

Iran Update, September 8, 2025



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Toplines

Iranian officials are signaling openness to cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and negotiations with the United States, likely to try to avoid the reimposition of UN Security Council (UNSC) sanctions on Iran. Iranian hardline outlet Farhikhtegan, which is affiliated with Supreme Leader International Affairs Adviser Ali Akbar Velayati, reported on September 8 that the regime has decided to resume negotiations with the United States under the condition that the UNSC does not reimpose sanctions on Iran under the snapback mechanism during negotiations.[1] The E3 (the United Kingdom, France, and Germany) triggered the 30-day snapback mechanism on August 28, which means that UNSC sanctions will automatically be reimposed on Iran on September 27 unless the UNSC extends sanctions relief for Iran.[2] Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi separately published an op-ed in the *Guardian* on September 7 in which he stated that Iran is ready to accept limits on uranium enrichment and allow extensive international oversight of its nuclear facilities in exchange for sanctions relief.[3] Araghchi specifically directed his op-ed to the E3.

Iranian leaders have recently expressed openness to resuming cooperation with the IAEA. Iran and the IAEA held their third round of talks in Vienna on September 6.[4] Araghchi and IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi stated following the meeting that Iran and the IAEA are close to reaching a new cooperation agreement.[5] Grossi suggested that Iran and the IAEA have not, however, agreed on a timeline for the resumption of IAEA inspections and stated that it is also unclear what the IAEA would do when inspections resume.[6] Iran may calculate that expressing willingness to cooperate with the IAEA and the United States will help Iran deter potential snapback sanctions. It is unclear if Iran is willing to make meaningful concessions on its nuclear program in talks with the IAEA or the United States, however. Iran previously rejected an E3 proposal to extend the snapback deadline by six months in exchange for Iran restoring full cooperation with the IAEA, resuming negotiations with the United States, and accounting for its 60 percent enriched uranium stockpile.[7] Araghchi and Grossi will reportedly meet in Cairo this week to finalize a new cooperation agreement.[8]

Iran is likely preparing for future conflicts with Israel and the United States by increasing funding for the Iranian armed forces and evaluating the combat readiness of armed forces units. The Iranian Parliamentary National Security and Foreign Policy Commission approved on September 7 a six-clause bill to increase the Iranian armed forces' "defense capabilities." [9] The IDF destroyed Iranian air defense systems and achieved air superiority over large parts of Iran during the Israel-Iran War, and Iran likely seeks to bolster its defensive capabilities in preparation for potential future

conflicts.[10] The bill includes the following clauses.

1. The Planning and Budget Organization and Oil Ministry must pay the entirety of the funds allocated to strengthening the Iranian armed forces in the budget for the current Persian calendar year (March 2025-2026) and the previous Persian calendar year (March 2024- 2025).
2. The Planning and Budget Organization must fund the Supreme National Security Council's defense allocations from public savings or the transfer of oil sales shares.
3. The Central Bank of Iran must provide the Armed Forces General Staff (AFGS) with up to two billion euros from blocked foreign assets or other overseas currency resources to implement emergency defense plans.
4. The Planning and Budget Organization, Central Bank of Iran, and Economy Ministry must provide the Defense and Armed Forces Logistics Ministry with two billion euros for "foreign purchases of major defense items."
5. The Planning and Budget Organization and Oil Ministry are authorized to allocate \$1.5 billion in oil revenues to the Iranian armed forces.
6. Iran will allocate 30 percent of its revenue from air transit fees to Artesh air defense systems annually.[11]

The clause to purchase "major defense items" is notable given that Iran has signaled interest in acquiring military equipment from foreign countries, such as China and Belarus, since the end of the Israel-Iran War.[12] Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Aziz Nasir Zadeh, who is responsible for Iranian arms sales and purchases, traveled to China in late June 2025 in his first foreign visit after the 12-day war.[13] Iranian media expressed support for purchasing Chinese military equipment, such as J-10 aircraft, after the war.[14] Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian recently traveled to Belarus, where he reportedly sought Belarusian help to restore Iranian air defense systems and electronic warfare (EW) equipment that Israel damaged during the June 2025 war.[15]

Iranian Artesh Commander Major General Amir Hatami separately visited three Artesh Air Force bases in Esfahan, Tabriz, and Hamedan, respectively, on September 6 to evaluate the combat readiness of units stationed at these bases.[16] Hatami visited the Artesh Air Force 8th Tactical Airbase in Esfahan, the 3rd Tactical Airbase in Hamedan, and the 2nd Tactical Airbase in Tabriz. Israel struck all three bases during the Israel-Iran War.[17] Hatami stated that Iran is preparing for another round of confrontation with Israel.[18]

The Institute for Science and International Security reported on September 7 that Israeli airstrikes during the Israel-Iran War destroyed a key Iranian centrifuge research and development site, the Kalaye Electric Company, in Tehran.[19] The Kalaye Electric Company is a subsidiary of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran and manufactures advanced centrifuges for the Iranian nuclear program. Centrifuges are used to enrich uranium. The United States sanctioned the Kalaye Electric Company in February 2007 for its involvement in Iran's weapons of mass destruction program.[20] The Institute reported that centrifuge design teams developed new centrifuge models and improved existing ones at the site.[21] Iran also reportedly previously tested advanced IR-8 centrifuges

at the site.[22] There have been no repair efforts at the site following the war, according to the Institute.[23] US and Israeli airstrikes during the war targeted Iran's centrifuge production facilities as well as active centrifuges, which will likely hinder Iran's ability to enrich uranium in the near future.[24]



Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei outlined a series of economic recommendations on September 7, which highlights the regime's concern about worsening economic conditions and their potential to undermine internal stability.[25] Khamenei delivered a speech during a meeting with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and his cabinet on September 7 in which he called on the government to "discipline the market" and ensure Iranians' access to essential goods.[26] Khamenei's directive to "discipline the market" comes as the Iranian rial traded above one million rials per one US dollar on August 28.[27] Khamenei also ordered government officials to build up reserves of

essential goods, break import monopolies by diversifying suppliers, and guard basic goods against sudden price hikes.[28] The Iranian regime's official data shows that Iranian household incomes have risen about 12.5 times since 2016, while the price of basic food items has increased more than 20 times.[29] Khamenei further emphasized that production is the key to economic progress and instructed officials not to cut electricity to factories except in emergencies.[30] Iranian media reported in late August that electricity shortages have forced about 50 percent of factories to go offline, which has created ripple effects across the economy.[31]

Khamenei also instructed Iranian officials and media outlets to emphasize Iran's strengths and avoid portraying Iran as weak.[32] Khamenei's directive comes after the Culture and Islamic Guidance Ministry restricted "provocative" media coverage of potential snapback sanctions.[33] Iranian authorities directed outlets to frame the E3's (the United Kingdom, France, and Germany) recent decision to trigger the snapback mechanism as proof of European dependence on the United States and to emphasize Iran's resilience.[34] Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi similarly directed Iranian media on September 7 to present potential snapback sanctions as a political setback but not as an economic catastrophe and warned that exaggerating the impacts of potential sanctions could inflame public anxiety.[35] CTP-ISW previously assessed that the Iranian regime likely seeks to control the media narrative about potential snapback sanctions to prevent further public frustration about deteriorating economic conditions and reduce the risk of economic-related unrest.

The Shia Coordination Framework (SCF), which is a loose coalition of Iraqi Shia political parties, is trying to bypass the Iraqi parliament to strengthen the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF).[36] The PMF is an Iraqi state security service that is comprised of many militias, some of which report to Iran instead of the Iraqi Prime Minister.[37] Iraqi media reported on September 7 that the SCF may plan to have the Iraqi Prime Minister issue an executive order to restructure and expand the PMF's authority after the SCF's attempt to do so through the legislature stalled.[38] The SCF supported the Popular Mobilization Authority Law, which would have likely increased Iran's influence in the Iraqi political and security spheres by formalizing key PMF structures.[39] Sunni and Kurdish parties walked out of parliament on July 16 in protest against the contentious legislation.[40] Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad al Sudani withdrew the bill from the parliamentary agenda on August 27, reportedly due to threats from the United States to sanction Iraq if he did not withdraw the bill.[41] The new SCF plan is reportedly modeled after former Prime Minister Haider al Abadi's 2016 Executive Order, which formally established the PMF.[42] The SCF plan would likely force Sudani to choose between two politically damaging options. He could issue an executive order to strengthen the PMF and risk the United States following through on its threats to sanction Iraq. He could, alternatively, refuse to issue the executive order and risk provoking a backlash from Iranian-backed Iraqi actors and militias.

Hezbollah officials welcomed the Lebanese Council of Ministers' approval of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) plan to monopolize weapons, likely due to the plan's implementation being contingent upon Israel withdrawing from Lebanon and ceasing its military operations in Lebanon.[43] The Lebanese Council of Ministers approved the LAF plan on September 5 under which the LAF will attempt to disarm Hezbollah and establish a state monopoly on all weapons.[44] Hezbollah Political Council Deputy Head Mahmoud Qamati told Reuters on September 6 that Hezbollah viewed the outcome of the September 5 cabinet session positively given that the government declared that the implementation of the LAF plan is dependent on Israel withdrawing from Lebanese territory and ceasing its operations in Lebanon.[45] Other Hezbollah officials have echoed Qamati's statement, calling the cabinet session a "step" toward "correcting" the government's previous cabinet decisions to disarm

Hezbollah.[46] Hezbollah has consistently rejected calls to disarm, often citing continued Israeli operations in Lebanon as justification for retaining its weapons.[47] The LAF plan did not include an official timeframe for disarming Hezbollah due to the LAF's resource constraints, which may also contribute to Hezbollah officials' support for the plan.[48] Hezbollah has consistently rejected any timetables for its disarmament.[49]

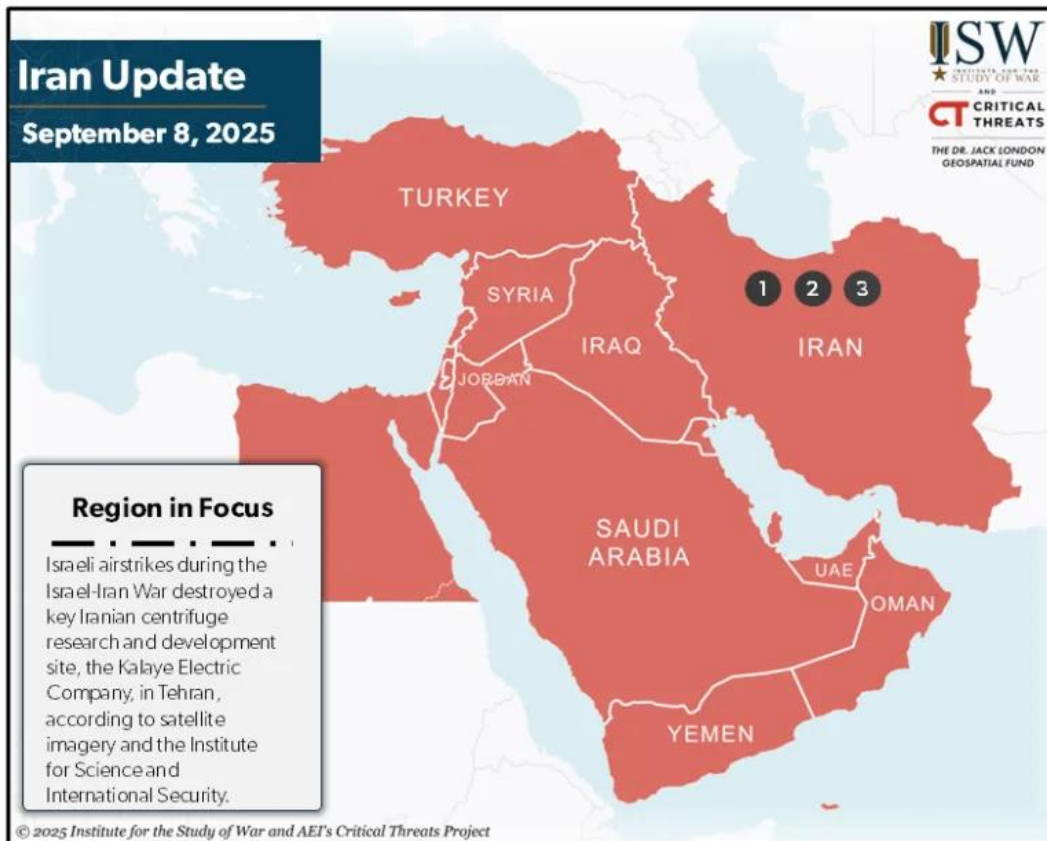
Hezbollah officials may calculate that Israel will not agree to the LAF plan and that Hezbollah can thereby delay or prevent the implementation of the disarmament plan. Lebanese officials, including Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, have stated that the Lebanese-approved US proposal will not become effective or be implemented until Israel agrees to it.[50] The LAF disarmament plan is part of the US proposal. The US proposal requires Israel to withdraw from its five positions in southern Lebanon within 90 days of the proposal's implementation. The proposal also stipulates that the LAF will completely disarm Hezbollah by the end of 2025.[51] Israel has maintained that it will continue to operate in Lebanon until Hezbollah is disarmed, however.[52] An Israeli journalist reported on August 25 that the Israeli government will not discuss the US proposal and has no intention of responding to it.[53] Israeli officials later stated that Israel would conduct "reciprocal measures" if the LAF takes steps to disarm Hezbollah.[54] Israel has rejected previous proposals that would require Israel to withdraw from Lebanon before the Lebanese government disarms Hezbollah.[55] The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) shifted to a "forward defense" posture in August 2025 to maintain Israel's "strategic superiority" in southern Lebanon and prevent Hezbollah from reconstituting capabilities that could pose a threat to northern Israeli towns.[56] IDF Operations Chief Brigadier General Yisrael Shomer reiterated on September 7 that the IDF's mission in southern Lebanon is not yet finished, given that Israeli civilians have not fully returned to northern Israeli towns.[57] The November 2024 Israel-Hezbollah ceasefire agreement included an addendum that ensures the Israeli right to self-defense against any future threat that Hezbollah may pose to Israel.[58] The IDF has acted on this addendum and continued to operate against Hezbollah since November 2024, including via airstrikes and raids targeting Hezbollah infrastructure.[59]

Hezbollah could use any delay in the Lebanese state's efforts to disarm it to reorganize and regenerate its forces, which would increase Hezbollah's relative strength vis-a-vis the Lebanese government and thus likely make it more challenging for the government to disarm Hezbollah. Hezbollah has undergone a review of its strategy in Lebanon since the November 2024 Israel-Lebanon ceasefire to shape its reconstitution effort and reduce reliance on external support.[60] Hezbollah reportedly began prioritizing domestic drone production in June 2025 to reduce its reliance on Iranian weapons and restructured its financial system in August 2025 to confront financial challenges.[61] Iranian officials and Axis of Resistance-affiliated media recently reported that Hezbollah has begun appointing new commanders to reconstitute its command structure.[62] Iran has reiterated that it will continue to support Hezbollah and has reportedly attempted to smuggle funds to Hezbollah in recent weeks.[63] Hezbollah's recent actions highlight how it is actively trying to refill its ranks, reconstitute its weapons, retain its Shia support base, and regenerate its smuggling networks. Any delay in the implementation of the LAF plan or US proposal would give Hezbollah more time to try to achieve these objectives.

