



By: TA | AP Brief

# Iran signals fast trials and executions for protesters



The head of Iran's judiciary signaled there would be fast trials and executions ahead for those detained in **nationwide protests** despite a warning from U.S. President Donald Trump.

The comments from Iran's judiciary chief Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejei come as activists had warned hangings of those detained could come soon.

Already, a bloody security force crackdown on the demonstrations has killed at least 2,571, the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency reported.

That figure dwarfs the death toll from any other round of protest or unrest in Iran in decades and recalls the chaos surrounding the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Trump repeatedly has **warned** that the United States may take military action over the killing of peaceful protesters, just months after it bombed Iranian nuclear sites during a 12-day war launched by Israel against the Islamic Republic in June.

Meanwhile Wednesday, Iran prepared for the mass funeral of 100 security force members killed in the demonstrations as people remained fearful in the streets.

Plainclothes security forces still milled around some neighborhoods, though anti-riot police and members of the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard's all-volunteer Basij force appeared to have been sent back to their barracks.

"We are very frightened because of these sounds (of gunfire) and protests," said one mother of two children shopping for fruits and vegetables Wednesday, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals. "We have heard many are killed and many are injured. Now peace has been restored but schools are closed and I'm scared to send my children to school again."

Ahmadreza Tavakoli, 36, told The Associated Press he witnessed one demonstration in Tehran and was shocked by the use of firearms

by authorities.

"People were out to express themselves and protest, but quickly it turned into a war zone," Tavakoli said. "The people do not have guns. Only the security forces have guns."

## 'We have to do it quickly'

Mohseni-Ejei made the comment in a video shared by Iranian state television online.

"If we want to do a job, we should do it now. If we want to do something, we have to do it quickly," he said. "If it becomes late, two months, three months later, it doesn't have the same effect. If we want to do something, we have to do that fast."

His comments stand as a direct challenge to Trump, who warned Iran about executions an interview with CBS aired Tuesday.

"We will take very strong action," Trump said. "If they do such a thing, we will take very strong action."

"We don't want to see what's happening in Iran happen. And you know, if they want to have protests, that's one thing, when they start killing thousands of people, and now you're telling me about hanging — we'll see how that works out for them. It's not going to work out good."

## Activists said Wednesday that Starlink was offering free service in Iran

Meanwhile, activists said Wednesday that Starlink was offering free service in Iran.

The satellite internet service has been key in getting around an **internet shutdown** launched by the theocracy on Jan. 8. Iran began allowing people to call out internationally on Tuesday via their mobile phones, but calls from people outside the country into Iran remain blocked.

“We can confirm that the free subscription for Starlink terminals is fully functional,” said Mehdi Yahyanejad, a Los Angeles-based activist who has helped get the units into Iran. “We tested it using a newly activated Starlink terminal inside Iran.”

Starlink itself did not immediately acknowledge the decision.

Security service personnel also apparently were searching for Starlink dishes, as people in northern Tehran reported authorities raiding apartment buildings with satellite dishes. While satellite television dishes are illegal, many in the capital have them in homes, and officials broadly had given up on enforcing the law in recent years.

## Death toll continues to rise

The Human Rights Activists News Agency said 2,403 of the dead were protesters and 147 were government-affiliated.

Twelve children were killed, along with nine civilians it said were not taking part in protests. More than 18,100 people have been detained, the group said.

Gauging the demonstrations from abroad has grown more difficult, and the AP has been unable to **independently assess** the toll given the communications being disrupted in the country.