



Iran Summary

October 2024

Anna Schaftel
Senior Programs & Outreach Associate

Marley Miller
JINSA Policy Intern

Executive Summary: After Iran [fired](#) more than 180 ballistic missiles at Israel on October 1, Israel responded by [carrying out](#) extensive airstrikes against military targets inside Iran on October 26. Israel [killed](#) Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar, the chief architect of the October 7 terror attacks. The United States used B-2 stealth bombers to [strike](#) the Iran-backed Houthis for the first time, targeting five underground weapons sites in Yemen. Russia reportedly [provided](#) targeting data to the Houthis as they continue to target vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, one of the world's most vital maritime waterways. Iran-backed militias [escalated](#) their attacks against U.S. troops and personnel in Iraq and Syria, carrying out 15 such attacks in October.

Iran's Direct Attacks Against Israel:

- On October 26, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) [carried out](#) extensive airstrikes against military targets inside Iran in response to Iran's October 1 missile attack.
 - » In Israel's first-ever [acknowledgment](#) of military action inside Iran, IDF spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari [said](#), "If the regime in Iran were to make the mistake of beginning a new round of escalation — we will be obligated to respond."
 - » Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei [said](#) Iran will "use all available tools to deliver a definite and effective response to the Zionist regime [Israel]."
 - » Commander-in-chief of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Hossein Salami [said](#) Israel will face "bitter consequences" after its strikes against Iran's military sites.
 - » U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Linda Thomas-Greenfield [said](#), "We believe this should be the end of the direct exchange of fire between Israel and Iran."
- On October 13, the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) [announced](#) that, at the request of President Joe Biden, the U.S. would deploy a Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) battery to Israel and roughly 100 U.S. troops to operate the system.
 - » On October 21, U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin [said](#), "the THAAD system is in place."
 - » The THAAD system is [capable](#) of intercepting ballistic missiles at a range of up to 200 kilometers and altitudes of up to 150 kilometers, enabling interceptions both inside and outside the earth's atmosphere, and expands Israeli air defense capabilities.
- On October 9, Iran [told](#) the Gulf Arab states that "any action by a Persian Gulf country against Tehran, whether through the use of airspace or military bases, will be regarded by Tehran as an action taken by the entire group, and Tehran will respond accordingly," according to a senior Iranian official.
 - » He added, "[Iran] also made clear that any assistance to Israel, such as allowing the use of a regional country's airspace for actions against Iran, is unacceptable."

- On October 8, Iran’s Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi [said](#), “We advise the Zionist regime (Israel) not to test the resolution of the Islamic Republic. If any attack against our country takes place, our response will be more powerful...Any attack against infrastructure in Iran will provoke an even stronger response.”
- On October 1, Iran [fired](#) roughly 200 ballistic missiles at Israel.
 - » The attack [killed](#) one Palestinian near Jericho and lightly injured two people.
 - » The IDF said it [intercepted](#) a “large number” of missiles, while videos circulating on social media indicated several missiles and missile fragments had struck in central Israel, including Tel Aviv.
 - » According to U.S. defense officials, two U.S. Navy destroyers in the Mediterranean Sea [intercepted](#) multiple missiles.
 - » Jordan’s Public Security Directorate [indicated](#) that its air defenses responded to several missiles and UAVs that entered its airspace.
 - » The Biden administration [signaled](#) its support for Israel after the attack.
 - President Biden said, “make no mistake, the United States is fully, fully, fully supportive of Israel.”
 - U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said, “we have made clear that there will be consequences—severe consequences—for this attack, and we will work with Israel to make that the case.”

