



Iran Summary August 2025

Sarah Havdala
Policy Analyst

Summary

Prompted by Iran's noncooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the European powers (E3) moved to reinstate United Nations snapback sanctions on the regime ahead of their expiration in October. Meanwhile, Tehran enhanced its defensive capabilities following the 12-Day War by establishing the Supreme National Defense Council (SNDC) to refine the government's crisis response and decision-making in the event of a future conflict with the United States or Israel. Iran's military also conducted a missile naval exercise, sought help from Belarus to restore its defense systems, and developed a new series of ballistic missiles.

Despite Iranian civilians facing severe financial hardships and the possibility of a further nationwide economic crisis, Iran's continued arming of and funding for the Houthis empowered the group to launch its first ballistic missile containing cluster munitions at Israel. Simultaneously, Iran also threatened violence upon Israel and Lebanon as the countries' governments seek to disarm Hezbollah.

Additionally, Iran targeted western interests by carrying out cyberattacks to disrupt hostage-ceasefire negotiations between Israel and Hamas, threatening military action against the United States and Europe, and directing antisemitic assaults in Australia. The regime also threatened future attacks against *Iran International* journalists while cracking down on internal dissent by reinforcing troops and boosting surveillance throughout the country.

Nuclear

Iran scrambled to avoid severe economic consequences for its nuclear noncompliance as the E3 threatened to reinvoke UN snapback sanctions on the regime but ultimately failed to delay the snapback's activation. While participating in talks with European powers, the regime begrudgingly agreed to limited engagement with the IAEA after accusing the group of collaborating with the United States and Israel.

- On August 28, the E3 nations of the United Kingdom, France, and Germany [activated](#) the process to impose UN snapback sanctions on Iran. If uninterrupted, the UN will reinstate all sanctions on Iran that were lifted in 2015 within 30 days.
 - » While Iranian leaders have refrained from publicly speaking on the issue since the snapback's activation, Iranian officials have [threatened](#) to leave the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in the past if the E3 were to invoke the snapback.
 - » An April [JINSA publication](#) by Gabriel Noronha highlighted how the end of August signified the E3's last opportunity to invoke snapback sanctions as the process takes at least 30 days. With the snapback mechanism nearing its October 18 expiration date, and

Russia, Iran's ally, taking control of the UN Security Council (UNSC) presidency in October, the E3 risked wasting the snapback if it delayed action any further.

- On August 27, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi [confirmed](#) that Iran's Supreme National Security Council permitted the limited return of IAEA inspectors to Iran, but that the parliament has not endorsed a deal agreeing to full cooperation with the agency.
- On August 26, Iranian officials [met](#) with British, French, and German delegations in Switzerland, attempting to prevent the European nations from reinvoking UN snapback sanctions on the regime for its inability to reach a nuclear deal.
 - » Later that day, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Esmail Baghaei [announced](#) that Iran had conveyed to the European nations during the meeting that they could face consequences if they reimpose sanctions.
- On August 26, *the Wall Street Journal* [reported](#) that IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi was granted additional security following threats from Iranian officials who accused him of collaborating with the United States and Israel to undermine Iran.
- On August 24, Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei [stated](#) that Iran's conflict with the United States is "unsolvable" over pressure to the regime's nuclear program.
- On August 9, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-e Ravanchi [confirmed](#) during an interview that Iran would consider placing limits on its nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief.
- On August 9, *Telegraph* [reported](#) that Iran had placed its remaining nuclear scientists in hiding following Israeli assassination plots of other nuclear experts during the 12-Day War.

Military

Fearing future attacks and foreign infiltration following the 12-Day War, Iran bolstered its security and defensive posture. While forming the Supreme National Defense Council to consolidate decision-making and refine crisis planning for future confrontation with Israel and the United States, Iran's military also carried out its first naval exercise since the 12-Day War and unveiled a new missile design.

- On August 22, Ukraine's Foreign Intelligence Service [revealed](#) that Iran may collaborate with Belarus to rebuild its air defenses and electronic warfare systems after Israeli forces damaged this infrastructure during the 12-Day War.
- On August 21, the Iranian military [commenced](#) the "Sustainable Power 1404" naval exercise in the Gulf of Oman and Indian Ocean to test missiles and drones.
- On August 20, Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh [declared](#) that Iran had developed a new series of enhanced missiles that could be used to target Israel.
- On August 20, Iran and Belarus [signed](#) agreements to strengthen the countries' defense partnership as both nations face severe economic sanctions imposed by western powers.
- On August 11, Iranian authorities [captured](#) a tanker in the Gulf of Oman and arrested the ship's 17 crew members, accusing them of smuggling two million liters of diesel fuel.
- On August 4, Iran's government [formed](#) the Supreme National Defense Council for coordinating defense operations and improving Iran's military preparedness in the wake of U.S. and Israeli strikes on the regime's nuclear and military facilities.

