosecuted for alleged Christian evangelism.

An Iranian judge sentenced Hakop Gochumyan to prison in February 2024 for committing “illegal Christian activities.” The judge invoked Article 160 of Iran’s Islamic Penal Code, which allows for decisions based on “personal intuition.” Gochumyan [appealed](#) in early June as the conviction lacked evidence, but he was unsuccessful.

Gochumyan and his wife, Elisa Shahvardian, who is Iranian-Armenian, were arrested in August 2023 while they and their two children were staying at their friends’ house near Tehran. Agents from the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence searched the house and found several copies of the New Testament and Christian literature among their belongings.



BY OPEN DOORS • 7 MAY 2025 • 2 MIN

IRAN | CHRISTIANS FACE SIX-FOLD INCREASE IN PRISON SENTENCES

More than 900 Iranian civilians were executed in 2024. Countless more received death sentences for religiously based charges. Ninety-six Iranian Christians were sentenced to a combined 263 years in jail.

According to a recent report, among the hundreds of death sentences carried out in [Iran](#), convictions ranged from "corruption on earth" and "waging war on God" to participation in the 2022 anti-government protests. The study, entitled "Tip of the Iceberg", was released this year by Article 18 in partnership with Open Doors, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, and Middle East Concern.

It documents the spike in prison terms handed down by judges and follows a sharp rise in arrests in late 2023. Five Christians are recorded as receiving 10-year terms and another believer a 15-year sentence.

Elections in Iran are neither free nor fair. Candidates are filtered by the regime, dissent is criminalized, and any real opposition is jailed, tortured, or killed. Women in Iran are systematically oppressed. Mandatory hijab laws are brutally enforced.



DAILYMATTER

**A PICTURE OF A WOMAN WHO
CHOSE NOT TO WEAR A HIJAB
IN IRAN**



©Amnesty International

6 December 2023

Available in Español, Français, العربية, English

Updated: 6 December 2023

Iran: Security forces used rape and other sexual violence to crush “Woman Life Freedom” uprising with impunity

Security forces in Iran used rape and other forms of sexual violence, amounting to torture and other ill-treatment, to intimidate and punish peaceful protesters during the 2022 “Woman Life Freedom” uprising, Amnesty International said in a new report published today.

The 120-page [report](#), “*They violently raped me*”: Sexual violence weaponized to crush Iran’s “Woman Life Freedom” uprising, documents in detail the harrowing ordeals of 45 survivors, including 26 men, 12 women and seven children, who were subjected to rape, gang rape and/or other forms of sexual violence by intelligence and security forces following their arbitrary arrest for challenging decades of oppression and entrenched gender-based discrimination. To date, the Iranian authorities have not charged or prosecuted any officials for the instances of rape and other sexual violence documented in the report.

Iranian woman dies 'after being beaten by morality police' over hijab law

Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Kurd, dies after 'violent arrest' for infringing hijab rules amid Iranian crackdown on women's dress



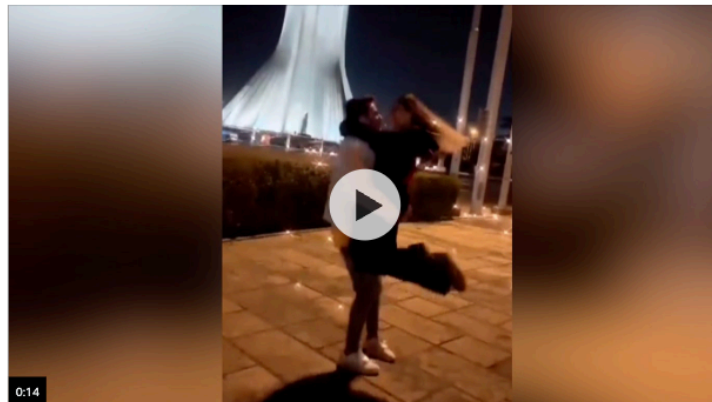
📹 Mahsa Amini was taken to hospital in a coma after being beaten by Iran's morality police amid a crackdown for infringements of strict hijab laws. Photograph: Twitter

