



# Iran Summary

## April 2025

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### Executive Summary:

Throughout April, U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi [held](#) a series of Omani-mediated indirect talks on a U.S.-Iran nuclear deal. On April 26, an explosion at Iran's Bandar Abbas commercial port [killed](#) dozens of people and [injured](#) 1,000 others. The Houthis carried out a series of attacks on Israel and U.S. targets in the Middle East, including [shooting](#) down multiple U.S. Air Force MQ-9 Reaper drones. According to the Oslo-based Iran Human Rights (IHRNGO), as of May 1, the Islamic Republic had [executed](#) 342 people through the first four months of 2025.

### Nuclear:

- On April 28, Esmail Baghaei, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman, [confirmed](#) that its red lines for a nuclear deal include "uranium enrichment inside the country and the effective removal of sanctions."
- On April 26, the U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi [met](#) in Oman for the third round of indirect nuclear talks.
- On April 23, Baghaei [stated](#), "The continued imposition of sanctions against various economic sectors of Iran is in clear contradiction with the U.S. claim for dialogue and negotiation and indicates the lack of goodwill and seriousness of the U.S. in this regard."
- On April 23, the Institute for Science and International Security [stated](#) that Iran is enhancing the security around its nuclear facilities, prompting concerns from International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors.
- On April 23, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio [stated](#), "The Iranians have shown a willingness to talk. We're going to talk to them [...] if Iran wants a civil nuclear program, they can have one just like many other countries in the world have one. That is, they import enriched material."
- On April 21, Baghaei [accused](#) Israel and "warmongering currents" in the United States of attempting to derail nuclear talks.
- On April 19, delegations from the United States and Iran [met](#) with an Omani mediator in Rome for the second round of nuclear talks.

- » Following the talks, Araghchi said, “I can say that there is movement forward. We’ve reached better understanding and agreement on some principles and goals in these Rome negotiations.”
- On April 17, *Iran International* [reported](#) that the Iranian government proposed a three-phased deal during nuclear talks with the United States in Oman.
  - » The deal reportedly would limit Iran’s uranium enrichment to 3.67 percent, allow for some IAEA oversight of Iran’s nuclear program, and ensure Iran transfers highly-enriched uranium stockpiles to another country. In exchange, the United States and other Western countries would agree to lift their sanctions on Tehran.
- On April 16, Araghchi [affirmed](#), “the principle of enrichment is not subject to negotiation” with the United States.
- On April 14, Witkoff [stated](#) during an interview with *Fox News* that Iran does “not need to enrich [uranium] past 3.67 percent ... [for] a civil nuclear program,” and that, “in some circumstances, they’re at 60 percent, and other circumstances, at 20 percent—and that cannot be.”
- On April 12, Araghchi and Witkoff [traveled](#) to Oman to hold their first, indirect nuclear talks mediated by Omani Foreign Minister Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi.
- On April 10, Iranian Rear Admiral Ali Shamkhani [threatened](#) online that “the continuation of external threats and Iran being in a state of military attack may lead to deterrent measures, including expulsion of inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency and cessation of cooperation.”
- On April 9, Iranian ultra-hardliners [warned](#) against Khamenei signing a nuclear deal with the United States, claiming he could be killed like Muammar Gaddafi in Libya.
- On April 8, a senior Iranian official [told](#) Reuters, “Trump wants a new deal: end Iran’s regional influence, dismantle its nuclear program, and halt its missile work. These are unacceptable to Tehran. Our nuclear program cannot be dismantled.”

## Iran-backed Proxy Aggression:

- On April 28, the USS *Harry Truman*, carrying a U.S. Navy F/A-18 Super Hornet fighter jet, quickly [switched](#) directions as the ship came under Houthi fire in the Red Sea. The sharp turn prompted the fighter jet to fall overboard and sink.
- On April 27, the Houthis [launched](#) a missile toward Israel’s Nevatim Air Base. Israel intercepted the missile before it crossed into its territory.
- On April 25, *NPR* [reported](#) that the Houthis had shot down seven U.S. Air Force MQ-9 Reaper drones since the United States began its targeted campaign against the terror group on March 15.
  - » According to U.S. defense officials, the Houthis destroyed three of the drones in the past week.
- On April 9, the Houthis [launched](#) a ballistic missile towards Israel, but it landed short in Saudi Arabia.

