

Iran Update, September 29, 2025



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Toplines

The European Union (EU) reimposed sanctions on Iran on September 29 that it had lifted under the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The EU's reimposition of sanctions comes after the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) reimposed snapback sanctions on Iran on September 27.[1] The EU froze the Iranian Central Bank and other major Iranian banks' assets, banned the import of Iranian oil, and banned the export of technologies or materials that Iran could use for uranium enrichment, among other measures.[2] The EU reimposed sanctions on Iranian economic institutions, such as the Khatam ol Anbia Construction Headquarters, that play an outsized role in the Iranian economy.[3] The Khatam ol Anbia Construction Headquarters is controlled by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and has built power plants, oil vessels, and transportation infrastructure on behalf of the IRGC. The EU also reimposed sanctions on Iranian banks, such as Bank Sepah and Bank Melli, that have supported Iran's defense industry.[4] Iranian banks reportedly held at least 1.9 billion euros in assets in Europe as of March 2024.[5] The reimposition of EU sanctions on Iran may further isolate Iran from international financial networks and reduce the volume of EU-Iran trade. The EU was Iran's fifth largest trading partner in 2024.[6] The full impact of the EU sanctions is currently unclear, however. The United States' imposition of maximum pressure sanctions against Iran in 2018 has already significantly diminished the volume of EU-Iran trade in recent years.[7] The EU's reimposition of sanctions on September 29 follows the UNSC's reimposition of snapback sanctions on Iran on September 27, which are similarly designed to politically and economically isolate Iran due to its failure to fulfill its obligations in the JCPOA.

Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's website framed snapback sanctions as "psychological warfare" and called on the regime to expand ties with neighboring countries and pursue a "Look East" policy to mitigate the impact of sanctions.[8] A newspaper run by Khamenei's website argued on September 28 that Iran must rely on its domestic strength and work with neighbors, "countries in the Global South," and countries that are part of Iran's "Look East" policy to mitigate the impact of Western sanctions. Iran's "Look East" policy seeks to counter US pressure by building ties with countries such as China and Russia.[9] This editorial is consistent with recent statements from Khamenei in May 2025 in which he framed Iran's participation in multilateral institutions like BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as "opportunities" for Iran.[10] Iran joined BRICS in January 2024. Iranian officials have emphasized that Iran's participation in BRICS provides opportunities for Iran to reduce its reliance on the US dollar and develop alternative financial platforms.[11] Iran has also deepened economic, political, and security ties with Russia in recent years and recently joined the

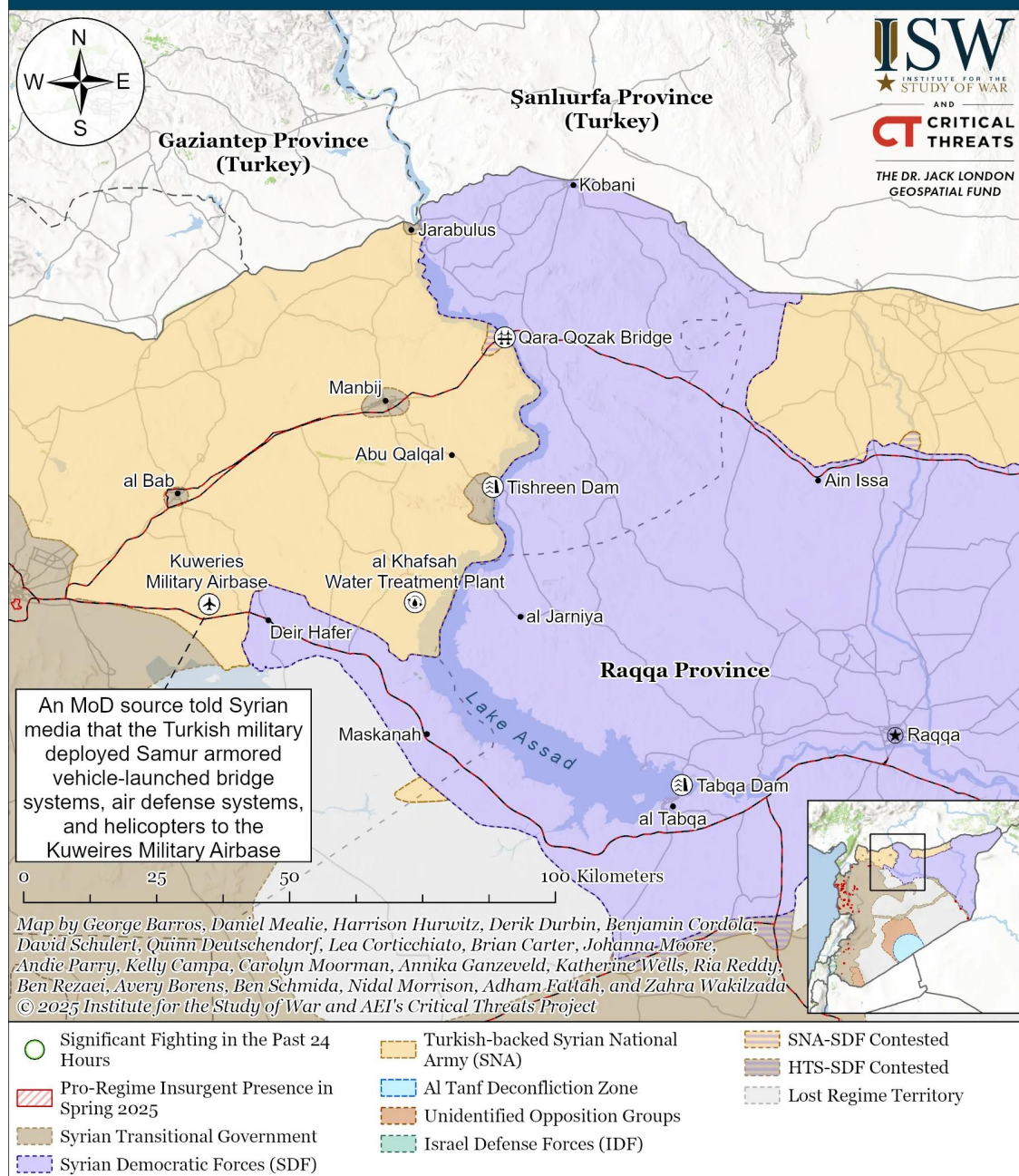
Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).[12] Iran likely seeks to use its membership in multilateral institutions to reduce the impact of Western sanctions and to secure alternative trade routes, energy partners, and financial channels.

