



Iran Summary October 2025

Sarah Havdala
Policy Analyst

Summary

With Chinese and Russian support, Iran formally withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on October 18, with the Islamic Republic declaring itself free from the 2015 deal's restrictions after the United Nations (UN) reimposed sanctions on the regime via the snapback mechanism in late September. Flouting snapback, Russia reaffirmed its dedication to aiding Iran's military while China worked to help the regime rebuild its ballistic missile stockpile, according to European intelligence sources.

While the Houthis have paused their missile and drone attacks since the Gaza ceasefire commenced, the group continues its destabilizing actions inside Yemen. Coinciding with the Gaza ceasefire, Israeli forces monitored growing threats from Iranian proxies, including Lebanese Hezbollah and Iran-backed groups in Iraq.

Iran's malign reach also spread online, with Iranian hackers targeting civilian infrastructure, including diplomatic organizations throughout the Middle East and North Africa, shipping and logistics firms, and an Israeli hospital. These cyberattacks come as authorities and courts worldwide arrested and sentenced several individuals for spying or plotting attacks on Iran's behalf, including two Iran-backed Russian mobsters who attempted to assassinate an Iranian-American activist in the United States.

Meanwhile, Iran has carried out at least 209 executions in October, the highest monthly count in 2025, including several political prisoners and accused Israeli collaborators. The regime also announced plans to deploy over 80,000 volunteer troops to Tehran to enforce Sharia law as protests mounted over the regime's corruption and economic mismanagement.

Nuclear

The Iranian regime asserted that it was no longer bound to nuclear limitations established in the JCPOA, with its leadership also confirming that the country would preserve its nuclear ambitions. Meanwhile, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Grossi publicly claimed that, while there is renewed activity at Iran's nuclear sites following the 12-Day War, there are no indications that the regime has resumed enriching uranium.

- On October 29, Grossi [declared](#) that while his inspectors have observed renewed activity at Iran's nuclear facilities, there are no signs that the country is enriching uranium.
 - » Grossi's statements [follow](#) his October 19 claim that Iran's "missing" stockpile of highly enriched uranium likely resides at the Isfahan, Fordow, and Natanz nuclear facilities.
- On October 25, Fadahassein Maleki, an Iranian parliament member on the country's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, [announced](#) that Iran's nuclear activity is

“ongoing” despite several nuclear sites suffering damage from U.S. and Israeli strikes during the 12-Day War.

- On October 22, Grossi [reiterated](#) his [pre-12-Day War assessment](#), claiming in an interview that while Iran could produce approximately 10 nuclear bombs if it further enriched its uranium stockpile, there are no current indications that the regime is pursuing weaponization.
 - » In the same interview, Grossi stated that Iran’s cooperation with the IAEA remains severely limited, while also expressing concern for future conflict if diplomatic efforts fail.
- On October 20, the Institute for Science and International Security [released](#) a report and satellite images depicting ongoing construction efforts to allegedly rebuild Iran’s Taleghan 2 facility, including the development of multiple arched structures at the site, following an Israeli attack on the complex in October 2024.
 - » Taleghan 2 is believed to be a nuclear weapons development site built for the government’s AMAD Plan, an unconfirmed nuclear project that allegedly ran until [2003](#).
- On October 20, Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei [rejected](#) potential nuclear negotiations with the United States and mocked President Donald Trump, telling him to “keep dreaming” if he believes the U.S. military destroyed Iran’s nuclear facilities during Operation Midnight Hammer.
- On October 18, Iran’s Foreign Ministry [announced](#) that the regime would no longer recognize the provisions under the JCPOA, “including the restrictions on the Iranian nuclear program and the related mechanisms.”
 - » That same day, Iran, along with Russia and China, [wrote](#) a letter to the UN confirming the JCPOA’s termination, while also claiming that the United Kingdom, France, and Germany’s process to reinvoke UN sanctions was “legally and procedurally flawed.”
- On October 15, Mohammad Eslami, the head of Iran’s Atomic Energy Organization, [declared](#) that Iran does not intend to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.
- On October 11, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi [announced](#) that Iran could consider participating in nuclear talks with the United States if the Trump administration provided it with a “reasonable, balanced, and fair proposal” for diplomatic engagement.

Proxy Aggression

The Houthis in Yemen unlawfully detained dozens of UN employees, including some of whom the group accused of spying for Israel, without providing evidence. Iran reaffirmed its support for its Yemeni proxy, including through an attempt to smuggle weapons to the group. Meanwhile, Israel disclosed that its forces are monitoring growing threats from Iran-backed groups in Iraq, as well as Lebanese Hezbollah, which is actively rearming its fighters.

