

Doc_Number: EU000423

Gear Up

Get your tickets to Top Gear Live

TIMESONLINE

NEWS COMMENT BUSINESS MONEY SPORT LIFE & STYLE TRAVEL DRIVING ARTS & ENTS ARCHIVE OUR PAPERS SUBSCRIPTIONS

UK NEWS WORLD NEWS POLITICS SCIENCE ENVIRONMENT WEATHER TECH & WEB VIDEO PHOTO GALLERIES TOPICS MOBILE RSS

Where am I? Home News World News **Middle East News**

From The Times

September 19, 2009

Ahmadinejad faces test of strength as fresh protests sweep Iran



Escorted by his bodyguards, the reformist former Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, centre, is attacked by hard-liners as he attends Quds Day rally in Tehran

IMAGE : 1 of 2

Martin Fletcher

19 COMMENTS | RECOMMEND? (27)

The Islamic Republic has seldom seen such scenes. President Ahmadinejad had to cut short an interview on state-controlled television because chants of "Ahmadi! Ahmadi! Resign! Resign!" could clearly be heard in the background.

After two quiescent summer months, huge new protests erupted across Iran yesterday, with popular anger at the alleged theft of June's presidential election inflamed by the subsequent killing, torture, rape and show trials of opponents of the regime.

Mir Hossein Mousavi, 68, the former Prime Minister and de facto opposition leader, had to abandon plans to join the huge anti-government demonstrations in Tehran when hardliners attacked him and his car.

Ayatollah Khatami, 65, a popular former President who supports the opposition, was knocked to the ground, had his robe ripped and lost his cleric's turban — a black garment signifying that he is a *sayyid*, or descendant of the Prophet.

RELATED LINKS

Courage in Iran
Behind the story: reporting on Iran protests
Iran told: talk to us about nuclear weapons

MULTIMEDIA

Pictures: Al-Quds Day protests

injuries.

In an address to the Friday prayers gathering in Tehran, Mr

In Tehran and other cities, tens of thousands of demonstrators hijacked Iran's annual al-Quds Day rallies in support of the Palestinian cause and turned them into protests against the oppression of Iranians. The security forces hit back with teargas and baton charges. There were violent confrontations between government and opposition supporters in the squares and avenues of central Tehran and numerous reports of arrests and

TIMES RECOMMENDS

Call for more babies as china turns to grey
Women gang up to hurt the mafia
President Obama stumped by Israel

IRAN HIT BY PROTESTS



Tens of thousands join first anti-government protests for two months

[Slide Show](#)

IN DEPTH



World Agenda

Times experts explain the issues behind the headlines

TIMES ARCHIVE: IRANIAN REVOLUTION



Run-ins are draining. There's a reason I don't leave the house Ariel Leve

Times Online [SEARCH](#)

[MY PROFILE](#) | [SHOP](#) | [JOBS](#) | [PROPERTY](#) | [CLASSIFIEDS](#)

[MOST READ](#) | [MOST COMMENTED](#) | [MOST CURIOUS](#)

TODAY

The 50 Biggest Movies of 2009
Obama stumped by Israel as all world's...
Public debt hits £800 billion - the...
Roman Abramovich zaps snappers with laser...

FOCUS ZONE

Northern Lights:

Win a luxury weekend to Newcastle and its neighbour Gateshead, find out more here



[Northern Lights](#)
[Need to Know](#)

[Business Travel](#)
[Corsica Travel](#)
[More reports](#)

Business city guides

Overseas contacts and local business information



Free Credit Advice

Credit crunched? Our Credit Clinic has advice



Find an IFA

Find a local independent financial advisor



Crossword Club

Sign up today or try one of our free demo crosswords



Free CV Review

Sell yourself! Have your CV reviewed by experts



FINANCIAL BROCHURES

Request your guide to investing in uncertain times
Saving for your child
Online trading
Wine Investing
Save for Retirement
ISA Guides
Investment Trusts

come down on them.”

A 69-year-old merchant said: “I came to show solidarity with the youth of my country. The regime is destroying Islam and Iran.”

A young female student said: “The cheating, the raping, the killing and the torture drive you mad. I’ve come to express my hatred for Ahmadinejad and his protector, that so-called Great Leader of the Revolution.”

The Revolutionary Guards had warned that demonstrations would be crushed and the security forces responded with baton charges, teargas and pepper gas, but there were reports of protesters hurling stones and beating pro-government *basiji* militiamen.

The security forces also cordoned off Tehran University, where Mr Ahmadinejad addressed thousands of government supporters bussed in for Friday prayers. Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the former President, had addressed Friday prayers on al-Quds Day for most of the past quarter century, but was barred yesterday because of his opposition sympathies.

Mr Ahmadinejad used the occasion to deliver another verbal onslaught on Israel, saying that the Holocaust — the West’s “pretext” for creating the Zionist state — was “a lie based on an unprovable and mythical claim”.

He said that confronting Israel was a “national and religious duty” and warned Israel’s supporters: “This regime’s days are numbered. It is on its way to collapse. It is dying.”

Mr Ahmadinejad was speaking just days before his scheduled address to the UN General Assembly and his words provoked outrage abroad. David Miliband, the British Foreign Secretary, called his comments abhorrent. The White House issued a condemnation. The World Jewish Congress urged UN member states to boycott his speech.