Key Takeaways

1. **Iran-IAEA Negotiations:** Iranian officials are signaling openness to cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and negotiations with the United States, likely to try to avoid the reimposition of UN Security Council (UNSC) sanctions on Iran.

2. **Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces:** The Shia Coordination Framework (SCF) is trying to bypass the Iraqi parliament to strengthen the Popular Mobilization Forces. The SCF may plan to have the Iraqi Prime Minister issue an executive order to restructure and expand the PMF's authority after the SCF's attempt to do so through the legislature stalled.
3. **Iranian Military Readiness:** Iran is likely preparing for future conflicts with Israel and the United States by increasing funding for the Iranian armed forces and evaluating the combat readiness of armed forces units. The Iranian Parliamentary National Security and Foreign Policy Commission approved a six-clause bill to increase the Iranian armed forces' "defense capabilities."
4. **Iranian Economy:** Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei outlined a series of economic recommendations in a speech, which highlights the regime's concern about worsening economic conditions and their potential to undermine internal stability. Khamenei also instructed Iranian officials and media outlets to emphasize Iran's strengths and avoid portraying Iran as weak.
5. **Iranian Centrifuge Capacity:** Israeli airstrikes during the Israel-Iran War destroyed a key Iranian centrifuge research and development site, the Kalaye Electric Company, in Tehran, according to satellite imagery and the Institute for Science and International Security. US and Israeli airstrikes during the war targeted Iran's centrifuge production facilities as well as active centrifuges, which will likely hinder Iran's ability to enrich uranium in the near future.



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- 2 **TEHRAN, IRAN.** Iran is likely preparing for future conflicts with Israel and the United States by increasing funding for the Iranian armed forces and evaluating the combat readiness of armed forces units. The Iranian Parliamentary National Security and Foreign Policy Commission approved a six-clause bill to increase the Iranian armed forces' "defense capabilities."
- 3 **TEHRAN, IRAN.** Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei outlined a series of economic recommendations in a speech, which highlights the regime's concern about worsening economic conditions and their potential to undermine internal stability. Khamenei also instructed Iranian officials and media outlets to emphasize Iran's strengths and avoid portraying Iran as weak.

Iran

See topline section.

Iraq

National Wisdom Movement head Ammar al Hakim traveled to Iran on September 5, where he held a series of meetings with senior Iranian officials to discuss bilateral relations between Iraq and Iran. An unspecified informed source cited by Iraqi media claimed that Hakim planned to deliver a "message" from Iraqi politicians regarding mediation with the United States and regional de-

escalation.[64] Hakim held separate meetings with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Larijani on September 7 to discuss strengthening political and security cooperation.[65] Hakim also met with Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and Expediency Discernment Council Chairman Sadegh Amoli Larijani, who is Ali Larijani's brother.[66] Sadegh Larijani claimed that the United States and Israel seek to weaken the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) to form a "greater Israel," referring to recent US pressure on the Iraqi government to withdraw proposed legislation that would have empowered the PMF within the Iraqi security and political space. The Expediency Discernment Council serves as an advisory body to the Iranian Supreme Leader and resolves disputes between the Guardian Council and the Iranian parliament.[67] Hakim is reportedly expected to meet with Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei during his visit to Tehran.[68]

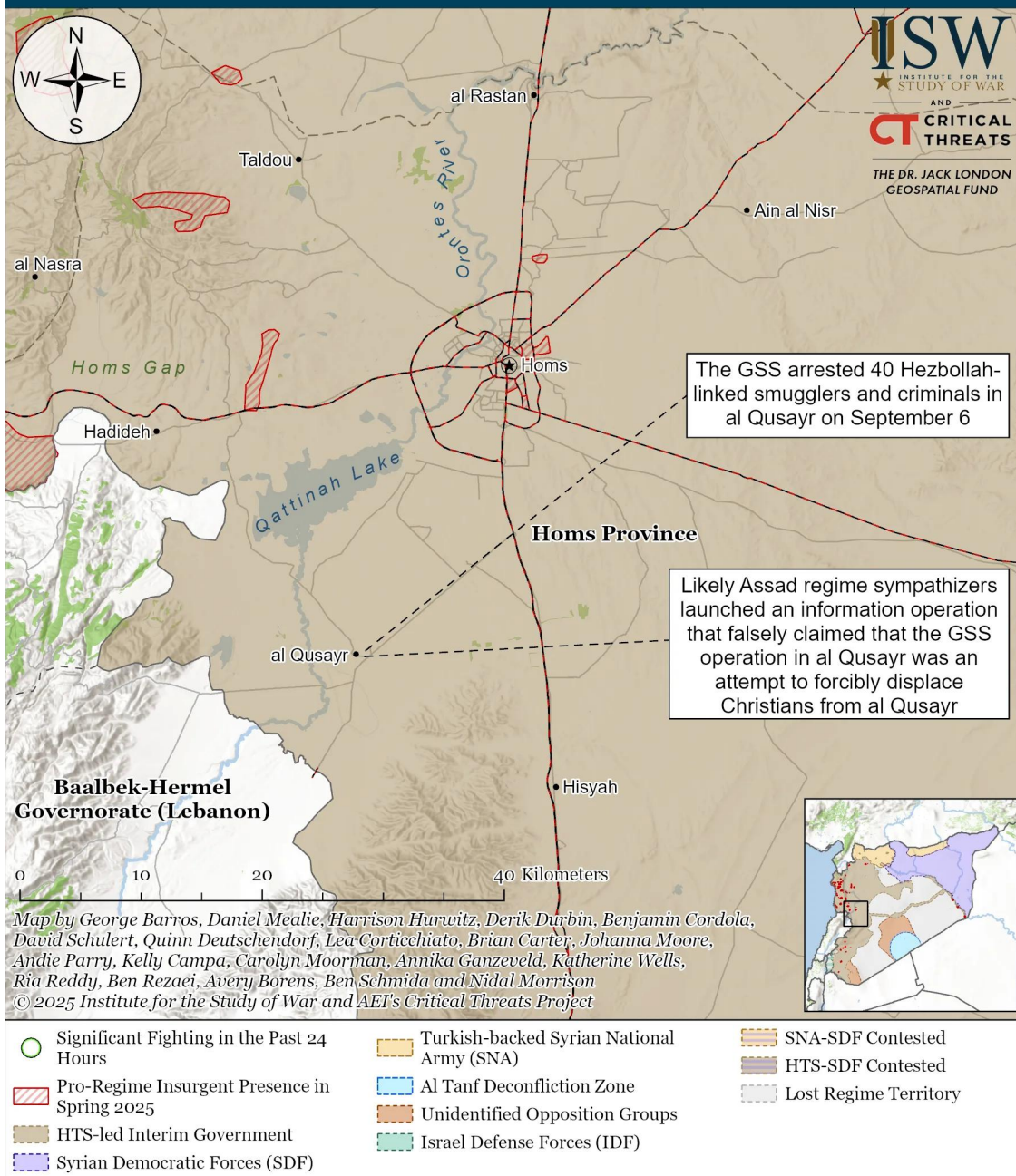
Syria

Likely Assadist information operations that exploit minority fears of Syrian transitional government forces could undermine the legitimacy of government operations that target Assad-era criminal networks. Assadist remnants launched a disinformation campaign that falsely claimed that the General Security Service's (GSS) arrest of 40 Hezbollah-linked smugglers and criminals in al Qusayr, Homs Province, on September 6 was an effort by the transitional government to forcibly displace Christians from al Qusayr.[69] A local journalist in western Syria reported that the GSS arrested 40 individuals in al Qusayr for offenses ranging from arms and narcotics smuggling to involvement in the Assad regime's atrocities.[70] The GSS reportedly arrested individuals who had cooperated with Hezbollah-linked smuggling networks led by Iyad Habib Jaafar.[71] Jaafar is a notorious Assad regime-era trafficker who was allegedly one of six prominent traffickers responsible for the majority of Captagon and weapons smuggling between Lebanon and Syria through al Qusayr.[72] Syrian media alleged that Jaafar was the "de facto ruler" of the border region between al Qusayr and Lebanon's Hermel countryside before the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024.[73] Iyad Jaafar belongs to the Lebanese Jaafar clan, which is a Hezbollah-affiliated family that maintained smuggling networks in al Qusayr but withdrew to Lebanon after the GSS took control of the Syria-Lebanon border in February 2025.[74]

Likely Assad regime loyalists may have launched a disinformation campaign in response to the arrest of Hezbollah-affiliated traffickers and criminals on September 6 to try to increase tensions between Syrian Christians and the Syrian transitional government.[75] The information operation claimed that the GSS carried out the arrests to forcibly displace Christians from al Qusayr.[76] Syrian-Kurdish media circulated the false claim on September 7.[77] Syrian Ministry of Interior (MoI) Spokesperson Nouredine al Baba denied claims that the GSS arrested individuals in al Qusayr to displace Christians and confirmed that the GSS transferred the detainees to the Homs judicial system on September 7.[78] Local Syrian media added that the arrested individuals included Sunnis, Christians, and Alawites.[79] A pastor in al Qusayr denied that the GSS operation aimed to forcibly displace Christians.[80] Assadist remnants previously attempted to conduct a false flag attack on a church in Tartous Province on August 6 to heighten fears among the Christian community and incite sectarian violence.[81]

Assessed Control of Terrain around Homs

September 8, 2025 at 2:00 PM EST



Arabian Peninsula

The Houthis launched drones targeting six sites in Israel on September 7:[82]

- One drone targeted Ramon Airport in Eilat.
- Three drones targeted two unspecified military targets in the Negev Desert.
- One drone targeted an unspecified site in Ashkelon.
- One drone targeted Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv.

- Two drones targeted an unspecified site in Ashdod.

The Houthis claimed that their attack on Ramon Airport disrupted air traffic and shut down the airport.[83] The IDF confirmed on September 7 that it intercepted several drones from Yemen but acknowledged that one drone penetrated Israeli air defenses and hit Ramon Airport, injuring civilians and temporarily closing the airport.[84]

The Houthis separately launched three drones on September 8 targeting Ben Gurion Airport, Ramon Airport, and an unspecified target in Dimona.[85] The IDF intercepted the three Houthi drones.[86]

Palestinian Territories & Lebanon

See topline section.

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Adham Fattah, Avery Borens, Ria Reddy, Ben Rezaei, Benjamin Schmida, Nidal Morrison, Andie Parry, Annika Ganzeveld

Toplines

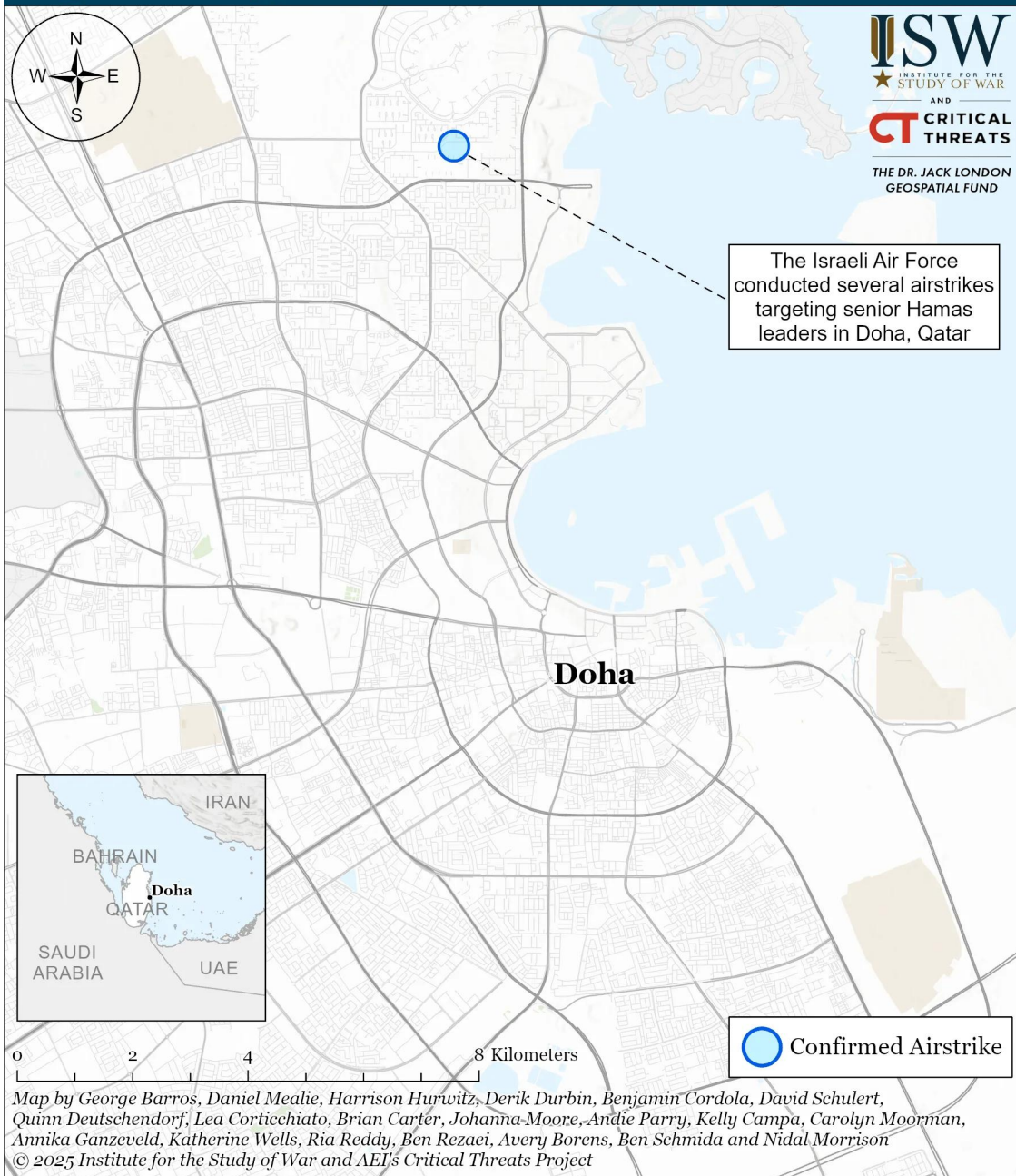
The Israeli Air Force (IAF) conducted several airstrikes targeting senior Hamas leaders in Doha, Qatar, on September 9.[1] Several IAF fighter jets dropped at least 10 munitions on a residential building in northern Doha.[2] Several Hamas Political Bureau members resided at the targeted building, according to the Qatari Foreign Affairs Ministry.[3] Senior Hamas officials and ceasefire negotiators, including Hamas Shura Council and Leadership Council head Mohammad Darwish and senior Hamas official and negotiator Nizar Awadallah, were reportedly meeting at the residence to review a recent US ceasefire proposal at the time of the strikes.[4] The Israeli strikes reportedly killed several Hamas officials, including:

- **Khalil al Hayya:** Hayya was the leader of Hamas in the Gaza Strip, the leader of Hamas' ceasefire negotiation team, and a member of Hamas' Leadership Council.[5]
- **Zaher Jabarin:** Jabarin was the leader of Hamas in the West Bank, a member of Hamas' Leadership Council, and a member of Hamas' ceasefire negotiation team.[6]
- **Khaled Meshaal:** Meshaal was a member of Hamas' Leadership Council.[7]

Hamas confirmed that the Israeli strikes killed five Hamas members, including the director of Hayya's office, Jihad Labad (Abu Bilal), and Hayya's son, Hammam al Hayya.[8] Hamas claimed that its negotiating team survived the Israeli strikes but did not specify if any officials sustained injuries.[9]

Three US officials told Axios that the US military detected Israeli fighter jets flying toward the Persian Gulf on September 9 and sought clarification from Israel.[10] The officials stated that "missiles were already in the air" by the time that Israel provided clarification to the United States. Axios reported that the Israeli strikes "infuriated" some of US President Donald Trump's senior advisers because the US government was waiting for Hamas' response to a recent US ceasefire proposal. White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt stated that Israel's strikes in Qatar, which is a major non-NATO ally of the United States, do "not advance Israel's or America's goals," but added that eliminating Hamas is "a worthy goal." [11] Qatar condemned the strikes and stated that it will not tolerate "reckless Israeli behavior." [12] A Qatari Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesperson denied claims that the United States warned Qatar about the Israeli strikes in advance.[13] Qatar has reportedly suspended its role as a mediator between Israel and Hamas following the strikes.[14]

Israeli Strike in Doha September 9, 2025



Iran appears to be trying to fulfill the E3's (the United Kingdom, France, and Germany) demands to postpone the expiration of the snapback mechanism, likely to try to avoid the reimposition of UN Security Council (UNSC) sanctions. The E3 triggered the snapback mechanism on August 28.[15] The snapback process lasts 30 days, which means that UNSC sanctions will automatically be reimposed on Iran on September 27 if the UNSC does not extend sanctions relief for Iran. South Korea, which is the current president of the UNSC, finalized a UNSC resolution on September 8 to extend sanctions relief for Iran.[16] South Korea was required to table such a resolution 10 days after the E3 triggered the snapback mechanism if no other UNSC member did so. Any permanent UNSC member (the United States, the United Kingdom, France, China, and Russia) can veto the South Korean resolution. The E3 previously outlined three conditions to extend the expiration date of the snapback mechanism, which is currently October 18, 2025. The three conditions are that Iran must account for its highly enriched uranium (HEU) stockpile, fully cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency

(IAEA) regarding inspections and verification of its nuclear sites, and resume negotiations with the United States. Iran rejected these conditions prior to August 28 but has since made progress toward fulfilling these conditions.

Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi and IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi signed an agreement in Cairo on September 9 regarding Iranian cooperation with the IAEA.[17] Some reports have indicated that the Iran-IAEA agreement would involve Iran submitting a report on the status of its HEU to the IAEA in one month, after which the IAEA and Iran would negotiate how the IAEA could verify the Iranian report. Neither Iran nor the IAEA has confirmed the details of the agreement at the time of this writing, however.[18] Araghchi stated after the signing of the agreement that “any hostile action against Iran,” including the reimposition of UNSC sanctions, would make the Iran-IAEA agreement “null and void.”[19] Araghchi similarly proposed an “interim deal” that would provide “more clarity” about the status of Iran’s HEU stockpile during a meeting with European Union Foreign Policy Chief Kaja Kallas in Qatar on September 5.[20]

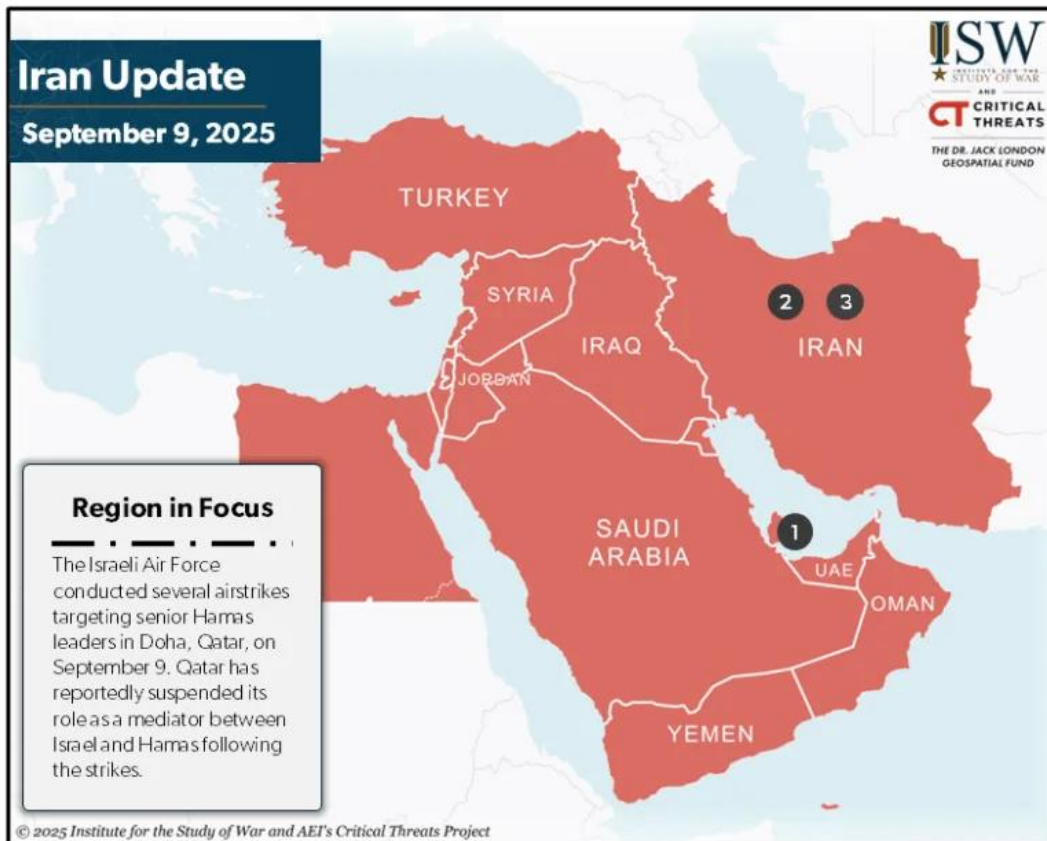
Iran has also indicated a greater willingness to negotiate with the United States on Iran’s nuclear program. Iranian hardline outlet Farhikhtegan, which is affiliated with Supreme Leader International Affairs Adviser Ali Akbar Velayati, reported on September 8 that the regime has decided to resume negotiations with the United States under the condition that the UNSC does not reimpose sanctions on Iran during negotiations.[21] Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei reportedly asked Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to seek Qatar’s help in mediating with the United States and the E3 to prevent the reimposition of UNSC sanctions.[22] UK-based outlet Amwaj Media reported on September 8 that Oman is “re-engaging” with Iran about “possible renewed dialogue.”[23] Araghchi held a phone call with his Omani counterpart on September 8.[24] Oman mediated the five rounds of talks between the United States and Iran before the Israel-Iran War.[25]

US and Israeli airstrikes during the Israel-Iran War severely degraded Iran’s ability to build a nuclear weapon. The Institute for Science and International Security assessed on September 8 that Iran no longer has a clear path to produce weapons-grade uranium (uranium enriched up to 90 percent) because US and Israeli strikes destroyed Iran’s gas centrifuge enrichment program.[26] The Institute assessed that US and Israeli strikes destroyed or rendered inoperable all of Iran’s 20,000 centrifuges that it had installed across its three declared enrichment facilities.[27] The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) recently reported that Iran possessed 440.9 kilograms of uranium enriched up to 60 percent before the start of the Israel-Iran War on June 12.[28] Iran would need to further enrich its 60 percent enriched uranium to be able to build a nuclear weapon. US and Israeli strikes also targeted Iran’s centrifuge production and research and development facilities, which will almost certainly also hinder Iran’s ability to enrich uranium in the near future.[29]

The Institute also published information about Iran’s fourth enrichment facility and reported that the facility does not appear to be operational after the war. Iran announced on June 12 that it would launch a newly built enrichment facility in response to a non-compliance resolution that the IAEA Board of Governors had passed earlier that day.[30] Atomic Energy Organization of Iran head Mohammad Eslami stated that Iran would operationalize the facility by installing and activating centrifuges there.[31] Israel launched its first airstrikes targeting Iran on June 12, which suggests that Iran never installed centrifuges at the site. The Institute assessed that the new facility, known as the Esfahan Fuel Enrichment Plant, is located within the tunnel complex at the Esfahan Nuclear Technology Center.[32] The Institute reported that US strikes damaged the site and assessed that the site is not currently operational.[33]

Key Takeaways

1. **Israeli Strikes Targeting Hamas Leaders in Doha:** The Israeli Air Force conducted several airstrikes targeting senior Hamas leaders in Doha, Qatar, on September 9. White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt stated that Israel's strikes in Qatar do "not advance Israel's or America's goals," but added that eliminating Hamas is "a worthy goal." Qatar has reportedly suspended its role as a mediator between Israel and Hamas following the strikes.
2. **Iranian Efforts to Avoid Snapback Sanctions:** Iran appears to be trying to fulfill the E3's (the United Kingdom, France, and Germany) demands to postpone the expiration of the snapback mechanism, likely to try to avoid the reimposition of UN Security Council sanctions. Iran previously rejected the E3's demands prior to August 28 but has since made progress toward fulfilling these conditions.
3. **Iranian Nuclear Program:** US and Israeli airstrikes during the Israel-Iran War severely degraded Iran's ability to build a nuclear weapon. The Institute for Science and International Security assessed on September 8 that Iran no longer has a clear path to produce weapons-grade uranium (uranium enriched up to 90 percent) because US and Israeli strikes destroyed Iran's gas centrifuge enrichment program.



- 1 **QATAR.** The Israeli Air Force conducted several airstrikes targeting senior Hamas leaders in Doha, Qatar, on September 9. White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt stated that Israel's strikes in Qatar do "not advance Israel's or America's goals," but added that eliminating Hamas is "a worthy goal." Qatar has reportedly suspended its role as a mediator between Israel and Hamas following the strikes.
- 2 **IRAN.** Iran appears to be trying to fulfill the E3's (the United Kingdom, France, and Germany) demands to postpone the expiration of the snapback mechanism, likely to try to avoid the reimposition of UN Security Council sanctions. Iran previously rejected the E3's demands prior to August 28 but has since made progress toward fulfilling these conditions.
- 3 **IRAN.** US and Israeli airstrikes during the Israel-Iran War severely degraded Iran's ability to build a nuclear weapon. The Institute for Science and International Security assessed on September 8 that Iran no longer has a clear path to produce weapons-grade uranium (uranium enriched up to 90 percent) because US and Israeli strikes destroyed Iran's gas centrifuge enrichment program.

Iran

Iranian outlet Nour News published an op-ed on September 9 that described the environment after the Israel-Iran War as a dangerous state of societal "suspension."[34] Nour News is affiliated with Ali Shamkhani, who is one of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's representatives to the Iranian Defense Council.[35] The op-ed echoed Khamenei's September 7 speech in which Khamenei warned that the current state of "neither war nor peace" threatens Iran's stability and must be overcome through economic resilience.[36] Nour News added that the state of "suspension" drains society, erodes social capital, and obstructs political, economic, and cultural growth.[37] Nour News argued that Iran can only restore deterrence and build resilience by shifting its focus inward to improve the Iranian economy, increase societal cohesion, and control media narratives.[38] Nour News tied this recommended approach to the doctrine of "active resistance," which emphasizes mobilizing internal capacities rather

than relying on external “negotiations or confrontation.”[39]

Unspecified gunmen killed an Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) intelligence officer in Rask, Sistan and Baluchistan Province, on September 7.[40] The IRGC officer reportedly directed arrests and repression of civilians.[41] The attackers’ identities and motives remain unknown, and no group has claimed responsibility for the attack.[42] The attack follows a series of recent Jaish al Adl attacks in Sistan and Baluchistan Province.[43] Jaish al Adl is a Baloch, Salafi-jihadi militant group that frequently attacks Iranian security forces in southeastern Iran.

Artesh Air Force Commander Brigadier General Hamid Vahedi visited the Artesh Air Force 5th Tactical Airbase (TAB) in Omidiyeh, Khuzestan Province, on September 9 to evaluate the combat readiness of units at the base.[44] Iranian Artesh Commander Major General Amir Hatami recently visited three Artesh Air Force TABs in Esfahan, Tabriz, and Hamedan on September 6.[45]

Iranian Military Officials' Visits to Artesh Air Force Bases Since September 6, 2025



Iraq

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia al Sudani formed a high-level committee on September 6 to investigate oil smuggling operations that involve mixing Iranian crude oil with Iraqi oil to help Iran bypass international sanctions.[46] Sudani's order comes after the United States sanctioned Iraqi-Kittian businessman Waleed al Samarrai and his network of companies and vessels on September 2 for smuggling Iranian oil.[47] Samarrai's network blended Iranian oil with Iraqi oil before selling it to international buyers, which generated millions of dollars in revenue for Samarrai and the Iranian regime.[48] Iraqi State Oil Marketing Organization (SOMO) Director General Ali Nizar al Shatri denied on September 2 that crude oil has been mixed and smuggled at Iraqi ports and in Iraqi territorial waters under his watch.[49] Shatri replaced Khudair Abbas Abed as SOMO Director General in March 2025.[50] Abed enabled oil smuggling operations and leaked classified intelligence to a US-sanctioned

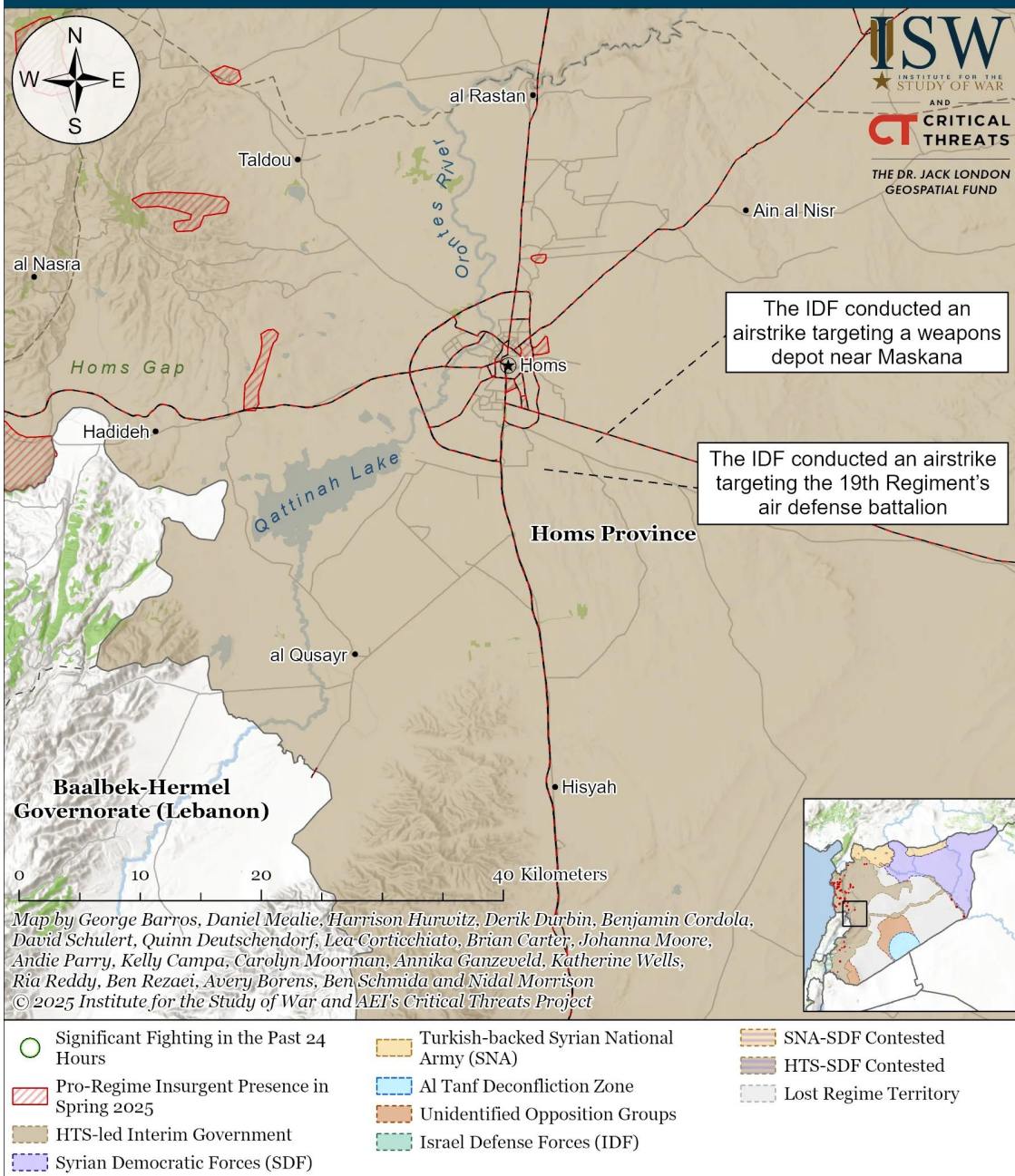
Iraqi businessman as head of the Oil Ministry Audit Directorate in 2019.[51] The United States threatened in July 2025 to sanction SOMO and block the Iraqi federal government's access to \$350 million of Iraqi oil revenue if the government failed to prevent Iranian oil smuggling.[52]

