



Iran Summary

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Executive Summary:

As May concluded, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) revealed that Iran had significantly expanded its stockpile of 60% enriched uranium amid ongoing negotiations over Iran's nuclear program between U.S. and Iranian delegations. While Iranian leaders remain adamant on enrichment, U.S. officials set enrichment as a redline for a deal. Outside of its nuclear activities, the regime continued to support the Houthis in Yemen, who launched at least 21 missiles and drones at Israel throughout the month. The regime also arrested several truckers during nationwide protests and executed at least 165 people for various alleged crimes in May alone. Iran also strengthened its partnership with other U.S. adversaries, particularly Russia, with whom Iran recently signed a 20-year pact to collaborate on defense and economic opportunities.

Nuclear

- On May 31, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) [released](#) details of two reports to the media, warning that Iran continues to enrich uranium at increased levels at undeclared sites.
 - » According to the Associated Press, one of the reports stated that “As of May 17, Iran has amassed 408.6 kilograms (900.8 pounds) of uranium enriched up to 60%.” If enriched further, the Iranian regime could [produce](#) enough uranium approximately 10 nuclear weapons.
 - » The Associated Press also revealed sections of the second report where the IAEA details its investigations of four undeclared nuclear sites in Iran. At three of these sites, inspectors discovered traces of uranium.
- On May 30, Hashem Hosseini Bushehri, Qom's Friday prayer Imam, [announced](#), “The fifth round of negotiations has ended. We are neither overly optimistic nor pessimistic. The Americans say they won't allow Iran to continue enrichment. But we say clearly to the people: our government, our nation and our dear leader will not allow enrichment to stop in this country.”
- On May 29, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi [posted](#) on X that reaching a deal “requires an agreement that will fully terminate all sanctions and uphold Iran's nuclear rights—including enrichment.”
- On May 28, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) [announced](#) that “If Iran's demands are taken into account and an agreement is reached, Iran can reconsider the acceptance of American inspectors through the IAEA.”

- On May 27, Araghchi [threatened](#) to discontinue nuclear conversations with European powers following comments by the United Kingdom’s ambassador to the United States in which he appeared to support President Donald Trump’s stance on forbidding Iran from enriching uranium.
 - » Araghchi [wrote](#) on X, “If the UK position is ‘zero enrichment’ in Iran [...] there is nothing left for us to discuss on the nuclear issue.”
- On May 26, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei [rejected](#) calls for Iran to pause uranium enrichment to reach a nuclear deal with the United States.
- On May 25, Araghchi [threatened](#) European powers regarding their own separate nuclear talks following concerns the E3 will reinstate snapback sanctions, stating, “if the Europeans activate the snapback mechanism established under the nuclear deal, Iran will respond forcefully.”
- On May 23, U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff and Foreign Minister Araghchi [met](#) in Rome for the fifth round of Omani-mediated indirect nuclear talks between the United States and Iran.
 - » Before the talks commenced, Araghchi [posted](#) to X, writing, “Figuring out the path to a deal is not rocket science: Zero nuclear weapons = we DO have a deal. Zero enrichment = we do NOT have a deal. Time to decide...”
- On May 22, following reports that the Israeli military [planned](#) to strike Iranian nuclear facilities, Araghchi wrote a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director General of the IAEA. On X, Araghchi [wrote](#), “In a letter to the UNSG Guterres and IAEA DG Grossi, I have called on the international community to take effective preventive measures against the continuation of Israeli threats, which if unchecked, will compel Iran to take special measures in defense of our nuclear facilities and materials.”
 - » He continued, “The Islamic Republic of Iran will not hesitate to forcefully respond to any transgression and will stop at nothing to protect its interests and people.”
- On May 20, Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei [posted](#) to X, writing, “For the Americans to say, ‘We won’t allow Iran to enrich uranium,’ is utter nonsense. We aren’t waiting for anyone’s permission. The Islamic Republic has certain policies, and it will pursue them.”
- On May 19, Baghaei [announced](#) that “The issue of enrichment, as part of the natural cycle of Iran’s nuclear industry, is absolutely non-negotiable.”
- On May 18, Araghchi [confirmed](#) that Iran would continue to enrich uranium regardless of whether the country enters a nuclear deal with the United States.
- On May 14, Ali Shamkhani, a senior adviser to Khamenei, [relayed](#) to *NBC News* that Iran would sign a nuclear deal with Trump, including abandoning highly enriched uranium stockpiles and forgoing the pursuit of a nuclear weapon, as long as the United States would agree to lift all sanctions on the country.
 - » Shamkhani appears to be the only senior Iranian official willing to publicly compromise on enriching uranium.