Hezbollah Attacks and Israeli Operations Against Iranian Proxies:

- Hezbollah [fired](#) more than 6,320 projectiles at Israel in October, based on JINSA’s Iran Projectile Tracker.
- On October 29, Hezbollah [elected](#) Naim Qassem as Secretary-General, succeeding former leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, who was killed in an Israeli airstrike in September.
 - » Qassem has served as Hezbollah’s deputy secretary-general for more than 30 years and as the terror group’s spokesperson.
 - » In response to the announcement, Israel’s Defense Minister, Yoav Gallant, [posted](#) on X, “Temporary appointment. Not for long.”
- On October 22, Israel [confirmed](#) it killed top Hezbollah leader, Hashem Safieddine, in airstrikes in Beirut in early October. Safieddine was the presumed successor of Nasrallah.
- On October 17, Israeli troops [killed](#) Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar.
 - » IDF soldiers [conducting](#) a patrol in the southern Gaza city of Rafah engaged three terrorists in a building. Upon examining the bodies of the terrorists, they realized Sinwar was among the dead, which was later confirmed with biometric testing.
 - » Sinwar was the chief architect of the October 7 terror attacks, during which Hamas [killed](#) at least 1,200 people, including more than 40 American citizens, and kidnapped 250 individuals to hold hostage in Gaza.

The Iran-Backed Houthis and Maritime Aggression:

- On October 29, the Houthis [targeted](#) a Greek-operated, Liberia-flagged bulker, *The Motaro*, but all three strikes [missed](#) and no injuries or damage was reported.
- On October 16, the United States used B-2 stealth bombers for the first time to [strike](#) the Houthis, targeting five underground weapons sites in Yemen.
 - » U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) [said](#) that U.S. Navy assets also took part in the attack, which it said was against “various advanced conventional weapons used to target U.S. and international military and civilian vessels navigating international waters.”
 - » Pentagon spokesman Maj. Gen. Patrick Ryder [said](#) the decision to employ B-2 bombers was a signal to “potential adversaries that hide things deep underground,” including Iran, which has an underground nuclear weapons facility in Natanz.
- On October 14, Iran’s Foreign Minister Araghchi [met](#) with Houthi spokesman and chief negotiator Mohammed Abdelsalam in Muscat, Oman.
- On October 9, the Houthis [targeted](#) a Liberia-flagged tanker in the Red Sea with missiles and drones, striking the vessel twice. No injuries were reported, but the attack did cause minor damage.
- On October 3, the Houthis [launched](#) three drones targeting central Israel. Two of the drones were shot down over the sea, and one landed in an open area. No damage or injuries were caused.

Malign Activities Abroad:

- In October, Iran-backed militias [conducted](#) 15 attacks against U.S. troops and personnel in Iraq and Syria, continuing an escalation that began at the end of September after nearly five months of diminished activity.
 - » Since October 17, 2023, Iran-backed groups in Iraq and Syria have launched at least 204 attacks involving over 350 rockets, missiles, and drones against U.S. personnel.
- On October 29, Iran [announced](#) its plans to increase its military budget by 200 percent.
- On October 16, Israel’s Police and State Attorney’s Office [announced](#) the arrest of a 35-year-old Israeli man for plotting to kill a local scientist in exchange for \$100,000 from Iran.
 - » According to the indictment, Vladimir Verhovsky made contact with an entity operating on behalf of the Iranian intelligence service in August and then carried out acts on behalf of Iran, in exchange for money, that ranged from graffiti to intelligence gathering and eventually agreeing to murder a scientist in Tel Aviv.
- On October 14, the United States [warned](#) the Iranian regime to stop all plotting against former President and current Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump and said that any attempt on his life would be viewed as an act of war, according to a U.S. official.
 - » Regarding the threats against Trump, White House National Security Council (NSC) spokesperson Sean Savett said, “We consider this a national and homeland security matter of the highest priority, and we strongly condemn Iran for these brazen threats. Should Iran attack any of our citizens, including those who continue to serve the United States or those who formerly served, Iran will face severe consequences.”

- On October 14, the Shin Bet and Israel Police [announced](#) that two Israelis were arrested for carrying out a series of acts of sabotage on behalf of Iran and plotting to kill a senior Israeli figure.
- On October 8, the UK's MI5 Director General Ken McCallum [said](#) that since January 2022, British security services have responded to “twenty Iran-backed plots presenting potentially lethal threats to British citizens and UK residents.”