Syria

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) struck military facilities and weapons depots in Latakia and Homs provinces on September 8, some of which reportedly contained recently imported Turkish air defense systems.[53] The IDF targeted the 19th Regiment's air defense battalion in the village of Shinshir, Homs Province, and a weapons depot in the village of Maskana, Homs Province.[54] The IDF also struck a Syrian Army barracks in Sqoubin, Latakia Province, causing casualties.[55] An Israeli security source told Saudi media on September 9 that the IDF targeted Turkish missiles and air defense systems in Homs that Turkey had recently transferred to Syria.[56] Commercially available satellite imagery captured on September 9 shows explosions in a small building and along a row of trees at the 19th Regiment's air defense battalion. Middle East Eye reported in April 2025 that Turkey planned to deploy Hisar surface-to-air missile systems to protect Turkish construction at an airbase in central Syria from Israeli airstrikes.[57] Syria formally requested Turkish military assistance after Israeli strikes targeted Damascus and Suwayda Province during intercommunal violence in July.[58]

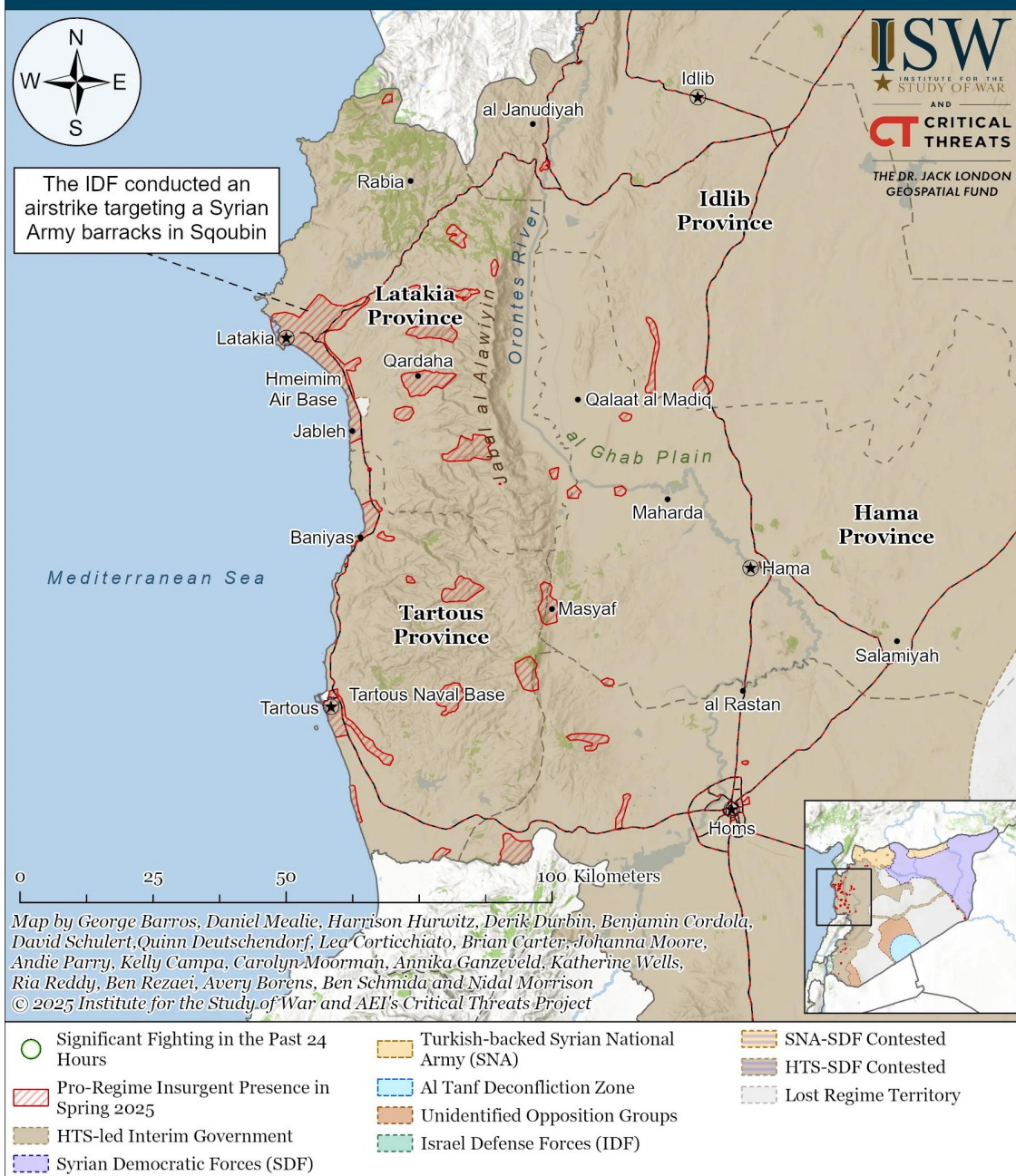
Assessed Control of Terrain around Homs

September 9, 2025 at 2:00 PM EST



Assessed Control of Terrain in Western Syria

September 9, 2025 at 2:00 PM EST



Turkey has reportedly begun training Syrian Ministry of Defense (MoD) personnel and police officers under a defense agreement that Syria and Turkey signed on August 13.[59] An unspecified source told Middle East Eye that Turkey is training approximately 300 Syrians, who are mostly soldiers but include some police officers, at two bases in central and eastern Turkey.[60] A second unspecified source said that Turkey will train 5,000 Syrian MoD and police force members in the “short term,” and “at least 20,000 in the medium to long term.”[61] This training appears to be within the scope of a security agreement that Turkey and Syria signed on August 13. The agreement stipulates that Syria can consult Turkey on military issues and that Turkey will help procure military equipment for Syria and train Syrian forces.[62] Syrian President Ahmed al Shara reportedly sought formal Turkish defense assistance to counterbalance Israeli strikes in Syria.[63] Israel has previously rejected Turkish proposals to establish air defense systems in Syria and reportedly struck Turkish air defense systems in Homs Province on September 8 (see above).[64] Israel and Turkey established a deconfliction mechanism in

May 2025 to resolve military tensions in Syria.[65]

Syrian General Chief of Staff Major General Ali al Nassan and other Syrian MoD officials met with Russian Deputy Defense Minister Yunus-bek Yevkurov and his delegation in Damascus on September 9, likely to further negotiate Russian basing in Syria.[66] Nassan and Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad al Shaibani also met with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak.[67] Shaibani stated that any foreign presence in Syria “must be aimed at helping the Syrian people build their future,” likely in reference to Russian military bases in Syria.[68] Syrian President Ahmed al Shara also hosted the Russian delegation at the Presidential Palace in Damascus.[69] Shara is scheduled to visit Moscow on October 15 for the Arab-Russian summit.[70] Novak said that Shara’s visit to Russia is of “special interest” to Moscow.[71] The Russian delegation’s visit to Damascus follows Shaibani’s recent trip to Moscow on July 31, where he met with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.[72] The meetings also followed recent Russian troop movements between Russian bases in Latakia and Tartous provinces on September 5.[73] Russia and the Syrian transitional government have been negotiating the status of Russian bases in Syria since January 2025.[74]

Arabian Peninsula

The Houthis launched a missile and a drone targeting Israel on September 9.[75] The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) intercepted a missile launched from Yemen that triggered sirens in several areas of Israel.[76] The IDF separately intercepted a drone over Eilat, southern Israel.[77]

Palestinian Territories & Lebanon

The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) will prioritize confiscating Hezbollah weapons south of the Litani River under the LAF’s disarmament plan.[78] The Lebanese Council of Ministers approved an LAF plan on September 5 under which the LAF will attempt to disarm Hezbollah and establish a state monopoly on all weapons.[79] The plan stipulates that the LAF will disarm Hezbollah south of the Litani River in three months.[80] Lebanese Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji stated that the first phase of the plan should be completed by the end of November 2025.[81] The LAF will set up additional checkpoints to prevent the smuggling of weapons out of southern Lebanon while it disarms Hezbollah there, according to Rajji.[82] The LAF will not conduct raids, arrests, or weapons seizures north of the Litani River during the first three-month phase.[83] The LAF will collect Hezbollah weapons in Beirut, the Bekaa Valley, and other unspecified areas in later phases of the disarmament process.[84] The LAF plan appears to prioritize the full disarmament of Hezbollah south of the Litani River, where Hezbollah weapons and fighters pose the most immediate threat to residents in northern Israel.[85] Hezbollah fighters launched the vast majority of rocket and drone attacks targeting northern Israel after October 7, 2023, from south of the Litani River.[86] Hezbollah has long stored the majority of its weapons in civilian infrastructure across southern Lebanon.[87] The LAF began disarmament operations in southern Lebanon before the government approved the LAF plan for the rest of the country. The LAF had deployed forces to 116 positions in southern Lebanon as of June 2025.[88] The LAF has also seized at least 500 Hezbollah weapons caches and military installations in southern Lebanon as of September 2025.[89] The LAF plan’s phased sequencing of geographical areas will help the LAF prioritize and effectively execute its disarmament plan despite the LAF’s resource constraints.[90]

Lebanon and Syria have continued to take steps to resolve outstanding issues between the two countries. Lebanese and Syrian officials agreed on September 1 to form two specialized committees to resolve security and border issues.[91] Lebanese and Syrian officials discussed Syrian

detainees held in Lebanese prisons, missing Lebanese civilians in Syria, and Lebanese-Syrian border demarcation during the first committee meeting in Damascus on September 8.[92] The officials also reportedly discussed establishing “legal frameworks,” such as a judicial treaty to formalize prisoner exchanges between the two countries.[93] Syria and Lebanon also signed an agreement to enhance judicial and security cooperation between the two countries.[94] These meetings and agreements are part of Lebanon and Syria’s efforts to resolve issues that have previously complicated Lebanese-Syrian relations, including prisoner repatriation and border demarcation.[95] The Syrian government has consistently called on the Lebanese government to allow Syrian prisoners in Lebanon to serve their sentences in Syria, but Lebanese judicial officials have denied these requests.[96]

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Endnotes

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Iran Update, September 10, 2025



**Adham Fattah, Avery Borens, Nidal Morrison, Benjamin Schmida,
Ben Rezaei, Kelly Campa, Annika Ganzeveld**

Toplines

The Wall Street Journal reported on September 10 that the Iran-International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) agreement is unlikely to persuade the E3 (the United Kingdom, France, and Germany) to stop pursuing the reimposition of UN Security Council (UNSC) sanctions on Iran because the agreement does not include a timeline for inspections or a deadline for Iran to clarify the status of its enriched uranium stockpile.[1] The E3 triggered the snapback mechanism on August 28, which will automatically reimpose UNSC sanctions on Iran on September 27 if the UNSC does not extend sanctions relief for Iran or postpone the snapback mechanism's expiration date.[2] Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi and IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi signed an agreement in Cairo on September 9 regarding Iranian cooperation with the IAEA.[3] The E3 stated in response to the agreement that "it is not enough for Iran to make promises for tomorrow." [4] UK Ambassador to the UN Corinne Kitsell stated on September 10 that the E3 "must be prepared to hold Iran to account" if Iran does not grant full access to its nuclear sites to the IAEA.[5] Grossi stated that the details of the agreement will not be made public due to its "technical and operational" nature and that the agreement "will open the way for the respective inspections and access." [6] Araghchi stated that the agreement will be considered "void" if the UNSC reimposes sanctions on Iran.[7] Araghchi also stated that Iran will not allow inspectors to access Iranian nuclear facilities besides the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant for fuel replacement.[8]

The casualties from Israel's strikes targeting senior Hamas leaders in Doha, Qatar, on September 9 remain unclear.[9] The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) conducted several airstrikes targeting senior Hamas leaders who were meeting to discuss ongoing ceasefire negotiations.[10] Saudi media reported that the Israeli strikes killed at least three Hamas leaders, including Hamas' Gaza Strip leader Khalil al Hayya, West Bank leader Zaher Jabarin, and Leadership Council member Khaled Meshaal.[11] An Israeli Army Radio journalist reported on September 9 that the Israeli security establishment felt "optimistic" about the strikes' success and estimated that it would take several hours to confirm which Hamas officials were killed in the strikes.[12] A senior Israeli official told the Guardian on September 10 that Israel's optimism about the strikes' success was "waning." [13] Two Israeli defense and intelligence sources similarly told Israeli media that they felt pessimistic about whether the strikes killed "most or even all" of the intended targets.[14] Israel reportedly informed the United States that the likelihood of the strikes' success has "decreased significantly." [15] Hamas has denied that the Israeli strikes killed any of its negotiating team, which includes Hayya, Jabarin, and Meshaal.[16] Hamas has consistently lied about the deaths of senior commanders and waited weeks or even months to confirm

the deaths of commanders who were killed by Israel in the Gaza Strip, however. There have been no official Israeli statements about which Hamas officials were killed in the strikes at the time of this writing.

Qatar and several regional countries have strongly criticized Israel's recent strikes in Doha.

