



Iran Summary September 2024

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Major Events in September 2024 (included below in bold): On September 27, Israel [killed](#) Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah in an airstrike on the group's central command headquarters in Beirut, Lebanon. On September 17 and 18, thousands of pagers and walkie-talkies used by Hezbollah operatives [exploded](#), wounding or killing as many as 3,000 Hezbollah officers and members, in an operation reportedly carried out by Israel. U.S. officials [said](#) that Iranian hackers sent stolen material from former President Trump's campaign to President Joe Biden's then re-election campaign. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) [announced](#) that a Pakistani national was arrested for allegedly plotting to assassinate an American official on behalf of Iran's regime. Iran [increased](#) its activities at two suspected nuclear weaponization sites.

Hezbollah Attacks and Israeli Operations Against Iranian Proxies:

- In September, Hezbollah and other terrorists in Lebanon [fired](#) more than 2,162 projectiles targeting Israel, a more than 230% percent increase over August.
- **On September 27, Israel [killed](#) Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah in an airstrike on the terror group's central command headquarters in Beirut, Lebanon.**
 - » Prime Minister Netanyahu [said](#), "Nasrallah's killing was a necessary step toward achieving the goals we have set, returning residents of the North safely to their homes and changing the balance of power in the region for years to come."
 - » President Biden [said](#), "Hassan Nasrallah and the terrorist group he led, Hezbollah, were responsible for killing hundreds of Americans over a four-decade reign of terror. His death from an Israeli airstrike is a measure of justice for his many victims, including thousands of Americans, Israelis, and Lebanese civilians."
- On September 20, Israel carried out an airstrike in Beirut that killed a top Hezbollah commander, Ibrahim Aqil, and at least ten other senior members of the terror group.
 - » U.S. officials have [said](#) that Aqil was a principal member of the terror cell that carried out the 1983 Marine barracks bombing in Beirut, the 1983 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, and the kidnapping of American and German hostages in Lebanon.
- On September 19, the Shin Bet [announced](#) that a Jewish Israeli civilian was arrested in August after he was allegedly recruited by Iran to participate in an assassination plot targeting Prime Minister Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, or the head of the Shin Bet, Ronen Bar.

- » According to the Shin Bet and Israel National Police, Moti Maman, 73, was smuggled into the Islamic Republic twice and received payment to carry out actions on behalf of Iran's regime.
- **On September 17, thousands of pagers used by Hezbollah [exploded](#) simultaneously in an alleged Israeli attack. The following day, on September 18, thousands of walkie-talkies used by the terror group exploded. According to *The Washington Post*, "as many as 3,000 Hezbollah officers and members – most of them rear-echelon figures – were killed or maimed" by the explosions.**
 - » Iran's ambassador to Lebanon, Mojtaba Amani, was [wounded](#) when his pager exploded on September 17, losing an eye.
- On September 17, the Shin Bet [announced](#) it had [foiled](#) a Hezbollah plot to assassinate former Israeli Defense Minister and IDF Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon with an explosive device.

The Iran-Backed Houthis and Maritime Aggression:

- The Iran-backed Houthis carried out 6 attacks on vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden in September, marking the lowest level of Houthi attacks since November 2023.
 - » Of the 6 maritime attacks, 4 were [entirely intercepted](#) by U.S. or partner forces or neutralized by crew onboard the commercial vessel.
 - » The remaining 2 attacks, both launched on September 2, struck the Panama-flagged/owned, Greek-operated MV *Blue Lagoon I* and the Saudi-flagged, owned, and operated MV *Amjad*, with two ballistic missiles and a one-way attack drone.
- On September 24, the Houthis [launched](#) a missile they said was aimed at Ben Gurion Airport in Israel, where Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's plane had just landed. Israel shot down the missile, and no casualties were reported.
 - » On September 25, the Israeli Air Force [launched](#) airstrikes against Houthi infrastructure in western Yemen, killing four and wounding 29 in the second-ever Israeli strike in Yemen.
- On September 24, *Reuters* [reported](#) that Iran brokered talks for Russia to potentially transfer anti-ship cruise missiles to the Houthis.
 - » Several sources told *Reuters* that Russia had not yet determined if it would transfer its Yakhont missiles, also known as the P-800 Oniks, to the militant group. The Yakhont missile would allow the Houthis to more accurately target vessels in the Red Sea.
- On September 19, *NBC News* [reported](#) that Iran was helping the Houthis target U.S. MQ-9 Reaper drones, citing two U.S. officials, by improving Houthi air defenses. According to Michael Knights of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Iran has transferred upgraded missile systems to the Houthis, including the 358 and SA-2 surface-to-air missiles, which improve their ability to target MQ-9 Reaper drones.
 - » On September 30, the Houthis [claimed](#) to have shot down a U.S. MQ-9 Reaper drone over Yemen. The U.S. military acknowledged losing a drone.
 - » On September 8, the Houthis [claimed](#) to have shot down a U.S. MQ-9 Reaper drone over Yemen. According to U.S. officials, the drone was able to land and was [recovered](#) by the U.S. military.
- On September 15, the Houthis [fired](#) a ballistic missile which was partially intercepted by Israeli air defenses before it struck in central Israel. No direct casualties were reported, but nine people were lightly hurt while seeking cover.

