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WORLD | MIDDLE EAST

In Iran, Streets Full of Soldiers and Warnings From Loudspeakers

Protests are replaced by virtual martial law as regime reasserts control after quelling an uprising aimed at ending its rule

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Downtown Tehran on Friday. VAHID SALEMI/ASSOCIATED PRESS

The protesters who filled the streets of Tehran are gone, replaced by security forces and reminders of the violence used by the regime to suppress a national uprising aimed at ending its rule.

Members of the [Basij pro-government militia](#) patrolled the streets of Tehran on motorbikes in recent days, with some shouting, “Don’t come out! We’ll shoot you!” according to residents of the capital. A medical student in Tehran said he counted the charred remains of at least five banks. Many shops remain closed. Universities, a hotbed of protests, are still closed.

The quiet reflects the success of the regime’s quick and deadly efforts to stop the [biggest challenge to its four decades in power](#). There have been only two new protests across Iranian cities since Monday, according to Human Rights Activists in Iran, a U.S.-based group. At least 3,308 have died in the unrest, almost all of them protesters, and more than 24,000 have been arrested, the rights group said.

The government is aiming to show some signs of normalcy returning. State broadcaster IRIB showed footage of schools reopening Sunday after a weeklong closure. IRIB also said that Tehran's stock market main index had jumped by 79,000 points Sunday.

Authorities said they are easing an internet shutdown that started on Jan 8. But Iranians trying to reach relatives say they are still facing problems.

Tehran is also continuing its crackdown. Asghar Jahangiri, the spokesperson for Iran's judiciary, said on Sunday that it had arrested individuals connected to Israel's Mossad intelligence services who were involved in the protests.

Residents report that normal is still a way off. Tajrish, an affluent neighborhood of North Tehran normally known as the capital's top dating spot, has been eerily quiet in the past week, a resident said. Most shops are closed except for local grocery shops, he said, and even those close early.

Armed security forces have taken over the streets of several cities across the country, imposing what some Iranians have described as unofficial martial law. In Karaj, an industrial town to the west of Tehran, police loudspeakers are blasting calls to people to stay away from their windows, according to Sahar Ajdamsani, an Iranian activist who spoke to a local resident.

In the holy city of Mashhad, which saw some of the biggest protests, footage filmed earlier in the week showed a heavy police presence. Armored vehicles were stationed at key entry points along with men sporting black uniforms and helmets, according to a video verified by Storyful, which is owned by News Corp, the parent company of The Wall Street Journal.

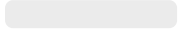
Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Saturday blamed President Trump for the protester deaths. "We find the U.S. President guilty due to the casualties, damages and slander he inflicted upon the Iranian nation," he said in a post on X. Trump responded in an interview with Politico by saying that Khamenei was a "sick man" and that it was [time for new leadership](#) in Iran.

The U.S. president had encouraged protesters to take to the streets and repeatedly threatened to intervene if Iran began killing them. But [he stepped back from military action](#) at the end of last week. Advisers told him that [the U.S. didn't have enough forces](#) in the region to deal a substantial blow to the regime and counter retaliatory strikes, and Trump opted to hold off until more firepower could be brought to bear, officials told the Journal.

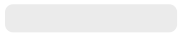
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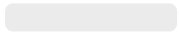
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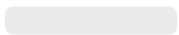
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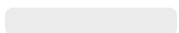
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