



Protests in Iran: Youth in the Streets, Rising Death Toll and Trump's Ultimatum

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The new wave of protests in Iran, triggered by the **collapse of the rial** and the high cost of living, is rapidly taking on the contours of an open political challenge between the streets and the Islamic Republic. And, in the background, an international standoff with the United States: Donald Trump has declared he is **ready to intervene** if Tehran should “shoot and kill” the protesters, receiving harsh responses from senior Iranian officials.

Backpacks Ready: The Push from the Youth and the Alliance with Merchants

In the account of Corriere della Sera, the protest is described as an “organized” return of the generation that had already experienced the repression of 2022: students with “backpacks ready” who decide to **join the merchants** who took to the streets from the **Grand Bazaar of**

Tehran, while radical slogans against the top of power return.

International reports confirm the dynamics: the mobilization started from the economic crisis (inflation and exchange rate), but quickly spread to more areas of the country, with a bond between categories (bazaar, students, citizens) that makes it more difficult to “contain” the protest as a simple wage claim.

On the number of victims, the counts vary: **Reuters** reports **at least 6 dead** in the initial stages of the escalation, while **AP** reports **at least 8** victims and describes the protests as the largest since 2022.

Corriere, citing information gathered on the ground and online, indicates a “growing” toll in the order of **about ten** (with rumors up to **15**), indicating a still fluid picture difficult to verify independently.



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Trump's “Challenge” and the Ayatollahs' Response: “No Interference”

According to Reuters and AP, Trump used Truth Social to warn that if Iran were to kill protesters, the USA would be ready to intervene in their support.

The Iranian response came immediately: top figures spoke of a “**red line**” and regional consequences in case of American interference. The Guardian reports that Tehran considers such threats “dangerous” and potentially destabilizing, reiterating that national security is non-negotiable.

The Corriere piece also cites the exchange of warnings on social media with **Ali Larijani** and **Ali Shamkhani**, both advisors to the Supreme Leader, who recall the precedent of Iraq and Afghanistan and warn Washington of the risks to its own interests and military.

This internal crisis erupts as Tehran raises the tone against the outside. A few days earlier, President **Masoud Pezeshkian** had declared that Iran would find itself in a **“full-scale war” with America, Israel, and Europe**, linking the country's difficulties to Western pressures and measures.

Reuters and AP remind that the Iranian economy remains marked by sanctions and instability, and that the currency collapse was the immediate spark of the new protest.



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In conclusion, **this is a high-risk phase** because the economic crisis is becoming a **political challenge**: merchants, citizens, and especially **youth and students** are joining the streets, while the number of victims grows and funerals risk fueling new mobilizations. What makes everything more unstable is the international dimension: Pezeshkian raises the tone against USA-Israel-Europe and Trump threatens intervention if protesters are killed, reinforcing the Iranian narrative of “interference” and pushing the leadership to harden the repression. In this tangle, it takes just a spark to turn the protest into a crisis with regional effects.

News link: https://www.corriere.it/esteri/26_gennaio_02/proteste-iran-morti-trump-c0ae91cf-a8d1-47f8-88c0-b87b89163xlk.shtml?refresh_ce