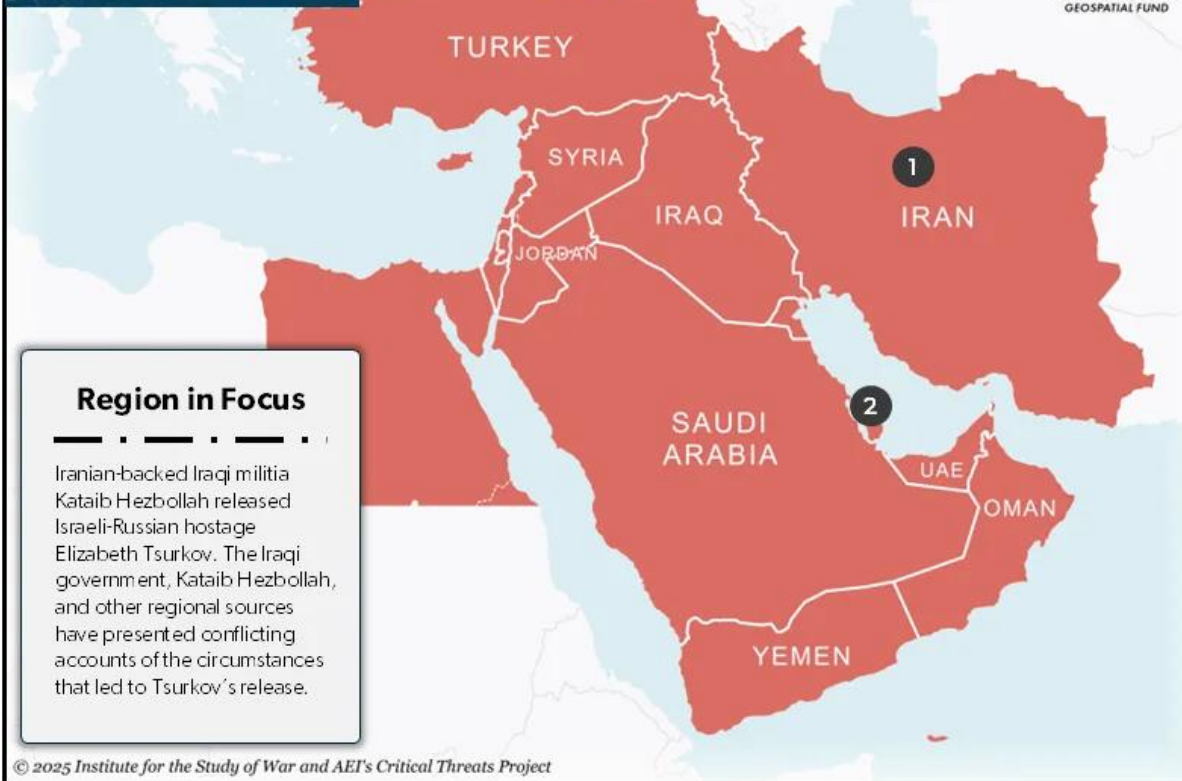
[17] Qatar condemned Israel's violation of its sovereignty and stated that it reserves the right to respond to the strikes and will "act firmly" against any "reckless breach" that threatens Qatari security.**[18]** Qatar also announced that it formed a legal team to take action against Israel in response to the strikes.**[19]** Several Gulf and regional countries also strongly condemned the Israeli strikes and expressed support for Qatar on September 9.**[20]** The UAE called the Israeli strikes a "reckless attack" and "flagrant violation" of international law, while Iran and Saudi Arabia characterized the strikes as a "criminal act."**[21]** The Turkish Foreign Ministry stated that the Israeli strikes indicate that Israel does not seek a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.**[22]** Regional leaders are converging in Doha to meet with Qatari leaders and show support for Qatar following the strikes.**[23]** UAE President Mohammad bin Zayed al Nahyan and Jordanian Crown Prince Hussein bin Abdullah arrived in Qatar on September 10, and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salam is expected to arrive in Qatar on September 11.**[24]**

Key Takeaways

1. **Snapback Sanctions on Iran:** The Wall Street Journal reported on September 10 that the Iran-IAEA agreement is unlikely to persuade the E3 (the United Kingdom, France, and Germany) to stop pursuing the reimposition of UNSC sanctions on Iran because the agreement does not include a timeline for inspections or a deadline for Iran to clarify the status of its enriched uranium stockpile.
2. **IDF Strikes in Doha:** The casualties from Israel's strikes targeting senior Hamas leaders in Doha, Qatar, on September 9 remain unclear. Israel reportedly informed the United States that the likelihood of the strikes' success has "decreased significantly." Regional leaders are converging in Doha to meet with Qatari leaders and show support for Qatar following the strikes.

Iran Update

September 10, 2025



- 1 IRAN.** The *Wall Street Journal* reported on September 10 that the Iran-IAEA agreement is unlikely to persuade the E3 (the United Kingdom, France, and Germany) to stop pursuing the reimposition of UNSC sanctions on Iran because the agreement does not include a timeline for inspections or a deadline for Iran to clarify the status of its enriched uranium stockpile.
- 2 QATAR.** The casualties from Israel's strikes targeting senior Hamas leaders in Doha, Qatar, on September 9 remain unclear. Israel reportedly informed the United States that the likelihood of the strikes' success has "decreased significantly." Regional leaders are converging in Doha to meet with Qatari leaders and show support for Qatar following the strikes.

Iran

See topline section.

Iraq

Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Hezbollah released Israeli-Russian hostage Elizabeth Tsurkov on September 9.[25] US President Donald Trump announced on September 9 that Kataib Hezbollah released Tsurkov, and Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia al Sudani later confirmed her

release.[26] Tsurkov, a Princeton University graduate student, disappeared in Baghdad in March 2023 while conducting research for her doctoral dissertation.[27] No group claimed responsibility for her abduction, but the Israeli government accused Kataib Hezbollah of abducting Tsurkov in July 2023.[28]

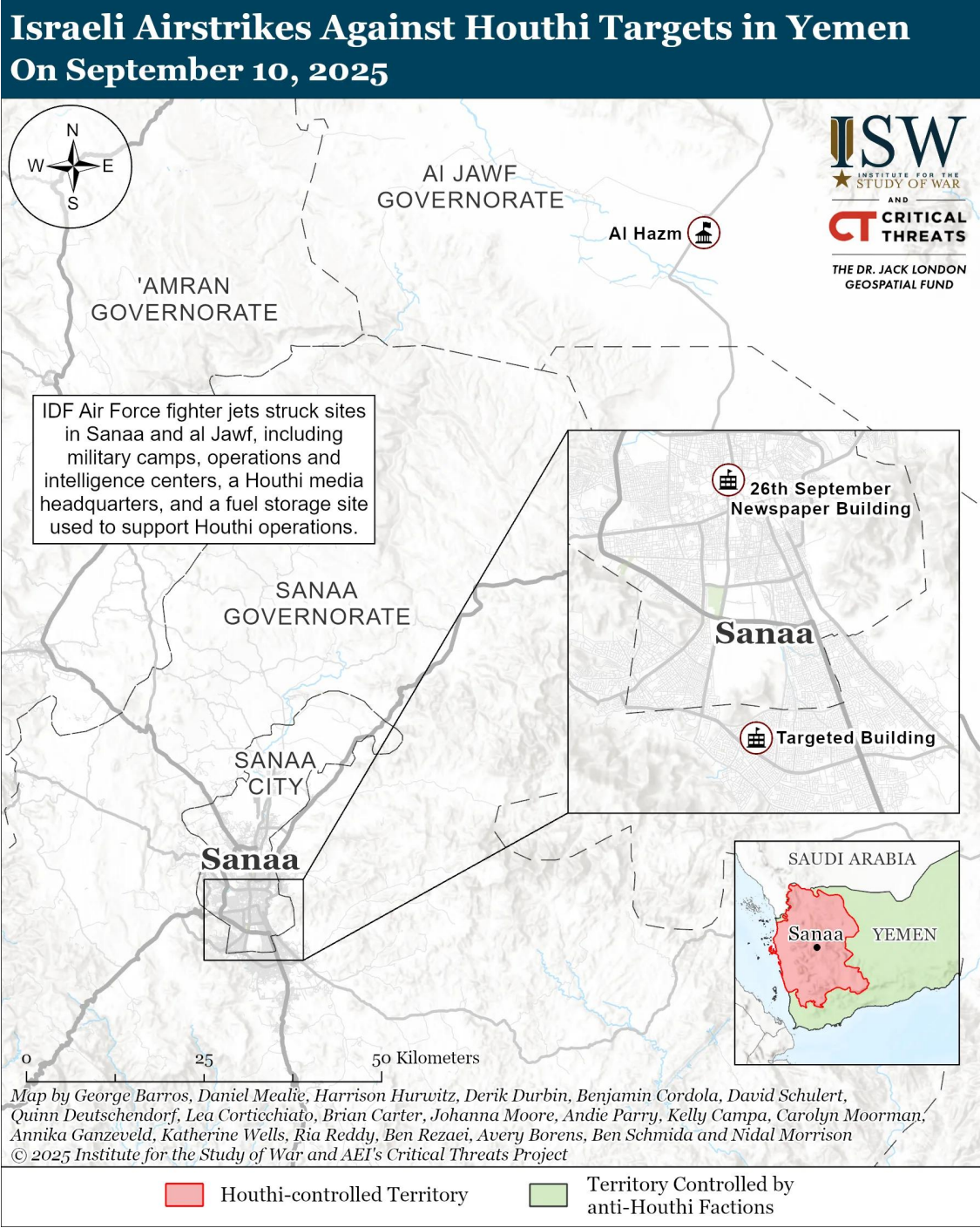
The Iraqi government, Kataib Hezbollah, and other regional sources have presented conflicting accounts of the circumstances that led to Tsurkov's release. An Iraqi Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief spokesperson announced on September 10 that an Iraqi military operation freed Tsurkov, whereas several unspecified Iraqi militia officials told Arab and Western media on September 10 that Tsurkov's release resulted from direct negotiations between the Iraqi government and her kidnappers.[29] An unidentified Kataib Hezbollah source told Agence France-Presse on September 10 that Tsurkov was released in exchange for a peaceful US withdrawal from Iraq and a guarantee that "Iraq be spared any conflict." [30] The Kataib Hezbollah source was likely referring to the upcoming US withdrawal from Iraq. Unspecified militia sources told Saudi media on September 10 that Tsurkov was released in exchange for the release of a Kataib Hezbollah member who was involved in the July 27 attack on an Agriculture Department building.[31] Iraq's Joint Operations Command arrested 14 members of the Kataib Hezbollah-controlled 45th and 46th Popular Mobilization Forces brigades on July 27 in response to their suspected involvement in the July 27 attack on an Agriculture Department building in Baghdad and the engagement that followed.[32] Kataib Hezbollah fighters killed a civilian and a federal police officer in the engagement.[33]

Syria

A likely Assadist insurgent group announced its formation in the Syrian coastal region in August 2025 and has since claimed at least two attacks targeting government forces. A likely Assadist militant group called "Rijal al Nour, Saraya al Jawad" announced its formation on August 1 in a social media post that commemorated Bashar al Assad's "Syrian Arab Army Day," which was a former regime holiday to honor the Syrian army.[34] Rijal al Nour's attacks, goals, rhetoric, and iconography suggest that the group seeks the restoration of Assad-era political and economic structures rather than Alawite representation or statehood, as other coastal Syria-based insurgent groups do. Rijal al Nour has stated that its objectives include the withdrawal of the Syrian transitional government from the Syrian coast, and it has claimed at least two attacks targeting government forces in coastal Syria.[35] Rijal al Nour posted a video on September 1 that allegedly shows the group conducting a roadside improvised explosive device (IED) attack targeting a Syrian Ministry of Defense (MoD) vehicle in Jableh, Latakia Province, on August 15.[36] The attack did not cause any MoD casualties.[37] Rijal al Nour claimed another IED attack targeting a Syrian government vehicle on September 4, which the group claimed it conducted in revenge for the government's recent arrest of an Assadist cell in Tartous City.[38] The cell had reportedly participated in the Alawite-led insurgent attacks on government forces in early March 2025.[39] Rijal al Nour has not explicitly advocated for Alawite representation or autonomy, as other Alawite insurgent groups on the coast have done. Many groups supported the Assad regime because the regime advanced their political and/or economic interests. These groups have sought to retain these benefits or even restore the Assad regime since its collapse in December 2024.

Arabian Peninsula

The IDF struck several Houthi targets in Yemen on September 10 in response to the Houthi drone and missile campaign against Israel.[40] The Houthis have launched at least 19 drones and five missiles targeting Israel since September 1, including strikes targeting Ben Gurion and Ramon airports.[41] IDF Air Force fighter jets struck sites in Sanaa and al Jawf, including military camps, operations and intelligence centers, a Houthi media headquarters, and a fuel storage site used to support Houthi operations.[42] The IDF stated that the media headquarters was central to Houthi propaganda and psychological warfare efforts. The Houthis’ military camps contained command-and-control sites that the Houthis have used to plan attacks against Israel.[43] Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz warned that Israel’s “long arm” will strike targets wherever threats to Israeli civilians emerge.[44]



Palestinian Territories & Lebanon

The Palestinian Authority (PA) is reportedly attempting to persuade various Palestinian militias in Lebanon to hand over their weapons to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF).[45]

Lebanese media reported on September 10 that Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee head Ramez Dimashqiyeh opened new channels of communication with Hamas and other Palestinian militias to convince the militias to disarm.[46] Prime Minister Nawaf Salam reportedly recommended that Dimashqiyeh open the new channels of communication.[47] Salam and PA President Mahmoud Abbas previously agreed in May 2025 to disarm all Palestinian militias in Lebanon.[48] Joint Lebanese-Palestinian efforts to disarm Palestinian militias in Lebanon have so far been limited to Abbas' Fatah, however.[49] Fatah is the dominant political party in the PA.[50] Dimashqiyeh met with Hamas' representative in Lebanon, Ahmed Abdel Hadi, on September 10 to discuss the Lebanese government and PA's efforts to disarm militias in Palestinian refugee camps.[51] Hadi reiterated Hamas' demand for a meeting with all Palestinian militias to reach a unified position on disarmament.[52]

The PA and Lebanese government currently appear to be trying to disarm Palestinian militias through persuasion, but the PA reportedly remains open to using force. Abbas' son, Yasser Abbas, reportedly told Lebanese officials in August 2025 that the PA would support the Lebanese government's use of force to disarm any non-compliant militias.[53] It is unclear whether the Lebanese government would decide to use force against Palestinian militias in Lebanon. Palestinian factions, like Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), are unlikely to voluntarily turn over their weapons.[54] Hadi reiterated on September 10 Hamas' view that Palestinian militias will retain their weapons until there is a comprehensive solution to the "Palestinian issue." [55] Hamas similarly stated in August 2025 that Palestinian factions in Lebanon will keep their weapons as long as Israeli operations in the Gaza Strip continue.[56] Disagreements among Palestinian militias in Lebanon regarding disarmament have previously delayed the Lebanese government's attempts to disarm these groups.[57]

Hezbollah Secretary General Naim Qassem reiterated that Hezbollah will not surrender its weapons during a speech on September 10.[58] Qassem stated that Hezbollah has four priorities that include preventing Israeli operations in Lebanon, compelling Israel to withdraw from Lebanese territory, securing the release of Lebanese prisoners held in Israel, and conducting reconstruction in Lebanon.[59] Qassem criticized the United States for "failing" to convince Israel to agree and comply with the recent US proposal.[60] The US proposal calls for an Israeli withdrawal from its five permanent positions in southern Lebanon within 90 days of the agreement's implementation.[61] The agreement also stipulates that the LAF will completely disarm Hezbollah by the end of 2025.[62] Israel has maintained that it will continue to operate in Lebanon until Hezbollah has been disarmed, however.[63] Hezbollah officials, including Qassem, have continuously rejected calls to disarm and have maintained that Hezbollah will not disarm until Israel halts its operations in Lebanon and withdraws from southern Lebanon.[64] Hezbollah's continued refusal to disarm could complicate the Lebanese government and the LAF's ability to implement their disarmament plan.

