



Iran Summary

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Note: This report only includes information from February 1 – February 27, 2026. For JINSA's coverage of Operations Epic Fury and Roaring Lion, please visit JINSA's website, <https://jinosa.org/>.

Overview

After months of severed diplomatic channels, U.S. and Iranian negotiating teams held three rounds of Omani-mediated indirect nuclear talks. As the teams struggled to reach an agreement, Iranian officials continued to show military aggression, prompting a mass U.S. force buildup in the Middle East.

As Iranian forces braced for a potential U.S. attack, regime authorities continued to exert force internally by suppressing growing dissent. Despite the risks, protesters continued to rally throughout Iran against the regime. While protests in early February were mostly limited to balcony chants, protesters gathered in city centers to mark the end of the 40-day mourning period since the January 8 and 9 massacres, igniting renewed demonstrations on university campuses throughout Iran.

While struggling to accept U.S. negotiating terms and facing widespread internal dissent, Iran continued to project its power throughout the region by supporting Lebanese Hezbollah, who declared its dedication for Iran in the event of a U.S. attack. Meanwhile, Iran received immense diplomatic and military support from Russia and China.

Nuclear

- On February 27, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) [shared](#) that Iran has not permitted its inspectors to enter nuclear sites damaged during the 12-Day War, warning that the agency “cannot provide any information on the current size, composition, or whereabouts of the stockpile of enriched uranium in Iran.”
- On February 26, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi [met](#) with U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner for a third round of Omani-mediated nuclear talks in Switzerland. IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi was also involved in the negotiations.
 - » The U.S. negotiating team [demanded](#) that Iran agree to an indefinite deal that forces the regime to destroy its nuclear facilities in Natanz, Fordow, and Isfahan, and give up its stockpile of enriched uranium. The U.S. proposal did not include any “sunset clauses” that would only temporarily limit Iran’s nuclear program.
- On February 25, Araghchi [claimed](#) that Iran is “ready to address concerns,” but that the regime is “not ready to give up [its] right for peaceful use of nuclear tech.”

- On February 23, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Esmail Baghaei [affirmed](#) that Iran is not interested in reaching a “temporary agreement” with the United States regarding the regime’s nuclear program and that “the drafting of any negotiating text is a joint effort.”
- On February 17, Araghchi [met](#) with Witkoff and Kushner for a second round of indirect nuclear negotiations at the Omani Ambassador to Switzerland’s residence in Geneva, where the Iranian negotiating team reportedly agreed to provide the U.S. delegation with “detailed proposals to address some of the open gaps” in the discussions.
 - » The day prior, Grossi and Araghchi [met](#) separately in Geneva and held “in-depth technical discussions.”
- On February 15, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Majid-Takht Ravanchi [stated](#) during an interview with the *BBC* that Iran would potentially discuss concessions to its nuclear program if the United States considered lifting sanctions on the country.
- On February 12, Grossi [warned](#) that Iran could produce “maybe a dozen” nuclear weapons with its uranium stockpile.
- On February 11, the Institute for Science and International Security [published](#) satellite images from February 10, showing construction at Pickaxe Mountain, an alleged nuclear plant adjacent to the Natanz Nuclear Facility damaged during the 12-Day War.
- On February 9, the Institute for Science and International Security [published](#) satellite images from February 8 and 9 revealing that Iran has blocked off all entrances to the Isfahan nuclear facility, burying them in soil.
- On February 7, the *Wall Street Journal* [reported](#) that Iran refused to cease its uranium enrichment operations during the first round of U.S.-Iran negotiations in Oman.
 - » Araghchi [stated](#) that Iran would also not remove its enriched uranium from the country, though the negotiating team would be open to reducing the uranium’s level of enrichment.