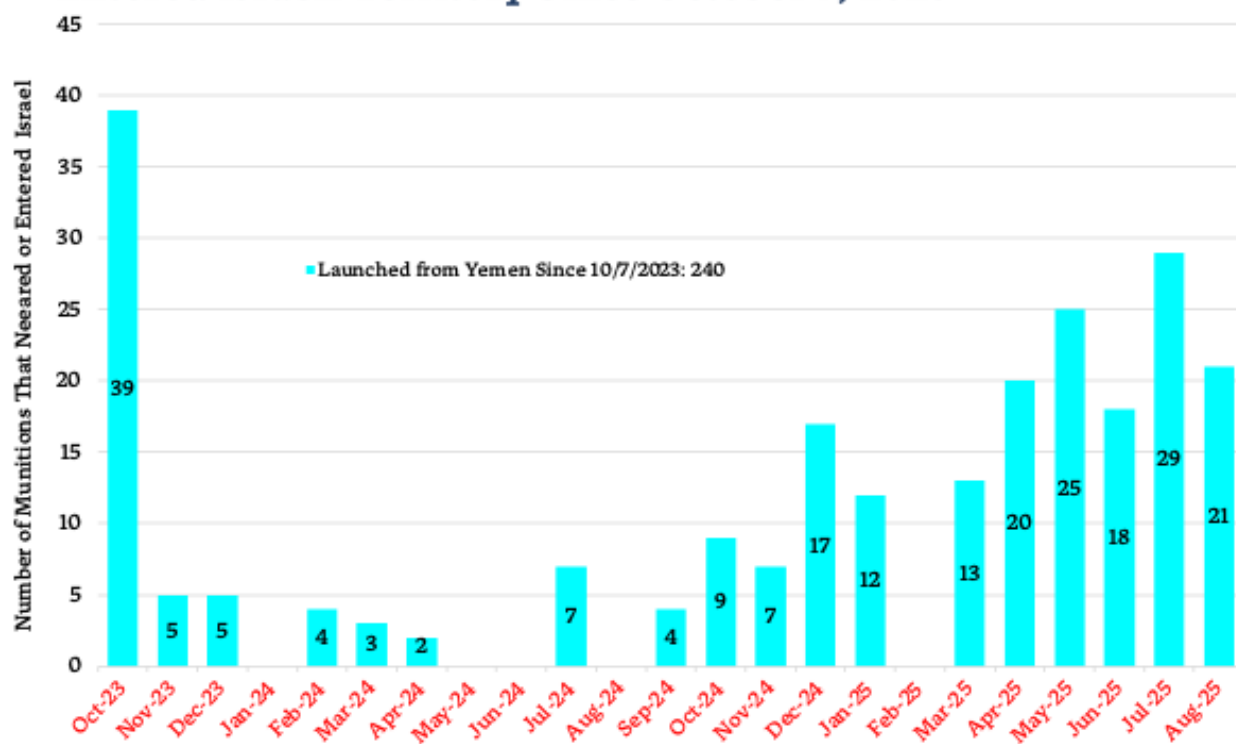
Iran-backed Proxy Aggression

Past illegal Iranian arms shipments and funding to its proxies allowed the Houthis to fire 21 projectiles at Israel during August, including 15 drones and 6 ballistic missiles. In a monumental first, the Houthis launched their first missile containing cluster munitions at Israel, while also targeting an Israeli oil tanker following blows to the Houthi leadership in Yemen. Additionally, Iran stood in solidarity with Hezbollah as the Lebanese and Israeli governments advocated for the groups disarmament.

- On August 31, the Houthis [fired](#) a missile at an Israeli-owned, Liberian-flagged oil tanker in the Red Sea after the Israeli Air Force [killed](#) a dozen Houthi senior officials, including the group's prime minister, and [struck](#) military infrastructure in the presidential palace and the Hizaz and Asar power plants in Yemen.
- On August 22, the Houthis [launched](#) their first ever ballistic missile containing a cluster munition on its warhead towards Israel.
- On August 15, Hezbollah's Secretary General Naim Qassem [suggested](#) his group would react violently if any force were to seize its weapons, warning of "no life in Lebanon."
- On August 11, *Aawsat* [reported](#) that Yemeni authorities had detained seven individuals in July after capturing a suspicious ship in the Red Sea. The captured sailors revealed they worked for a major covert Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) smuggling network that sends weapons through Lebanon, Syria, Somalia, and Djibouti to the Houthis in Yemen.

Projectiles the Houthis Fired That Neared or Entered Israeli Territory Since October 7, 2023

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Malign Activities Abroad

The Iranian government threatened dissidents worldwide, including several *Iran International* journalists and their families and western nations with assassinations and missile attacks. Several governments also sounded the alarm on Iran, criticizing the regime for recruiting spies and attacking Jewish targets in Australia.

