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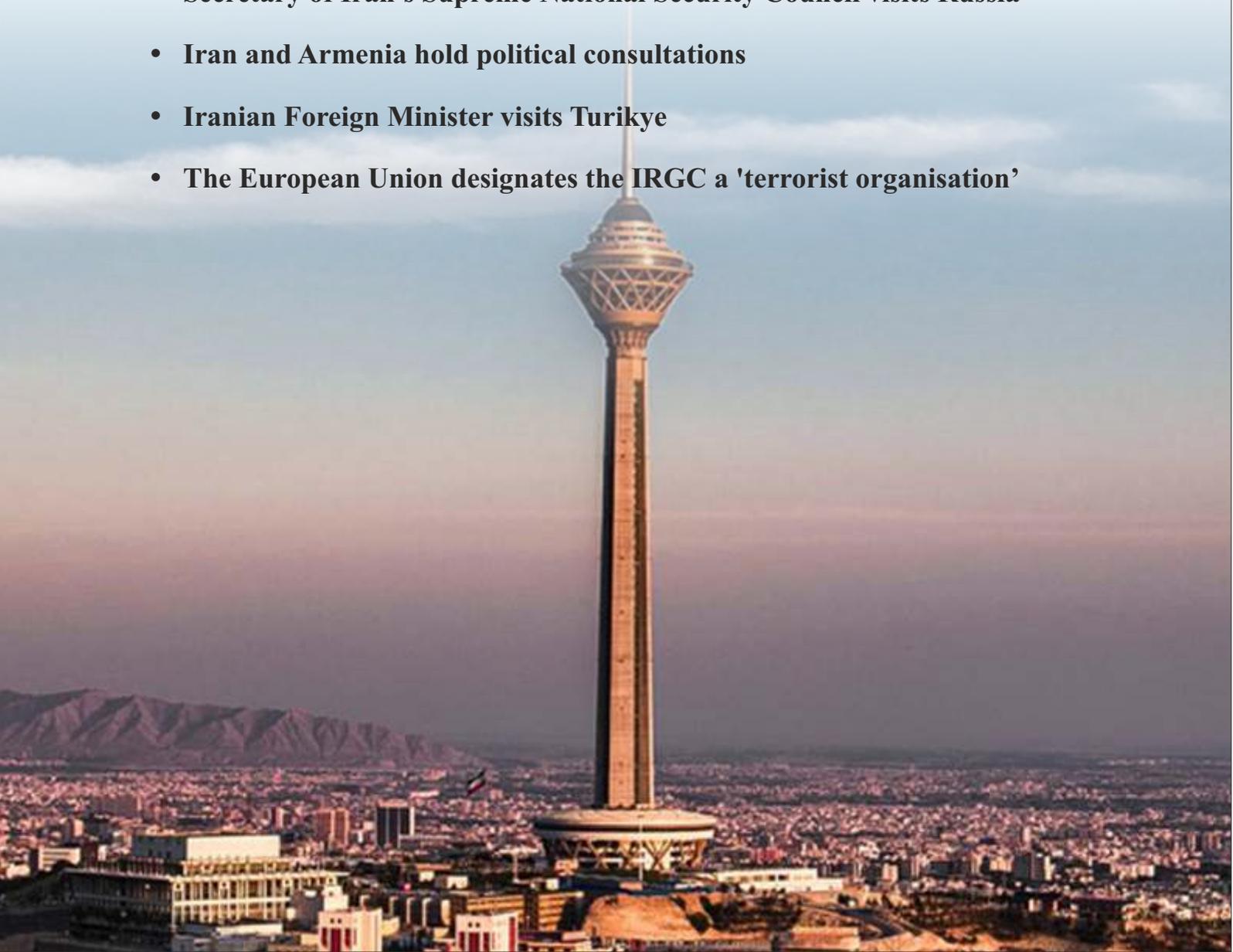
मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

# Iran

## *Digest*

January 2026

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## Internal Protests in Iran over currency fall

On 28 December 2025, shopkeepers in Tehran's Grand Bazaar shuttered their shops in protest as the Iranian currency plunged to a record low against the US Dollar. Subsequently, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian announced the [end of preferential foreign currency](#) allocations, arguing that multiple exchange rate mechanisms have fuelled corruption and inequality, and instead redirected subsidies directly to consumers. However, the protests spread to 27 of Iran's 31 provinces, focusing on cost-of-living crises and political grievances. On 2 January, President Trump warned that the United States would "rescue" the protesters if the regime "violently kills" them. As protests entered a third week and Trump made repeated threats of military intervention, the Iranian government imposed a nationwide internet blackout. On 9 January, Reza Pahlavi, son of the deposed Shah, who is based in the US, called on Iranians to takeover the city centres, inviting accusations of leading a 'terrorist war' from Iranian leaders. Amid internal unrest and US military build-up, Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammed Bagher Ghalibaf challenged Washington to intervene, saying that Iranian retaliation would target both US bases in the region and Israel. On 12 January, in a meeting with foreign diplomats in Tehran, Foreign Minister [Abbas Araghchi](#) noted that Trump's warning of military action against Tehran, should protests turn violent, motivated "terrorists" to target protesters and security forces to invite foreign intervention. About the high-level violence on 7-8 January, including arson attacks on government buildings, mosques, and banks, Araghchi said demonstrations were "stoked and fuelled" by foreign elements, noting that