- On May 13, *The Guardian* [reported](#) that Iran had allegedly sought to collaborate with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates on a plan to enrich uranium together.
- On May 11, Witkoff and Araghchi [met](#) in Oman to hold their fourth round of nuclear talks.
- On May 8, *Fox News* [announced](#) that it had acquired satellite images over Iran that depict an alleged “secret Iranian nuclear weapons facility” in the Semnan Province.
 - » According to the report, the Iranian government masks the facility as a chemical production company, referring to it as “Rainbow Site.”

Iran-backed Proxy Aggression

- On May 19, the Houthis [announced](#) that their group seeks to impose a naval blockade on the Port of Haifa in Israel.
- On May 7, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that Iran had coerced the Houthis into accepting a ceasefire with the United States to encourage progress in nuclear talks.
- On May 4, the Houthis [launched](#) a missile attack that struck the ground near Israel’s Ben Gurion Airport, briefly halting flights. The Houthis launched at least 21 missiles and drones at Israel throughout May.
- On May 2, the United States [intercepted](#) a shipment of Iranian weapons being smuggled to the Houthis in Yemen.

Russia Ties

- On May 21, the Iranian parliament [voted](#) to enter a 20-year strategic partnership with Russia. The pact promotes collaboration in various sectors, including the military and economy.
- On May 10, Reuters [reported](#) that Iran plans to provide Russia with Fath-360 launchers for short-range missiles, citing two Western security officials.

Domestic/Human Rights

- According to the Oslo-based Iran Human Rights (IHRNGO), the Islamic Republic [executed](#) at least 165 people throughout May, contributing to a cumulative 507 executions in 2025 as of May 31.
- On May 28, the Iranian regime [hanged](#) Pedram Madani, accusing him of spying for Israel.
- On May 22, Iranian truck drivers [began](#) protesting in Bandar Abbas to demand enhanced working conditions, including support following increased insurance costs and restrictions on fuel. According to *Iran International*, the protests have spread nationwide.
 - » On the ninth day of protests, Iran’s Truckers and Heavy Vehicle Drivers Union announced that security forces had arrested 20 of its protestors.

- On May 20, the Iranian government [released](#) British-Iranian political prisoner Nasrin Roshan after spending 550 days in the Evin Prison. The government accused her of engaging in protests abroad.

Malign Activities Abroad

- On May 20, Israeli authorities [revealed](#) that they had arrested two Israeli citizens in April for attempting to spy on Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz for Iranian agents.
- On May 19, a 16-year-old Israeli male was [indicted](#) for maintaining contact with an Iranian agent, who instructed the teen to incite political conflict and capture images of buildings in Israel in exchange for digital financial transactions.
- On May 18, the Israel Police and Shin Bet [revealed](#) they had arrested 18-year-old Moshe Attias in April after accusing him of spying for Iran.
 - » Israeli authorities believe Attias collected information on former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett during his hospital stay at Saba’s Meir Medical Center last month.
 - » According to the police statement, “He documented, at the request of an Iranian operative, a floor in the hospital containing a room with guards protecting the former prime minister.”
- On May 18, the Iranian government [summoned](#) its charge d’affaires for the United Kingdom following the arrests of Iranian nationals seeking to compromise British national security. In return, the United Kingdom summoned its ambassador to Tehran.
- May 3, police in the United Kingdom [arrested](#) eight men, including seven Iranian nationals, in two separate incidents.
 - » Three men were [charged](#) under the National Security Act for spying for Iran and plotting to harm journalists working for *Iran International*.
 - » In a separate incident, five men were [arrested](#) for plotting an attack on the Israeli Embassy in London.

Cyber

- On May 30, *The Record*, a cybersecurity news outlet, [reported](#) that Meta had interrupted cyberoperations aligned with China, Iran, and Romania that sought to influence political conversations around the world through misleading and false social media profiles.
- On May 29, Shin Bet [confirmed](#) that its agency had thwarted 85 Iranian cyberattacks in recent months. The attacks targeted a variety of individuals, including senior defense officials and politicians.

Recent JINSA Publications on Iran

- June 4: “[Monthly Iran Projectile Tracker: May 2025](#),” Ari Cicurel

- May 19: "[How Trump Can Avoid Another Bad Iran Nuclear Deal](#)," *The Dispatch*, Jonathan Ruhe
- May 15: "[Infographic: Iran Nuclear Talks Scorecard](#)"
- May 14: "[The Poisoned Chalice: President Trump's Opportunity with Iran](#)," General Kenneth F. McKenzie, Jr., USMC (ret.)
- May 7: "[Houthi Projectile Tracker: 5/7/25 Update](#)," Ari Cicurel