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Iran Update, September 11, 2025



Benjamin Schmida, Avery Borens, Johanna Moore, Ben Rezaei, Nidal Morrison, Adham Fattah, Brian Carter

Toplines

Iranian media outlet Nour News highlighted the Defense Council as an important body in shaping Iran's strategy after the Israel-Iran War. Nour News is affiliated with Supreme Leader Adviser to the Defense Council Ali Shamkhani. The Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) established the Defense Council on August 3 to streamline wartime decision-making after the Israel-Iran War and justified its formation by citing fragmentation and lack of coordination among Iranian institutions.[1] Nour News published a video on September 9 in which it described the Israel-Iran War as a turning point that demonstrated how global security is no longer guaranteed by international law.[2] It claimed that international institutions tasked with preserving peace "proved powerless," and that law has effectively been replaced by power. Nour News described this as a global transition from "law-based security" to "weapon-based security." The outlet stated that the formation of the Defense Council was a structural response to the shift to weapon-based security and that it is more than an administrative initiative. Nour News previously framed the Defense Council as responsible for executing a new Iranian defense doctrine against "hybrid threats." [3]

The United States and other foreign countries have taken steps to provide Lebanon with economic and military support. The US Department of Defense (DoD) announced on September 10 that it will send a \$14.2 million military aid package to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF).[4] The aid package will include a range of military equipment, including demolition charges, time blasting fuses, and blasting caps, to help the LAF dismantle unexploded ordnances and Hezbollah weapons caches.[5] The US DoD stated that the package will empower the LAF to "degrade Hezbollah." [6] Lebanese officials met with French Presidential Envoy Jean-Yves Le Drian on September 11 to discuss providing the LAF with unspecified support to implement its disarmament plan.[7] Drian reaffirmed that France would support the LAF, help with Lebanon's reconstruction, and stimulate international investment in Lebanon.[8] France will also continue its work to organize two international conferences aimed at acquiring support for the LAF and increasing economic investments in Lebanon.[9]

Economic support for the Lebanese government would undermine Hezbollah's ability to build support among the Lebanese population by giving the government the ability to provide services that it has been unable to provide previously. Hezbollah previously led reconstruction efforts and provided a social safety net for the Lebanese population after the 2006 war, but Hezbollah has recently struggled to access funds to pay for the reconstruction of damaged infrastructure following the conflict with Israel in late 2024.[10] Hezbollah has also struggled to maintain its financial commitments to fighters, which has contributed to

growing frustration among Hezbollah supporters.[11] Hezbollah has historically used financial benefits, including pensions for the families of deceased fighters and compensation to those who lost their homes or property, to retain its support base among Lebanese Shia.[12]

The Iraqi Independence Gathering in Najaf, which is a political advocacy group, launched a campaign to pressure the Iraqi government to prevent parties tied to armed factions from running in the November 2025 parliamentary elections. The Iraqi Independence Gathering submitted a complaint to the Department of Political Parties and Organizations under the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC).[13] IHEC was established in 2019 as an “independent and impartial body” responsible for developing election rules and regulations, approving candidates running for elections, adjudicating electoral complaints and appeals, and approving election results.[14] The Iraqi Independence Gathering cited Article 9 of the Iraqi constitution in its complaints. Article 9 bars the formation of militias and excludes all Iraqi security forces from participating in or being affiliated with any political activity.[15] The organization also claimed that parties violated Articles 8 and 47 of the 2015 Political Parties Law Number 36.[16] Articles 8 and 47 of the 2015 Political Parties Law prohibit political parties from having any ties to armed factions and state that violators will face a prison sentence.[17]

The Iraqi Independence Gathering also filed a lawsuit with the Iraqi Federal Supreme Court against Parliament to challenge the current Elections Act.[18] The organization claimed that the Elections Act contained articles that contradicted the Iraqi constitution. The Iraqi Independence Gathering claimed the following political parties violated Iraqi federal and election laws:[19]

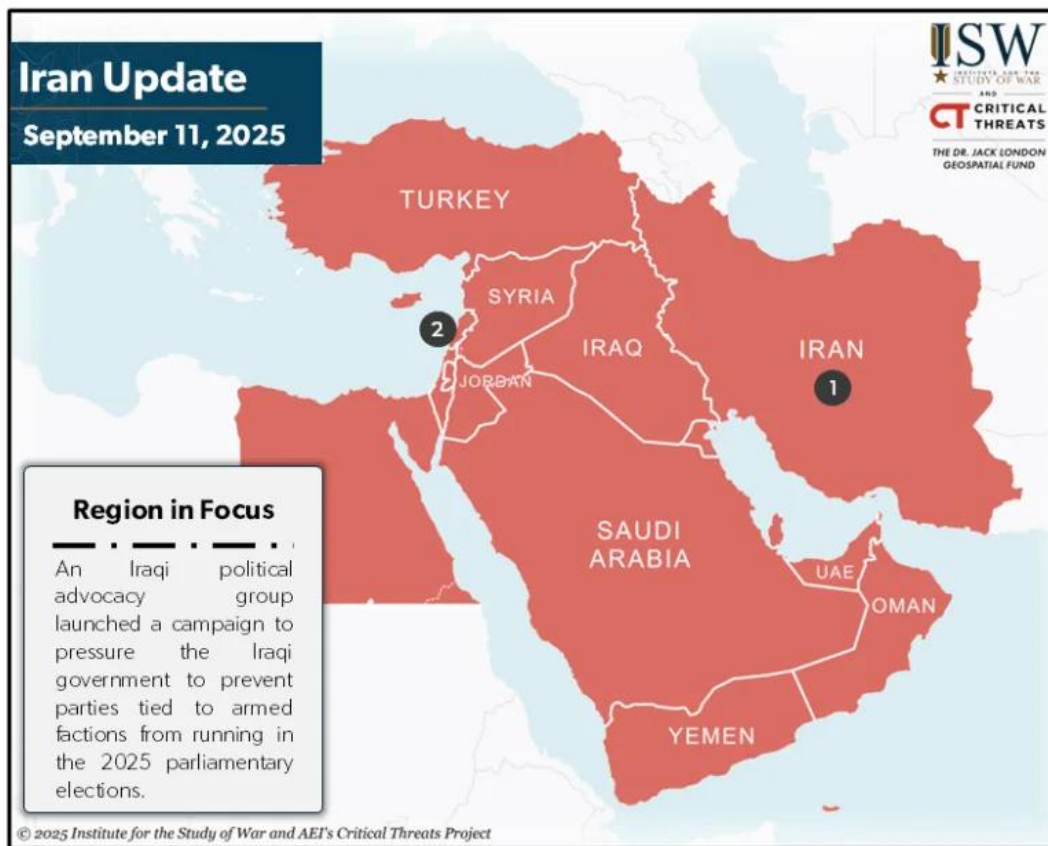
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- **Islamic Movement of Iraq (Harakat al Iraq al Islamiyah):** led by Imam Ali Brigades Secretary General Shibl Mohsen Ubaid al Zaidi;
- **Services Alliance (Tahaluf Hadmat):** led by Imam Ali Brigades Deputy Secretary General Ali Zaidan Hamid al Gharawi;
- **Conservative Party:** led by Popular Mobilization Forces member Wael Asim Hussein al Shammari;
- **Jihad and Construction Party (Harakat al Jihad al Bina):** led by Saraya al Jihad founder Jawad Rahim Qasim al Saadi;
- **National Elite Alliance (Tahaluf al Safwat al Watani):** led by Ansar Allah al Awfiya militia commander Haidar Mazhar Malak al Gharawi;
- **National Plateau Alliance (Tahaluf al Hadba al Watani):** led by Kataib Sayyida al Shudada Secretary General Hashim Fityan Rahm (Abu Alaa al Walai);
- **Babylon Party:** led by Raban Salem Sadiq al Kildani. The Babylon Party is the political wing of the 50th PMF Brigade (also known as the Babylon Brigade).
- **Badr Organization:** led by Hadi al Ameri. Ameri also leads the Badr Organization’s military wing.[20]
- **Sadiqoun Movement:** led by Qais al Khazali. Khazali also leads the armed wing of the Sadiqoun Movement, Asaib Ahl al Haq.[21]

The Iraqi Independence Gathering’s complaint to IHEC and lawsuit with the Federal Supreme Court are unlikely to achieve meaningful results. The parties listed by the Iraqi Independence Gathering have also co-opted many of Iraq’s adjudicating bodies and can protect members from prosecution. Parliament appointed a Shia Coordination Framework-approved judge, Abbas al Fatlawi, as the head of IHEC’s Electoral Administration in April 2023, in a move that was reportedly part of a broader effort to fill the IHEC Board of Commissioners with judges loyal to the Shia Coordination Framework.[22] The president of Iraq’s Federal Supreme Court, Faiq Zaidan, has similarly been accused of cooperating

with Iranian-backed Iraqi Shia actors to pass favorable court decisions.[23]

Key Takeaways

1. **Iran Defense Strategy:** Iranian media outlet Nour News highlighted the Defense Council as an important body in shaping Iran's strategy after the Israel-Iran War. The outlet stated that the formation of the Defense Council was a structural response to the shifts in the global security situation.
2. **Hezbollah Disarmament:** The United States and other foreign countries have taken steps to provide Lebanon with economic and military support. The US Department of Defense announced on September 10 that it will send a 14.2 million USD military aid package to the Lebanese Armed Forces.



- 1 **IRAN:** Iranian media outlet Nour News highlighted the Defense Council as an important body in shaping Iran's strategy after the Israel-Iran War. The outlet stated that the formation of the Defense Council was a structural response to the shifts in the global security situation.
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Iran

West Azerbaijan Province's chief justice announced on September 11 that the Revolutionary Court indicted four defendants accused of cooperating with Israel to threaten Iranian security.[24] Iran claimed that the four defendants reconnoitered Iranian military facilities and sent the pictures to Mossad agents in return for cryptocurrency payments from the Israeli government.[25] These indictments are part of Iranian policies to crack down on real and perceived Israeli infiltration following the Israel-Iran War.[26] Iran has used concerns over Israeli infiltration to justify a crackdown on the Kurdish and Azeri population in West Azerbaijan Province.[27] The New York Times reported on August 30 that Iranian authorities have also arrested dozens of military, intelligence, and high-ranking government officials for spying for Israel.[28] Iranian media reported on June 25 that Iran has arrested 700 alleged Mossad spies across Iran since the start of the Israel-Iran War.[29]

Iraq

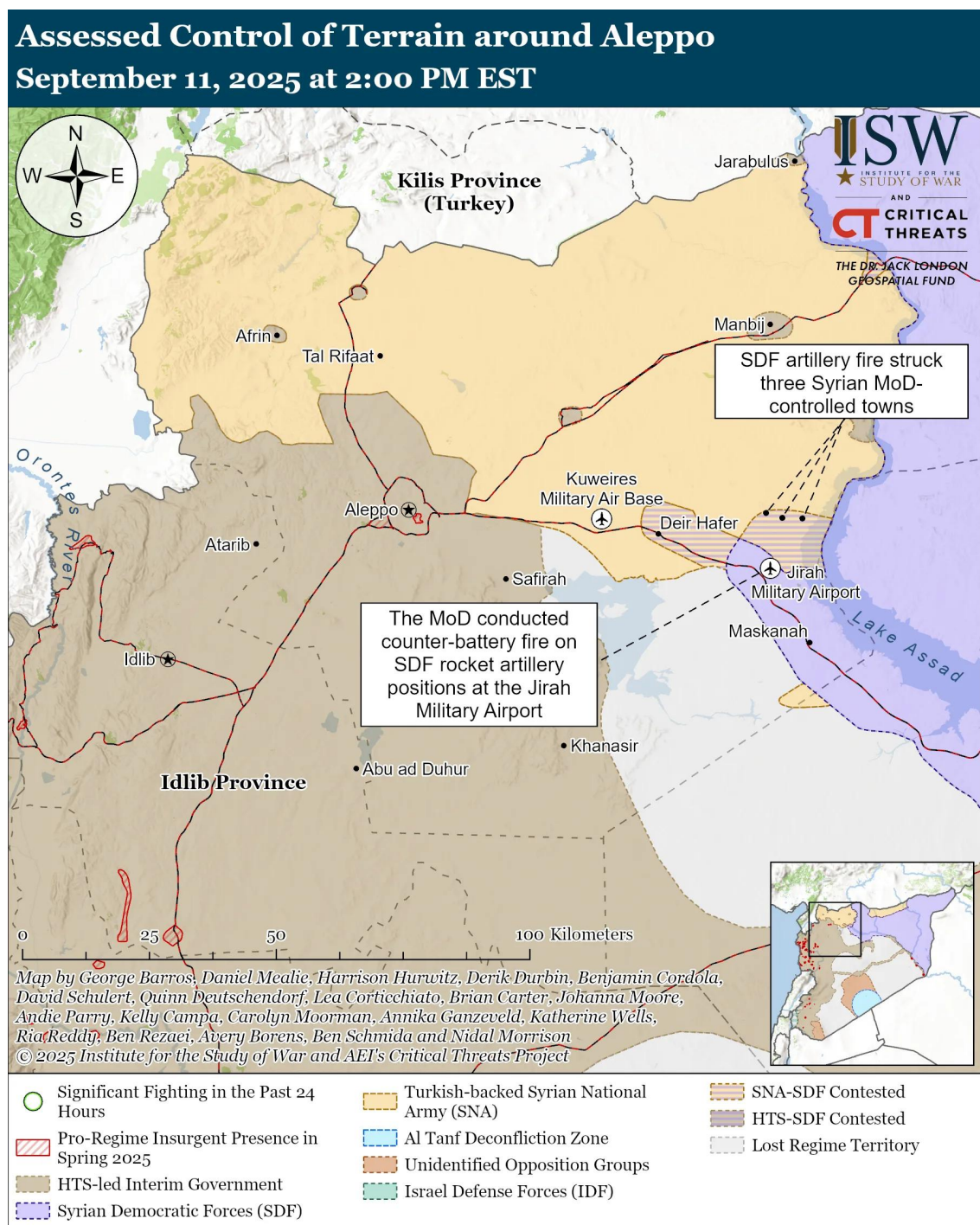
Iraqi Oil Ministry sources told Arab media on September 11 that the Oil Ministry may contract with unspecified international oil companies that specialize in the “auditing, monitoring, and packaging” of oil to enhance the transparency of Iraqi oil exports.[30] The United States threatened in July to sanction the Oil Ministry's State Oil Marketing Organization (SOMO) and block the Iraqi federal government's access to \$350 million of Iraqi oil revenue if the government failed to prevent Iranian oil smuggling.[31] The United States subsequently sanctioned two separate Iraqi businessmen for smuggling Iranian oil.[32] Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia al Sudani ordered the formation of a high-level committee on September 6 to investigate oil smuggling operations that involve mixing Iranian crude oil with Iraqi oil to help Iran bypass international sanctions.[33]

