IRANWATCH DAILY | November 3, 2025

Brief Notes

Iranian Dissident's Death Sparks Anti-Regime Protests: On Saturday, the deceased body of Omid Sarlak, a young Iranian man, was reportedly discovered in Aligudarz, Lorestan Province, hours after he posted a video of himself burning a photo of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. Authorities claim Sarlak "took his own life with a handgun," but many Iranians, including his family, believe he was "killed under torture by the Intelligence Ministry." In one of his final Instagram posts, Sarlak paired the video of himself burning Khamenei's image with archival audio of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the King of Iran prior to the Islamic Revolution. Sarlak's funeral, held today, quickly turned into an anti-regime protest, with mourners chanting "Death to Khamenei" and "I will kill, oh I will kill he who killed my brother." Instead of reciting traditional Islamic prayers, Sarlak's family chose to read passages from the Shahnameh (Book of Kings), a gesture seen as an act of defiance. In a widely circulated video of the funeral, Sarlak's father can be heard saying, "They killed my champion here!" Iranian social media users have started recording videos of themselves burning photos of the Supreme Leader as a tribute to Sarlak.

Tehran Says Caracas Will 'Definitely Be Able to Defend Itself' Against Washington: Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei said, during his weekly press conference, that Venezuela will "definitely be able to defend itself well" against the U.S. because of its "determined" people, adding that the Islamic Republic will continue cooperation with Caracas "within the framework of mutual respect and interests," in line with existing agreements. Bagheai condemned U.S. rhetoric as "completely contrary to the principles of the United Nations Charter regarding the prohibition of the use of force and the threat of force." These remarks come amid reports that Venezuela is seeking military equipment from the Islamic Republic.

New Crackdown Targets Economists, Sociologists: Authorities have arrested at least four prominent individuals, including economist Mohammad Maljou and Parviz Sedaqat, chief editor of the Critique of Political Economy website. Regime forces reportedly raided the individuals' homes and detained them without presenting any charges, also arresting sociologists Mahsa Asadollahnejad and Shirin Karimi.

Sistan and Baluchestan Province Violence Continues to Escalate: Three law enforcement personnel were killed in separate attacks in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, a Sunni-majority region of Iran that has seen an increased tempo in violent clashes since the 12-Day War. On November 1, state-run ILNA reported that two local Basij members, Esmaeil Shaverzi and Mokhtar Shahozehi, were "martyred" after armed assailants attacked a vehicle belonging to Mohammad Reza Shahozehi, the head of a local tribe, on the Khash–Zahedan motorway. A day later,

Mizan News Agency said intelligence officer Mohammad Siahani was shot dead by "hostile groups" firing from an unmarked car on the Bampur–Delgan road.

Khamenei Doubles Down on 'Enmity With the U.S.'

Today, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said that any future cooperation with the U.S. would require "a fundamental shift in U.S. regional policy." Speaking to students on the anniversary of the 1979 seizure of the U.S. embassy in Tehran, Khamenei rejected claims that the Islamic Republic's slogan of "Death to America" is the cause of U.S. hostility towards the regime, saying, "This slogan is not the reason why America confronts our nation in this way. The issue between America and the Islamic Republic is a fundamental incompatibility and a clash of interests."

Khamenei continued, "Only if America were to end its support for the accursed Zionist regime entirely, withdraw its military bases from the region and cease its interference in regional affairs could any American request for cooperation with Iran be considered, and even then, not in the near future, but at a later time."

He then warned: "The arrogant nature of America accepts nothing short of submission. All American presidents have desired this, most did not state it openly, but the current president has expressed it explicitly, thereby revealing America's true nature."

Emphasizing the need to strengthen the regime's military apparatus, Khamenei said, "At present, everyone should understand that the remedy for many of our problems lies in becoming stronger.... If the country becomes strong...the country will certainly be secure.... The military sector, by God's grace, is working and advancing day and night, and it will continue to make progress."

Meanwhile, in a statement commemorating the anniversary, the General Staff of the Armed Forces wrote that any "mistake by the enemy" would provoke a "crushing response." It accused the United States of "five decades of continuous hostility" and of "violating the rights of the Iranian nation." Referring to the 12-Day War, the Armed Forces said the conflict showed the regime's enemies that "the possibility of renewed aggression (against the Islamic Republic) has been lost."

The IRGC also released a statement to mark the occasion, which in part read: "Enmity with America is not a political misunderstanding, but rather is rooted in a structural conflict of interests and is a continuous and institutionalized strategy by the White House."

President Vows to Rebuild Nuclear Program 'With Greater Power'

President Masoud Pezeshkian, visiting the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran yesterday, vowed to "rebuild nuclear facilities with greater power" and rejected Western "propaganda" that claims the regime's nuclear program aims to build weapons, saying this assertion was aimed at "instilling in public minds that the word 'nuclear' is synonymous with building atomic weapons."

During his weekly press conference, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei said that, although Washington and Tehran continue to exchange messages via mediators "as usual," this "does not mean at all" a resumption of nuclear talks. Baghaei also dismissed reports that Oman had relayed "an official message" from the U.S. during Deputy Foreign Minister Takht-Ravanchi's recent visit, and said the Islamic Republic's contacts with Egypt were not tied to mediation with Washington.

Baghaei further said, "Conditions are not ripe for meaningful dialogue" with the U.S., while accusing Washington of "insisting on advancing its own demands unilaterally," adding that the regime "does not respond to such forms of dictation."

On the Radar

- Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei, during his weekly press conference, said that the Islamic Republic has obtained the necessary permits to open a consulate in Bonn." Baghaei noted that the October 2024 closing of three Islamic Republic consulates in Germany, in response to the regime's execution of German citizen Jamshid Sharmahd, had created "significant difficulties" for Iranian citizens, though the embassy in Berlin has remained operational and has since "significantly expanded its consular activities."
- Yesterday, the IRGC conducted a military drill, reportedly featuring its Sejjil drones, in the northwest of the country. The exercise was overseen by IRGC Commander-in-Chief Mohammad Pakpour and IRGC Ground Force Commander Mohammad Karami. Pakpour reportedly assessed the Ground Force's combat capabilities and operational readiness. The drill took place near Iran's borders with Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkey, and Iraq.
- A high-ranking Air Force delegation from the Islamic Republic visited Belarus to discuss expanding cooperation in aviation and air defense.
- The Judiciary has rejected social media claims of corruption within its Protection and Intelligence Department as "baseless." The reports circulating on social media allege that several senior judiciary officials have been arrested in a covert operation due to their roles in helping cover up a 60 trillion rial

($56 million) embezzlement case and for selling confiscated luxury goods on the black market. The judiciary dismissed the allegations as "entirely unfounded," saying they were spread by individuals previously targeted by its anti-corruption measures. It added that "no arrests or discoveries of corruption have taken place within this center."

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