Iran dancing couple given 10-year jail sentence

31 January 2023

Mattea Bubalo and Khosro Kalbasi Isfahani

BBC News



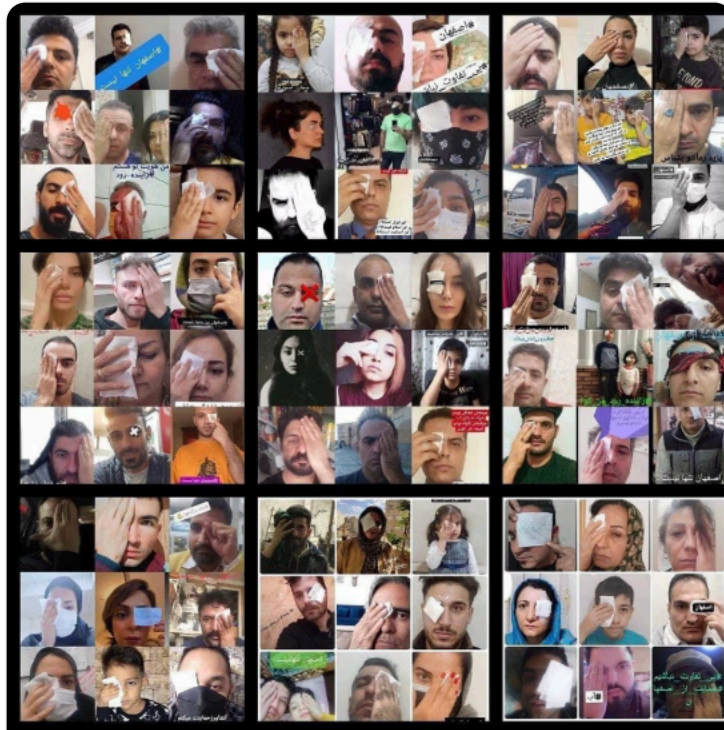
Watch: Iranian couple dance in Tehran streets

An Iranian couple in their 20s have been given jail sentences totalling 10 years after posting a video of themselves dancing in the street.

Protests like those after Mahsa Amini's death are met with mass arrests, killings, sexual abuse, and maimings. The Islamic Republic jails people for dancing and executes them for dissent, protests, or homosexuality. It's the world's top executioner per capita.

JUNE 22, 2022

As Eight Prisoners Face Finger Amputations, UN Calls on Government in Iran to Cease the Torture Once and For All



A mosaic photo of some of the protesters who lost eyes during the crackdown on protesters in Iran



While hiding behind “virtue” and “morality”, one of the very first acts of the regime was basically to legalize pedophilia. A natural ally for Putin, who recently praised child marriage too: extreme depravity hiding behind the hypocrisy of fighting “degeneracy” or “vice”.

NOVEMBER 13, 2025

Victim of Child Marriage Faces Execution in Iran



Execution Scheduled for December Unless \$90K Paid for Killing Abusive Husband

Denied Lawyer During Interrogation, Coerced into Confession Despite Illiteracy

November 13, 2025 — At only 12 years old, Goli Kouhkan was forced into an abusive marriage. At 13, she gave birth to her son without any medical care. At 18, after years of suffering physical and sexual abuse, she was arrested for killing her abusive husband during a domestic dispute. Now, after seven years on death row, Kouhkan is scheduled to be executed in December unless she can pay an unattainable amount of “blood money” to her abuser’s family.

Kouhkan’s case is not an isolated one. In Iran, girls are **legally married off at age 13** (younger with the approval of a male guardian and judge), girls and women **lack legal protection against domestic violence** that is severe and widespread, and women have extremely **limited ability to divorce** and thus escape abusive marriages. As a result, some are driven to kill their abusers as a last resort.

Yet the Islamic Republic’s **judiciary refuses to recognize any mitigating circumstances in these cases**—even including severe and sustained physical and sexual abuse—and sentences these women to death for murder.

“Girls are married off at age 13 or even younger, and subjected to decades of beatings and rape, with no real possibility of divorce or escape. Many are often killed by family members if they try. Courts must consider these circumstances as mitigating factors when sentencing,” said Bahar Ghandehari, director of advocacy at the Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI).

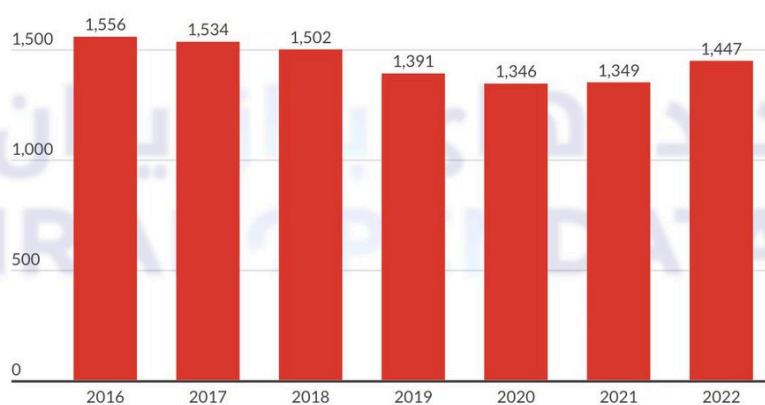
Child Motherhood in Iran: 1,450 Babies Are Born to Mothers Younger Than 15 Each Year

April 26, 2023

Iranian state media recently reported on the birth of a child to a 14-year-old mother, calling her the "youngest mother in Iran". The article sparked a heated debate, especially on social media platforms. Yet the incident was only one example of child motherhood in Iran. Hundreds more cases go unreported by state media each year. Mothers aged 14 years or younger gave birth at least 10,125 times in the past seven years, Iran Open Data has found.