- On October 31, Israel’s Northern Command [stated](#) that the Israeli military and Mossad, Israel’s national intelligence agency, are preparing to counter a possible attack by Iran-backed militias in Iraq.
- On October 30, *The Wall Street Journal*, citing Israeli and Arab intelligence, [revealed](#) that Lebanese Hezbollah is violating its November 2024 ceasefire with Israel by restoring its weapons stockpile, despite Lebanese military efforts to disarm the terror organization.
- On October 28, in a major ceasefire violation, Hamas terrorists [opened](#) fire on Israeli soldiers in Gaza, killing one reservist.

- » Outside of the firefight, Hamas has also [violated](#) the ceasefire agreement by repeatedly handing over the remains of non-hostages.
- On October 25, the Houthis [arrested](#) three UN World Food Programme staffers, claiming they spied for Israel, without providing evidence.
- On October 22, Yemeni authorities [interdicted](#) a ship carrying illegal Iranian weapons destined for the Houthis in the Bab al-Mandab Strait and arrested the vessel's crewmembers.
- On October 19, Houthi terrorists [raided](#) a UN facility in Sanaa, detaining around two dozen workers.
- On October 19, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Commander Major General Mohammad Pakpour [reasserted](#) Iran's commitment to the Houthis after the group announced that a previous Israeli strike had killed the Houthis' Chief of Staff, Major General Muhammad Abdul Karim al-Ghamari.
- On October 18, *Le Figaro*, a French newspaper, [revealed](#) that Iran's IRGC Quds Force (QF) helped reorganize Hezbollah in Lebanon after Israeli forces killed the group's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, in September 2024.
- On October 14, footage circulating on social media [depicted](#) Hamas terrorists carrying out mass executions in Gaza City immediately following the Israeli military's withdrawal from the area.
- On October 8, Hamas [agreed](#) to President Donald Trump's 20-point ceasefire plan, committing the terror group to [release](#) 20 living Israeli hostages on October 13.
- On October 7, the UN [announced](#) that Houthi terrorists had detained nine of its workers in Yemen without providing justification for their arrests.

Malign Activities Abroad

Iranian hackers launched numerous cyberattacks targeting diplomatic organizations in the Middle East and North Africa, shipping and logistics firms, and an Israeli hospital. Iranian leaders also emphasized their commitment to eliminating Israel through a state-endorsed plan and by threatening to pursue military action against the regime's "enemies." Meanwhile, Israeli authorities revealed Iran's complicity in carrying out several attacks targeting Jewish sites in Europe and Australia.

- On October 29, a U.S. judge [sentenced](#) two Iran-backed Russian criminals to 25 years in federal prison for attempting to assassinate Masih Alinejad, an Iranian-American journalist and vocal critic of Iran's human rights abuses.
- On October 28, Reuters [revealed](#) that a New Zealand-based insurance company has helped Iran and its allies evade Western sanctions by insuring their "shadow fleets" that illegally transport sanctioned oil.
- On October 26, Israel's Mossad [publicized](#) that an IRGC-QF-run network was behind several attacks and attack plots targeting Jewish sites in Greece, Australia, and Germany.
- On October 26, Israeli authorities [charged](#) three Turkish citizens for allegedly smuggling Iranian weapons into Israel.
- On October 24, Radio Free Europe [reported](#) that Iran has likely registered thousands of companies in the country of Georgia to evade international sanctions.
- On October 22, Singaporean cybersecurity company Group-IB [reported](#) that the Iranian-state hacker group, Muddywater, is responsible for an international malware campaign

targeting diplomatic organizations in the Middle East and North Africa via a compromised email account.

- On October 21, IRGC General Pakpour [threatened](#) to “turn the region into hell for the enemy” if Iran is attacked.
- On October 16, Microsoft [warned](#) of Iranian interference in commercial shipping, highlighting that “three Iranian state-affiliated actors attacked shipping and logistics firms in Europe and the Persian Gulf to gain ongoing access to sensitive commercial data.”
- On October 16, a Norwegian court [sentenced](#) a former security guard for the U.S. Embassy in Oslo to over three years in prison for spying for Iran and Russia.
- On October 15, a senior Iranian cleric and aide to Khamenei, Ali-Asghar Mohammadi-Rad, [revealed](#) his new state-endorsed book that outlines an Iranian plan to destroy Israel.
- On October 2, Iran-backed hackers [launched](#) a cyberattack on Israel’s Shamir Medical Center during the Yom Kippur holiday as part of a larger Iranian cyber campaign targeting Israeli institutions.
 - » While the hackers acquired and leaked patient data, the Israeli government is reported to have blocked the group from fully infiltrating the hospital’s computer system.

