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Unrest in Iran spreads to provinces as students clash with security forces

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The head of one of Iran's most prestigious universities resigned today in protest at a security forces attack believed to have left at least one student dead. Mohammad Hadi Sadeghi stepped down as chancellor of Shiraz University after riot police and special forces stormed a library and fired teargas.

More than 100 students were arrested and at least one staff member was assaulted. The confrontation, on Monday, was the latest in a series in Shiraz since last week and feelings ran high today. Autnews, a website run by students at Tehran's Amir Kabir University, reported that tension had spread into the city. One rally, in Shiraz, was assailed by security forces, causing violent clashes and many arrests. Armed security forces lined the street leading to the university shoulder to shoulder.

Similar incidents were reported elsewhere. In Mashhad, the volunteer Basij militia and Ansar-e Hezbollah vigilante movement clashed with students at Ferdowsi University.

Two political leaders, Mehdi Abayi, head of the Islamic Participation party, in Khorasan, and Amir Eghtenaee, leader of the provincial branch of the Tahkim-e Vahdat student movement, were arrested.

Unrest was also reported at universities in Sistan-Baluchestan, Kermanshah, and Mazandaran. Unconfirmed reports suggested two people died in Orumiyeh in a rally of more than 3,000 people.

In Qom, HQ of Iran's clerical establishment, the only reported demonstrations were against the former president, Hashemi Rafsanjani, widely seen as a key backer of the defeated reformist candidate, Mir Hossein Mousavi.

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