

Iran Is Teetering. The West Isn't Prepared.

by [Holly Dagues \(/experts/holly-dagues\)](#)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Articles & Testimony

To avoid being caught flat-footed, Western governments must begin policy planning for the destabilizing waves that could accompany regime collapse while urgently restoring support for programs focused on internet freedom, human rights, and similar areas.

A lone man crouched in the middle of a Tehran street, a black jacket pulled over his head, blocking advancing Iranian security forces. The [video \(https://x.com/hdagues/status/2005678701929959477/video/1\)](https://x.com/hdagues/status/2005678701929959477/video/1) went viral among Iranians, quickly drawing [comparisons \(https://www.iranintl.com/en/202512296936\)](https://www.iranintl.com/en/202512296936) to the famous “[Tank Man \(https://x.com/hdagues/status/2005689580276834355/photo/1\)](https://x.com/hdagues/status/2005689580276834355/photo/1)” in China’s Tiananmen Square in 1989. Similarly courageous actions have occurred across Iran: young protesters—sometimes [alone \(https://t.me/AmirMiresmaeili/12112\)](https://t.me/AmirMiresmaeili/12112), sometimes in [pairs \(https://x.com/hdagues/status/2006136174734115032/photo/1\)](https://x.com/hdagues/status/2006136174734115032/photo/1) or [more \(https://x.com/hdagues/status/2007269682550624579\)](https://x.com/hdagues/status/2007269682550624579)—standing or kneeling peacefully before their repressors. The protests are the largest since the Woman, Life, Freedom uprising that began in 2022 and are taking place despite what the United Nations has called crimes against humanity [committed \(https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/03/iran-institutional-discrimination-against-women-and-girls-enabled-human\)](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/03/iran-institutional-discrimination-against-women-and-girls-enabled-human) by the authorities during that period. The trigger this time was the [collapse \(https://apnews.com/article/iran-traders-protest-rial-currency-ddc955739fb412b642251dee10638f03\)](https://apnews.com/article/iran-traders-protest-rial-currency-ddc955739fb412b642251dee10638f03) of the Iranian rial against the dollar. However, the protesters’ core grievances remain constant—government mismanagement, corruption, and repression—and they include an explicit [demand \(https://x.com/ksadjadpour/status/2009318513085968887?s=20\)](https://x.com/ksadjadpour/status/2009318513085968887?s=20) for the ouster of the Islamic Republic...

[Read the full article on the New York Times website.](#)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/10/opinion/iran-protests-trump-regime-islamic-republic.html>



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