



# Iran Summary

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**Executive Summary:** In its most recent quarterly report, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) [reported](#) that Iran has accelerated its production of near weapons-grade uranium, increasing its stockpile of 60% enriched uranium by slightly more than 50% since its last report in November. The United States [reimposed](#) “maximum pressure” sanctions on Iran’s oil trade. Reports indicate that Hezbollah is [facing](#) serious financial troubles, as the U.S., Israel, and the new Syrian government clamp down on Iran’s supply of funds and weapons to the terror group. Lebanon [suspended](#) inbound and outbound flights to Iran indefinitely, following Israel’s [allegations](#) that Iran was smuggling funds to Hezbollah through commercial flights to Beirut. Iran [unveiled](#) its first ship capable of launching drones and helicopters at sea and a new [underground missile base](#) on the southern coast of Iran. The Houthis [fired](#) a surface-to-air missile at a U.S. F-16 fighter jet and a MQ-9 Reaper drone flying off the coast of Yemen. According to Oslo-based Iran Human Rights (IHRNGO), as of February 28, the Islamic Republic had [executed](#) 152 people in 2025.

## Nuclear:

- On February 25, the U.K.’s *Telegraph* [reported](#) that Iran has placed its nuclear facilities on high alert and deployed additional air defense systems, in anticipation of a potential Israeli or U.S. attack.
- On February 24, negotiators from Iran and the E3 countries of Germany, France, and Britain [held](#) their third round of nuclear talks in Geneva. Germany’s Foreign Office described the talks as “serious, frank & constructive.”
- On February 17, South Africa’s Minister of Mineral and Petroleum Resources Gwede Mantashe [said](#) his government would be open to nuclear energy cooperation with Russia and Iran.
  - » Mantashe said, “we can’t have a contract that says Iran or Russia must not bid, we can’t have that condition.” Mantashe added, “if they are the best in terms of the offer on the table, we’ll take any [country].”
- On February 13, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian [said](#) that if Iran’s enemies struck its nuclear facilities, the country would rebuild: “they threaten us that they will hit nuclear facilities... If you (the enemy) strike a hundred of those we will build a thousand other ones... You can hit the buildings and the places but you cannot hit those who build it.”
- In its most recent quarterly report, the IAEA [reported](#) that, since November 2024, Iran has undertaken its largest-ever increase in production of near weapons-grade uranium.

- On February 7, Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei [criticized](#) proposed nuclear negotiations with the United States, saying such talks “are not intelligent, wise or honorable,” and “there should be no negotiations with such a government.”
  - » Khamenei’s statement contradicted previous messaging from senior Iranian government officials, which indicated they were interested in talks. However, he did not outright ban communication with the United States.
- On February 3, *The New York Times* [reported](#) that U.S. intelligence believes Iran has a secret team of nuclear scientists exploring a faster, potentially cruder approach to developing a nuclear weapon that would utilize its existing stocks of 60% enriched uranium.

## Israel’s Northern Front:

- On February 23, hundreds of thousands [attended](#) the mass funeral for Hassan Nasrallah, the former Hezbollah secretary-general killed in an Israeli airstrike last September.
- On February 22, *The Washington Post* [reported](#) that Hezbollah was facing serious financial troubles as the United States, Israel, and the new Syrian government clamped down on Iran’s supply of funds and weapons to its proxy terror group.
- On February 13, Lebanon [announced](#) that Iranian airlines Mahan Air and Iran Air would be barred from flying to Beirut. The decision follows Israeli allegations that Iran had been using civilian flights to Beirut to smuggle funds to Hezbollah.
  - » On February 15, the Lebanese army [fired](#) tear gas to disperse Hezbollah supporters protesting the suspension of Iranian flights at Beirut airport.
  - » On February 17, Lebanese authorities [extended](#) the suspension of inbound and outbound flights to Iran indefinitely.
- On February 5, Khamenei [named](#) Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem as his “representative” in Lebanon, a title previously held by the now-deceased Nasrallah.

## Strategic Issues and Russia/China Ties:

- On February 28, Reuters [reported](#) that Iranian oil exports to China rebounded to 1.4 million barrels per day in the period between February 1 to 20, after falling close to a two-year low in January.
- On February 26, the United States [imposed](#) sanctions on six entities based in Hong Kong and China that were allegedly involved in an Iranian drone procurement network and in supplying Iran’s ballistic missile program.
- On February 24, the U.S. State and Treasury Departments [reimposed](#) what they called “maximum pressure” sanctions on Iran’s oil trade.
- On February 18, Russia [said](#) that the start of talks with the United States will not impact Moscow’s relationship with Tehran.
  - » Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said, “Moscow attaches great importance to good relations with Iran and intends to develop them comprehensively, including providing assistance in solving the main problems, including the nuclear program.”
- On February 13, the first of two ships carrying 1,000 tons of Chinese-made sodium perchlorate, a missile fuel precursor, [arrived](#) in Iran. At the time of writing, the second shipment has not yet departed for Iran.