Iranian officials are concerned that the reimposition of snapback sanctions may trigger economic unrest. Four unspecified Iranian officials and two unspecified “insiders” told Reuters on September 27 that the reimposition of sanctions will deepen Iran’s economic isolation and fuel public anger.[13] An Iranian official said that the regime is increasingly concerned that discontent over economic difficulties may lead to mass protests. Several Iranian officials framed the reimposition of snapback sanctions as “psychological warfare” against Iran, which likely reflects Iranian officials’ belief that Iran’s adversaries seek to increase public disillusionment by increasing economic pressure on Iran.[14] Iranian Judiciary Chief Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei warned on September 29 that Iranian authorities will take legal action against individuals who undermine public morale or disrupt markets in ways that “serve enemy objectives.”[15] Khamenei categorically rejected negotiations with the United States on September 23, which makes it very unlikely that Iran will receive economic relief in the near term.[16] The regime’s concerns about potential internal unrest come as inflation has risen above 40 percent, and the Iranian rial fell to a record low of 1,121,000 rials per one US dollar on September 29.[17]

The Turkish military’s reported deployment of assets to Kuweires Airbase near Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)-controlled territory in eastern Aleppo Province may indicate that Turkey and Syria are preparing for a joint military operation against the SDF.[18] An unspecified source from the Syrian Ministry of Defense (MoD) told Syrian media that the Turkish military deployed Samur armored vehicle-launched bridge systems, unspecified air defense systems, and helicopters to the Kuweires Airbase on September 28.[19] A separate local anti-SDF source circulated a video of a Turkish military convoy driving toward Kuweires Military Airbase on September 28.[20] The MoD source did not specify why Turkey deployed military assets to Kuweires.[21] Kuweires Airbase is located about 10 kilometers west of the SDF-controlled town of Deir Hafer, which is the westernmost town that the SDF controls in the province. Kuweires Airbase is positioned near an east-west highway that runs along the SDF’s salient south of Lake Assad. The MoD source added that several Syrian Army divisions also deployed to Kuweires Airbase to “secure” the base.[22] The Turkish military also deployed reinforcements to the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA)-controlled towns of Tal Abyad in Raqqqa Province and Ras al Ain in Hasakah Province along the Syria-Turkey border, according to the same MoD source.[23]

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Turkey's reported deployment of military assets to Kuweires Airbase may signal Turkey's willingness to launch a military operation against the SDF if the SDF does not integrate into the Syrian state. Turkey has consistently threatened the SDF with military action since the MoD and SDF began continually engaging each other along the Deir Hafer salient in August.[24] Syrian President Ahmed al Shara recently stated that he had persuaded Turkey to refrain from taking military action against the SDF until the end of the year, but the Turkish Defense Ministry said as recently as September 25 that SDF engagements with the Syrian MoD are a threat to "regional peace and stability." [25]

The reported Turkish reinforcements position new and valuable assets near the SDF-MoD frontlines that Turkey or Syrian forces could use in the event of a military operation targeting the SDF. The Turkish military's deployment of armored vehicle-launched bridge systems could enable Syrian and Turkish forces to move large vehicles across waterways that divide MoD and SDF frontlines north of the Deir

Hafer salient, including the northern canal and the Euphrates River. The Turkish Samur armored vehicle-launched bridge system can ferry large vehicles across rivers up to 100 meters wide, if 12 Samurs are connected.[26] Water-crossing capabilities would open additional routes of advance into SDF-controlled territory in the event of a military operation. Turkish-backed forces stalled at Tishreen Dam in January 2025 due to limited plausible avenues to reach SDF-controlled territory to the east, for example.[27] Turkish helicopters would additionally provide Syrian MoD forces with close air support and reconnaissance capabilities during an operation against the SDF.

Shia Coordination Framework parties are reportedly debating the appointment of the next Iraqi prime minister, which demonstrates the confidence that these parties have in their electoral position ahead of the November 2025 Iraqi parliamentary elections.[28] The Shia Coordination Framework is a loose coalition of Shia political parties, some of which Iran backs. Shia Coordination Framework sources told Iraqi media on September 29 that the Shia Coordination Framework is divided into two camps over who to appoint as the next prime minister: one camp is comprised of the Shia Coordination Framework “sheikhs,” while the second camp is comprised of the rest of the coalition.[29] The term “sheikhs” in this context likely refers to the most prominent Shia Coordination Framework leaders, such as State of Law Coalition head and former Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki, Badr Organization head Hadi al Ameri, and Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Asaib Ahl al Haq head Qais al Khazali. Iraqi media reported that Maliki, Ameri, current Prime Minister Mohammad Shia al Sudani, former Prime Minister Haider al Abadi, Sadrist Basra Governor Assad al Eidani, and Wasit Governor Mohammad al Mayahi, among others, have expressed interest in becoming prime minister.[30]

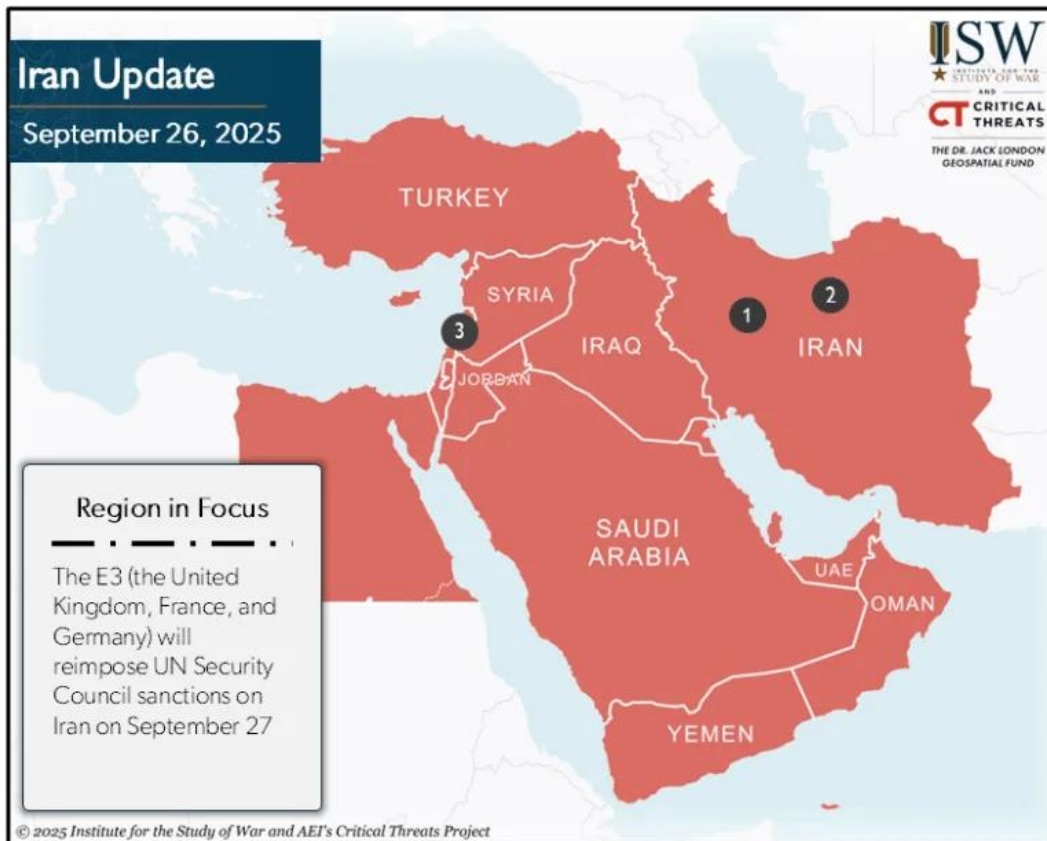
Maliki claimed in an interview with Iraqi media on September 28 that Iraqi prime ministers are not meant to participate in parliamentary elections because their position and access to resources can unfairly impact the elections. Maliki acknowledged that previous Iraqi governments have not followed this practice, however.[31] Maliki himself campaigned for the Iraqi premiership during the Iraqi 2010 and 2014 elections, despite serving as the prime minister at the time.[32] A Shia Coordination Framework source claimed on September 29 that unidentified Shia Coordination Framework parties have considered choosing one of the Shia Coordination Framework “sheikhs” as the next prime minister due to Sudani’s participation in the upcoming elections.[33]