Domestic/Human Rights

Iran’s already high execution count skyrocketed as the regime surpassed 10,000 executions since 2010. In October, the regime executed at least 209 people, including accused Israeli collaborators, without granting them proper trials or providing substantial evidence for their alleged crimes. Iranian officials also plan to deploy over 80,000 troops to enforce Sharia law in Tehran and curb citizens’ “secular” tendencies. Meanwhile, Iran’s Bank Ayandeh dissolved following years of corruption and poor supervision as citizens across Iran took to the streets to protest the Republic’s dire economic situation.

- According to Iran Human Rights (IHRNGO), an Oslo-based group, the Islamic Republic [executed](#) at least 209 people throughout October, contributing to a cumulative 1,250 executions in 2025 as of October 31.
- Between October 25 and 27, citizens across Iran, including students, retirees, current employees, and families of prisoners on death row, [protested](#) the regime’s corruption and the severe economic plight plaguing the country.
- On October 25, Iran’s Melli Bank [absorbed](#) Bank Ayandeh, one of the country’s largest private banks, after the Central Bank of Iran declared it bankrupt following years of corruption and poor supervision.
- On October 23, *Iran International* [reported](#) that an Iranian court had sentenced Amirreza Jalilian, a former IAEA researcher, to 10 years in prison for allegedly spying for the United Kingdom.
 - » Jalilian’s wife claimed the regime denied him basic rights during the trial, including a visit from a UN representative and fair legal representation.
- On October 18, Iranian authorities [hanged](#) Javad Naeimi, an engineer who worked at the Natanz nuclear facility, after subjecting him to torture and forcing him to confess to Israeli espionage allegations.
- On October 17, senior Iranian official Ruhollah Momen-Nassab [announced](#) that the regime would deploy 80,000 volunteer troops to Tehran to enforce the traditional Sharia dress code and combat secularist tendencies.

- On October 14, an Iranian court [sentenced](#) a French tourist couple to decades in prison after arresting them in 2022 for allegedly spying for France and Israel.
- On October 12, Araghchi and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian [declined](#) to attend the Sharm El-Sheikh peace summit in Egypt due to Trump's anticipated attendance.
 - » Opposition Iranian figures expressed their dismay with the leaders' choices, claiming the summit was a rare opportunity for Iran and the United States to resume diplomatic talks.
- On October 8, *Sky News* [reported](#) that Iran had deported approximately 1.3 million Afghans in 2025, with many claiming they had suffered severe abuse under the regime.
- On October 8, Iranian authorities [released](#) French-German tourist Lennart Monterlos after detaining the teenager in June.
- On October 6, IHRNGO [reported](#) that Iran is set to execute Goli Kouhkan, a former child bride who murdered her abusive husband in 2018, if she cannot pay his family €100,000 (\$115,000 USD).
- On October 4, Iran [executed](#) six prisoners, without granting them proper legal trials, for allegedly carrying out attacks in Iran on Israel's behalf.

Russia-China Ties

Both Russia and China offered support to Iran following the implementation of UN sanctions on the regime in late September. While Russian leadership declared its commitment to Iran by announcing that Moscow was supporting Tehran militarily, a *CNN* report revealed that despite UN sanctions, Iran continued to import Chinese shipments of sodium perchlorate, a precursor for building solid-fueled ballistic missiles.

- On October 29, *CNN* [published](#) a report citing European intelligence sources that claim China is evading UN sanctions by shipping sodium perchlorate to Iran, which will help the regime rebuild its ballistic missile program.
- On October 20, Russian government spokesman Dmitry Peskov [announced](#) that "Russia is definitely ready to expand cooperation with Iran in all areas."
- On October 13, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov [stated](#) that Russia was "legally" supplying military equipment to Iran despite current UN sanctions on the regime.
- On October 8, members of Russia's state nuclear corporation, Rosatom, [traveled](#) to Tehran to meet with Mohammad Eslami, the head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, to discuss nuclear cooperation between the two nations.
- On October 5, *Defense Security Asia* [reported](#) that leaked Russian documents reveal Iran's €6 billion (\$6.9 billion USD) plan to purchase 48 Su-35 fighter jets from the Kremlin.

Recent JINSA Products on Iran

- October 16: [Building on the Win: U.S. Strategy Toward Iran After the 12-Day War](#), JINSA Iran Policy Project
- October 16: "[Disrupting the Iran-Houthi Supply Line](#)," *Defense Post*, VADM Kevin Donegan, USN (ret.) and Sarah Havdala
- October 7: "[Israel's Defensive Breakthrough is America's Opportunity](#)," *Washington Times*, LTG H. Steven Blum, USA (ret.) and Yoni Tobin

- October 2: “[Disrupting the Houthi-al Shabaab Alliance](#),” *RealClearDefense*, RADM Paul Becker, USN (ret.) and Jonah Brody
- October 2: “[Iran Remains Defiant in Defeat](#),” *The Dispatch*, Jonathan Ruhe