Russia/China Ties:

- On October 24, *The Wall Street Journal* [reported](#) that Russia provided targeting data for the Houthis as they continue to target vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, one of the world's most vital maritime waterways.
- On October 12, Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency [reported](#) that Iran sent two locally made satellites to Russia to be put into orbit by a Russian state vehicle: the Koswar, a high-resolution imaging satellite, and the Hodhod, a small communications satellite.
- On October 11, Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian and Russian President Vladimir Putin [met](#) in Turkmenistan.
 - » According to Iran's official IRNA news agency, Pezeshkian told Putin, “The growing trend of cooperation between Iran and Russia, considering the will of the top leaders of both countries, must be accelerated to strengthen these ties.”
- On October 9, a Ukrainian strike on a warehouse in southern Russia [blew up](#) 400 Iranian-made and supplied Shahed attack drones.
- On October 7, *The Wall Street Journal* [reported](#) that Viktor Bout, the Russian arms dealer known as the “Merchant of Death” who was freed in a 2022 trade with Russia for wrongly detained U.S. basketball player Brittney Griner, was brokering small arms sales to the Iran-backed Houthis.
 - » According to a European security official, when Houthi emissaries went to Moscow to negotiate the purchase of \$10 million of automatic weapons, they encountered Bout.

Nuclear:

- On October 9, *Iran International* [reported](#) that 39 of Iran's 290 members of parliament (MPs) have called on Iran's Supreme National Council to consider adopting nuclear weapons.
 - » The MPs argued that Iran's Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, can reconsider his religious ban on nuclear weapons. MP Hassanali Akhlaghi Amiri said, “In the context of jurisprudence, time and place can influence the modification of rulings, and secondary rulings can replace primary ones.”
- On October 7, CIA Director William Burns [said](#) the U.S. has no evidence that Iran has decided to build a nuclear weapon, but that it would take a “week or a little more” for Iran to “produce one bomb's worth of weapons-grade material.”
 - » He added, “I think we are reasonably confident that—working with our friends and allies—we will be able to see [if Iran decides to create nuclear weapons] relatively early on. But ... the great danger in a way is that time frame has been compressed in ways which create new challenges for us.”

Domestic/Human Rights:

- According to Oslo-based Iran Human Rights (IHRNGO), as of October 30, the Islamic Republic had [executed](#) 636 people in 2024.
- On October 28, Iran [executed](#) Jamshid Sharmahd, an Iranian-born German citizen with U.S. permanent residency, four years after agents of the Islamic Republic abducted him in Dubai.
 - » Sharmahd was an outspoken opponent of Iran's regime. He was living in California at the time of his abduction. Iran accused Sharmahd of helping orchestrate a deadly terrorist bombing in 2008; he and his family denied these charges. The U.S. and Germany [denounced](#) his trial as a sham.
 - » Germany [recalled](#) its ambassador to Iran and summoned the Iran's chargé d'affaires to voice protest to the execution on October 29.
- On October 26, at least 10 Iranian border police officers were [killed](#) in an attack in Iran's Sistan and Baluchistan province. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Recent JINSA Publications on Iran:

- October 27: "[Israel's Iran Strike Threads a Tight Strategic Needle](#)," Jonathan Ruhe
- October 22: "[Northern Escalation Projectile Tracker: 10/22 Update](#)," Ari Cicurel
- October 20: "[IDF Kills Sinwar: A Blow for Iran, Triumph for Israelis and Palestinians](#)," Ari Cicurel
- October 15: "[Northern Escalation Projectile Tracker: 10/15 Update](#)," Ari Cicurel
- October 15: "[THAAD Deployment No Substitute for Action Against Iran](#)," Yoni Tobin
- October 10: "[To Deter Iran, US Must Rethink Military Basing in the Middle East](#)," General Kenneth F. McKenzie, Jr., USMC (ret.)
- October 9: "[Northern Escalation Projectile Tracker: 10/9 Update](#)," Ari Cicurel
- October 1: "[Iran Goes Ballistic Defending Degraded Hezbollah](#)," Jonathan Ruhe and Ari Cicurel