Malign Activities Abroad:

- On September 27, the U.S. DOJ [indicted](#) a former Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) contractor for acting as an illegal agent for Iran's regime. According to DOJ officials, Abouzar Rahmati, 42, a naturalized U.S. citizen and resident of Great Falls, Virginia, acted as an agent of Iran for at least six years.
- On September 16, Iran's Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi, [said](#) the policy of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's government is to "provide unlimited support to the resistance." He added, "We will support the resistance front, which has established itself as a reality in the region."
 - » Iran's "Axis of Resistance" refers to its proxy terror groups, including Hamas, Hezbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), the Houthis, and Iraq militias.
- **On September 11, the U.S. DOJ [said](#) that a Pakistani national was arrested for allegedly plotting to assassinate a U.S. official on behalf of Iran's regime. Asif Raza Merchant, 46, allegedly sought to hire a hitman to kill a U.S. politician or government official in retaliation for the U.S. killing of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) commander Qassem Soleimani in 2020.**
- On September 8, French authorities [revealed](#) that they had arrested and charged a couple in May of 2024 for their involvement in an Iranian plot to assassinate Israelis and Jews in France and Germany.
 - » According to French authorities, Abdelkrim S. and his partner Sabrina B. [intended](#) to target a former employee of an Israeli security firm and three of his colleagues living in the Paris suburbs, and also marked three Israeli-German citizens in Berlin and Munich as targets.

Cyber:

- On September 24, Swedish authorities [said](#) that Iran was responsible for thousands of text messages that were sent to people in Sweden calling for revenge after a string of public burnings of the Quran in the summer of 2023.
 - » Swedish authorities said, "it was the Iranian state via the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, IRGC, that carried out a data breach at a Swedish company that runs a major SMS service."
- Israel's National Cyber Directorate [said](#) that Iran and Hezbollah were behind the mass text messages sent to millions of Israelis on September 19 that included threats and links to malware. The texts included messages such as, "Say goodbye to your loved ones; but don't worry. You'll hug them in hell in a few hours," and "If you want to live, leave. If you want to stay, go to hell."
- **On September 18, U.S. officials [said](#) that Iranian hackers sent stolen material from former President Trump's campaign to President Biden's then re-election campaign in June and July.**
 - » The FBI, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, and Office of the Director of National Intelligence said in a joint statement, "Furthermore, Iranian malicious cyber

