



Iran: Revolutionary Guard Crowdsourcing Protestor Identification

OE Watch Commentary: The protests which erupted on 28 December in Mashhad and spread across Iran caught security forces by surprise. While protestors used social media to rally each other and spread word of events in other cities, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and its associated media turned to social media to crowdsource identification of protest leaders.

In the accompanying highlighted tweet from the IRGC-affiliated *Tasnim*, the news agency is asking its twitter followers to identify suspects. Other IRGC-related websites like *Gerdab.ir* also engaged in similar campaigns to identify protestors. While the Iranian government has gradually improved its facial recognition capabilities, efforts to mobilize regime supporters to inform on other Iranians suggests that holes still exist in Iranian security force capabilities. It also suggests that the government seeks to create a dynamic by which Iranians must prove themselves and their loyalty by informing on others. Such crowdsourcing also highlights a disincentive for the Iranian government to completely close off access to social media platforms.

The tweet's associated hashtags—all translated from the original Persian—give insight into how the regime seeks both to rally Iranian nationalism to the “#Flag_of_Iran” and to spin the protests as an external plot. They also demonstrate how the IRGC uses the narrative of chaos in Syria to justify strict security and crack down on demands for reform or democracy. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

“#Iran_is_not_Syria.”

Source: “Tasaviri Sardesteh-haye Aghteshashgeran-e Tehran (Photos of the Agitators of the Unrest in Tehran),” @Tasnimnews_Fa, 3 January 2018. https://twitter.com/Tasnimnews_Fa/status/948507708684161024

Pictures of the Agitators

Pictures of the Agitators of the Unrest in Tehran. Do you know them?

#Uprising_against_Chaos

#Flag_of_Iran

#Trump

#The_Overthrow

#National_Turmoil

#New_Sedition

#We_must_be_Alert

#Iran_is_not_Syria



The Official Seal of Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

Source: By MrInfo2012 - This vector image was created with Inkscape. (Own work), https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ASeal_of_the_Army_of_the_Guardians_of_the_Islamic_Revolution.svg, CC BY-SA 3.0.