Number of births from under 15 years old mothers

2016 till 2022



Source: National Organization for Civil Registration of Iran



Rights and freedom

**Iranian regime accused of
raping and violating protesters
as young as 12**



Iran is now a key military partner of Russia, supplying Shahed drones used to murder Ukrainian civilians, and even provided Russia with the technology to mass-produce them domestically. While Iranians struggle with inflation, unemployment, and collapsing infrastructure...

8/20



... the regime obsesses over countries it doesn't even border like Israel and pours enormous resources into foreign operations it can't afford, such as supporting Assad in Syria, hurting both the local populations and Iranians. As Assad and Maduro have learned the hard way...

9/20

MARCHERS SAYS DESTROYING ISRAEL IS MUSLIM WORLD'S TOP PRIORITY, BUT ALSO DENOUNCE US, UK, SAUDIS

Unveiling clock showing 8,411 days left for Israel, Iranians rage against Jewish state

Parliament speaker calls Israel 'mother of terrorism' as Islamic Republic parades missiles, rallies in support of Palestinians and against raft of enemies

By AGENCIES and TOI STAFF

23 June 2017, 11:00 am

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38



A Shahab-3 long range missile, left, and Zolfaghar missiles, right, are displayed during a rally marking al-Quds (Jerusalem) Day in Tehran on June 23, 2017. (AFP Photo/Stringer)

TEHRAN — Iran held major anti-Israel rallies across the country Friday, with protesters chanting “Death to Israel” and declaring that destroying the Jewish state is “the Muslim world’s top priority.”

Iranians participating in Quds Day rallies also called for unity among pro-Palestinian groups against the “child-murdering” Israeli government, according to Iran’s Tasnim News Agency.



... there is nothing to gain in working with Russia against the West. Only the Kremlin with its well-planned global operations sowing chaos and running over decades profits in the long run. Russia has no real interest in a strong Iran.



Vatnik Soup 
@P_Kallioniemi · Follow



In today's Vatnik Soup, I'll explore how Russia is working with Iran, and how the recent Israel-US strikes on Iran could affect the war in Ukraine. Iran has been one of Russia's key allies in their genocidal war, but in reality the partnership is deeply one-sided.

1/21



10:53 AM · Jun 24, 2025



5.2K



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Like Russia, Iran is also behind a lot of terrorism in the world, whether directly, through the IRGC, or through its terror proxies like Hezbollah and Hamas: the 1979 US embassy attack, the 1983 Beirut barracks bombing, the 1994 AMIA bombing in Argentina, etc. etc.

11/20

Hamas received weapons and training from Iran, officials say

Iran 'broadly complicit' in supporting Palestinian militants, but no evidence seen of a direct role in slaughter, officials say

Updated October 9, 2023 **More than 2 years ago**



Iranians carry pictures of slain Revolutionary Guard commander Qasem Soleimani as they attend a gathering in Tehran on Saturday to express their solidarity with Palestinians after Hamas militants launched a deadly assault into Israel from the Gaza Strip. (AFP/Getty Images)

By [Joby Warrick](#), [Ellen Nakashima](#), [Shane Harris](#) and [Souad Mekhennet](#)

The Palestinian militants behind the surprise weekend attack on Israel began planning the assault at least a year ago, with key support from Iranian allies who provided military training and logistical help as well as tens of millions of dollars for weapons, current and former Western and Middle Eastern intelligence officials said Monday.

While Iran's precise role in Saturday's violence remained unclear, the officials said, the assault reflected Tehran's years-long ambition to surround Israel with legions of paramilitary fighters armed with increasingly sophisticated weapons systems capable of striking deep inside the Jewish state.



Despite all this, the murdered US citizens and the Iranian parliament chanting “death to America”, useful idiots from the US will still defend the terror regime. Just like Russia has RT and its army of vatniks, whether openly affiliated or not, working against the West...

CODEPINK heads to Iran!



By Medea Benjamin

I plant my hands in the garden soil—
I will sprout,
I know, I know, I know.
And in the hollow of my ink-stained palms
swallows will make their nest.

Forugh Farrokhzad, Iranian feminist poet who died in a car accident in 1967 at the age of 32





 **Wyatt Reed**  @wyattreed13 · Jan 29
🇷🇺 Russia state-affiliated media
The era of US global domination is over

 **NAVstéva**  z @Navsteva · Jan 29
Argentina, Algeria and Iran have applied for BRICS membership. Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, Egypt and Afghanistan are thought to be next after them.

If all are approved, that would mean that those thirteen nations (BRICS+) would represent 51% of the world's population.

... Iran has its own “Iran state-affiliated media”, PressTV. And it’s often the same anti-Western useful idiots helping both terror regimes with the same falsehoods: terrorism as “resistance”, chaos as “multipolarity”, and the usual denial of the regime’s atrocities.

Tech Policy

News site editor's ties to Iran, Russia show misinformation's complexity

Experts say an overlap in funding underscores concern that the spread of falsehoods and propaganda online is entering a more complicated stage as the November election draws closer.