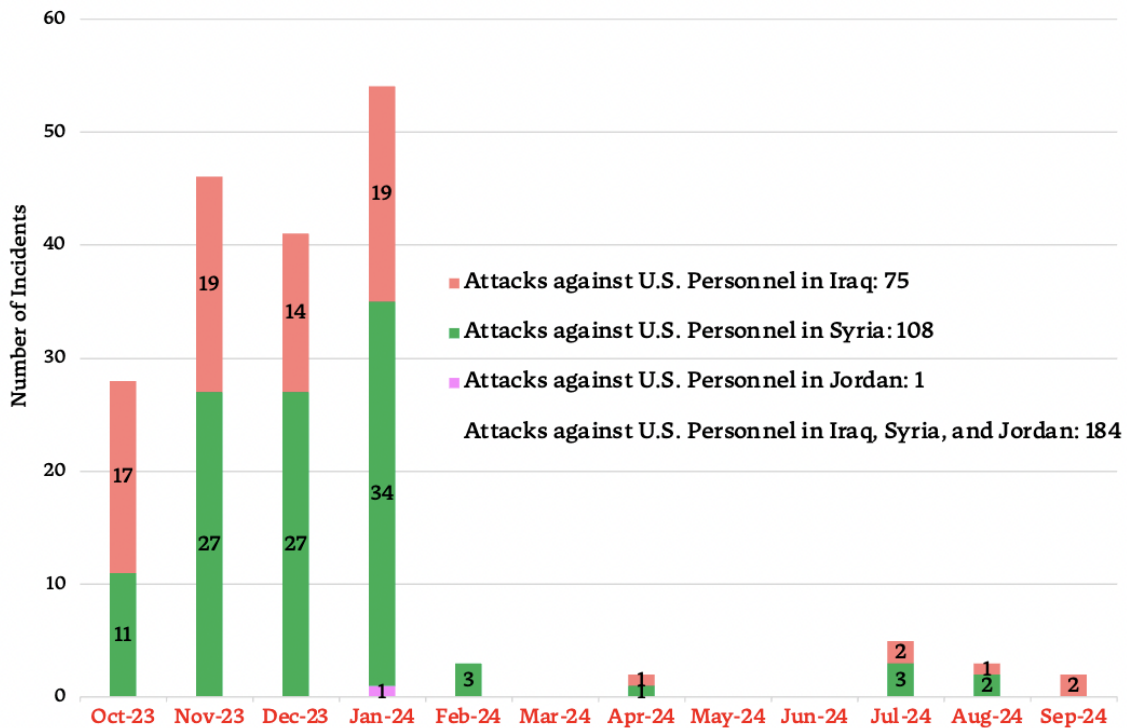
actors have continued their efforts since June to send stolen, non-public material associated with former President Trump’s campaign to U.S. media organizations...This malicious cyber activity is the latest example of Iran’s multi-pronged approach ... to stoke discord and undermine confidence in our electoral process.”

- On September 12, *The Hacker News* reported that an Iran-backed hacker group, OilRig, [targeted](#) Iraqi government networks, including Iraq’s Prime Minister’s Office and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. According to the report, the hackers likely used social engineering and phishing attacks to infiltrate the networks and steal files of interest.

Attacks on U.S. Troops and Personnel in the Region:

- Iran-backed militias [carried out](#) two attacks against U.S. troops and personnel in Iraq, continuing the resumption of attacks after nearly five months of abatement.
 - » On September 10, a U.S. official [said](#) that Iran-linked groups fired “two Katyusha-type rockets” at a U.S. diplomatic compound at Baghdad airport. No casualties were reported.
 - » On September 30, at least two [Katyusha](#) rockets were [fired](#) at a U.S. diplomatic compound at Baghdad Airport. No casualties were reported.
 - » Since October 17, 2023, Iran-backed groups in Iraq and Syria have [launched](#) at least 184 attacks involving over 330 rockets, missiles, and drones against U.S. personnel.

Iran-linked Projectile Attacks Against U.S. Personnel Since the Start of the Israel-Hamas War



Russia/China Ties:

- On September 30, Russia's Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin [met](#) with President Pezeshkian and other senior officials in Tehran. During his visit, they finalized a supply deal in which Iran will import Russian natural gas via a pipeline.
- On September 30, the Commander of Iran's Navy, Rear Admiral Shahram Irani, [met](#) with his Chinese counterpart, Admiral Hu Zhongming, in China. The two discussed the potential for deeper maritime cooperation.
- On September 17, Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu [met](#) with top Iranian officials in Tehran, including President Pezeshkian.
 - » Pezeshkian pledged to strengthen ties between the two countries, telling Shoigu, "Relations between Tehran and Moscow will develop in a permanent, continuous and lasting way. Deepening and strengthening relations and cooperation between Iran and Russia will reduce the impact of sanctions."
- On September 10, the U.S. [confirmed](#) that Iran had transferred shipments of Fath 360 tactical ballistic missiles to Russia.
 - » Pentagon Press Secretary Air Force Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder said the Fath 360 missile is "a short-range or close-range ballistic missile system... What this does is it would enable Russia to employ this capability while preserving its longer-range capabilities for use throughout the battlefield, thus deepening Russia's arsenal and also, again, giving it the ability to strike the kinds of targets that we've seen them striking, to include civilian targets."
 - » In response, the U.S. [imposed](#) new sanctions on Iran's main airline, Iran Air, and France, the United Kingdom, and Germany announced they would follow suit.