Unspecified Iraqi sources told Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps-affiliated media on September 10 that Israeli-Russian dual-citizen Elizabeth Tsurkov was exchanged for Lebanese national Imad Amhaz and an unidentified “Axis of Resistance” prisoner.[34] Israeli naval commandos detained Amhaz in northern Lebanon in November 2024 on suspicion of Hezbollah membership.[35] The unspecified Iraqi source did not suggest who the unidentified “Axis of Resistance” prisoner was.[36] The Iraqi government, Kataib Hezbollah, and other regional sources have presented conflicting accounts of the circumstances that led to Tsurkov's release.[37] Iranian-backed militias kidnapped Tsurkov, a Princeton University graduate student, in Baghdad in March 2023 while she was conducting research for her doctoral dissertation.[38] Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Hezbollah released Tsurkov on September 9.[39]

Syria

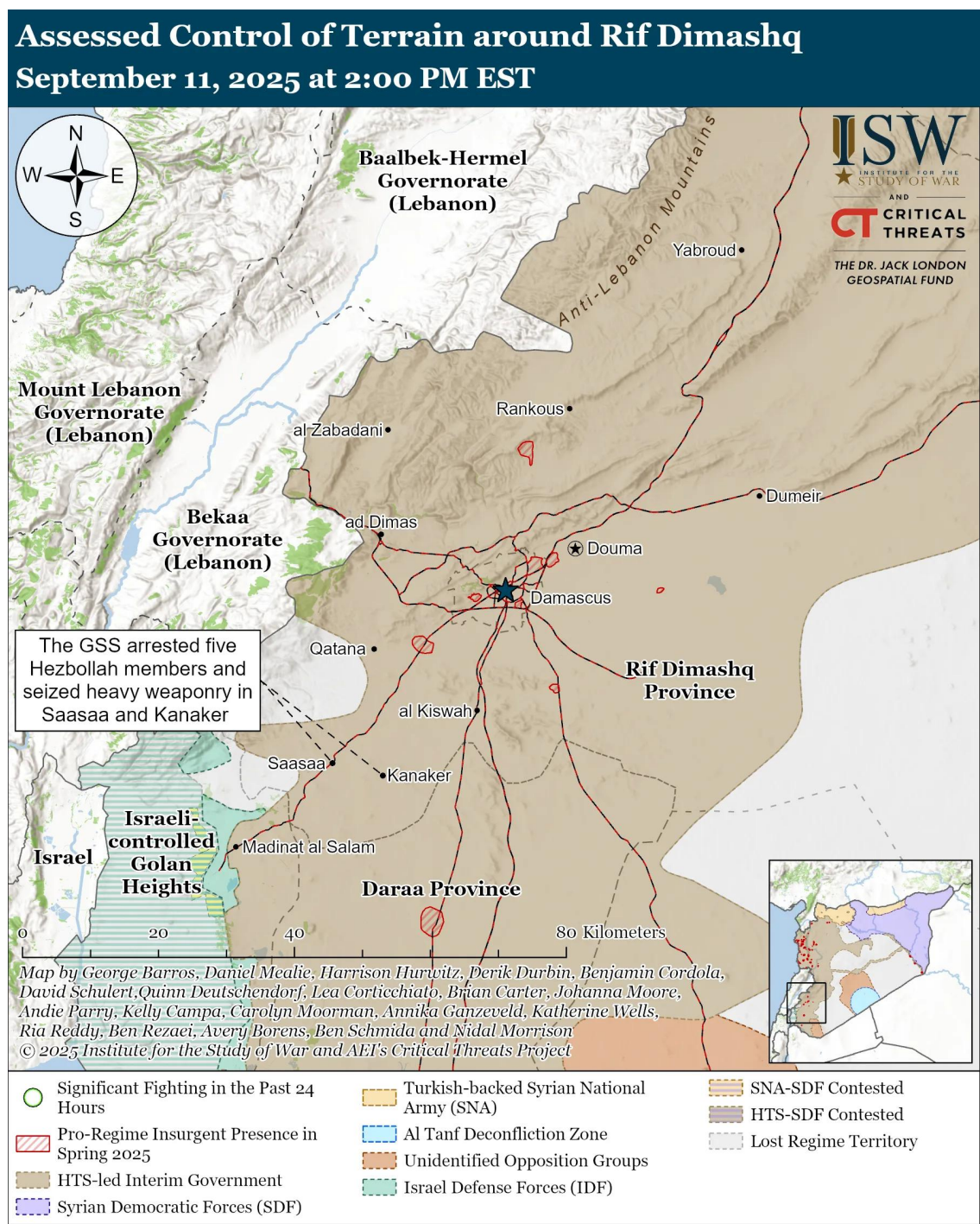
Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the Ministry of Defense (MoD) exchanged artillery fire north of Jirah Military Airport near Deir Hafer, Aleppo Province.[40] Syrian state media reported on September 10 that the SDF fired several rocket artillery salvos, which struck civilian homes in the MoD-controlled villages of al Kayariya, Rasm al Ahmar, and Habubba Kabir, Aleppo Province.[41] The SDF shelling killed two civilians and wounded seven others in al Kayariya.[42] MoD forces responded with counter-battery fire against SDF artillery positions at the Jarrah Military Airport and near the SDF-controlled town of Maskanah.[43] No military casualties have been reported at the time of writing. The SDF released a statement on September 11, which claimed that the SDF “repelled” MoD forces who

attempted to “infiltrate and launch artillery attacks in the Deir Hafer area,” but did not mention the SDF’s artillery barrages. [44] The frontlines north of the Jirah Military Airport are separated by a 20-meter canal, which acts as a barrier that forces must cross to access the other side. This is the same canal that is likely the frontline along the northern side of the SDF-controlled Deir Hafer salient.[45] Al Kayariya, Rasm al Ahmar, and Habubba Kabir are approximately eight kilometers northeast of the canal. The SDF and MoD have frequently engaged each other along the northern side of the Deir Hafer salient, which extends into the MoD rear along the Euphrates River.[46] The SDF and MoD previously engaged each other on the Deir Hafer-Tal Maaz axis after the MoD engaged an SDF reconnaissance team on September 2 and separately on August 12.[47]



The General Security Services (GSS) arrested five Lebanese Hezbollah members and seized

their heavy weaponry in Kanaker and Saasaa, Rif Dimashq Province, on September 11.[48] Rif Dimashq Province GSS commander Major General Ahmed al Dalati stated that the Hezbollah members had received training in camps in Lebanon and planned to carry out unspecified attacks in Syria.[49] Lebanese Hezbollah denied that the five men the GSS arrested were Hezbollah members and said that “Hezbollah has no presence or activity on Syrian soil.”[50] The GSS seized a cache of heavy weaponry as part of the arrest operation on September 11.[51] A Syrian source said the cache, which included 19 Grad rockets, multiple anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs), small arms, and ammunition, was stored uncovered in a garage.[52] Syrian security forces in Homs Province previously arrested a Hezbollah-linked individual and seized several explosively formed penetrators (EFPs) he allegedly planned to use in “terrorist operations” on July 13.[53] The GSS seized a separate heavy weapon shipment destined for Lebanon near al Zabadani, Rif Dimashq Province, on September 9.[54]



Arabian Peninsula

The Houthis launched two separate drone and missile attacks targeting southern Israel on September 11. The Houthis launched a missile targeting an unspecified military site in the Negev region.[55] The Houthis separately launched three drones, two of which targeted Ramon Airport in Eilat and one that targeted an unspecified military site in the Negev region.[56] The IDF reported on September 11 that it detected a suspicious aerial target and stated that the incident had "concluded." [57]

The Houthis released Deputy Representative of UNICEF in Yemen Luna Shukri Kataw on September 11.[58] An anti-Houthi journalist claimed that the release was part of a secret Jordanian-brokered settlement that involved a military flight from Amman to Sanaa to transport Kataw, who is a Jordanian citizen.[59] He added that the Jordanian intelligence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Royal Jordanian Air Force coordinated the operation.[60] The Houthis detained Kataw after a Houthi raid on UNICEF's office in Sanaa on August 31.[61] At least five Yemeni UNICEF staff reportedly remain in Houthi custody.[62]

The United States sanctioned the Houthis' illicit revenue and procurement networks on September 11.[63] The US Department of the Treasury imposed sanctions against 32 individuals and entities and four vessels in connection with Houthi fundraising, smuggling, and weapons procurement operations.[64] The sanctions targeted networks across Yemen, China, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and the Marshall Islands that finance and supply the Houthis' attacks on the United States, its allies, and international shipping.[65] Sanctions targeted Houthi state capture, petroleum smuggling, maritime shipping, Chinese suppliers, procurement fronts, and shipping facilitators, as follows:

- **State Capture and Corruption:** The Treasury Department sanctioned family members of the Houthis' Judicial Custodian, Saleh Mesfer Alshaer, who manages seized state-owned and private assets. Alshaer oversaw the Houthis' extortion and seizure of Yemeni state-owned and private assets totaling over \$100 million in value.
- **Petroleum Smugglers:** The Treasury Department sanctioned two key operatives in the Houthis' oil smuggling network, Zaid Ali Yahya al Sharafi and Saddam Ahmad Mohammad al Faqih. Treasury also sanctioned several petroleum companies managed by Sharafi, including al Faqih International Trade, Import, and Oil Services Limited, Sam Oil Company for Trade and Oil Services Ltd, Azal Company, and Royal Plus Petroleum Derivatives Import, for assisting, sponsoring, or providing financial, material, or technical support for the Houthis. The Treasury Department is also sanctioning Silm Road Company for Trading and Importing, and Oil Primer Company for being controlled by Zaid Ali Yahya al Sharafi.
- **Maritime Shipping:** The Treasury Department sanctioned the United Arab Emirates-based Tyba Ship Management DMCC, Star MM Inc., and MT Tevel Incorporated, and four vessels associated with the companies.
- **Suppliers to the Houthis:** The Treasury Department sanctioned Hubei Chica, Shenzhen Shengnan Trading Co., and Shanxi Shutong Import and Export Trade Co. for selling chemical precursors and electronics to the Houthis that are used to build drones, missiles, and explosives. The Treasury Department reported that these companies sometimes falsified shipping documents to avoid detection.
- **Procurement Front Companies:** The Treasury Department sanctioned Yiwu Wan Shun Trading, a

China-based firm used by the Houthis' procurement operatives to coordinate shipments of UAV components, and the Sanaa-based Irtiqa Institute for Development and Qualification Technical Institute (IQDI), which procures dual-use equipment and conducts weapon research and development (R&D) for the Houthis. Treasury noted IQDI has been instrumental in upgrading Houthi one-way attack UAVs.

• **Shipping Facilitators:** The Treasury Department sanctioned a network of Houthi-linked logistics companies operating in China that move dual-use components into Yemen. Guangzhou Yakai International Freight Forwarding arranged multiple shipments of sensitive materials, while Guangzhou Nahari Trading Co., owned by Yemeni nationals Mohammed and Hisham al Nahari, procured and concealed dual-use items in shipments bound for Houthi areas. Al Hammadi Trading, run by Yemeni national Nasr al Hammadi, procured and shipped additional components to Yemen.

The Treasury described the new sanctions on Houthis as its largest sanctions action to date and stated that all property and assets of those sanctioned are now blocked in the United States.[66]

Palestinian Territories & Lebanon

See the topline section.

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Iran Update, September 12, 2025



**Adham Fattah, Johanna Moore, Avery Borens, Benjamin Schmida,
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Toplines

Iranian officials are using Israel's September 9 strike in Doha, Qatar, to frame the United States as an unreliable security guarantor for Gulf states in an effort to break the nascent anti-Iran coalition in the region. Israel's September 9 airstrike targeting senior Hamas leaders in Doha, Qatar, caused the Gulf states to condemn Israeli actions.[1] Iran has exploited these frustrations among Gulf states by questioning the reliability of US partnerships. Iranian officials have made statements and held a series of meetings and phone calls with Gulf and Arab states since September 9, in which they condemned the Israeli airstrike as a "violation of international law." [2] Iranian officials have misrepresented the degree of US knowledge of the Israeli strikes and have suggested that the US-brokered agreements are incapable of defending Arab states from Israeli attacks.[3] The United States did not have adequate foreknowledge of the Israeli strike to discourage the Israelis from conducting the strike. Iranian officials have painted the Israeli strike as a direct threat to the security of Gulf countries and called for the international community to hold Israel accountable for its "criminal act." [4] Iran, of course, has repeatedly targeted Gulf states with much less precision and to much greater effect. Iran fired missiles and drones at the Saudi oil terminal in Dhafran in 2019, for example, which forced Saudi Arabia to dip into its oil reserves to support exports.[5] Tehran interim Friday prayer leader Ahmad Khatami addressed the governments of Egypt, Jordan, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia — all countries that have security partnerships with the United States — during Friday prayers on September 12 and warned that Israel would strike their country next if it was allowed to grow in power.[6]

This Iranian effort to dissuade Gulf states from cooperating with the United States or Israel is extremely unlikely to succeed, but Iran has presumably designed a gradual coalition-breaking effort to undermine US-led efforts to forge an anti-Iran coalition in the Middle East. The US-led effort to forge this coalition has paid dividends for the United States in the Middle East already. Many Gulf and other Arab states contributed to Israel's defense against Iranian missile and drone attacks in April and October 2024, for example. This defense decreased the likelihood of further escalation between Iran and Israel by helping prevent any significant damage to Israel. One Iranian diplomatic push is extremely unlikely to undo the progress the United States has made towards forging an anti-Iran coalition, especially after the Iranian attack on Al Udeid Airbase in Qatar in June 2025. The recent Iranian rhetoric degrading US diplomatic and security partnerships is part of a long-running line of effort in a long-standing Iranian campaign to weaken the United States and secure Iran's role as a regional hegemon. This line of effort has had no success to date.

Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani called for an emergency Arab-Islamic summit in Doha on September 14 and 15.[7] An unspecified source cited by Lebanese media on September 12 claimed that the Qatari government is prepared to launch a “comprehensive diplomatic campaign” against Israel through the Gulf Cooperation Council, Arab League, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the United Nations Security Council, and “even within Washington itself and the halls of Congress.”[8] Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian will attend the emergency Arab-Islamic summit on September 14 and 15 in Doha, Qatar.[9]

The People’s Republic of China (PRC) is similarly trying to sow doubt about the United States’ role in the region. These narratives, although not coordinated with Iran, support Iranian objectives to decrease regional support for the United States. The PRC’s Foreign Ministry stated on September 10 that the Israeli strikes were linked to the US bias towards Israel, implying that the United States ignored the Gulf states’ security concerns.[10] Chinese state-owned media widely covered the Israeli strike in Doha and accused the United States of foreknowledge of the strikes. Chinese state media Xinhua reported on September 10 that the Israeli airstrikes in Doha were “a clear escalation” involving a sovereign Arab country that has no direct military hostilities with Israel.[11] State broadcaster China Central Television (CCTV) reported on September 11 that it would have been “very difficult” for Israel to have launched its airstrikes on Doha without US approval.[12] A Chinese scholar similarly told CCTV on September 11 that the United States did not attempt to stop the Israeli strikes after receiving advanced warning from Israel about the strikes.[13] The PRC has previously tried to exploit unpopular US policies among Arab states to undermine the US role as the primary regional partner.[14]

The PRC’s statements incorrectly characterize the United States’ role in Israel’s recent strikes in Doha and attempt to demonstrate that the United States is an unreliable security partner for Gulf states. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office indicated that Israel unilaterally conducted its airstrikes in Doha.[15] US officials stated that Israel’s warning gave the United States no time to warn Qatar.[16] The United States was only informed while Israeli jets were in the air, giving the United States only enough time to briefly inform Qatar and no time to force Israel to call off the strike.