Yesterday’s protests show that the Iranian regime is still far from secure and that, with summer over, its problems will mount. The football season has begun, meaning large and volatile crowds will gather each weekend. At the same time students, who are traditionally in the vanguard of Iranian protest movements, are pouring back into the capital for the start of the new academic year next week.

There are rumours that the regime may shut down some universities for a term. It is said to be purging “suspect” teachers and increasing the number of pro-government *basiji* volunteers in schools and colleges. In recent weeks the regime has cancelled other public events, including the commemoration of Imam Ali’s death at the mausoleum of Ayatollah Khomeini. During August it is understood to have moved three big football matches out of Tehran or had them played behind closed doors.



Shah fights exile for control of Iran

The Ayatollah has inspired the mass protest movement against the Shah’s rule

Will the Shah be toppled from his shaky throne?

The mind and heart of Ayatollah Khomeini

Find a Lawyer

Cut your legal costs



POPULAR SEARCHES ON TIMES ONLINE

books | [chess](#) | [crosswords](#) | [fantasy football](#) | [fashion](#) | [formula 1](#) | [horoscopes](#) | [Michael Jackson](#) | [need to know](#) | [obituaries](#) | [recipes](#) | [redundancy calculator](#) | [savings](#) | [science](#) | [sudoku](#) | [swine flu](#) | [twitter](#) | [university guide](#) | [wine](#) | [latest travel deals](#)

Shortcuts to help you find sections and articles

CLASSIFIEDS

CARS JOBS

PROPERTY TRAVEL

CARS

Car leasing

New Audi A5 - 2.0 TDI Sportback
36-month car lease on contract hire for £359.99 plus VAT pm

Gocompare.com

Compare 100+ insurers with Gocompare.com

Prestige Car Finance

The UK’s leading alternative to showroom finance.
Finance packages tailored to your needs.
Minimum loan of £25,000

Car Finance from Car Loan 4U

No Deposit Required.
Use Any UK Dealer.
Apply Online Now at CarLoan4U

Search for more cars and bikes

Place your advert now

Search Ad Reference:

PRINT EMAIL

YOUR COMMENTS

19 Comments (Displaying 1-10)

Order By: [Newest first](#) | [Oldest first](#) | [Most recommended](#)

Andrew Carpenter wrote:

The worst thing about this horror story seems to be his desire to see his whole Country going up in smoke..This will surely happen if he continues to goad the USA and Israel.

The sad thing is that many many rational, even minded folk will get caught up in it and die. The minute America says "go ahead" to Israel, it will firstly be the end of Iran; as a Country and a People..It'll also be an end to peace as we know it for the next twenty generations...End of days.

September 19, 2009 11:13 PM BST

RECOMMEND? (2)

esra aksoy wrote:

Obama did well to call off the shield plans. It is time for hypocritical Europeans to face the reality and Middle East problems rather than picking the dirt in thier backyards.

September 19, 2009 9:40 PM BST

RECOMMEND?

marcus toomster wrote:

Why is it that we hear nothing from that "silent majority" of moderate UK muslims on this brutal repression of democracy in Iran?

September 19, 2009 8:27 PM BST

RECOMMEND? (2)

John Schluter wrote:

Wonder why Iran doesn't trust it's people? Sad to have a government of thugs.

September 19, 2009 6:42 PM BST

RECOMMEND? (3)

Mark Love Iran wrote:

Obviously, mail is edited and/or deleted before exhibiting...

September 19, 2009 6:27 PM BST

RECOMMEND?

Andy B wrote:

Although I've never had the pleasure of visiting Iran, I've met many Iranians, and developed a fondness for the people and for the country. From what I know, Iran is ready to be free, and ready to be a democracy. That's what the people want. My heart is with the people of Iran. I hope this deep culture and ancient civilisation can flower again, free from the crushing, deadening power of the mullahs.

September 19, 2009 5:23 PM BST

RECOMMEND? (6)

Mike Johnson wrote:

I wish all the good luck to the people of Iran, to crush tyranny. I hope they get the freedom they are fighting for.

September 19, 2009 1:15 PM BST

RECOMMEND? (12)

Colin Horsman wrote:

When Mr Ahmadinejad attends a religious rally as part of the congregation, he appears, by his body language and facial expressions, to be immersed in an agonising spiritual experience while listening to the words of the Mullah.

Does he then go back to his office in this same state of contorted mind, and then to make important decisions for the future and policies of Iran?

Or does he return to some sense of, what most people would judge as balanced normality, when away from the religious setting.

If his decisions are influenced by his own and others religious emotions, then that seems a most extraordinary way to try and run a country. If that is the case then it is unsurprising that the majority of sensible Iranians are rising up against him.

September 19, 2009 11:51 AM BST

RECOMMEND? (7)

sara s wrote:

Ahmadinejad is a danger for all people in the world. He is enemy of humanity.

September 19, 2009 10:49 AM BST

RECOMMEND? (20)

Hus Darbari wrote:

The very events that the regime have initiated to show people's approval of them,are now turning to platforms for their opposition.History repeats itself.What inspired the mass against the Shah is inspiring the Iranian-youth of today. If ever the wealth of a nation was decimated by a corrupt regime,it is present day Iran.

September 19, 2009 10:46 AM BST

RECOMMEND? (16)