June 2, 2024 More than 1 year ago



A window display with TV sets depicting Russian President Vladimir Putin delivering the state of the nation address in 2006. Russia has sought new ways to reach Americans through news sites and social media. (Sergey Ponomarev/AP)



By [Joseph Menn](#)

CORRECTION

A previous version of this article incorrectly said that leaders of the online news site Grayzone had received payments from Iranian media, according to recently unearthed documents. The documents show that only one of the site's editors received such payments. The article has been corrected.

A top editor at an online news site aimed at Americans who has worked extensively for Russia's Sputnik also has taken money from Iranian government-owned media, according to newly unearthed documents — a sign of how widening geopolitical alliances are making it harder to identify and trace foreign influence operations.



George Galloway

@georgegalloway

Russia state-affiliated media

Y'all said [#Russia](#) was about to invade [#Ukraine](#). I told you it wasn't. You were wrong. I was right. Again. Show some bloody humility. Especially if they're not even paying you to act like an idiot.

17:54 · 14 Feb 22 · Twitter for iPhone



Chris Williamson

@DerbyChrisW

Iran state-affiliated media



No2Nato

@No2NatoNo2War

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No2Nato No2War campaigns against US proxy war in Ukraine and continuing NATO aggression against China & Iran. Supported by George Galloway & Chris Williamson.

A top editor at an online news site aimed at Americans who has worked extensively for Russia's Sputnik also has taken money from Iranian government-owned media, according to newly unearthed documents — a sign of how widening geopolitical alliances are making it harder to identify and trace foreign influence operations.

Hacked emails and other documents from the Iranian government-funded Press TV show payments of thousands of dollars to Wyatt Reed, a writer who is now a Washington-based editor for the online publication Grayzone. In addition, the site's founder, Max Blumenthal, regularly appears on Russian television and once accepted a trip to Moscow for a celebration of Russian state-controlled video network RT that featured Vladimir Putin.

Misinformation experts say the overlap in funding underscores concern that the spread of falsehoods and propaganda online is entering a more complicated stage as the United States' November election draws closer.

“What you are reporting is, I think, the most practical example of that convergence we've seen, where you have someone who has deep ties to Iranian state media working for an organization that we also know is a destination for narrative laundering from Russia,” said Emerson Brooking, co-director of the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensics Research Lab.

Press TV was added to the U.S. Treasury’s list of Specially Designated Nationals in September, when officials said that the government outlet “has broadcast scores of forced confessions and derogatory programs about Iranian activists, in many cases broadcasting forced confessions before detainee trials. Press TV has also been used by Iranian intelligence services to recruit sensitive assets, including U.S. persons.”

Reed’s payments had to be routed through third parties even though they preceded the Press TV sanctions because banking restrictions on transactions with Iran were already in place, the hacked emails show.

In multiple exchanges during 2021, Reed told Press TV’s finance department to send his payments via another man, Gamal Hassanein, though he provided his own account number at a bank in Ruther Glen, Va. Records refer to payments to Reed of \$3,600, \$1,690, and 210 euros, now worth about \$225. Hassanein did not respond to an email from The Post.

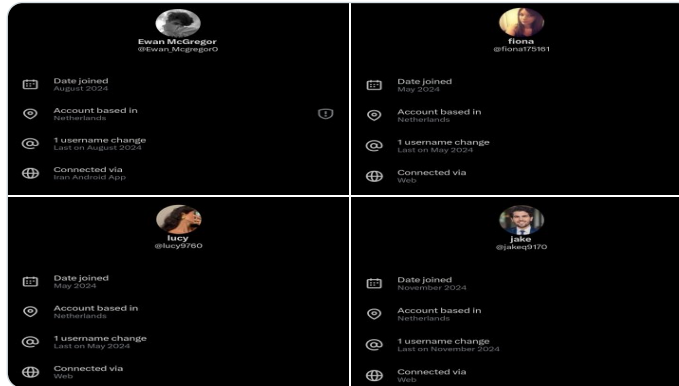
The Press TV website identifies Reed as “its correspondent in the U.S.” His contributions include a commentary on Donald Trump’s false claims of major election fraud in December 2020, an interview with a Press TV anchor about protests against police brutality in April 2021, and a two-minute video segment about past U.S. support for the Iranian opposition group Mujahideen-e Khalq in July 2021.

Reed more recently reported from Russia-occupied Donetsk, in eastern Ukraine, where he said that “poor Zelensky” was worth hundreds of millions of dollars. Variations of that claim have been repeated for years by Russian-aligned media, but the supposed yachts and mansions attributed to Zelensky belong to other people.

Iran’s influence operations are smaller than Russia’s or China’s, but they pursue similar goals. One example: an Iran-linked troll farm targeted Scottish independence, pushing divisive narratives to weaken the UK and distract Western governments.



Remember those accounts pretending to be Scottish nationalists but we suspected were Iranian in origin? They were, in fact, Iranian in origin and as we suspected, connected via VPN.