The Shia Coordination Framework reportedly plans to form a post-election coalition, which likely explains why Shia Coordination Framework parties are confident enough to discuss possible prime minister appointments ahead of the elections.[34] Shia Coordination Framework parties could individually win a small amount of votes but form a coalition among themselves and with other parties after the elections to form the largest parliamentary bloc. The Iraqi Constitution states that the Iraqi president asks the leader of the largest parliamentary bloc to form a government, but, in reality, the appointment of the prime minister results from highly politicized post-election negotiations.[35] Smaller and poorer performing Iraqi parties, therefore, have an opportunity after the elections to form a coalition to determine the next Iraqi government.[36]

Iranian Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Secretary Ali Larijani conducted his second visit to Beirut since becoming SNSC secretary on August 5.[37] Larijani’s multiple visits to Beirut in recent months highlight the extent to which Iran is prioritizing retaining its influence in Lebanon amid Lebanese state efforts to disarm Hezbollah. Larijani met with Lebanese Parliament Speaker and Hezbollah ally Nabih Berri and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, who is currently leading the Lebanese state’s disarmament efforts, on September 27.[38] Larijani previously visited Beirut in August 2025 and similarly met with Lebanese officials, including Salam and Lebanese President Joseph Aoun.[39] Larijani’s previous visit reportedly aimed to “prevent a complete shift in Lebanon’s internal power balance to the detriment of Hezbollah,” according to an Iranian analyst close to

the regime.[40] Larijani's multiple visits to Beirut in recent months are likely part of an Iranian effort to prevent Hezbollah's disarmament, although it remains unclear how specifically Iran intends to achieve this objective.

Larijani overstated the degree of Iranian support to Hezbollah and Lebanon during his visit to Beirut on September 26 and 27. Larijani met with Hezbollah Secretary General Naim Qassem on September 26 and told Qassem that Iran is prepared to back Lebanon and Hezbollah at "all levels."[41] Larijani did not specify what types of support Iran is prepared to give Hezbollah moving forward. Larijani's vow of support for Hezbollah is largely performative, particularly given that Iran failed to support Hezbollah during the Israeli campaign in Lebanon in late 2024 and sustained significant damage during the Israel-Iran War. Iran has provided Hezbollah with limited support since the end of the Israel-Hezbollah conflict, which has included some financial support for reconstruction. Qassem previously claimed in December 2024 that Iran had allocated at least \$50 million to reconstruct damaged households in Lebanon.[42] Larijani noted that he traveled to Beirut to follow up on Hezbollah's reconstruction efforts.[43] Iran's claimed economic support is unlikely to help Lebanon make any meaningful progress in its reconstruction. The World Bank estimated in March 2025 that Lebanon would need approximately \$11 billion for its reconstruction and recovery needs following the Israel-Hezbollah conflict in late 2024.[44] \$50 million from Iran is minuscule in comparison to the economic support that the Lebanese state requires for its post-war reconstruction.



- 1 **IRAN.** The E3 (the United Kingdom, France, and Germany) will reimpose UN Security Council (UNSC) sanctions on Iran on September 27 despite a last-ditch Iranian effort to delay the snapback mechanism. The E3 rejected Iran's offer to immediately grant International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors full access to the Natanz Nuclear Facility in return for the UNSC adopting a Russian-Chinese resolution to extend the snapback mechanism's deadline by six months.
- 2 **IRAN.** Iran has continued to expand its nuclear infrastructure at the Mount Kolang Gaz La facility in Esfahan Province, which was not damaged or targeted during the Israel-Iran War in June 2025. Iran has made significant changes to the site's security perimeter and tunnel entrance since the war, and increased excavation spoil outside the tunnel entrances suggest increased tunneling at the site.
- 3 **LEBANON.** Iran is attempting to exploit anti-Israel sentiments in Saudi Arabia to protect Hezbollah from its looming disarmament. Iran's attempts to exploit anti-Israel sentiment in the Saudi government will most likely fail due in part to Iran's long history of attacking Saudi Arabia with proxies and partners trained by Hezbollah.

Key Takeaways

1. **Turkish Assets in Syria:** The Turkish military's reported deployment of assets to Kuweires Airbase near Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)-controlled territory in eastern Aleppo Province may indicate that Turkey and Syria are preparing for a joint military operation against the SDF. An unspecified source from the Syrian Ministry of Defense told Syrian media that the Turkish military deployed Samur armored vehicle-launched bridge systems, unspecified air defense systems, and helicopters to the airbase.
2. **EU Sanctions on Iran:** The European Union (EU) reimposed sanctions on Iran on September 29 that it had lifted under the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The EU's reimposition of sanctions comes after the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) reimposed snapback sanctions on Iran on September 27. Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's website framed snapback

sanctions as “psychological warfare” and called on the regime to expand ties with neighboring countries and pursue a “Look East” policy to mitigate the impact of sanctions.

3. **Iraqi Elections:** Shia Coordination Framework parties are reportedly debating the appointment of the next Iraqi prime minister, which demonstrates the confidence that these parties have in their electoral position ahead of the November 2025 Iraqi parliamentary elections.
4. **Larijani in Beirut:** Iranian Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Secretary Ali Larijani conducted his second visit to Beirut since becoming SNSC secretary. Larijani’s multiple visits to Beirut in recent months highlight the extent to which Iran is prioritizing retaining its influence in Lebanon amid Lebanese state efforts to disarm Hezbollah.

