



Iran Summary September 2025

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Summary

On September 27, the United Nations reimposed extensive sanctions on Iran that the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action's (JCPOA) nuclear deal had lifted after the E3 (France, Germany, and the United Kingdom) had triggered "snapback" and Iran failed to satisfy their concerns about its nuclear program. As sanctions loomed, Iran signed a \$25 billion deal with Russia, permitting the Kremlin to build four new nuclear plants inside Iranian territory. Additionally, Iranian leadership vowed to evade these sanctions by selling oil to China.

In September, Iran began the process of rebuilding its nuclear program and military capabilities after the 12-Day War. Satellite imagery revealed expanded construction at Pickaxe Mountain, a suspected nuclear facility buried deeper than Fordow. The Iranian military announced plans to deploy four satellites in 2026 and appeared to begin rebuilding its damaged missile production sites. Simultaneously, the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen launched at least 48 missiles and drones at Israel, more than any other month and over double the total launched during August. The Houthis also twice targeted a Dutch-flagged cargo ship transiting the Gulf of Aden, damaging it in the second attack.

Internationally, Iranian cyber criminals carried out several phishing campaigns targeting over 100 embassies' and diplomatic agencies' emails worldwide, as well as Israeli civilians. Iranian operations sought to interfere in regional politics in Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia. At home, the regime carried out at least 183 executions in September alone, surpassing 1,000 executions in 2025, while also arresting Kurdish children and teachers for participating in unions.

Nuclear

Despite the European power nations activating the snapback mechanism and the UN ultimately reimposing heavy sanctions on Iran, the regime defended its nuclear program in the face of international pressure. Iranian leadership rejected all negotiation efforts with foreign governments while also expressing contradictory views on whether it would permit the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to inspect its nuclear sites. As Iran fought off foreign interference in its nuclear program, satellite images from September 18 depicted expedited construction at the base of Pickaxe Mountain which sits atop an alleged underground nuclear facility in the country's Isfahan Province.

- On September 27, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian [denied](#) U.S. appeals to temporarily lift sanctions, claiming, "they want us to give them all of our enriched uranium in exchange for giving us a three-month period, which is absolutely unacceptable."
- On September 27, the UN [reimposed](#) heavy sanctions on Iran via the snapback mechanism for the regime's nuclear noncompliance.

- » Security Council Resolution 2231 endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, also known as the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, which permitted Iran to maintain a limited nuclear program granted it obey several guidelines and allow international surveillance of its nuclear activities.
- On September 26, the IAEA announced that it had [resumed](#) inspections of Iran's nuclear facilities after Iran barred the UN watchdog from the country in July following the 12-Day War.
 - » However, that same day, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi [declared](#) that Iran would ban IAEA inspections of its nuclear sites if the UN reimposed sanctions on the regime despite Araghchi and IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi agreeing to inspections earlier this month.
- On September 26, *The Washington Post* [reported](#) that recent satellite imagery depicted increased construction activity at the base of Pickaxe Mountain, the site of a new, more heavily fortified alleged underground nuclear facility in Iran's Isfahan Province.
- On September 23, during a televised speech in Iran, Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei [declared](#) that Iran will not negotiate its nuclear program with the United States.
- On September 22, at least 70 Iranian parliament members [endorsed](#) a letter addressed to the Supreme National Security Council demanding that Iran develop nuclear weapons to deter international pressure to abandon its nuclear program.
- On September 19, the United Nations Security Council [voted](#) against sanctions relief for Iran, allowing the E3 to continue processing the reimposition of snapback sanctions on the regime due to its nuclear noncompliance.
- On September 16, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei [posted](#) to X a draft resolution signed by Iran, China, Russia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Belarus calling for the IAEA to ban all foreign threats to, and attacks on, Iran's nuclear program.
 - » However, on September 18, Iran [withdrew](#) the resolution following backlash from the United States.
- On September 11, Araghchi [stated](#) that Iran's enriched uranium lies underneath rubble following claims that the regime's enriched uranium stockpile was "inaccessible."
- On September 9, Araghchi [traveled](#) to Egypt to meet with Grossi where the two agreed to a framework that could permit the watchdog agency to inspect Iranian nuclear sites after it was barred following the 12-Day War.
 - » However, Araghchi [stated](#) that the agreement does not permit IAEA inspectors to access Iran's nuclear sites outside of the Bushehr nuclear plant.
- On September 3, the IAEA [divulged](#) a report to UN member states revealing that Iran had expanded its near weapons-grade enriched uranium stockpile prior to the 12-Day War.

Military

As Iranian leadership sought to combat impending UN sanctions for its nuclear noncompliance, the regime prioritized rebuilding its ballistic missile program following extensive damage to its weapons stockpile during the 12-Day War. While satellite images revealed that the country has begun rebuilding its missile-production sites, the regime claimed to have carried out rare missile tests in Tehran. Additionally, Iran's Space Agency chief announced that the country would soon open the Chabahar spaceport from where it would launch four satellites.

