



By: TA | AP Brief

# Tehran has launched a campaign to arrest reformist figures



Iranian security forces have launched a campaign to arrest figures within the country's reformist movement, reports said Monday.

That widens a crackdown on dissent after authorities earlier put down **nationwide protests** in violence that killed thousands and saw tens of thousands more detained.

Detained Nobel Peace Prize laureate **Narges Mohammadi** has received another prison sentence of over seven years. It signals a widening effort to silence anyone opposed to the bloody suppression of unrest by Iran's theocracy as it faces new nuclear talks with the United States.

President Donald Trump has repeatedly warned he could launch an attack on the country if no deal is reached.

Media reports quoted officials within the reformist movement, which seeks to change Iran's theocracy from inside, as saying at least four of their members had been arrested.

They include Azar Mansouri, the head of the Reformist Front, which represents multiple reformist factions; and former diplomat Mohsen Aminzadeh, who served under reformist President Mohammad Khatami.

Also detained was **Ebrahim Asgharzadeh**, who led students who stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran in 1979, sparking the 444-day hostage crisis.

Their arrests likely stem from a reformist statement in January that called for Iran's 86-year-old Supreme Leader **Ayatollah Ali Khamenei** to resign from his position and have a transitional governing council oversee the country.

Iran's state-run IRNA news agency quoted a statement from prosecutors in Tehran, the country's capital, saying four people had been arrested and others summoned to meet authorities.

It accused those allegedly involved of "organizing and leading ... activities aimed at

disrupting the political and social situation in the country amid military threats from the United States and the Zionist regime."

"Having bludgeoned the streets into silence with exemplary cruelty, the regime has shifted its attention inward, fixing its stare on its loyal opposition," wrote Ali Vaez, an Iran expert at the International Crisis Group.

"The reformists, sensing the ground move beneath them, had begun to drift — and power, ever paranoid, is now determined to cauterize dissent before it learns to walk."

## Political support

However, it remains unclear just how much political support reformists have within Iran. The **anger on the streets** of Iran during the demonstrations, heard in people shouting "Death to Khamenei!" and in support of the country's **exiled crown prince**, appeared to lump reformists in with all other politicians now working in the Islamic Republic.

Iran and the U.S. held new nuclear talks last week in Oman. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, speaking Sunday to diplomats at a summit in Tehran, signaled that Iran would stick to its position that it must be able to enrich uranium — a major point of contention with Trump, who bombed Iranian atomic sites in June during the 12-day Iran-Israel war.

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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is to travel to Washington this week, with Iran expected to be the major subject of discussion, his office said.

The U.S. has moved the aircraft carrier **USS Abraham Lincoln**, ships and warplanes to the Middle East to pressure Iran into an agreement and have the firepower necessary

to strike the Islamic Republic should Trump choose to do so.

Meanwhile, Iran issued a warning to pilots that it planned “rocket launches” Monday into Tuesday in an area over the country’s Semnan province, home to the Imam Khomeini Spaceport.

Such launches have corresponded in the past with Iran marking the anniversary of its 1979 Islamic Revolution.