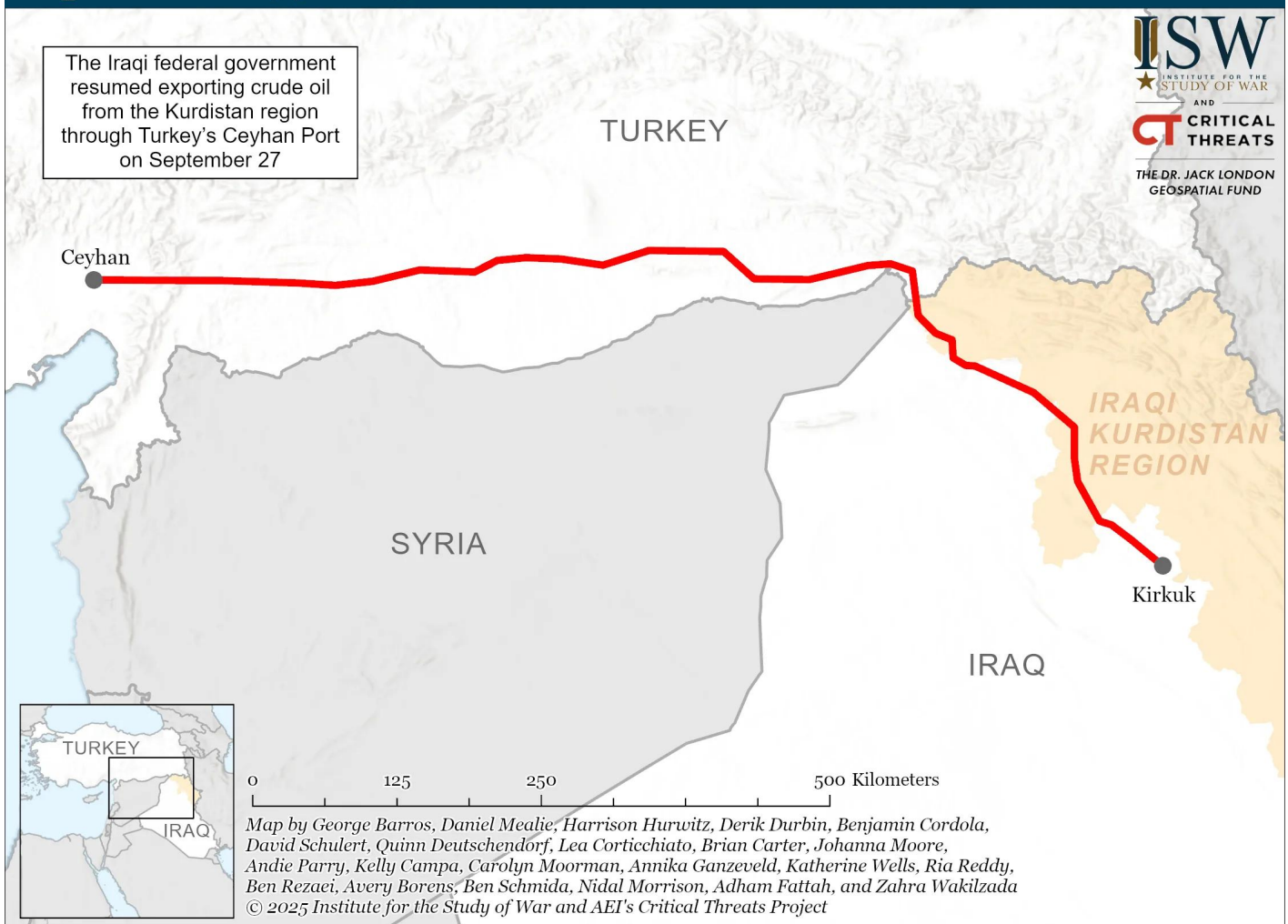
Iran

See topline section.

Iraq

The Iraqi federal government resumed exporting crude oil from the Kurdistan region through Turkey’s Ceyhan Port on September 27.[45] The Iraqi federal government, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), and eight international oil companies operating in northern Iraq signed an interim deal on September 25 to resume oil exports.[46] The KRG halted oil exports through the Kirkuk-Ceyhan Pipeline in March 2023 after the International Chamber of Commerce ruled that the Iraqi federal government had the right to control loading at Turkey’s Ceyhan Port.[47] The Iraqi federal government and the KRG have attempted to reach an oil export agreement and reopen the pipeline since at least February 2025.[48] The United States reportedly threatened to sanction the Iraqi federal government in February 2025 if it prevented the KRG from resuming oil exports.[49] The closure of the Kirkuk-Ceyhan Pipeline led to an uptick in the smuggling of Kurdish oil to Iran, as companies in northern Iraq had no way to legally export oil and make profits.[50] Renewed KRG oil exports through the Kirkuk-Ceyhan Pipeline will likely curb crude oil smuggling from Iraqi Kurdistan to Iran by providing a legal route to sell crude oil on the international market.[51]

Iraqi-Turkish Kirkuk-Ceyhan Oil Pipeline September 29, 2025



Iraqi politicians and militias responded to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's September 26 speech at the United Nations in which he vowed to "eliminate" Iranian-backed Iraqi militia leaders if they attack Israel.[52] French media reported on September 27 that Iranian-backed Badr Organization Secretary General Hadi al Ameri and former Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki are taking unspecified precautionary measures following Netanyahu's speech.[53] The report added that unspecified Iraqi militias evacuated key sites and ceased using cellphones after Netanyahu's speech.[54] Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein and Popular Mobilization Commission Chairman Faleh al Fayyadh condemned Netanyahu's remarks.[55] Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba dismissed Netanyahu's speech as containing "empty threats" on September 26.[56] Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba is part of the Islamic Resistance of Iraq, which is a coalition of Iranian-backed militias that consistently conducted attacks targeting Israel and US forces in Iraq and Syria between October 2023 and January 2024.[57]

Syria

The Syrian General Security Service (GSS) seized a large weapons cache near the Syria-Lebanon border on September 27.[58] GSS forces interdicted a weapons shipment that contained 200 Grad rockets, mortar rounds, rocket-propelled grenade warheads, and heavy machine guns in al

