



Tensions escalate in Tehran as more protests take place

11 July, 2009, 01:21

Thousands of anti-government protesters took to the streets of Tehran on Friday, defying security forces using tear gas to disperse the crowd.

Demonstrators gathered outside Tehran University to commemorate a student uprising 10 years ago.

This is the first opposition rally in two weeks after Iranian authorities banned demonstrations. A ban was imposed when mass protests followed claims of electoral fraud, allegations rejected by re-elected President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

The protests sparked some of the bloodiest violence seen in the country since the Iranian revolution of 1979, also known as Islamic Revolution, when the Iranian monarchy was overthrown and replaced with the Islamic Republic.

The Iranian authorities claim that the U.S. and Britain have been meddling in the country's internal affairs and have helped support the protests. But Christopher Preble of the CATO Institute, which promotes peaceful international relations and individual liberties, says there is no evidence to support the claim.

"I have no reason to believe it's true," Preble told RT. "Of course, the U.S. and the U.K. were involved in the overthrow of the Iranian government in 1953, and that's something the Iranians are taught on a regular basis, but I think President Obama has taken a very careful but ultimately appropriate stance recognizing the likelihood that he would be accused of fomenting this unrest and therefore undermining the legitimacy of this popular protest."

There have been human rights abuses when peaceful protestors have been fired upon and several even killed, and by doing this the Iranian government has undermined itself in the eyes of international community, suggested Preble. But whether Ahmadinejad's government is able to rule with legitimacy, Preble said, is going to be decided by sentiment inside of Iran, far more than any international criticism or sanctions.