8:19 AM · Nov 23, 2025



 712  Reply  Copy link

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The Bot Network Collapse That Exposed Iran's Influence Operation

Rotem Baruchin July 10, 2025

As social media conversations around Scottish independence and Brexit spiked this summer, Cyabra found that the heated discourse suspiciously synchronized. On June 13, proof of those findings emerged: **For 16 days, hundreds of fake accounts went completely dark.**

Cyabra's latest investigation revealed a state-run Iranian influence campaign, exposed mid-operation, attempting to manipulate public discourse in the UK.

TL;DR?

- **26% of profiles discussing Scottish independence** were fake, posting more than **3,000** posts in just six weeks.
- These fake accounts blended in by promoting *pro-Scottish* and *anti-Brexit* narratives.
- The bot network went dark **immediately after the military strike on Iran on June 13**, confirming their suspected origin.
- When the bots returned **16 days later**, the messaging had changed: now it was promoting *pro-Iran* narratives and **attacking the West**
- Overall, fake profiles' content gained a massive **224 million potential views** and **126,000+ engagements**

A Disinformation Campaign Hidden in Plain Sight

Between May and June 2025, Cyabra scanned thousands of profiles discussing Scottish independence and Brexit on X, uncovering a coordinated and inauthentic influence operation driven by fake accounts linked to Iran.

X feature exposes Iranian-run pro-Scottish independence accounts - UKDJ

Nov 24, 2025, 12:13 GMT
Updated: 23:51 GMT

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Pro-Scottish independence campaigners protest outside the United Kingdom Supreme Court in London, Britain November 23, 2022

A new transparency feature on X showed that a coordinated cluster of Scottish pro-independence personas was operated from inside Iran, according to findings published by the UK Defense Journal.

The platform's transparency panels now show the cluster accessing X through Iran's App Store while routing traffic via VPN servers in the Netherlands, UKDJ reported on Sunday.

The outlet said it had tracked a sample of the accounts for months, citing synchronized posting patterns, near-identical creation timelines and AI-generated profile images.

The accounts, analysts said, mimicked [Scottish independence supporters](#) but repeatedly boosted pro-Iran narratives.

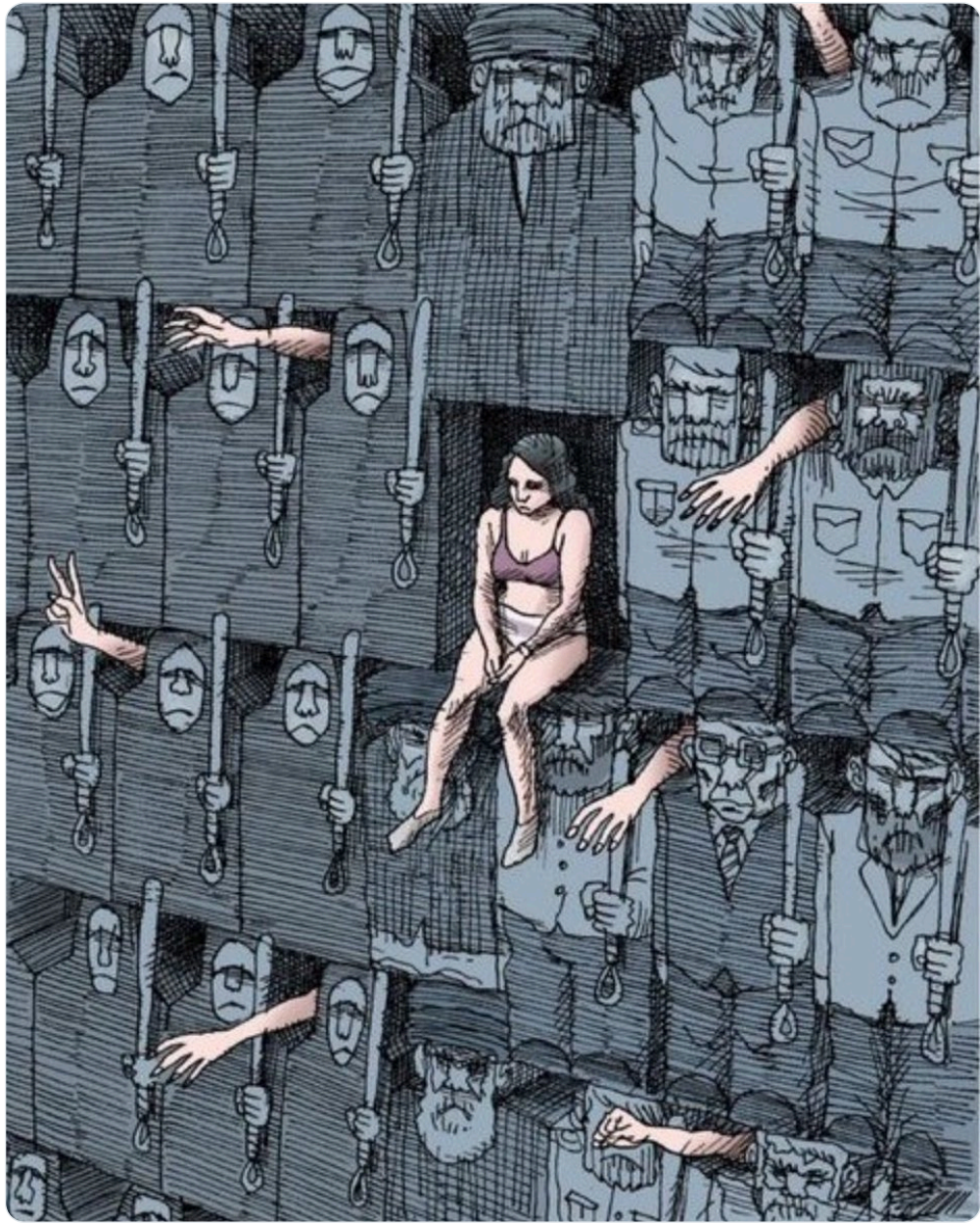
As is tradition, anti-Western propagandists blame everything on “CIA coups”, as if neither the people nor the regime had any agency, often with utterly absurd pretexts like the Euromaidan cookies. What will they come up with for the current protests?