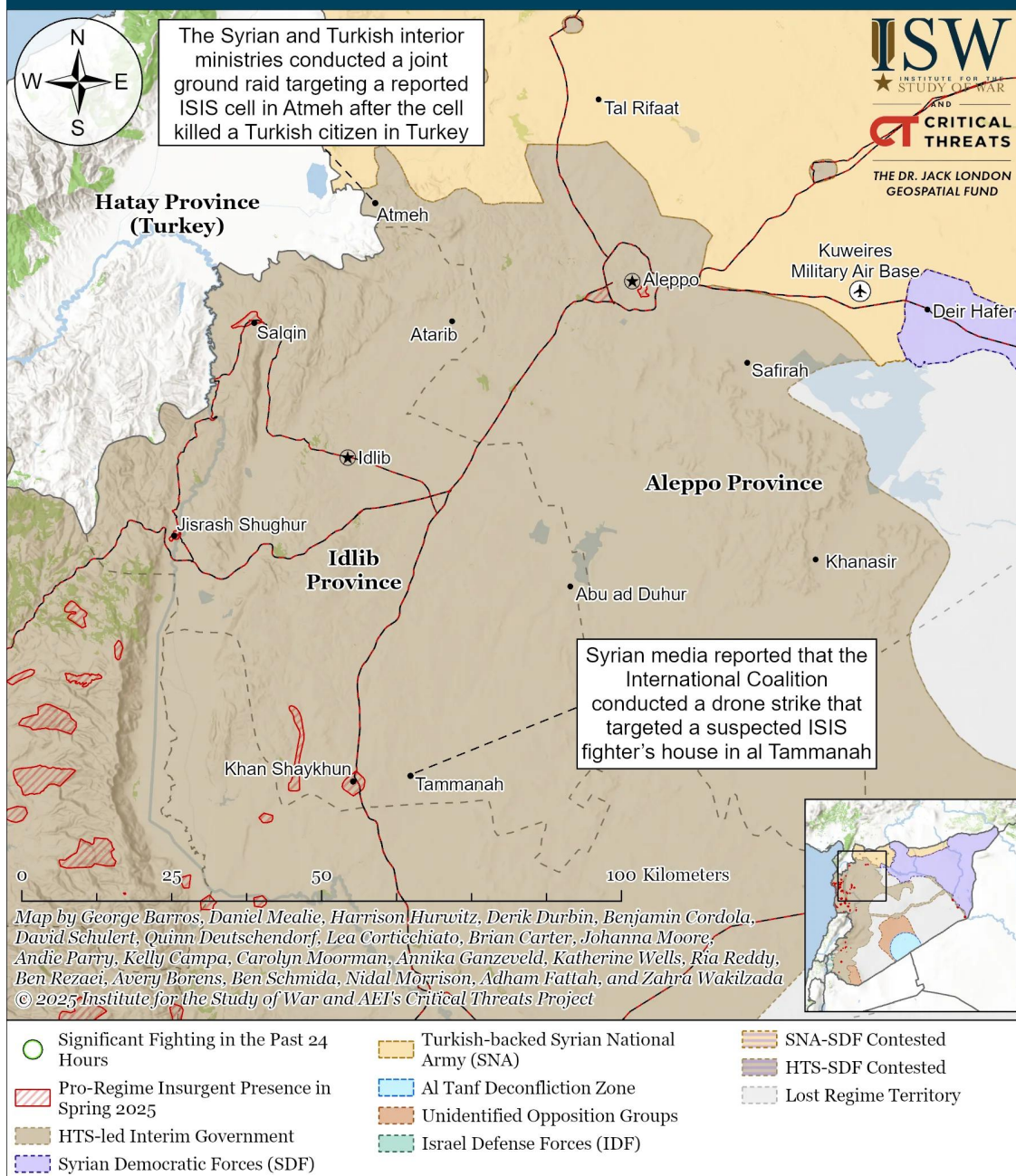
Qusayr, Homs Province.[59] A Syrian source assessed that this weapons cache was the largest cache that the GSS has seized since the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024.[60] The weapons shipment was likely intended for Hezbollah as the weapons were interdicted in Homs Province, which borders the Bekaa Valley, a Hezbollah stronghold in Lebanon. Hezbollah fired thousands of Grad rockets into northern Israel between October 2023 and November 2024 as part of its campaign against Israeli operations in the Gaza Strip.[61] Al Qusayr is also located along a well-established smuggling corridor that Hezbollah formerly operated with the Assad regime and Iranian-backed smugglers.[62]

Syrian media reported on September 28 that the International Coalition conducted a drone strike that targeted a suspected Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) fighter's house in southern Idlib Province.[63] Syrian media reported that an International Coalition drone killed the suspected fighter in his home in Tammanah, southern Idlib Province.[64] US Central Command (CENTCOM) has not claimed responsibility for the attack at the time of this writing. CENTCOM has conducted strikes targeting several ISIS fighters in northern Syria since the fall of Assad, including a drone strike on June 10 and a likely CENTCOM drone strike on September 4.[65] US forces also conducted ground raids that killed two ISIS leaders in northern Idlib Province on August 19 and southern Hama Province on September 19.[66]

The Turkish and Syrian interior ministries conducted a joint raid against a reported ISIS cell in Atmeh, Idlib Province, on September 28.[67] **Turkish forces participated in the raid after the ISIS cell killed a Turkish citizen in Turkey and fled across the border into Syria.**[68] The Turkish Interior Ministry announced on September 28 that a cell comprised of 14 ISIS members killed a Turkish citizen in Turkey, stole his vehicle, and then fled across the border to Atmeh.[69] Turkish and Syrian forces killed eight ISIS members and arrested six others, who were extradited to Turkey.[70] This joint counter-ISIS operation follows increased Syrian military cooperation with Turkey. Turkey began training Syrian MoD forces on September 9 after Turkey and Syria signed a security agreement in August.[71] US-led International Coalition forces and the Syrian GSS previously coordinated on a joint counter-ISIS raid in Atmeh, Idlib Province, on August 20, killing a senior Iraqi ISIS leader.[72]

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Arabian Peninsula

The Houthis launched a ballistic missile targeting several “sensitive” sites in the Tel Aviv-Jaffa area and two drones targeting “vital” sites in Eilat, southern Israel, on September 28.[73] The Israel Defense Forces intercepted the missile on September 28.[74] The Houthis have launched hundreds of drones and ballistic missiles targeting Israel since October 2023.[75]

The Houthis disabled a Dutch cargo ship, *MV Minervagracht*, with an anti-ship ballistic missile in the Gulf of Aden on September 29.[76] The missile attack injured two crew members and forced the crew to abandon the vessel 128 nautical miles southeast of Aden.[77] The Houthis have not claimed responsibility for the attack at the time of this writing. The Houthis previously launched a missile targeting *MV Minervagracht* on September 23 but failed to strike the vessel.[78] The Houthis have

targeted international shipping to impose an economic “blockade” on Israel since October 2023. The US Navy-run Joint Maritime Information Center stated that *MV Minervagracht* has no ties to Israel.[79]

Palestinian Territories & Lebanon

See topline section.

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Endnotes

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Iran Update, September 30, 2025



Ben Rezaei, Zahra Wakilzada, Benjamin Schmida, Carolyn Moorman, Adham Fattah, Avery Borens, Andie Parry, Brian Carter

Toplines

Senior Iranian officials appear to be preparing for potential military conflict. Iranian officials continue to believe that the current ceasefire between Israel and Iran will collapse and fighting will resume at some point in the future. Iranian Deputy Interior Minister for Security and Law Enforcement and National Security Council (NSC) Secretary Ali Akbar Pour Jamshidian stated on September 27 that the Supreme National Security Council (SCNC) had directed all Iranian military and civilian officials to designate several successors to ensure continuity of governance in the event of leadership disruption.[1] Pour Jamshidian added that the Interior Ministry adopted the same decision and designated several individuals, down to provincial governors, as successors within the Interior Ministry.[2] The SNSC rejected Pour Jamshidian's statement on September 27 and denied holding any meeting on this issue.[3] The SNSC likely pursued succession planning as a part of the Iranian government's attempts to amend issues it faced during the 12-day war, including those posed by the Israeli decapitation campaign that targeted senior Iranian officials. Israeli strikes destroyed the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force command bunker on June 13 and killed senior IRGC commanders.[4] The death of these commanders disrupted Iran's command-and-control and made responding to Israeli attacks extremely difficult.[5] The SNSC's succession planning also comes after Khamenei's absence during the war, which prevented his principal subordinates from reaching him for rapid decisions.[6] Khamenei also reportedly named three senior clerics as potential successors during the war and directed the Iranian Assembly of Experts to choose from those clerics to ensure an orderly wartime transition.[7] The rare decision to take steps to ensure a smooth succession suggests that senior officials have already considered succession plans, even before the SNSC's reported order.

