

Iran protesters defy crackdown as Tehran warns against potential US involvement

Iranian authorities could be jamming Starlink terminals to further isolate the country amid an ongoing communications blackout, according to an expert who studies internet disruptions.

Starlink is a US-based service, owned by billionaire Elon Musk's SpaceX. It delivers mobile broadband via a network of orbiting satellites.

Doug Madory, director of internet analysis at network intelligence platform Kentik, raised the possibility that the government is carrying out "some sort of electronic warfare to try to disrupt those Starlink signals."

"When you use a satellite terminal, you're kind of blasting the signal out," he said. This signal can then be traced and blocked, "depending on how much effort the government want to spend on it," Madory told CNN.

Some Starlink users in Iran are experiencing high degrees of "packet loss," which indicates their signal could be "getting jammed," Madory said.

Even though the Iranian regime opposes the use of Starlink in the country, Madory said that people have managed to smuggle in terminals.

"There are quite a few people that do have connections, and so this has been a point of concern for the Iranian government," he said.

People in at least 180 cities across Iran have taken to the streets in recent days to protest against the country's current regime, according to US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA).

Though the demonstrations were initially "unbelievably beautiful and hopeful" according to one person, authorities cracked down violently on those protesting on Friday night, eyewitnesses have said.

Here's what some protesters told CNN about the violence they have seen in Iran:

- A woman in her mid-60s and a 70-year-old man described seeing **people of all ages** out in the streets of the Iranian capital on Thursday and Friday. On Friday night, however, security forces brandishing military rifles killed "many people," they said.
- An Iranian social worker who attended a protest in Tehran on Friday described seeing authorities **firing at protesters**. "Bullets, who knows, tear gas, whatever you can think of, they would fire them," she said. "And it was very terrifying." She also

said that she witnessed a girl being shocked in the neck with an electric device “until she passed out.”

- Scenes inside hospitals have been described by a number of witnesses as [“chaotic.”](#) One woman in Tehran described seeing “bodies piled up on each other” in the hospital, while an Iranian doctor in the northeastern city of Neyshabur said injured people were “terrified” they would be identified as a protester when seeking treatment.
- Mohammad Lesanpezeshki, a Chicago doctor educated in Tehran, told CNN his friends working in Iranian hospitals are [overwhelmed](#). A doctor at one hospital was “crying on the phone because they have no blood supplies,” he said. His friends also told him that an eye hospital in Tehran experienced a particular surge in patients with pellets lodged in their eyes, with roughly 200 to 300 patients.