- On August 29, Dream, an Israeli cyber company, [announced](#) that Iranian cyber attackers infiltrated an Omani Embassy email account, ultimately seeking to disrupt the ceasefire-hostage deal talks in Egypt between Israel and Hamas.
- On August 27, Israel's National Cyber Directorate [thwarted](#) an attack targeting Israeli soldiers with PTSD by Iranian cyber criminals posing as mental health specialists.
- On August 26, Australia [expelled](#) Iran's ambassador to Canberra, citing that Iran had fueled two antisemitic arson attacks throughout the country in 2024.
- On August 26, following his April arrest, Iranian-American Abouzar Rahmati was [sentenced](#) to one year in prison after collaborating with Iranian authorities and providing them with sensitive information on the United States' aviation and energy sectors.
- On August 18, Israel's *Channel 12 News* [reported](#) that Israeli authorities had arrested a Palestinian woman from the West Bank on suspicions of collaborating with an Iranian agent.
- On August 17, Amir Hayat-Moqaddam, a member of Iran's parliament, [threatened](#) western cities, claiming that Iran "can move [its] ships to within 2,000 km. of the U.S. and from there target Washington, New York, and other cities."
 - » He continued, noting that "right now, all European countries are within our range."
- On August 11, *Iran International* [published](#) an investigation into Iran's nuclear program, revealing that the regime secretly operates a nuclear procurement network in Europe and utilizes Austrian companies as fronts for its scheme.
- On August 5, *Iran International* [filed](#) a formal appeal to the United Nations after claiming that 45 of its journalists and over 300 of their relatives received death threats from Iran's Ministry of Intelligence.

Domestic/Human Rights

As Iranians throughout the country suffer from water and energy shortages, the government continued to abuse its power by targeting minorities, particularly members of the Baha'i community, executing alleged spies, and detaining dissidents in inhuman conditions while increasing nationwide surveillance following the 12-Day War.

- According to the Oslo-based Iran Human Rights, the Islamic Republic [executed](#) at least 128 people throughout August, contributing to a cumulative 858 executions in 2025 as of August 31.
- On August 20, *Iran International* [revealed](#) that the Iranian government is unjustly confiscating homes of Baha'i community members in Isfahan, alerting them via text messages.
- On August 19, the Iran Human Rights Society [announced](#) that Iranian authorities have been operating a covert prison in Isfahan. According to the report, the prison is disguised as an industrial warehouse with hundreds of people being held in inhumane conditions.

- On August 18, fearing widespread civil unrest with mounting anti-government protests, Iran [placed](#) its police and military forces on maximum alert. Iranian officials have called for the reinforcement of troops in Tehran, as well as the formation of checkpoints and conduction of rigorous security drills.
- On August 15, former Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif [incited](#) internal conflict amongst Iranian politicians after publishing an op-ed in *Foreign Policy* that advocated for Iranian governmental reform. Rejecting his calls, conservative voices, including Hossein Shariatmadari, the chief and supreme leader appointee for the hardliner newspaper, Kayhan, accused Zarif of treason by conceding to U.S. and Israeli demands.
- On August 13, Iran forcibly [closed](#) more than half of its provinces' businesses to save energy amidst frequent nationwide power outages as a result of the government's resource mishandling.
- On August 11, the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) [reported](#) that an illegal crypto mining facility, connected to Iranian government employees, had been uncovered in secret tunnels under the Ahvaz stadium.
- On August 8, Iran [sentenced](#) a man to three years in prison after he shared a post supporting Israel during the 12-Day War.
 - » The government accused the man of sharing propaganda, highlighting Iran's strict punishments for dissidents.
- On August 6, Iran [executed](#) a nuclear scientist, after accusing him of espionage and helping the Israeli military assassinate a fellow nuclear scientist during the 12-Day War.

Russia-China Ties

Russia and China supported Iran in the face of snapback sanctions, advocating for Iran in a letter to UN officials. Additionally, while Russia and Iran remain allies, concerns over their partnership mounted with Russia's growing capabilities to independently produce Shahed-136 drones and an Iranian official accusing the Kremlin of sharing intelligence with Israel.

- On August 31, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian [traveled](#) to China for the 2025 Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit following the E3's activation of the snapback mechanism.
- On August 28, Iran's foreign minister, along with his Chinese and Russian counterparts, [argued](#) that the E3 countries do not have the legal power to reinstate snapback sanctions on Iran in a letter to the UN Secretary-General and UN Security Council President.
- On August 25, Russia [drafted](#) a resolution for the UNSC that would delay the implementation of snapback sanctions on Iran.
- On August 24, Mohammad Sadr, a member of the Iranian Expediency Council, [accused](#) Russia of sharing information on Iran's air defense capabilities with Israel.
- On August 8, *CNN* [published](#) a report highlighting Russia's decreasing dependence on Iran to produce Shahed-136 attack drones.
 - » While a 2023 agreement permitted the Kremlin to produce the drones domestically, Russia's new designs and ability to make the drones for cheaper has potentially ignited a rift between the two countries, with Iran feeling betrayed by its ally.

Recent JINSA Products on Iran

- August 28: “[Use It or Lose It: The Last Change for Snapback Sanctions on Iran](#),” Amb. Eric Edelman, Hon. Stephen Rademaker, Jonathan Ruhe, and Blaise Misztal.
- August 21: “[Shielded by Fire: Middle East Air Defense During the June 2025 Israel-Iran War](#),” Ari Cicurel
- August 11: “[After 47 Years of Failure, It’s Time to End UNIFIL](#),” *Algemeiner*, Yoni Tobin