Military

- On February 24, Iranian state broadcaster IRIB [announced](#) that the government has chosen Brigadier General Seyed Mohamad Hosseini to command the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Ground Forces’ Saber Special Forces Brigade.
- On February 23, IRGC Ground Forces [conducted](#) a series of live-fire drills in southern Iran and Persian Gulf islands to test “new combat tactics using modern technology across multiple operational levels.”
- On February 16 and 17, IRGC Naval Forces [launched](#) military drills in the Strait of Hormuz, prompting Iran to temporarily close the international waterway on the 17th due to “security precautions” related to “shipping safety.”
- On February 6, the *New York Times* [reported](#) that Iran prioritized restoring its missile sites over repairing its nuclear facilities damaged during the 12-Day War, though the full extent of repairs remains unclear from satellite imagery.
- On February 5, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian [appointed](#) Ali Shamkhani, senior advisor to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, to serve as Iran’s Supreme Defense Council’s new secretary.
- On February 5, IRGC Naval Forces [announced](#) that they had captured two ships accused of smuggling more than one million liters of fuel through the Persian Gulf.

- On February 4, Iran’s military [deployed](#) the advanced long-range Khorramshahr-4 ballistic missile in one of its subterranean “missile cities”.
 - » The Khorramshahr-4 ballistic missile, one of Iran’s newest, has a range of 2,000KM and is currently the cornerstone of Iranian deterrence and first-strike capabilities.
- On February 3, Iranian gunships [attempted](#) to intercept and board a U.S. tanker in the Strait of Hormuz before a U.S. Navy warship escorted the tanker to safety.
 - » Earlier that day, the USS *Abraham Lincoln* [shot](#) down an Iranian drone in the Arabian Sea that approached the aircraft carrier.

Domestic/Human Rights

- On February 24, *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* [reported](#) that Iranian authorities had detained Japanese journalist and *NHK World* bureau chief, Shinnosuke Kawashima, and transported him to Evin prison on February 23. The reason for his arrest remains unknown.
- On February 23, the Human Rights Activists News Agency [released](#) a report documenting the first 50 days of the ongoing protests in Iran.
 - » Between December 28 and February 15, HRANA confirmed the deaths of at least 7,000 people, including 6,488 protesters and the arrests of almost 54,000 others.
- On February 22, five Kurdish Iranian opposition groups—the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan, the Kurdistan Free Life Party, the Kurdistan Freedom Party, the Komala Party of Iranian Kurdistan, and the Khabat Organization of Iranian Kurdistan—[formed](#) the Coalition of Political Forces of Iranian Kurdistan against the regime.
- On February 20-25, protests [erupted](#) across Iranian university campuses with students chanting against the regime and clashing with authorities.
 - » Basij forces retaliated against the students, attacking protesters at [Beheshti University](#), [Ferdowsi University](#), [the University of Tehran](#), [Iran University of Science and Technology](#), [Amir Kabir University of Technology](#), and [Sharif University of Technology](#).
- On February 17, regime forces [opened fire](#) on mourners attending a memorial ceremony for slain protester Alireza Seidi in Abdanan, injuring several individuals.
- On February 16, security forces [conducted](#) a mass raid in the village of Chenar in Iran’s Hamadan province, arresting hundreds of residents and parading them around in caged vehicles for allegedly participating in recent protests.

Malign Activities Abroad

- On February 17, *The Record from Recorded Future News* [reported](#) that suspected regime-linked hackers took advantage of the recent communications blackout in Iran by disseminating real protest footage linked with malware to target dissidents in the diaspora.
- On February 16, Israeli prosecutors [charged](#) a man for spying on former Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and gathering security-related intelligence for Iranian agents.
- On February 8, the Indian Coast Guard [captured](#) three oil tankers linked to Iran and previously sanctioned by the United States.
- On February 5, Israeli authorities [announced](#) they had arrested two Israeli citizens for maintaining contact with, and carrying out tasks for, Iranian agents in exchange for financial compensation from the regime.

Proxy Aggression

- On February 25, Hezbollah [declared](#) that while it would not militarily intervene if the United States struck Iran, it has set a “red line” for the United States on attacking Khamenei.
- On February 21, Saudi media outlet *Al Arabiya* [reported](#) that IRGC officers have effectively taken over Hezbollah amidst growing tensions between the U.S. and Iran, with the officers prioritizing the group’s military capabilities.
- On February 11, *Iran International* [reported](#) that six Iranian diplomats smuggled millions of dollars in cash onto commercial flights to Lebanon to help fund Hezbollah in recent months.