15/20

<https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/israel-middle-east/articles/cia-coup-in-iran-that-never-was-mossadegh>

Indeed, despite the risks and the repression, Iranians have often courageously protested the terror regime. The current protests started two weeks ago, sparked by hyper-inflation and the government’s failing economic policies, but are now turning into an actual revolution.

16/20



Tossing Turbans Of Clerics Becomes A New Protest Act In Iran

Nov 8, 2022, 16:32 GMT

Updated: 15:57 GMT



A girl flipping the turban of a cleric in Iran

The newest manifestation of protests in Iran is flipping turbans of the clergy, something profoundly worrisome for Islamic Republic's authorities as well as Muslim clerics abroad.

Tossing the turbans of clergymen as they are walking in streets is now part of the current wave of antigovernment protests across Iran, which started as a reaction to the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in custody of hijab police. Younger Iranians tired of government attempts to force them to observe the mandatory Islamic dress code and a restricted lifestyle, began protests and disobedience in mid-September.



Protests erupt in Iran over currency's plunge to record low

UPDATED DEC 30, 2025 ✓
Story by Associated Press



Protesters march in downtown Tehran, Iran on December 29, 2025. (Fars News Agency/AP)

Tehran, Iran (AP) — Iran's largest protests in three years erupted Monday after the country's currency plummeted to a record low against the US dollar, and the head of the Central Bank resigned.

State TV reported the resignation of Mohammad Reza Farzin, while traders and shopkeepers rallied in Saadi Street in downtown Tehran as well as in the Shush neighborhood near Tehran's main Grand Bazaar. Merchants at the market played a crucial role in the 1979 Islamic Revolution that ousted the monarchy and brought Islamists to power.

The official IRNA news agency confirmed the protests. Witnesses reported similar rallies in other major cities including Isfahan in central Iran, Shiraz in the south and Mashhad in the northeast. In some places in Tehran, police fired tear gas to disperse protesters.

Monday's protests were the biggest since 2022, when the death of 22-year-old **Mahsa Jina Amini** in police custody triggered nationwide demonstrations. She was arrested by the country's morality police for allegedly not wearing her hijab properly.



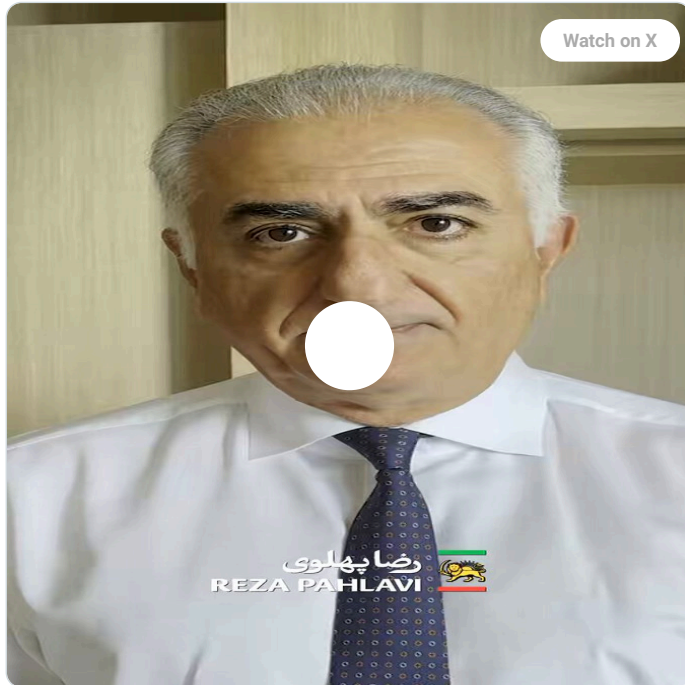
Exiled Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi (son of the last Shah) has now been making regular appeals to Iranians to protest every evening. The regime has responded with some small handouts, an Internet blackout, and a violent crackdown, as it always does.