- On April 8, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy [captured](#) an oil tanker in the Persian Gulf, accusing its crew of smuggling 100,000 liters of fuel.
- On April 7, Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Saree [announced](#) that the Houthis had launched a drone attack on the Tel Aviv area, as well as a drone and missile attack on two U.S. destroyers in the Red Sea.

## Russia/China Ties:

- On April 25, Mohsen Paknejad, Iran’s Minister of Petroleum, [announced](#) that Russia will fund “new nuclear energy facilities and the completion of phases two and three of the Bushehr power plant” in Iran.
- On April 24, Chinese state media [reported](#) that representatives from Iran, China, and Russia met with IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi to discuss concerns regarding Iran’s noncompliance with IAEA safeguard obligations, according to *Reuters*.
- On April 22, Araghchi [traveled](#) to Beijing to meet with China’s First Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang.
  - » Araghchi informed Ding of Iran’s nuclear talks with the United States and promoted the Iran-China 25-year strategic cooperation pact.
- On April 18, Araghchi [met](#) with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Moscow. After the meeting, Lavrov confirmed that “Iran is ready to seek a deal within the nuclear non-proliferation agreement.”
  - » Later that day, Araghchi [posted](#) to X, “Fruitful discussions in Russia, where I traveled to deliver a letter by Iran’s Supreme Leader to President Putin. In this critical juncture, Iran and Russia are strategic partners and will continue to be so in pursuit of shared interests & for the good of the two nations and the world.”
- On April 18, *Bloomberg* [reported](#) that Iran is refining its space program with Russian assistance, including constructing platforms that would allow the Islamic Republic to launch satellites, rockets, and possibly intercontinental ballistic missiles.

## Domestic/Human Rights:

- According to the Oslo-based Iran Human Rights (IHRNGO), as of May 1, the Islamic Republic has [executed](#) 342 people in 2025.
- On April 30, Iran [executed](#) Mohsen Langarneshin, a man the regime believes to have worked for Israel’s Mossad.
- On April 27, Iran claimed it [thwarted](#) a major cyberattack that targeted the country’s critical infrastructure.
- On April 26, an explosion at the port of Bandar Abbas, Iran’s largest commercial port, [killed](#) dozens of people and [injured](#) 1,000 others.
  - » According to the *New York Times*, sodium perchlorate, a chemical used for missile fuel, likely [ignited](#) the explosion.

- » In February, Iranian ships [docked](#) in Shanghai to receive 1,000 tons of sodium perchlorate.
- » Eskandar Momeni, Iran’s Interior Minister, [blamed](#) the explosion on “shortcomings, including incompliance with safety precautions and negligence in terms of passive defense.”
- On April 22, Filterwatch, a group that promotes internet freedom in Iran, [accused](#) local authorities of implementing surveillance technologies in Isfahan to identify, locate, and intimidate women suspected of defying hijab dress codes.
- On April 17, Chief of Staff of Iran’s Armed Forces, Major General Mohammad Bagheri, [welcomed](#) Saudi Arabia’s defense minister, Khalid bin Salman Al Saud, to Tehran to discuss strengthening relations between the two countries.
- On April 8, Amnesty International [reported](#) that Iran carried out 64 percent of global executions in 2024.
- On April 8, according to the Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI), the regime [hanged](#) five male political prisoners charged with *baghy* (armed rebellion). CHRI described the prisoners’ trials as a “sham.”
- On April 8, Iran’s currency value [strengthened](#) following the announcement of indirect nuclear talks between Iran and the United States in Oman.
- On April 7, retired and active employees of the Telecommunications Company of Iran and Iranian Offshore Oil Company [held](#) nationwide protests, blaming the Iranian government’s corruption for their economic struggles.
- On April 2, Edalaat-e Ali, a hacktivist group, [revealed](#) that the Law Enforcement Command of the Islamic Republic had distributed 3,000 pistols to senior Iranian government officials over fears of possible assassination attempts.