Nuclear:

- On September 25, IAEA Chief Rafael Grossi [indicated](#) it was unlikely that Iran would lift its ban on several inspectors from its nuclear sites, saying, "Until a few months ago they say they were considering and now they say they are not going to reincorporate these inspectors to the list, so unfortunately this ship has sailed."
- **According to a September 12 report by the Institute for Science and International Studies (ISIS), Iran has [increased](#) its activities at two suspected nuclear weaponization sites, Sanjarian and Golab Dareh, which were "key" to its early nuclear weapons program in the early 2000s.**
 - » The report said this activity is concerning because "if nuclear weapons-related, they would be occurring hand-in-hand with the enormous progress in Iran's uranium enrichment programs, verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and then assessed by the Institute, to have the ability to shorten breakout timelines for the production of weapon-grade uranium to about a week."
- On September 10, U.S. Ambassador to the IAEA, Laura Holgate, [delivered](#) a statement at the IAEA's quarterly board meeting, denouncing Iran's continual expansion of its nuclear program for which she said, "has no credible peaceful purpose."
 - » Ambassador Holgate also criticized Iran's continued "stonewalling" of IAEA inspectors, and noncompliance with the agency's safeguards.

Domestic/Human Rights:

- According to the Center for Human Rights in Iran, as of October 4, the Islamic Republic had [executed](#) 494 people in 2024.
- On September 21, a gas explosion in a coal mine in Iran's South Khorasan Province [killed](#) at least 51 people and injured more than 20 others.
- On September 17, *Iran International* [reported](#) that Iranian authorities released Austrian citizen Christian Weber to the custody of Austria's ambassador to Iran. According to Austria's Foreign Minister, Alexander Shallenberg, Weber was "abducted and detained" in August of 2022 shortly after he entered Iran, and taken to a state police prison in northern Iran.
- On September 14, Iran successfully [launched](#) a satellite into orbit. According to Iran's state-run Tasnim News Agency, [using](#) a Qaem-100 solid-fuel rocket, which was built by the IRGC's aerospace engineers, Iran launched the Chamram-1 satellite into orbit.

Recent JINSA Publications on Iran:

- October 2: "[Monthly Iran Projectile Tracker: September 2024](#)," Ari Cicurel
- September 30: "[Israel's Operation Northern Arrows Projectile Tracker: 9/24-9/30](#)," Ari Cicurel
- September 25: "[Cutting Houthi Supply Lines Key to Trade](#)," *eKathimerini*, Lt Gen Henry Obering, USAF (ret.) and Yoni Tobin
- September 23: "[Iran Projectile Tracker: Northern Escalation in September](#)," Ari Cicurel
- September 23: [Israel's Coming Northern War: A U.S.-Israel Strategy to Defeat Hezbollah](#), lead author: Jonathan Ruhe
- September 19: [U.S Bases in the Middle East: Overcoming the Tyranny of Geography](#), General Kenneth F. McKenzie, Jr., USMC (ret.)
- September 12: "[UN Watchdog Playing 'Blind Man's Bluff' with Iran's Nuclear Program](#)," *The Cipher Brief*, Jonathan Ruhe and Yoni Tobin
- September 12: "[What Will Trump or Harris Do if Iran Goes Nuclear?](#)" *RealClearDefense*, Amb. Eric Edelman and Gen Charles "Chuck" Wald, USAF (ret.) and Jonathan Ruhe
- September 9: "[Harris' Incoherent Middle East Strategy](#)," *The Washington Times*, Michael Makovsky, PhD and Blaise Misztal
- September 9: [Why the Next President Should Start Worrying and Fear the \(Iran\) Bomb](#), JINSA Iran Policy Project
- September 6: [AUMFs Against Iran's Terror Proxies and Against Its Nuclear Program Would Bolster Deterrence](#), Blaise Misztal and Gabriel Noronha