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Ahmadinejad sworn in for second term amid walkouts and protests

- Arrests reported as protesters gather outside parliament
- UK ambassador hears president attack west in speech

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Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's inauguration as Iranian president for a second term was marked by opposition walkouts, demonstrations and criticism from his own conservative camp today as pressure mounted on the disputed winner of Iran's election.

Senior officials and clerics attended the ceremony at Iran's parliament but it was boycotted by many opposition leaders and moderate politicians. Those of the reform faction who did attend walked out when Ahmadinejad started speaking, according to the opposition website Parleman News. Hundreds of opposition supporters gathered outside parliament and further protests were reported to be planned for 30 locations at 7pm Iranian time (3.30pm GMT).

The opposition claims Ahmadinejad stole the vote in the 12 June presidential elections. At least 30 demonstrators were killed in uprisings that followed.

Despite recent friction between Iran and Britain, the British ambassador, Simon Gass, was there to hear Ahmadinejad renew his attacks on western countries, which Iranian officials blame for stirring up unrest after the election. "Some governments should feel responsible for the words and deeds, interferences, occupations ... they need to be accountable for this," the president said.

The Iranian people wanted "constructive dialogue" with the international community, he said, but added: "We will resist violation of law and interference and abuse of national mechanisms and discrimination ... We will not remain silent."

Britain's Foreign Office defended the decision to send Gass to the ceremony. A spokesman said it was important "to keep channels of communication open" to address issues of concern, including Iran's nuclear programme and human rights. He said it was "not business as usual" as the UK was not sending a letter of congratulations to Ahmadinejad. Following informal EU co-ordination, Germany and France followed suit, as did the US. In his speech after taking the oath of office, Ahmadinejad mocked the snub, saying: "Well, no one in Iran is waiting for your messages." Some in the audience responded with cheers.

Before Ahmadinejad's speech, the conservative head of Iran's judiciary, Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi, urged him "to not use force ... on minor issues".

Ahmadinejad remained dismissive of the allegations of vote-rigging as he urged Iranians to stand together. "Who has voted for whom is not the question ...today we need a national will. We need to join forces."

Hundreds of police were deployed around the parliament and a subway station nearby was closed to the public as opposition groups called protesters on to the streets.

Opposition websites urged supporters of Ahmadinejad's main rival, Mir Hossein Mousavi, to protest against the swearing-in. Reuters reported a witness seeing hundreds of Mousavi supporters walking around the parliament building despite a heavy presence of riot police and Basij militia. The witness said there were no clashes but at least 10 people were arrested and mobile phones were cut off.

There were reports of teargas used against protesters. Other witnesses said security troops dispersed hundreds of protesters chanting "Death to the dictator" in streets near the parliament building.

The detained were said to include protesters who wore black T-shirts in a sign of grief over Ahmadinejad's inauguration. Others were a young man in green trousers – the colour of Mousavi's movement – a middle-aged woman carrying a royalist banner in support of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who was toppled in the 1979 Islamic revolution, and another woman chanting pro-Mousavi slogans. The official IRNA news agency said there had been no "disturbance of the peace".

Inside parliament, Ahmadinejad said: "I, as the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, swear before the holy Qur'an and the Iranian nation and God to be the guardian of the official religion, the Islamic Republic and the constitution." He pledged to protect the constitution and frontiers of Iran.

He said his main focus would be on "progress and development", and that he knew the Iranian people were "committed to the same principles".

On Monday, Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, ignored bitter divisions at home and deep dismay abroad to publicly endorse Ahmadinejad as a "brave, hard-working and wise man".

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