Russia/China Ties

- On February 24, Reuters [reported](#) that Iran is close to purchasing CM-302 supersonic anti-ship missiles from China, which weapons experts claim would pose a threat to U.S. naval forces deployed to the Middle East.
- On February 23, the *Financial Times* [reported](#) that Iran had purchased thousands of advanced shoulder-fire missiles, including 500 Verba launch units and 2,500 9M336, from Russia in a €500 million deal that the two countries signed in December.
 - » According to the report, Iran is set to acquire the advanced Russian weaponry over the next three years as part of the military deal.
- On February 19, the Iranian and Russian militaries [conducted](#) joint naval drills in the Gulf of Oman and the Indian Ocean for their annual Maritime Security Belt exercise to improve command and control operations and tactical coordination.
- On February 12, Iran [launched](#) its first geostationary telecommunications satellite aboard a Russian rocket from Kazakhstan.
- On February 5, leading up to the first round of renewed U.S.-Iran nuclear talks, Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Liu Bin [asserted](#) that “China supports Iran’s legitimate right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.”
- On February 2, Russian sources [stated](#) that the Kremlin would accept Iran’s enriched uranium abroad for processing or storage.

Recent JINSA Products on Iran

Reports, Insights, & Op-eds

- February 27, “[The Rise of Iran’s Kurdish Coalition](#),” Blaise Misztal, Giran Ozcan, and Jonah Brody
- February 20: “[Iran’s Evolving Missile and Drone Threat](#),” Jonathan Ruhe and Ari Cicurel
- February 19: “[Any Action Against Iran Needs to Account for the Proxies](#),” *Breaking Defense*, Lt Gen Thomas W. Bergeson, USAF (ret.), LTG Karen Gibson, USA (ret.), and LtGen Sam Mundy, USMC (ret.)
- February 12: “[Iran Has Teeth. Can America Extract Them?](#)” *JNS*, Jonathan Ruhe and Yoni Tobin

- February 4: “[Fall, Fall is Better than Jaw, Jaw: The Folly of Negotiating with Iran Now,](#)” Blaise Misztal and Jonathan Ruhe

Webinars & TV Appearances

- February 23: [Iran is “Playing With Fire”](#) | JINSA Vice Admiral (ret.) Robert Harward on *Fox News*
- February 16: JINSA’s Vice Admiral (ret.) Robert Harward: “[Time For This Regime to Go!](#)” | *NewsNation*
- February 12: JINSA Distinguished Fellow MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror: “[The Americans Have VERY Good Cards](#)” in Iran Talks | *JPC*
- February 6: “[Webinar – U.S. Force Posture in the Middle East: An Achilles’ Heel?](#)” Maj Gen Charles Corcoran, USAF (ret.), VADM John Miller, USN (ret.), and Jonathan Ruhe
- February 4: “[Webinar – Iran Talks Déjà Vu,](#)” Stephen Rademaker, Ray Takeyh, Jonathan Ruhe, and Blaise Misztal
- February 4: JINSA’s VADM Robert Harward: [Iran Threatening U.S. Ships – U.S. Should “Do the Same to Them”](#) | *NewsNation*

Protest Updates

- [Iran Protests Update 2/18/26 – 2/23/26](#)
- [Iran Protests Update 2/10/26 – 2/17/26](#)
- [Iran Protests Update 2/3/26 – 2/9/26](#)
- [Iran Protests Update 1/28/26 – 2/2/26](#)

Nuclear Updates

- [Iran Nuclear Talks Update – 2/27/26](#)
- [Iran Nuclear Talks Update – 2/23/26](#)
- [Iran Nuclear Talks Update – 2/18/26](#)
- [Iran Nuclear Talks Update – 2/13/26](#)