Senior Iranian military commanders also continue to inspect military and air defense units across Iran. Khatam ol Anbia Air Defense Headquarters Commander Brigadier General Alireza Sabahi Fard inspected the Dezful Air Defense Group on September 29 and assessed its combat readiness.[8] Armed Forces General Staff Chief Major General Abdol Rahim Mousavi separately inspected Artesh and IRGC naval, commando, and aviation units in Hormozgan Province on September 30.[9] Mousavi assessed the capabilities of different units, met with commanders and personnel, and emphasized that both navies have achieved full readiness "for a possible future conflict." [10]

Iran Update

September 30, 2025

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Region in Focus

The United Kingdom imposed sanctions on over 70 Iranian individuals and organizations linked to Iran's nuclear program following the UNSC's reimposition of snapback sanctions.

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- 1 Iran.** Senior Iranian officials appear to be preparing for potential military conflict. Iranian officials continue to believe that the current ceasefire between Israel and Iran will collapse and fighting will resume at some point in the future. Senior Iranian military commanders also continue to inspect military and air defense units across Iran.
- 2 Iran.** Iran's worsening water and energy crisis could gradually increase the Iranian public's frustrations with the regime and compound existing challenges to regime legitimacy. The Karaj Dam's water reserves decreased from 111 million cubic meters to 28 million cubic meters between September 2024 and September 2025, making the dam incapable of generating electricity for Tehran.
- 3 Iraq.** Iraqi National Security Advisor Qasim al Araj said on September 30 that Iraq would take "all necessary measures" to prevent Israel from using Iraqi airspace to attack Iran, during a meeting with Iranian Armed Forces Intelligence head Brigadier General Sayyed Majid Mirahmadi in Baghdad. Iranian-backed Iraqi politicians and militia figures have long called on the Iraqi federal government to adopt policies that would restrict the United States and Israel's ability to fly through Iraqi airspace.

Key Takeaways

- Iranian Succession Planning:** Senior Iranian officials appear to be preparing for potential military conflict. Iranian officials continue to believe that the current ceasefire between Israel and Iran will collapse and fighting will resume at some point in the future. Senior Iranian military commanders also continue to inspect military and air defense units across Iran.
- Iranian Water and Energy Crisis:** Iran's worsening water and energy crisis could gradually increase the Iranian public's frustrations with the regime and compound existing challenges to regime legitimacy. The Karaj Dam's water reserves decreased from 111 million cubic meters to 28 million cubic meters between September 2024 and September 2025, making the dam incapable of generating electricity for Tehran.
- Iraqi Airspace Superiority:** Iraqi National Security Advisor Qasim al Araj said on September 30

that Iraq would take “all necessary measures” to prevent Israel from using Iraqi airspace to attack Iran, during a meeting with Iranian Armed Forces Intelligence head Brigadier General Sayyed Majid Mirahmadi in Baghdad. Iranian-backed Iraqi politicians and militia figures have long called on the Iraqi federal government to adopt policies that would restrict the United States and Israel’s ability to fly through Iraqi airspace.

Iran

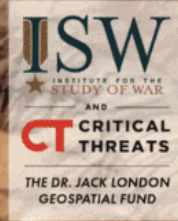
Iran’s worsening water and energy crisis could gradually increase the Iranian public’s frustrations with the regime and compound existing challenges to regime legitimacy. The Karaj Dam’s water reserves decreased from 111 million cubic meters to 28 million cubic meters between September 2024 and September 2025, making the dam incapable of generating electricity for Tehran. The dam is currently only 15 percent full. The Karaj Dam is one of five dams that supply Tehran with drinking water. CTP assessed in August 2025 that the regime will likely not be able to meaningfully improve its water crisis if it does not address underlying issues, including mismanagement and unsustainable development.[11] The water and electricity shortages reflect the regime’s inability to meet the basic needs of its citizens, which could generate potential internal instability.

Critically-low Water Levels in Tehran Reservoirs

SEP 24
2024

AUG 01
2025

SEP 29
2025



Karaj Reservoir

Lar Reservoir

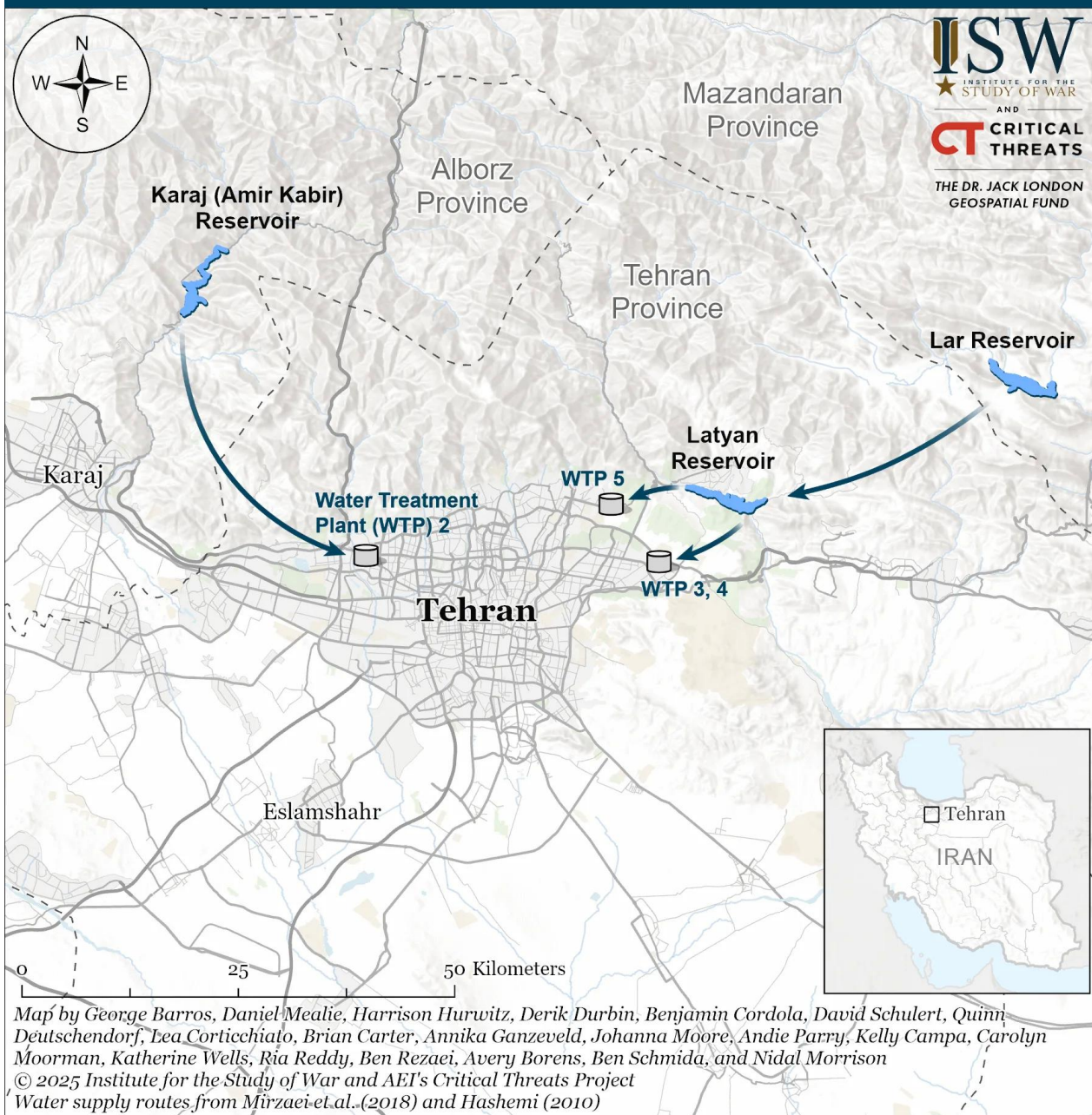
Latyan Reservoir

Note: Scale may vary
Images © PlanetLabs



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Water Supply from Reservoirs Near Tehran City September 30, 2025