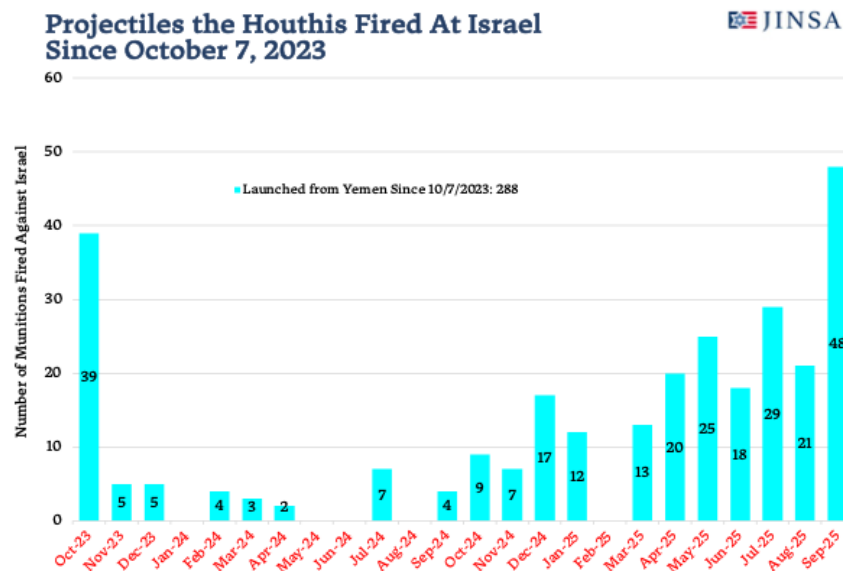
- On September 24, satellite images [revealed](#) that Iran is rebuilding its missile-production sites damaged by Israeli strikes during the 12-Day War. However, an Associated Press

report revealed that the satellite images indicate Iran lacks the large, solid-fuel mixers required to develop the weapons.

- On September 18, Semnan Province Deputy Governor for Political, Security, and Social Affairs Mehdi Barari [announced](#) that Iran's military had conducted rare missile tests in Tehran after Sepah Pasdaran News, an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)-affiliated source, posted images of the tests on Telegram.
- On September 17, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei [asserted](#) that Iran would not engage in talks with the United States regarding the regime's missile program.
- On September 7, the Iranian parliament's Security and Foreign Policy Committee [passed](#) a draft bill to bolster the country's strength in response to potential future military confrontations with Israel.
- On September 7, Hassan Salarieh, the head of Iran's Space Agency, [announced](#) that Iran will deploy four satellites by mid-March 2026 and open the Chabahar spaceport.

Iran-backed Proxy Aggression

The Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen fired at least 48 ballistic missiles and drones at Israel in September, more projectiles than any other month, and a 129 percent increase over August. Houthi attacks included one drone strike that injured dozens in Eilat, and the terrorist group also launched two missile attacks against a Dutch-flagged cargo ship in the Gulf of Aden, with the second striking the ship and forcing its evacuation.



- On September 29, the Houthis [fired](#) a missile at the Dutch-flagged *Minervagracht* cargo ship transiting the Gulf of Aden, setting fire to the vessel, injuring at least two crew members, and forcing the vessel to evacuate after the group launched a missile that missed hitting the same ship on September 23.
- On September 27, while traveling to Beirut to attend a memorial service for former Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah, Secretary to Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Larijani [met](#) with senior Lebanese officials to discuss cooperation between the two countries as Lebanon's leadership seeks to disarm Iran-backed Hezbollah.

- On September 26, a Reuters report citing Iranian sources and a source close to Hezbollah [revealed](#) that Iran had facilitated Hezbollah's appeal to Saudi Arabia earlier in the month to normalize relations between the terror group and the Kingdom.
- On September 25, Chairman of Yemen's Presidential Leadership Council Rashad Al Alimi [spoke](#) to the UN General Assembly in New York, warning member states that the Houthis "are armed to the teeth" with Iranian weapons.
- On September 24, a Houthi drone [crashed](#) near a hotel in Eilat, wounding 22 people.
 - » The drone hit just six days after a Houthi drone [struck](#) a hotel courtyard in Eilat on September 18, causing damage to the surrounding area.
- On September 9, Iran-backed Kataib Hezbollah finally [freed](#) Israeli-Russian student Elizabeth Tsurkov, who attended college in the United States, after holding her for 903 days in captivity.
- On September 7, one of several Houthi drones [struck](#) Israel's Ramon International Airport near Eilat, causing damage to the building and injuring one person. Israel's air defenses intercepted the other drones.

Malign Activities Abroad

Iranian cyber criminals carried out multiple phishing campaigns, targeting several international companies, embassy staffers, and Israeli celebrities while Iranian scammers sought to recruit spies in Israel via threatening phone calls. While several men across Israel and the United Kingdom were arrested and summoned on charges of spying for Iran, an *Iran International* report revealed Iranian intentions to compromise Jordanian security.