security forces would "hunt down" those responsible. "We are ready for war but also for dialogue," he added. As per the first [official death toll](#) released by Iran's Martyrs Foundation, 3,117 people were killed during the crackdown, 2,427 of whom were civilians and security forces.

## Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council visits Russia

On 30 January, [Ali Larijani](#), Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, met Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Kremlin. The meeting came amid the US military buildup in the Middle East and US President Donald Trump's renewed threats of military action against the Islamic Republic of Iran. The discussions focused on expanding relations between the two nations, particularly in the economic sphere. Beyond the bilateral framework, the two politicians held "thorough consultations on vital regional and global issues." Following internal protests in Iran, [Sergei Shoigu](#), secretary of the Russian Federation Security Council, in a telephone call with Larijani condemned what he described as "another attempt by external forces to interfere in Iran's internal affairs", and the two sides agreed to maintain close contact and coordinate their positions to ensure security. On 26 January, Kremlin Spokesman [Dmitry Peskov](#) told reporters that "a possible US strike on Iran would seriously destabilise the Middle East, and Moscow hopes for restraint from all sides." He also noted that "Russia continues its efforts to de-escalate tensions."

## Iran and Armenia hold political consultations

On January 8, Majid Takht Ravanchi, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran for Political Affairs, visited Armenia for political consultations between the Ministries of

Foreign Affairs of the two countries. During the talks, which focused on a broad agenda of bilateral relations, Ravanchi's Armenian counterpart, Vahan Kostanyan, also referred to [projects aimed at enhancing regional connectivity](#), including the new opportunities expected to arise from the implementation of the "TRIPP" project. Amid Tehran's lingering concerns about the Armenian government's plans to open a U.S.-administered transit corridor for Azerbaijan, Ravanchi's talks with Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan and the secretary of Armenia's Security Council, Armen Grigorian, focused on "issues related to unblocking regional infrastructures". Ravanchi told the media in Yerevan that work on preparing the [Armenia-Iran strategic partnership document](#) is underway. He noted that the unblocking of roads in this sensitive region of the Caucasus has always been at the centre of our attention, and we are in favour of it. If we want the South Caucasus to become a developed region, because it is beneficial for all countries in the region, then all roads must be unblocked within the framework of international laws, respecting the internationally recognised borders, and respecting the sovereignty of countries.

### Iranian Foreign Minister visits Turkiye

On 30 January, Iranian [Foreign Minister Araghchi](#) visited Turkiye. Araghchi's visit came a day after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, during a [telephone call](#) to President Pezeshkian stressed that Ankara is ready to assume a facilitating role between Iran and the US to help de-escalate tensions and contribute to resolving outstanding issues. He made a similar offer to mediate in a call to President Trump. As the USS Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group arrived in the Arabian Sea on 26 January, Trump warned in an interview that "a big armada

next to Iran" but added that Tehran appears keen to engage diplomatically. In his meeting with Erdogan, Araghchi highlighted Iran's principled approach to diplomacy, emphasising its readiness to negotiate based on mutual respect and the recognition of Iran's legitimate rights and concerns, while appreciating Turkey's responsible stance on Iran's nuclear issue. President Erdogan underlined Turkiye's efforts to reduce tensions and return to diplomacy, stating that the region cannot tolerate further instability and reaffirming that diplomacy is the only solution to Iran's nuclear issue, while expressing Turkiye's readiness to offer any facilitative efforts in this regard.

### The European Union designates the IRGC a 'terrorist organisation'

The European Union designated the [Islamic Revolution Guards Corps](#) (IRGC) as a terrorist organisation in response to the crackdown on protests in Iran. To protest the move, the Iranian Foreign Ministry summoned representatives of all EU member states with embassies in Tehran. On 1 February, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammed Bagher Ghalibaf said Tehran had categorised the armed forces of individual EU states as "terrorist groups" in accordance with 2019 legislation. In a statement, the [General Staff of the Armed Forces](#) of the Islamic Republic of Iran described the EU's move as "irrational, irresponsible and hateful" and described it as a violation of international law, the UN Charter, and the principle of national sovereignty. The General Staff emphasised that the IRGC has long been a legitimate and powerful institution, defending Iran against US state terrorism and the "dangerous" Israeli regime. It added that the accusation aims to support, expand, and legitimise terrorism regionally and globally.