Source: Hashemi Mukhtar and Roya Mirzaei et al.[12]

The United Kingdom imposed sanctions on over 70 Iranian individuals and organizations linked to Iran's nuclear program on September 30 after the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) reimposed snapback sanctions on September 27.[13] The United Kingdom froze the assets of Iranian banks, such as Bank Sepah and Bank Melli, that have supported Iran's defense industry.[14] Iranian banks reportedly held at least 1.9 billion euros in assets in Europe, with a large part being in the UK, as of March 2024.[15] UK sanctions also targeted Iranian oil, nuclear engineering, and shipping companies that contribute to the funding of and projects for Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC).[16] The United Kingdom imposed sanctions after the European Union imposed similar sanctions on September 29 that are designed to politically and economically isolate Iran due to its failure to fulfill its obligations under the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).[17]

Iraq

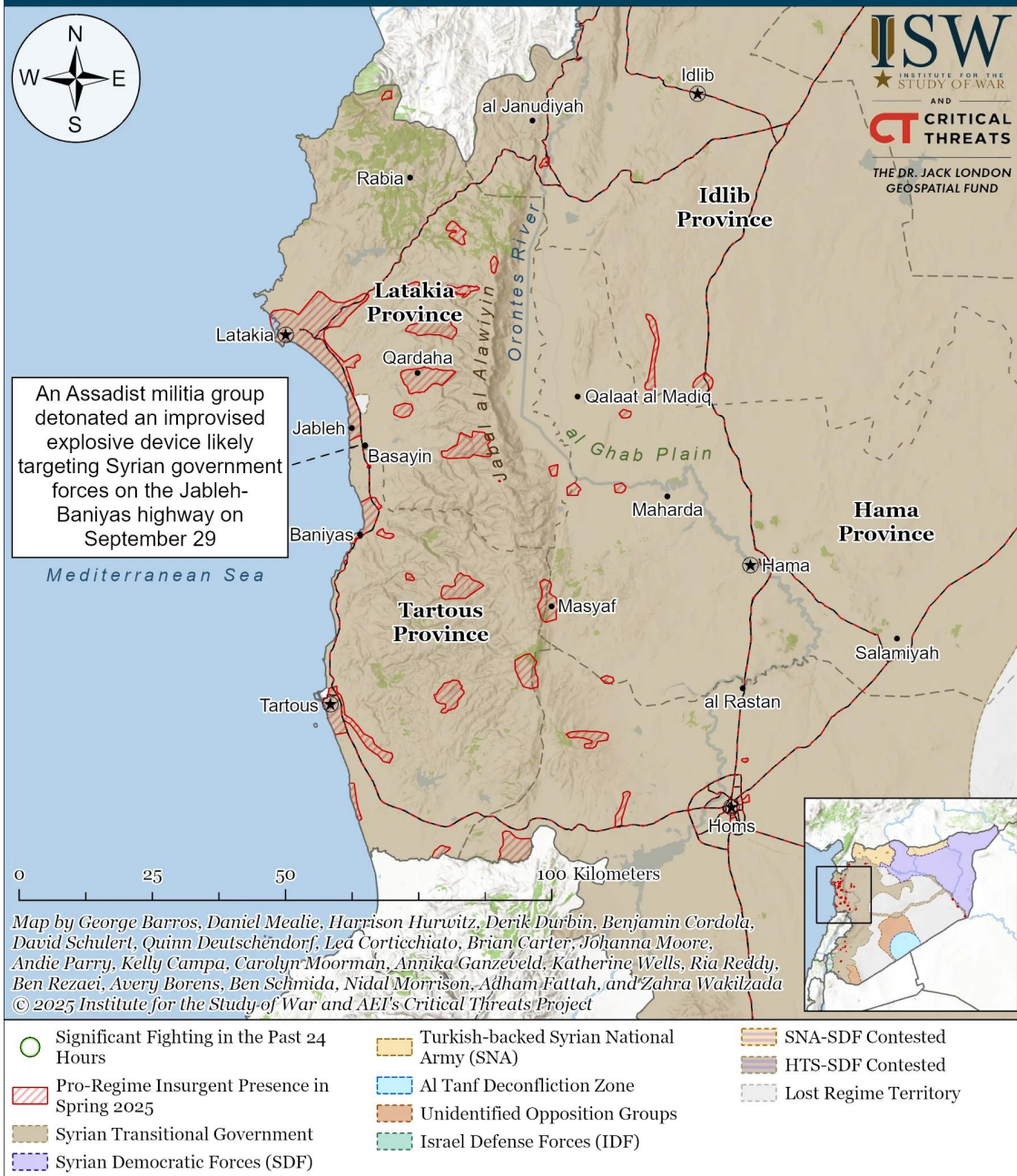
Iraqi National Security Advisor Qasim al Araj said on **September 30** that Iraq would take “all necessary measures” to prevent Israel from using Iraqi airspace to attack Iran, during a meeting with Iranian Armed Forces Intelligence head **Brigadier General Sayyed Majid Mirahmadi in Baghdad**.^[18] Iranian-backed Iraqi politicians and militia figures have long called on the Iraqi federal government to adopt policies that would restrict the United States and Israel’s ability to fly through Iraqi airspace.^[19] Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu discussed potential Russian involvement in the development of Iraqi air defenses with senior Iraqi officials in mid-September, but CTP-ISW assessed that those discussions are unlikely to translate into Iraqi air defense purchases from Russia due to Russian constraints related to its war against Ukraine.^[20] Iraq lacks the capabilities to stop Israeli F-35s, though improved air defenses could theoretically challenge Israel’s ability to operate other aircraft in the area if the Israelis did not strike the air defenses.

Syria

An Assadist militia detonated its third roadside improvised explosive device (IED) targeting Syrian government forces on September 29. Rijal al Nour, Saraya al Jawad (Men of Light, Jawad Company) detonated a roadside IED on a likely government position near Besayasin, Latakia Province, on September 29.^[21] None of Rijal al Nour’s three IED attacks, including the September 29 attack, caused casualties.^[22] Rijal al Nour said that it conducted the attack in revenge for the killing of four Alawite construction workers in Jardin, Hama Province, on September 28.^[23] The General Security Service (GSS) arrested three unidentified individuals responsible for the murders on September 30, however.^[24] Rijal al Nour’s consistent failure to inflict casualties on government forces with roadside IED attacks suggests that the group lacks explosives expertise. Rijal al Nour’s attacks, rhetoric, goals, and iconography indicate that the group aims to restore Assad-era political and economic structures.^[25] Many militia groups supported the Assad regime to advance their political and economic interests and have since sought to preserve these benefits or restore the regime’s power structures (if not Assad or his family) after the regime’s collapse in December 2024.