- » According to multiple sources, the shipment likely [indicates](#) that Iran is attempting to resupply and rebuild its missile arsenal.
- » It remains unclear if the Chinese government was aware of these shipments. The delivery of the sodium perchlorate does not violate Western sanctions.
- On February 13, Deputy Commander of the Iranian Army for Coordination, Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, [claimed](#) that Iran produces more than 90% of its weapons and defense equipment domestically.
- On February 12, Khamenei [urged](#) Iran to expand its missile program, saying “progress should not be stopped. We cannot be satisfied (with our current level). Say that we previously set a limit for the accuracy of our missiles, but we now feel this limit is no longer enough. We have to go forward.”
- On February 6, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) [unveiled](#) its first ship capable of launching drones and helicopters at sea.
  - » According to IRGC Navy Chief Alireza Tangsiri, the ship, *Shahid Behesti*, is equipped with a 180-meter runway and can operate for up to a year without refueling.
  - » Tangsiri called it the “largest naval military project” in the history of the Islamic Republic.
- On February 5, Iran [used](#) the Russian-made S-300 long-range air defense systems in a military drill.
  - » Tehran’s official state media [indicated](#) the drills were meant to demonstrate Iran still had air defense capabilities, after Israel’s strikes inside in Iran in October 2024 neutralized many of Iran’s most advanced air defenses at the time.
- On February 1, Iran’s IRGC Navy [unveiled](#) a new underground missile base along the coast of southern Iran, as well as a new cruise missile, the Ghadr-380, which the IRGC says has “anti-jamming capabilities” and a range of more than 1,000 kilometers.
  - » At the unveiling, IRGC Navy Chief Tangsiri said, “we are preparing ourselves to confront any enemy, at any scale, in any manner, and in any geography.”

## Domestic/Human Rights:

- According to Oslo-based Iran Human Rights (IHRNGO), as of February 28, the Islamic Republic had [executed](#) 152 people in 2025.
- On February 20, Iranian authorities carried out a series of arrests it claimed were intended to disrupt a spy ring allegedly linked to “U.S. intelligence, the Zionist regime, and other hostile countries,” according to IRGC commander Siavash Moslemi.
  - » Iran did not [provide](#) any evidence for these claims, which it makes frequently with dubious veracity.
- On February 18, speaking at the Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy, Reza Pahlavi [called for](#) global action to defeat the Islamic Republic, saying the regime is “weaker than it has ever been.”
- On February 18, Iranian authorities [accused](#) a British couple, Craig and Lindsay Foreman, of espionage. Iran had detained the couple since early January.
  - » The couple was reportedly traveling the world on motorbikes and Iranian officials arrested them sometime after crossing the Armenian border into Iran.
  - » Iran has repeatedly [detained](#) foreigners on baseless accusations for leverage to pressure other countries into concessions.

- On February 6, IRGC intelligence agents [raided](#) a Christian gathering in Gatab in northern Iran, confiscating bibles, removing and destroying cross necklaces, and arresting Somayeh Rajabi, a Christian convert.

## Malign Activities Abroad:

- On February 27, a former U.S. Navy sailor, Xuanyu Harry Pang, [pled](#) guilty to plotting to attack Naval Station Great Lakes in Illinois allegedly on behalf of the IRGC. According to a U.S. Department of Justice press release, the plot was in retaliation for the U.S. killing of former IRGC's Quds Force commander Qasem Soleimani.
- On February 20, three buses [exploded](#) in a depot in Bat Yam, Israel, south of Tel Aviv. Explosives were found on an additional two buses in Holon. There were no casualties in the narrowly avoided large-scale terror attack.
  - » Terrorists reportedly [set](#) the timers on the explosives incorrectly and detonated in the evening instead of during morning rush hour.
  - » An initial assessment by the Shin Bet [found](#) that the plan for the attack came from Iran, and was carried out by Hamas terrorists in the West Bank.
  - » On February 21, Israel Police and the Shin Bet [arrested](#) two Jewish Israelis and a Palestinian in connection with the botched attack but said that the perpetrators were still at large.
- On February 19, *Fox News* [reported](#) that the Houthis fired surface-to-air missiles (SAM) at a U.S. F-16 fighter jet flying off the coast of Yemen. The missile did not strike the jet. The Houthis also fired a SAM at an American MQ-9 Reaper drone flying over Yemen.
  - » This was the first time the Iranian proxy terror group had fired a SAM at an American F-16 fighter jet.
- On February 18, Iran's Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi, [hosted](#) the leader of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) terror group, Ziyad al-Nakhalah, and the chairman of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), Falih al Fayyadh, in Tehran.
- On February 17, deputy commander-in-chief of the IRGC Brigadier General Ali Fadavi [said](#) that Iran plans to carry out a third wave of missile strikes against Israel at the "appropriate time."
- On February 12, Yemen's Coast Guard [intercepted](#) a shipment of Iranian advanced weapon components, drones, and communications gear destined for the Houthis.
- On February 11, Houthi leader Abdulmalik al-Houthi [said](#), "Our hands are on the trigger and we are ready to immediately escalate against the Israeli enemy if it returns to escalation in the Gaza Strip."
- On February 9, IRGC Navy Chief Tangsiri [threatened](#) that Iran has "the capability to close the Strait of Hormuz."
  - » Iran has made [repeated](#) threats to block the strait, which is a key route for global shipping.
- On February 4, President Trump [gave](#) his advisors instructions to obliterate Iran if they assassinate him, saying, "I've left instructions if they do it, they get obliterated, there won't be anything left."

## Cyber:

- On February 9, the Iranian hacker group “Handala” [claimed](#) to have hacked into Israeli police computers and stolen 2.1 terabytes of classified documents.
  - » Israeli police said they found no breach in its information systems and that “no external entity had accessed the Israel Police’s information systems.”

## Recent JINSA Publications on Iran:

- February 27: “[Iran is Stealing Sensitive US Intellectual Property and Using it to Kill Americans](#),” *Washington Examiner*, Lt Gen William J. Bender, USAF (ret.) and Yoni Tobin
- February 7: “[Monthly Iran Projectile Tracker: January 2025](#),” Ari Cicurel
- February 4: “[No More Talk: It’s Time to Destroy Iran’s Nuclear Weapons Program](#),” *Newsweek*, Michael Makovsky, PhD and John Hannah