



Iran, the protest that does not extinguish: internal crisis, international pressure, and risk of escalation

Published on 06/01/2026

While the attention of the main international media remains focused on **Venezuela, Gaza, and Ukraine**, Iran is experiencing a phase of **growing internal instability** that, although remaining on the margins of the global agenda, presents elements of strong criticality. The protests that erupted between the end of 2025 and the beginning of 2026 constitute the **most significant mobilization since 2022**, when the death of Mahsa Amini during a police detention shook the country.

According to journalistic sources and independent human rights organizations, the demonstrations have involved **hundreds of locations in over twenty provinces**, starting from the **Grand Bazaar of Tehran** and quickly spreading to urban centers and suburbs. The initial spark was **economic**: the **collapse of the Iranian rial, uncontrolled inflation**, and the

increase in prices of essential goods have aggravated an already deep social crisis. These factors were compounded by a **structural political discontent**, leading protesters to express openly anti-government slogans.

The Iranian authorities continue to claim they enjoy the **support of the majority of the population**, downplaying the extent of the protests. However, testimonies and images from within the country describe a reality marked by **repression, arrests, and civilian casualties**. Although not yet reaching the intensity of 2022, the **persistence of the demonstrations** indicates a deep rift between society and political power, unlikely to be healed in the short term.

The international dimension of the crisis

The evolution of the protests cannot be analyzed without considering their **international projection**. The [statements of the President of the United States Donald Trump](#), spread on social media, have introduced an element of **strong diplomatic tension**, stating that Washington would not remain inert should Tehran resort to a **bloody repression** against peaceful protesters. A direct message that breaks with the traditional **American caution** on issues of internal Iranian dissent.

Iran, the protest that does not extinguish: internal crisis, international pressure, and risk of escalation

Tehran's response was immediate. Leading figures of the Iranian political and security system accused **the United States and Israel** of fomenting the unrest, claiming that external interference would lead to **regional chaos** and put U.S. interests in the Middle East at risk. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated that Iran will **defend its sovereignty**, threatening targeted responses in case of violations.

This verbal escalation fits into a context already marked by **recent clashes**. In June 2025, during the twelve-day conflict between Israel and Iran, Tehran struck a U.S. airbase in Qatar in response to attacks on Iranian nuclear sites. Nevertheless, Western military sources indicate that **there are no significant changes** in the readiness levels of U.S. forces in the region, a sign that, for now, the rhetoric has not translated into an immediate military escalation.

Risks of escalation and future scenarios

The main risk remains the **transformation of the internal crisis into a regional crisis**. The statements of top regime figures, who go so far as to define U.S. military installations as **“legitimate targets”**, show how Tehran is preparing the narrative ground to **justify a tough response**, both internally and externally.

Iran, the protest that does not extinguish: internal crisis, international pressure, and risk of escalation

At the same time, Iranian diplomacy recalls a long series of **historical disputes with Washington**, from the 1953 coup to the downing of a civilian aircraft in 1988, up to the more recent clashes with Israel. A communication strategy designed to **consolidate the internal front**, but which clashes with the evidence of **widespread and persistent protests**.

The **explicit support of the White House** for the protesters carries an evident risk: offering Tehran the **pretext for a more violent repression**, with the paradox of bringing closer precisely that scenario of external intervention that the regime claims to want to avoid. The demonstrations continue even in **sensitive areas**, including the border regions with Pakistan, while international analysts speculate that the Iranian power leaders have prepared **extraordinary security measures**.

The coming weeks will be decisive in understanding whether the protest will remain confined within the limits of a **prolonged internal crisis** or whether it will become a **new factor of regional instability**, in a Middle East already marked by fragile balances and unresolved tensions.

News link: <https://www.cybernaua.it/news/newsdett.php?idnews=13286>