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# The Continuation of Mahsa Demonstrations and Iran's Attacks on the Kurdistan Region

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## Authors

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**Summary :** As demonstrations and protests continued in Iran for two months, the Revolutionary Guards conducted missile and drone attacks on three different locations in the Kurdistan Regional. This is the second attack in less than two months. The attacks were justified by the presence of the Rozhelatian parties (Kurdish opposition to the Iranian Regime) in the Kurdistan Region.

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Mahsa's protests are no longer just usual protests that just happen sometimes. They have become the most extended political crisis in Iran's past 43 years, and it seems the government has not been able yet to control it. On one side, the government's primary strategy is to portray Mahsa Amini protests as the fabrication of some states. On the other, to represent a local face of their existence. Here's where the protests and attacks are linked together. Although there are different factors, this is one of the most important ones. In this context, a delegation of Iranian leadership went to Baluchistan yesterday for dialogue and "comfort," and today (Nov, 14,2022), it launched missiles and drone attacks into the Kurdistan Region. That's why there's more focus on these two places in their work and reactions!

## Dialogue in Baluchistan and Attacks on Kurdistan Region

The demonstrations in Baluchistan have taken a sectarian aspect, and Mawlawi Abdulhamid is about to appear as the Sunni leader of Iran with a moderate and liberal doctrine. Even though he is a Hanafi (One of the four primary Sunni Schools), some of the Shafi'i Sunnis and religious men in eastern Kurdistan, particularly Hassan Al-Amin's Qur'an school, have supported him. Of course, there is still a national form that dominates the protests. Iran's efforts over the past four decades to lessen the national desire in Kurdistan have not succeeded, and the Mahsa protests have strengthened it. Mawlawi Abdulhamid became a leader who determined the day, especially after the famous prayer for freedom. His request regarding the referendum has brought him forward. Also, after his demand to punish the killers of the demonstrators, he just became an influential political figure. In fact, despite all the talk on Iranian television. A delegation of Iranian leaders visited Sistan and Baluchistan and met with him. After the removal of the Commander of the Sistan and Baluchistan police forces, this could be the state's most crucial retreat from the protests and demonstrators.

Although the King, the "Shah" of Iran's son, initially tried hard to appear as the unrivaled leader of the demonstration, this seems to have failed because, despite everything, at least the slogans were not against having the monarchy again in Iran. The protests appear to have no specific leaders or organizing groups, making it difficult for the government to control them. Iran's intelligence minister himself told the country's leader's website that this time's demonstration was horizontal and not easy to find their leaders.

Over the past two months, Ahmadinejad, many Shia Religious Marja'a, Larijani, and many former army commanders, Rohani, even Khatami, etc... Either were silent or only once backed the government. This is a clear sign of their hesitation in the current situation. The protests also divided Iranian reformists into two groups. Some initially supported the demonstrators, then remained silent, but recently another group supported them and demanded a clear stance on religious references (Marja'a). Some of them asked the government to reform and apologize to the demonstrators. The recent statement by *Iran's Reform Front*, despite attempts to face dialogue with the government and present itself as an address to solving problems, also discussed the diversity and popularity of Iranian protests and demonstrations. Evermore, the government insists on calling the protests an outside ruse and has repeatedly threatened to retaliate. It is always clear from the governments nearby media that the Kurdistan Region is counting on the ranks of these faraway places; according to them, they are interfering in the demonstrations.

An important point here is that after Iran's stance on Russia's support for the Ukraine war is revealed, there is about to be a turning point in The European and U.S. perspective on the protests. Germany insists on further punishing Iranian officials, and France appears to be sat down with the opposition and wants to play the same role it played over four decades ago in

changing Iran's former Regime. For the first time, Azerbaijan has publicly talked about Azeri rights in Iran. Ilham Alief said, "Azerbaijani rights are our concern wherever they are." Similarly, Netanyahu's return from Israel, the U.S.'s coldness in the nuclear deal, and Saudi Arabia's disregard for threats made by Tehran are among the outside factors that make Tehran's government again willing to demonstrate its military capability. Of course, because of the support the United States has reaffirmed to protect its allies, it may be challenging for Iran to attack Saudi Arabia, at least first. Recently, U.S. B52 aircraft have been flying in the area, and "Our enemies have told us not to hit us," said the Commander of the Iranian Guards Corps. Hence, the Kurdistan Region is the best place for them to attack and show their ability.

## Protesting for Two Months

During the past two months, at least 80 big and small cities and towns in Iran have protested, and 25 have been opposed daily. If we rank the day of demonstrations in Iran, Sanandaj is two months old, Tehran in 32 days, Isfahan is 18, Mashhad is 14, Saqqez is 14, Shiraz is 10, and Rasht and Zahedan in 9 days are the places where most demonstrations have taken place. According to the statistics, we have collected, at least in the 36 days of the two months, protests have occurred in more than ten different parts of Iran each time. The end of September, the middle, and the end of October were the hottest and most widespread days of demonstrations in Iran, with protests in more than 40 different cities and towns in Iran on October 26.

In the early days and the end of the two months, protests intensified more in Kurdistan and Baluchistan, and the rest of the demonstrations were more than in October. There are actual events daily in Eastern Kurdistan and every Friday in Baluchistan. The government's reactions are also manifested more in these two places, and there may be a reason why the government is not reluctant to show demonstrations and incidents in these places to give them a local, ethnic, or sectarian face. This may not have succeeded so far, as the cities of Tehran, Karaj, Mashhad, and Isfahan have always protested. Even if they have yet to continuously expand in terms of participation.

Iran's Guards described the attacks as a "conditional halt" after the September 28, 2022, attack on The Kurdistan Region with dozens of drones and missiles. Although Peshmerga from eastern Kurdistan's parties was no longer at four points close to the border, which Iran was sensitive to, Iran attacked again. This shows that Iran's reason for attacking the Kurdistan Region is not only for the presence of these parties. However, the demonstration continuation, countries' reactions towards the protests, and the government's willingness to localize demonstrations are reasons behind the attacks.