Reza Pahlavi 
@PahlaviReza · Follow



من اولین فراخوان خود را امروز با شما در میان می‌گذارم و از شما دعوت می‌کنم که این پنج‌شنبه و جمعه، ۱۸ و ۱۹ دیماه، هم‌زمان سر ساعت ۸ شب، همگی چه در خیابان‌ها یا حتی از منازل خودتان شروع به سردادن شعار کنید. در نتیجه بازخورد این حرکت، من فراخوان‌های بعدی را به شما اعلام خواهم کرد.



Watch on X

6:40 PM · Jan 6, 2026



140.4K



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'People die in the dark': experts decry Iran's 'worst internet shutdown'

 Negar Mojtahedi
Iran International

9 hours ago



Iranian protesters seen through the windshield of a car, Tehran, Iran, January 9, 2026

Internet experts are warning that Iran's sweeping nationwide internet blackout is being used to shield lethal crackdowns on protesters, cutting off evidence of state violence as unrest continues across the country.

"This is the worst internet shutdown in Iran's history," said Ali Tehrani, director of Washington operations for Psiphon, an open-source anti-censorship tool widely used in Iran. "Even Starlink uploads have been affected."

Iran Offers Citizens \$7 a Month in a Bid to Cool Protests

The payments are the latest step to alleviate economic pressures, but given the severity of the crisis, critics say, they are likely to do little.

Listen to this article · 5:29 min [Learn more](#)

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47



gas station in Tehran last month. Official statistics show that inflation exceeded 42 percent in December alone. Arash Khamooshi for The New York Times

By Erika Solomon and Sanam Mahoozi

Jan. 5, 2026

Facing protests sparked by a deepening economic crisis, Iran's government announced plans on Monday to provide most citizens with a monthly payment equivalent to around \$7.

The plan, according to the government spokeswoman, Fatameh Mohajerani, is aimed at "preserving households' purchasing power, controlling inflation, and ensuring food security." But it will likely do little to ease the economic struggles of most Iranians, whose minimum needs cost upward of \$200 a month.

In late December, [economic pressures](#) drove merchants, traders, and university students in many cities to stage protests, shutting down marketplaces and demonstrating on campuses. Over the past year, Iran's currency has lost more than half its value against the dollar, and official statistics show that inflation exceeded 42 percent in December alone.

Shopkeepers, who traditionally support Iran's regime, sparked the protests. Here's why that's significant

From CNN's Mostafa Salem



An employee arranges a shelf at a store in the capital Tehran on Wednesday, January 7.
Atta Kenare/AFP/Getty Images

Anti-government protests in Iran challenging the regime have spread to more than 100 cities. The fact that they began with the bazaaris – a powerful force for change in Iran's history and one seen as loyal to the regime – is notable.

How it began: When the central bank decided to end a program allowing some importers to access cheaper US dollars compared to the rest of the market, shopkeepers increased prices and some shuttered their doors, initiating the demonstrations. The move by the bazaaris, as they are known, was a drastic measure for a group traditionally supportive of the Islamic Republic.


The enduring alliance between the bazaaris and the clergy in Iran had the shopkeepers play a crucial role as kingmaker across Iran's history. It was their support to those very clergymen that eventually helped the Islamic Revolution of 1979 succeed, giving the rebels a financial backbone that led to the fall of the shah, or monarch.


CNN


World

Sign in

Iran plunged into internet blackout as nationwide anti-government turmoil spreads





UPDATED 15 HR AGO 
By [Mostafa Salem](#)





Street demonstrations erupt in Tehran as anti-government protests spread

0:57



Iran was plunged into a nationwide internet blackout Thursday evening as mass **anti-government protests** spread around the country, with Iranians shouting slogans against the ruling theocratic regime as anger mounts over economic turmoil and security crackdowns.

Authorities cut internet access and telephone lines immediately after Thursday's protests in the capital Tehran and other major cities began, although the blackout did not immediately prevent the posting of videos of the protests, now well into their second week.

"National blackouts tend to be the regime's go-to strategy when deadly force is about to get used against protesters," Alp Toker, director of cybersecurity watchdog NetBlocks, told CNN, "with the goal being to prevent the spread of news of what's happening on ground, and also to limit international scrutiny."

Internet access is still possible using smuggled Starlink terminals (it's illegal of course), but the regime has been jamming that as well. The violent response has even prompted a warning from Trump, who just took down Maduro, a key ally of Iran.



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In today's Vatnik Soup, I'll introduce a Venezuelan bus driver, politician & dictator, Nicolás Maduro ([@NicolasMaduro](#)). He's best-known for ruining Venezuela, turning it into a dictatorship, and for collaborating with other authoritarian regimes like Russia, Iran & Belarus.

