Iran Continues Crackdown A Month After Protests With 650 New Arrests

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Radio Farda

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More than a month after the start of the latest round of anti-government protests in Iran, security forces are still arresting people in various cities. The Police Chief in Kermanshah, Ali Akbar Javidan said on Wednesday December 18 that 250 more protesters have been arrested in that city.

Elsewhere in Iran officials broke the news on Tuesday about more than 400 other arrests in Alborz Province near Tehran, as well as Khuzestan and Fars Provinces in the south

Although arbitrary arrests continue, there is still no official figure about the number of those detained during and after the protests that started on November 15 following a sudden three-fold rise in the price of gasoline.

Some officials, including a key member of Parliament, Hossein Naqavi Hosseini of the National Security Committee, have said that around 7,000 protesters have been arrested during the first week after the protests started. Radio Farda’s estimate is that well over 8,000 people have been detained.

The official news agency IRNA reports that Javidan has accused the detainees of "being thugs, provoking others to stage mutiny, destruction of public and private property and attacking the police and Basij militia."

The accusations are typical of what Iranian officials have said about protesters in the past and in the wake of the most recent unrest while ignoring their[**demands for socio-economic justice**](https://en.radiofarda.com/a/iran-protests-uprising-of-the-poor-and-underprivileged/30285206.html).

Javidan said most of those detained in Kermanshah, in Western Iran, are between 20 to 35 years old. He claimed that some of the detainees have confessed to being linked to "terrorist groups and the enemies of the revolution."

He further claimed that some of the detainees were in possession of weapons. This comes while numerous videos released on social media do not show any armed protesters.

Judiciary officials including Prosecutor General Mohammad Jafar Montazeri and Interior Minister Rahmani Fazli had earlier promised to make matters clear about the arrests as soon as possible. This has not happened while the number of detainees is on the rise.

The Police Chief in Alborz province Abbas Ali Mohammadian announced more arrests in the province including two in Fardis near Karaj on Tuesday.

Earlier, the police chief in Fars Province told reporters that at least 300 protesters were arrested in that province including 10 in Kazeroun and Mamasani.

Khuzestan Province Police Chief also said last Friday that 136 people were arrested in that province on charges of "shooting and illegal possession of guns."

Khuzestan Province has been the venue of some of the fiercest attacks on protesters by security forces during the first week of the protests. Scores of protesters were killed in Mahshahr according to eyewitnesses, where security forces used tanks and heavy machine guns killing at least dozens in the marshlands around the city.

Reports say arrests in Mahshahr have been continuing since then.

International human [**rights watchdogs have voiced**](https://en.radiofarda.com/a/rights-organizations-urge-un-members-to-condemn-iran-human-rights-violations/30318461.html) deep concern over the ongoing arrests. In a December 16 statement, Amnesty International's Chief Officer for Middle East and North Africa expressed concern over arbitrary arrests and disappearances in Iran and called on the United Nations to take the case to the Security Council and the Human Rights Commission.

According to Amnesty International at least 304 protesters have been killed during the first three days of the protests between December 15 to 18, while opposition groups put the number around 400 and the United States has said up to 1,000 might have been killed.