

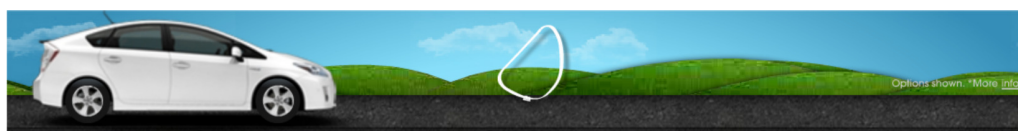
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Pro-Mousavi Iranians chant "death to the dictator"

Thu Aug 6, 2009 5:25pm EDT

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By [Parisa Hafezi](#)

TEHRAN (Reuters) - Hundreds of supporters of Iranian opposition leader Mirhossein Mousavi chanted "death to the dictator" in Tehran on Thursday, a witness said, a day after Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was sworn in as president.

The renewed protests come despite a heavy police presence and the mass trial of some 100 leading reformers accused of fomenting the unrest that has continued for eight weeks since disputed June 12 polls returned hard-liner Ahmadinejad to office.

"Hundreds of people are in Vanak square, chanting 'death to the dictator'. Others are also honking car horns," said the witness. "Hundreds of riot police are there as well."

The witness said riot police tried to disperse protesters.

"They are telling protesters to leave the area or face being arrested," the witness said.

The election and protests that followed, some of them the biggest anti-government demonstrations the Islamic Republic has ever seen, have exposed deep divides among Iran's political and clerical elite.

Mousavi and the other defeated pro-reform candidate Mehdi Karoubi say the election was rigged and the next government will be illegitimate -- defying Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has formally endorsed Ahmadinejad.

Authorities say the vote was "the healthiest" election since Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution.

Leading reformists, who support Mousavi, boycotted Ahmadinejad's inauguration ceremony, defying Khamenei's call to preserve unity after the vote.

The Etemad-e Melli newspapers said on Thursday at least 55 moderate and several headline lawmakers were also absent from the ceremony. Hundreds of pro-Mousavi supporters gathered near parliament, where the ceremony was held.

SEALED OFF

Ahmadinejad has been criticized by some hardliners angered by his initial choice of Esfandiar Rahim-Mashaie as his first vice-president. They were further upset when he took a week to obey Khamenei's order to dismiss Mashaie.

A few hours after Ahmadinejad took the oath of office, Karoubi said moderates would continue their "fight" over the vote, criticizing the authorities for "suppressing street protests," his website Etemademelli reported.

U.S. President [Barack Obama](#) and the leaders of France, Britain, Italy and Germany have all decided not to congratulate Ahmadinejad on his re-election.

Ahmadinejad reacted angrily, saying "no one in Iran is waiting for your messages." [Continued...](#)

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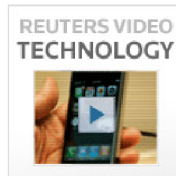
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