1/22



11:46 AM · Jan 8, 2025



5.3K



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Maduro's capture in Venezuela sends warning signal to Iran

Elina Farhadi
01/07/2026

The capture of Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro is being closely watched in Tehran. Iran fears US military action in the Middle East, as nationwide protests continue to pressure the regime.



Iran's leaders are closely watching developments in Venezuela, aware that they too could become a US military target

Image: Majid Asgarpour/WANA/REUTERS

The unprecedented US military attack in Venezuela and the capture of [Nicolas Maduro](#) and his wife set alarm bells ringing for Iran's leadership.

[Tehran](#) is one of the closest allies of Maduro, who remained in power in 2024 after massive election rigging and is not recognized by Germany or the [European Union](#) as the legitimate president of [Venezuela](#). After his dramatic capture on Saturday, Maduro appeared in a New York courtroom on Monday on narco-terrorism charges.

Venezuela: Iran risks losing a key economic and military ally

Tehran and Caracas have maintained close ties with each other, notably to circumvent the sanctions against both countries. Iran, which has also come under threat from Washington, has projected a facade of optimism.

By Ghazal Golshiri and Madjid Zerrouky

Published on January 7, 2026, at 1:47 am (Paris), updated on January 7, 2026, at 11:01 am - 3 min read

[Lire en français](#)



From this photo released by the Venezuelan presidency press service, Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro (left) listens to Iranian Defense Minister Aziz Nasirzadeh at the Miraflores presidential palace in Caracas, on November 21, 2024. MARCELO GARCIA/PRESIDENCE VENEZUELIENNE VIA AFP

The Islamic Republic of Iran, which has been threatened with military action by Donald Trump should it violently suppress the protest movement sparked by the rapid devaluation of its currency, is oscillating between vehement rhetoric and denial in the face of a looming regime change scenario in Venezuela. Caracas is a rare and distant ally of Tehran, one with which it has developed close economic and military relations.

39 min ago

Trump warns Iranian leaders that US "will start shooting, too"

From CNN's Betul Tuncer



President Donald Trump listens during a meeting with oil executives in the East Room of the White House, Friday, Washington, DC. *Alex Brandon/AP*

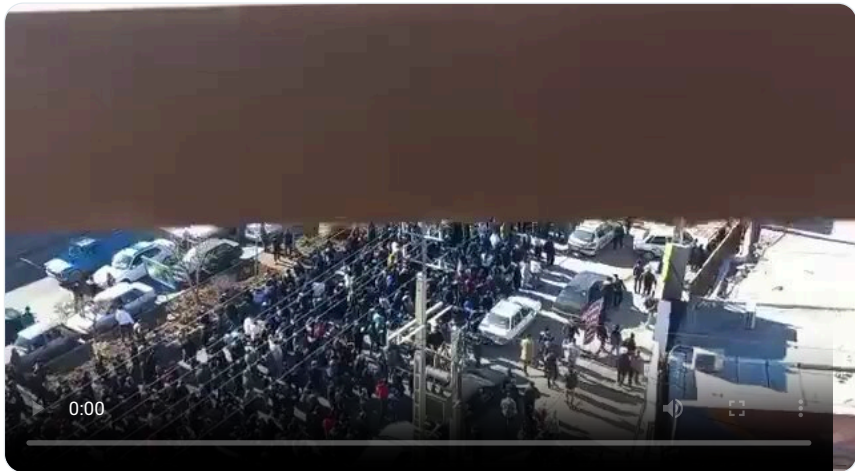
President Donald Trump on Friday said the US is closely watching the situation in Iran and again warned leadership against using violence on demonstrators.

"And again, I tell the Iranian leaders, you better not start shooting, because we'll start shooting too," Trump said during a meeting with oil executives at the White House.

But he added that wouldn't mean US "boots on the ground."

Basijis' main role is to ensure support for the Islamic republic. They fail spectacularly: the protests are growing across the whole country and more and more policemen, soldiers and even IRGC members are joining the revolution. As the protests against the regime intensify...

19/20







... Ayatollah Khamenei is already planning to flee to... Moscow, plundering the nation's gold. A popular destination for oppressive and corrupt dictators, he'll end up in the company of Yanukovych, Assad, and all the other losers, traitors and Russia's useful idiots.



Ayatollah Ali Khamenei greeting a crowd during a ceremony in Tehran on Saturday

IRAN'S SUPREME LEADER OFFICE/EPA

Ayatollah Khamenei plans to flee to Moscow if Iran unrest intensifies

The republic's supreme leader has plotted an exit route out of Tehran should his forces fail to quell dissent, an intelligence report reveals

UK lawmaker cites reports on Russian flights to Iran, gold airlift

20 hours ago
Updated: 18:01 GMT



British lawmaker Tom Tugendhat told parliament on Thursday that there were reports of Russian cargo aircraft landing in Tehran and quantities of gold leaving the country.

"We're also seeing Russian cargo aircraft coming and landing in Tehran, presumably carrying weapons and ammunition, and we're hearing reports of large amounts of gold leaving Iran," Tugendhat said. It was unclear what reports he was referencing.

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