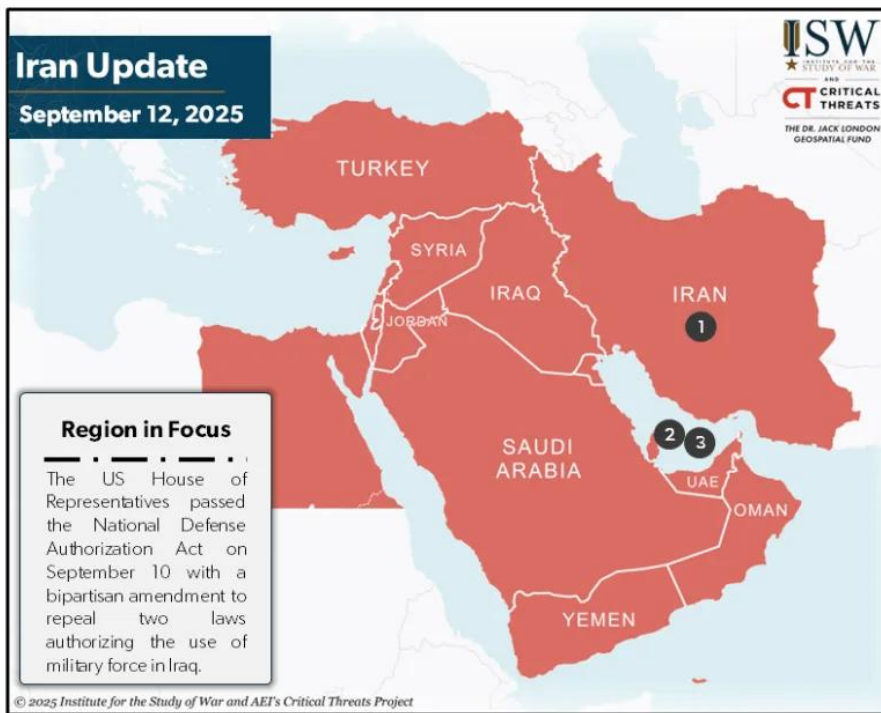
Members of the Iranian regime are trying to prepare for supreme leader succession by taking steps to secure their influence within the regime after the eventual passing of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. UK-based media outlet “IranWire” reported on September 12 that, according to a senior Iranian diplomat, Iranian Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Secretary Ali Larijani and former First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber are the regime stalwarts most in contact with Khamenei and are positioning themselves for more influence in the regime in the event of a succession.[17] The report comes after elements within the Iranian regime used Khamenei’s absence during the Israel-Iran War to attempt to exert more influence over regime policy.[18] The diplomat stated that Larijani is actively engaging with reformists, Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) commanders, and grand ayatollahs to prepare the country diplomatically, economically, and militarily for the transition period.[19] Larijani has been a key figure within the Iranian policy space over the past two decades and supported major initiatives, including the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA, also known as the 2015 nuclear deal).[20] Larijani has taken on a prominent role in shaping Iranian foreign policy as a pragmatic hardliner since the June 2025 Israel-Iran War. The diplomat added that Mokhber is actively trying to undermine Larijani’s efforts by exploiting his “controversial” history with Iran’s media and security apparatus.[21] Mokhber previously served as the head of the Execution of Imam Khomeini’s Order (EIKO)—a parastatal organization directly controlled by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei—between 2007

and 2021.[22]

This political maneuvering is occurring as Khamenei continues to be absent from important political decisions. The IranWire report stated that senior Iranian officials are growing increasingly concerned about the health of Khamenei following a reduction in communication from his office since the beginning of the Israel-Iran War.[23] The senior Iranian diplomat stated that Khamenei's office did not brief Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi before this year's UN General Assembly as it normally does, and that the Foreign Affairs Ministry is operating "almost independently." [24] Khamenei's personal absence could be explained by increased security measures, though it is unclear why his office could not communicate with other elements of the Iranian government. Khamenei did not make any public appearances during the Israel-Iran War except for three pre-recorded televised speeches.[25] Khamenei gave 12 speeches in the 80-day period before the Israel-Iran War (March 24-June 12), while he has only given four speeches in the 80-day period after the war (June 24-September 12).[26] Western media reported on June 22 that a group of Iranian businessmen, political and military figures, and relatives of high-ranking clerics had begun planning how to lead Iran without Khamenei.[27]

Key Takeaways

1. **Supreme Leader Succession:** Iranian Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Secretary Ali Larijani and former First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber are the regime stalwarts most in contact with Khamenei and are positioning themselves for more influence in the regime in the event of a succession, according to a senior Iranian diplomat cited by a UK-based news site.
2. **IDF Strikes in Doha:** Iranian officials are using Israel's September 9 strike in Doha, Qatar, to frame the United States as an unreliable security guarantor for Gulf states in an effort to break the nascent anti-Iran coalition in the region. This Iranian effort to dissuade Gulf states from cooperating with the United States or Israel is extremely unlikely to succeed, but Iran has presumably designed a gradual coalition-breaking effort to undermine US-led efforts to forge an anti-Iran coalition in the Middle East.
3. **IDF Strikes in Doha:** The People's Republic of China (PRC) is similarly trying to sow doubt about the United States' role in the region. These narratives, although not coordinated with Iran, support Iranian objectives to decrease regional support for the United States. The PRC's statements incorrectly characterize the United States' role in Israel's recent strikes in Doha and attempt to demonstrate that the United States is an unreliable security partner for Gulf states.



- 1 **IRAN:** Iranian Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Secretary Ali Larijani and former First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber are the regime stalwarts most in contact with Khamenei and are positioning themselves for more influence in the regime in the event of a succession, according to a senior Iranian diplomat cited by a UK-based news site.
- 2 **QATAR:** Iranian officials are using Israel's September 9 strike in Doha, Qatar, to frame the United States as an unreliable security guarantor for Gulf states in an effort to break the nascent anti-Iran coalition in the region.
- 3 **QATAR:** The People's Republic of China (PRC) is similarly trying to sow doubt about the United States' role in the region. These narratives, although not coordinated with Iran, support Iranian objectives to decrease regional support for the United States.

Iran

See topline section.

Iraq

Former Iraqi Prime Minister and State of Law Coalition head Nouri al Maliki met with US Charge d'Affaires in Iraq Joshua Harris on September 11 to discuss strengthening US-Iraq relations by developing economic cooperation and protecting Iraqi sovereignty.[28] This meeting comes after the US House of Representatives passed the National Defense Authorization Act on September 10, which included a bipartisan amendment to repeal two laws authorizing the use of military force (AUMF) in Iraq.[29] This effort to repeal the 2002 Iraq War and 1991 Gulf War authorizations coincides with the planned US withdrawal from Iraq.[30] The Senate has not yet passed the bill. The United States and Iraq agreed in September 2024 that hundreds of US-led international coalition forces would withdraw from Iraq by September 2025 and that remaining forces in Iraqi Kurdistan would withdraw by the end of 2026.[31]

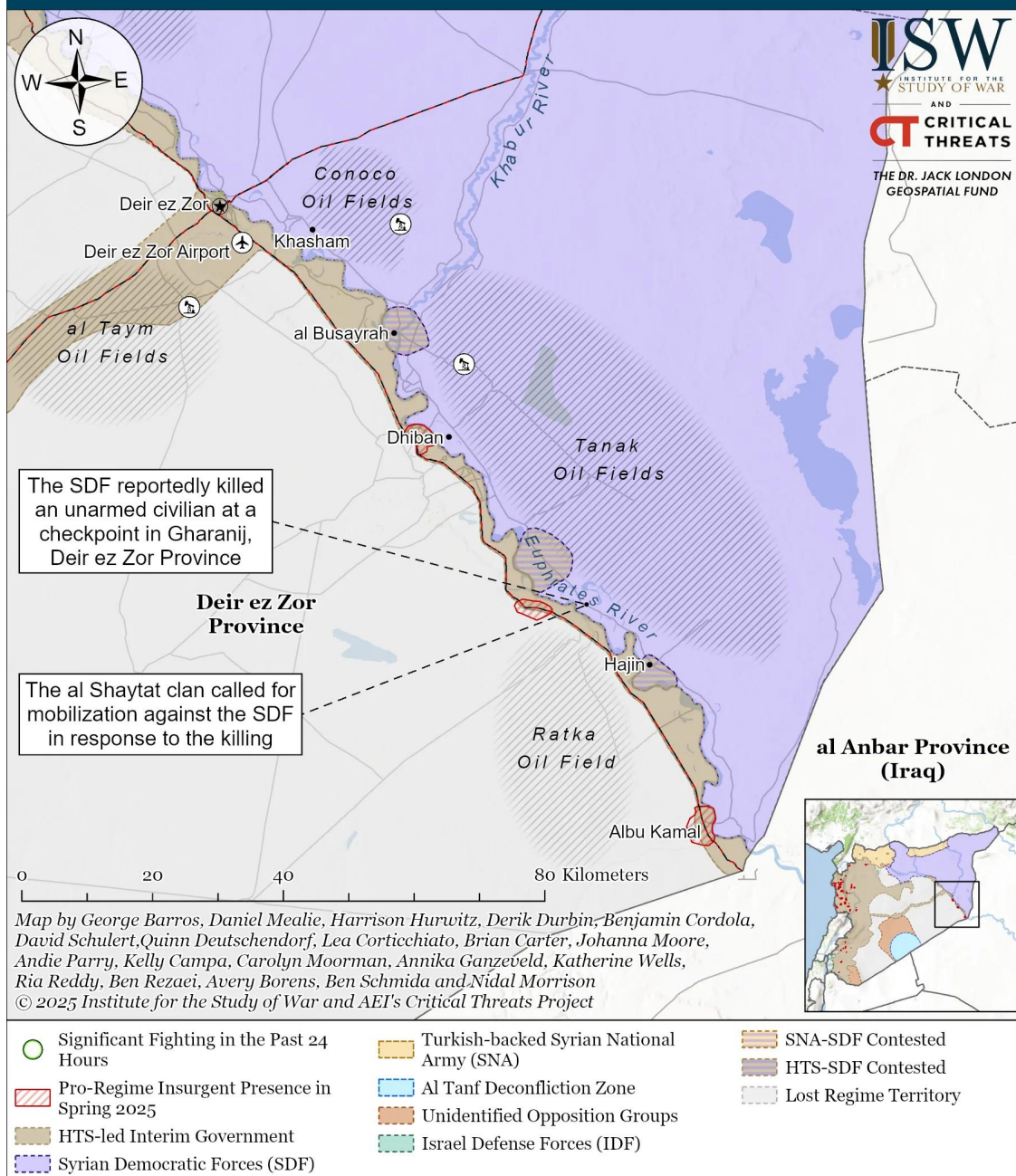
Syria

A covert Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force unit specializing in assassinations and kidnappings abroad recently recruited several Syrians, which suggests that the IRGC planned to use Syrians to conduct external attacks against unknown and unspecified targets.[32] The Israel Defense Force (IDF) announced on September 12 that it had captured several members of the IRGC Quds Force Unit 840 over the past few months in southern Syria who were planning unspecified attacks against Israel.[33] Unit 840 is an elite IRGC Quds Force covert unit responsible for conducting assassinations, kidnappings, and clandestine operations abroad.[34] The IDF captured two Syrian “field operatives” from Unit 840 in March and April 2025.[35] The IDF captured at least three additional Syrian Unit 840 members in recent weeks, who had been recruited by two Lebanese IRGC Unit 840 members.[36] The IDF killed the Lebanese Unit 840 members, who were responsible for smuggling Iranian weapons to the West Bank and Lebanon, in separate strikes in July.[37] The IDF previously captured seven Syrian IRGC Quds Force members in southern Syria on July 7, but it is unclear if they were affiliated with Unit 840.[38] The IDF said that Iran recruited some of the Syrian Unit 840 members without revealing that the new recruits would be part of an IRGC operation. The IDF said that the recruits were motivated by financial incentives rather than ideology.[39] It is not clear what the IRGC intended to use these operatives for because it would be extremely difficult for a Syrian to enter Israel, though it is possible the IRGC could have intended to use the operatives in a third country. IRGC Unit 840’s concealment of its identity and use of financial incentives with recruits is consistent with Unit 840 and the IRGC’s Quds Force’s previous activity abroad. The IRGC Quds Force attempted in 2011 to assassinate the Saudi Arabian ambassador to the United States by hiring a Mexican cartel member to detonate a bomb targeting the ambassador at a restaurant in Washington, DC.[40] The IRGC recruiters did not inform the cartel member who they were when they recruited him.[41]

The Arab al Shaytat clan mobilized against the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) after SDF forces reportedly killed an unarmed civilian who failed to stop at a checkpoint in Gharanij, Deir ez Zor Province, on September 11.[42] The SDF reportedly refused to release the civilian’s body to his family.[43] The Gharanij mosque broadcast calls for “jihad and general mobilization” from its speakers in response to the killing, according to social media videos.[44] The al Shaytat clan mobilized in response to the killing and called on all clans in eastern Deir ez Zor Province to join their mobilization against the SDF.[45] Gharanij residents reportedly attacked SDF checkpoints in the town in response to the killing and mobilization order.[46] The SDF has not commented on the situation in Gharanij at the time of writing. The al Shaytat mobilization and calls for other tribes to do the same follow increased tensions between Arab tribes and the SDF. Seven Arab tribes announced their mobilization against the SDF on August 11 in response to a conference organized by the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) in Hasakah on August 8.[47] Likely tribal forces abducted four off-duty SDF fighters in Gharanij on August 14 after the August 11 mobilization announcement.[48] The mobilized tribes have said that they are “waiting for the right moment to begin action,” possibly referring to a breakdown in the ceasefire between the SDF and the Syrian transitional government.[49] The mobilization of Arab tribes will impose new requirements against the SDF in the event of military operations between the SDF and the transitional government, even if the SDF attempts to withdraw into Kurdish-majority areas.

Assessed Control of Terrain around Deir ez Zor

September 12, 2025 at 2:00 PM EST



US Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander Admiral Bradley Cooper and Syrian President Ahmed al Shara met in Damascus on September 12 to discuss future defense cooperation, particularly on counter-Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) operations.[50] US Special Envoy to Syria Thomas Barrack, Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad al Shaibani, Syrian Defense Minister Marhaf Abu Qasra, and Syrian Interior Minister Anas Khattab also attended the bilateral meeting.[51] Cooper and Barrack thanked the Syrian transitional government for its support in counter-ISIS operations in Syria.[52] Syrian forces assisted in US ground raids targeting ISIS leaders in northern Syria on July 25 and August 20.[53] Cooper and Barrack praised the Syrian government's efforts to locate missing US citizens in Syria.[54] Cooper and Barrack also supported the Syrian government's efforts to integrate Syrian armed factions into the Syrian Ministry of Defense.[55] The officials agreed to hold future US-Syrian meetings to continue counter-ISIS operation coordination.[56]

Arabian Peninsula

Nothing significant to report.

Palestinian Territories & Lebanon

Nothing significant to report.

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Endnotes

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