
Iran police clash with protesters

Security forces have used batons and tear gas to disperse opposition supporters in the Iranian capital, Tehran, witnesses and state media say.

Unconfirmed reports said the authorities had also opened fire.

Video posted on a reformist website showed hundreds of opposition supporters marching in central Tehran chanting "death to dictators".

It came as an officially backed demonstration was held to mark 30 years since the seizure of the US embassy.

Thousands turned out for the anti-American rally, about 1.5km (1 mile) from where opposition supporters gathered in Haft-e Tir square.

Bus attacked

Many of the opposition demonstrators wore green scarves or bands, which have been used in repeated protests since Iran's disputed presidential elections in June.

Opposition supporters say the elections were rigged to ensure the re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

On Wednesday, riot police and pro-government militiamen had packed the streets in the centre of the capital, and security forces made a number of arrests, reports said.

Iran's Irna news agency said protesters had set fire to rubbish bins and attacked a bus, and that two policemen had been injured.

It also reported that security forces had used tear gas in some parts of the city to disperse protesters.

Authorities have placed severe restrictions on foreign news organisations, making it difficult to verify reports.

Obama statement

Reformist leaders had urged their supporters to attend peaceful rallies at the former US embassy. In November 1979, 52 US diplomats were taken hostage at the embassy and held for 444 days by Islamist students in support of the Iranian revolution.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards had warned opposition groups not to stage demonstrations on the anniversary.

Opposition leader and former presidential candidate Mehdi Karroubi briefly joined the protesters in Haft-e Tir square, according to a reformist website, Mowjcamp.

Unconfirmed reports were circulating that police had surrounded the house of another reformist leader, Mir-Hossein Mousavi, to prevent him from joining any demonstration.

Some arrests were made on Firdowsi Square, Mowjcamp reported.

At least 30 protesters have been killed in clashes and thousands arrested since June's election.

Some 200 opposition activists remain behind bars. Three have been sentenced to death.

On Wednesday's anniversary of the seizure of the US embassy, US President Barack Obama released a statement in which he urged Iran to move beyond the "suspicion, mistrust, and

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confrontation" that had prevailed between Iran and the US since then.

"Iran must choose," the statement said. "We have heard for 30 years what the Iranian government is against; the question now is what kind of future it is for."

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