## Malign Activities Abroad:

- On April 28, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian [traveled](#) to Baku to meet with Azeri President Ilham Aliyev.
  - » During the meeting, Pezeshkian commented on the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, stating, “We believe that the rights of the people of Azerbaijan must be respected, and Karabakh must belong to the country of Azerbaijan.”
- On April 24, the Netherlands [summoned](#) its Iranian envoy after discovering the Islamic Republic had plotted to assassinate an Iranian dissident inside the country.
- On April 17, Abouzar Rahmati, an Iranian-American Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) contractor and former member of the IRGC, [pled](#) guilty to collaborating with Iranian intelligence from December 2017 through June 2024.
  - » According to court documents, Rahmati downloaded approximately 175 gigabytes of sensitive data and sought to collect information on America’s energy sector and details about U.S. airspace.

- On April 9, *The Times*, a London-based newspaper, [reported](#) that over a week's course, the IRGC Aerospace Force delivered short- and long-range missiles to its proxy groups in Iraq.
- On April 8, *Al Arabiya* [revealed](#) that IRGC Quds Force Units 190 and 700 are currently sending weapons and money shipments to Hezbollah via maritime routes.
- On April 8, *Newsweek* [reported](#) that a new Iranian-backed group, Uli al-Baas, has emerged in Syria.
  - » Uli al-Baas claims they are a “faith-based, revolutionary, nationalist movement with an Arab nationalist dimension, unaffiliated with any existing organization in Syria.”
- On April 7, 10 Iraqi officials and commanders [confirmed](#) that Iranian-backed militias in Iraq are considering disarming to avoid conflict with the United States.
- On April 7, *CNN* [revealed](#) that Iranian agents are recruiting Swedish teenagers to carry out attacks on Jewish and Israeli targets in Sweden.
- On April 4, *Kayhan*, an Iranian state-controlled newspaper, [published](#) an article threatening an assassination of President Trump.
  - » The article's author wrote, “Any day now, bullets will be shot into Trump's empty skull as revenge for the blood of Martyr Soleimani, and he will swallow the ‘bitter draught of damnation.’”
  - » Iran's Press Supervisory Board issued an official warning to the newspaper, arguing that the published article contradicts Iranian interests.

## Cyber:

- On April 23, Hannah Neumann, the European Parliament's Iran delegation chair, informed *Politico* that she [fell](#) victim to an IRGC-affiliated cyber-espionage operation.

## Recent JINSA Publications on Iran:

- April 25: “[Bad Idea: Trump Risks Following in Barack Obama's Footsteps](#),” Michael Makovsky, PhD, and John Hannah
- April 23: “[How Iran Is Using a Familiar Playbook on Nuclear Talks](#),” Jonathan Ruhe
- April 16: “[Infographic: Which Is It: Verification or Dismantlement?](#)”
- April 14: “[In the Red Sea, the U.S. Is Sending a Message — But Is It Loud Enough?](#)” VADM John W. Miller, USN (ret.) and RADM Paul Becker, USN (ret.) and Yoni Tobin
- April 11: “[Infographics: Challenges of Getting a Good Deal with Iran](#)”
- April 9: “[Last Best Chance: U.S. Policy for an Israeli Strike on Iran](#),” Michael Makovsky, PhD, Amb. Eric Edelman, Gen Chuck Wald, USAF (ret.), John Hannah, and Jonathan Ruhe
- April 4: “[Monthly Iran Projectile Tracker: March 2025](#),” Ari Cicurel
- April 3: “[Iran Sanctions, UN Security Council Resolution 2231, and the Path to Snapback](#),” Gabriel Noronha