- On September 30, Israeli police and Shin Bet [announced](#) that their forces had arrested two Israeli men from Holon for allegedly spying for Iran.
- On September 27, Israel's National Cyber Directorate [stated](#) that several Israelis had received scam calls from Iranian agents seeking to recruit spies.
- On September 26, three Iranian men residing in the United Kingdom [pled](#) not guilty to spying for Iran and targeting exiled Iranian journalists.
- On September 19, *The Hacker News* [reported](#) that PRODAFT, a Swiss cybersecurity company, is monitoring a series of IRGC-affiliated cyberattacks that compromised 34 devices via fake LinkedIn recruitment ads.
- On September 12, Israel's National Cyber Directorate [stated](#) that Iranian cyber criminals stole dozens of Israeli actors' data in a targeted phishing scam.
- On September 11, *Iran International* [released](#) a report highlighting that Jordan faced increased Iranian threats in light of Israel's degradation of Hezbollah in Lebanon and Bashar Al-Assad's demise in Syria in 2024.
- On September 4, Israeli authorities [arrested](#) Israeli-American Yaakov Perl, accusing the well-known anti-Zionist activist of collecting intelligence on former Israeli Defense Forces Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi and Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir. Perl allegedly sent the information to Iranian agents he met on Telegram.
- On September 3, *The Hacker News* [reported](#) that Iranian cyber criminals had compromised over 100 diplomatic email accounts, mostly belonging to European embassy workers and African organizations, in a global spear-phishing campaign.

Domestic/Human Rights

Iran forcefully suppressed protestors and minorities by shuttering a business contradicting Sharia law, wrongfully detaining Kurdish children, arresting teacher-union members, summoning protestors who spoke out against the government's resource mismanagement, and executing almost 200 individuals.

- According to the Oslo-based group, Iran Human Rights, the Islamic Republic [executed](#) at least 183 people throughout September, contributing to a cumulative 1041 executions in 2025 as of September 30.
- As of September 29, four Iranian female prisoners had [died](#) all within the same week after authorities denied the women medical care.
- On September 29, Iran [hanged](#) Bahman Choobiasl for allegedly spying for Israel. However, activist channels monitoring Iranians on death row were unaware of his pending execution.
- On September 17, the Center for Human Rights in Iran [revealed](#) that Iranian police had detained and interrogated at least 45 teachers between June and September 2025 over their union participation. According to the report, the unions demanded “the release of imprisoned teachers, livable salaries, decent working conditions, and access to free education for all children.”
- On September 17, Iran [executed](#) Iranian citizen Babak Shahbazi after Iranian authorities accused him of spying for Israel. However, activists claim Shahbazi's espionage confessions were forced.
- On September 15, the Kurdistan Human Rights Network [reported](#) that Iranian authorities had arrested four Kurdish children and detained them in undisclosed locations after raiding their families' homes over the past week.
- On September 15, the Human Rights Activists News Agency [revealed](#) that Iranian police had summoned 10 citizens to appear before a court in Sabzevar after they allegedly protested the regime's resource mismanagement that has led to severe water shortages and power outages throughout the country.
- On September 14, following a recent string of government-forced business closures, Iranian authorities [shuttered](#) a café in Tehran after the establishment served alcohol and permitted dancing. Iranian police have vowed to continue closing “norm-breaking establishments.”

Russia-China Ties

Russia and China defended Iran's nuclear program in the face of pressure from the UN with the two countries fighting to delay the implementation of snapback sanctions on the regime. Russia independently sought to bolster Iran's nuclear program as it signed a \$25 billion deal with the regime that would permit Russia to build four nuclear power plants inside Iranian territory while Iran also vowed to illegally sell oil to China.

- On September 26, Iran's *IRNA News* [announced](#) that Iran and Russia had signed a \$25 billion agreement permitting Russia's to construct four nuclear power plants inside Iran.
- On September 24, Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad [declared](#) that Iran would continue selling to China regardless if the UN voted to reimpose sanctions on the regime.
- On September 19, following the UNSC's vote to continue with the process to reimpose sanctions on Iran, Russian ambassador to the UN Vassily Alekseevich Nebenzia [denounced](#) the

vote, stating “[The E3’s] only goal now is to use the council as a tool for their bad faith play, as a lever to exert pressure on the state in favor of a state which is trying to defend its sovereign interests.”

- On September 17, Russian Energy Minister Sergei Tsivilev [traveled](#) to Tehran to meet with senior Iranian leadership, including President Masoud Pezeshkian and the Armed Forces Chief of Staff Abdolrahim Mousavi. The officials reportedly discussed bolstering the countries’ defense and economic cooperation.

Recent JINSA Products on Iran

- September 15: “[Countering the Houthi Threat](#),” IDF MG (ret.) Amikam Norkin, LtGen Sam Mundy, USMC (ret.), VADM Mark Fox, USN (ret.), and Ari Cicurel
- September 11: “[Iran Nuclear Tracker: September 2025 Quarterly Update](#),” Jonathan Ruhe and Yoni Tobin
- September 4: “[Europe Started Snapback. The U.S. Must See It Through](#),” *RealClearDefense*, Jonathan Ruhe
- September 2: “[Use It or Lose It: The Last Chance for Snapback Sanctions on Iran](#),” Amb. Eric Edelman, Hon. Stephen Rademaker, Jonathan Ruhe, and Blaise Misztal