



[Iran Plans Public Trials of Detained Citizens in an Effort to Suppress Weeks of Anti-Government Protests While Large-Scale Demonstrations Persist](#)

Following the suspicious circumstances surrounding the detainment and death of Iranian woman Mahsa Amini back in mid-September, mass anti-government protests have been taking place across the country. For weeks, an array of Iranian citizens have been demonstrating against authorities and the so-called “morality police” behind the killing of Amini. She was taken into custody for allegedly violating the dress code, with eyewitnesses stating that Amini was severely beaten and died as a result of police brutality, refuting authorities’ claims aimed at absolving themselves of wrongdoing. The large-scale protests initially began over outrage regarding the incident and abrupt fuel price increases, but quickly transformed into broader popular discontent with the government’s repression and corruption. Recently, earlier this week, Iranian authorities announced that they would hold public trials for thousands of people who have participated in the protests, and analysts have outlined how the mass indictments are the government’s first legal actions with the goal of suppressing dissent since the unrest broke out approximately six weeks ago. Some Iranian officials have also claimed that “foreign enemies in the West” have encouraged the unrest. According to human rights groups, at least 270 people have been killed and more than 14,000 have been arrested.

Iranian authorities have demonstrated their fears of the protests extending a longer period of time, as they have gone out of their way to suppress those who participate. The widespread demonstrations have lasted more than a month and solidarity with them has spread to over 104 cities, and around the world. During this preceding period of time, the government has failed to report the total number of deaths and arrests taking place. They have confronted the protests with astonishing levels of violence, and have threatened families of victims and imposed a near-total internet shutdown in November. Internet shutdowns violate basic human rights, including the rights to freedom of expression, access to information, and peaceful assembly and association. Under standards of international human rights laws, Iran should not use indiscriminate shutdowns to curtail the flow of information or harm citizens’ ability to assemble or express their sociopolitical views.

The government has also gone out of its way to hide the full extent of the crackdown that was imposed on protesters, with even the number of victims being difficult to pinpoint. Authorities have also detained at least 35 reporters and photographers since the demonstrations began. Videos of the protests show that on several occasions, security forces shot at people who were fleeing the demonstrations. Many of those wounded during the protests would not seek hospital treatment out of fear of arrest. Some of the worst violence has taken place in Khuzestan Province, where authorities responded to roadblocks set up by protesters and reacted with heavy weaponry and lethal force.

In an attempt to suppress and deter protests, authorities have announced charges against thousands of people across a plethora of Iranian provinces. Many have been accused of broad and dubious charges like “corruption on earth” and “war against God,” offenses that carry the death penalty. Families of those arrested have also been banned at the threat of retaliation from speaking and conducting interviews with the media.