Assessed Control of Terrain in Western Syria

September 30, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET



Arabian Peninsula

Nothing significant to report.

Palestinian Territories & Lebanon

The Lebanese government will provide new benefits to active and retired military personnel and the families of deceased soldiers. The Lebanese government signed a decree on September 30 to provide two financial grants to active-duty military personnel, retirees receiving pensions, and families of military martyrs in September and October.[26] Active-duty military personnel will receive approximately \$156 USD a month, while retirees and families will receive \$133 USD a month.[27] LAF

veterans protested in Beirut on September 17 against poor pension payments and limited benefits.[28] The protestors emphasized that the protest was a "warning message" and that "subsequential steps" would follow if the Lebanese government did not improve the financial situation for LAF personnel.[29]

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Iran Update, October 1, 2025



Ben Rezaei, Kelly Campa, Nidal Morrison, Benjamin Schmida, Adham Fattah, Katherine Wells, Zahra Wakilzada, Andie Parry, Brian Carter

Toplines

The Iranian regime appears to be trying to mitigate internal economic pressure by taking steps to remove itself from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) blacklist, which currently hampers Iran's access to the international financial system. FATF is the global body that sets international standards to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.[2] The FATF blacklisted Iran in February 2020 for failing to implement anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing policies. An FATF blacklist designation requires all FATF member states to sanction and restrict international financial interactions with Iran.[3] The Iranian Expediency Discernment Council approved Iran's accession to the Combating the Financing of Terrorism (CFT) convention on October 1, which is the final convention required for Iran to exit the FATF blacklist.[4] The Expediency Discernment Council approved Iran's accession to the other required convention, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, in May 2025.[5] The CFT is a set of international policies and measures that prevent terrorist groups from accessing and using financial resources.[6] The Expediency Council is an administrative assembly appointed by the Supreme Leader to resolve differences between the Iranian Parliament and the Guardian Council.[7] Sadegh Amoli Larijani, who is Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Larijani's brother, heads the Expediency Discernment Council. Amoli Larijani has historically opposed Iran joining the FATF, but Ali Larijani and other pragmatic figures, such as former President Hassan Rouhani, have supported taking actions to remove Iran from the FATF blacklist.[8] Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian previously stated in September 2024 that his government has "no choice but to resolve FATF" and emphasized that addressing the FATF designation is essential to improving Iran's economy.[9] It is very unlikely that Iran will halt financial support for the Axis of Resistance, which makes its removal from the blacklist doubtful even if it has adopted international treaties on transnational crime and terrorist financing. Iranian officials have repeatedly framed support of the Axis of Resistance as a core national security policy.

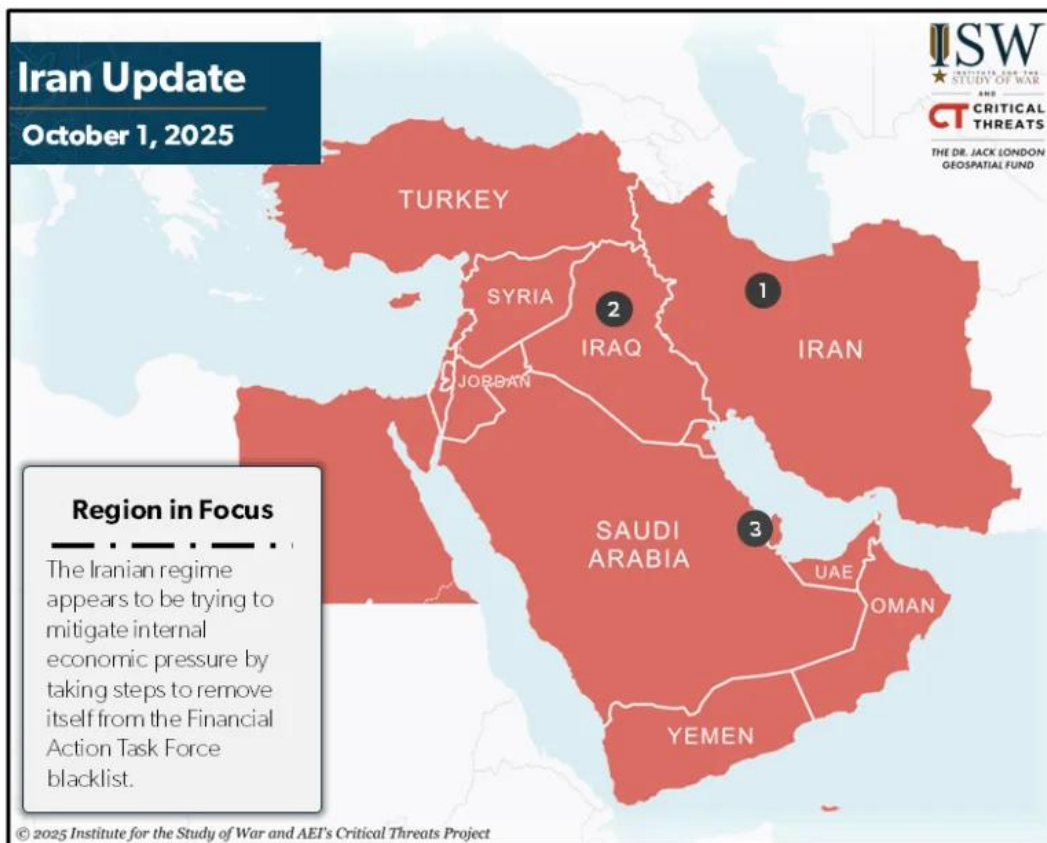
The Expediency Discernment Council may have also advanced CFT accession to calm Iran's domestic markets, which have faced sharp currency depreciation following the reimposition of UN Security Council snapback sanctions on September 27.[10] The European Union (EU) also reimposed sanctions on Iran on September 29 that it had lifted under the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).[11] Several Iranian officials framed the reimposition of snapback sanctions as "psychological warfare" against Iran and downplayed the sanctions' economic impact.[12] These remarks come after four unspecified Iranian officials and two unspecified "insiders" told Reuters on September 27 that the reimposition of sanctions will deepen Iran's economic isolation and fuel public anger.[13] The Iranian rial lost 14.5 percent of its value after the E3 (the United Kingdom, France, and Germany) triggered snapback sanctions on August

28, falling from 1,013,000 rials to a US dollar to its lowest value at 1,160,000 rials on October 1.[14]

The US Department of Defense announced on September 30 that it reduced the US military presence in Iraq.[15] The United States and Iraq agreed in September 2024 that hundreds of US forces would withdraw from Iraq by September 2025 and that remaining forces would withdraw by the end of 2026.[16] The Department of Defense said that the mission reduction is “an effort to transition to a lasting US-Iraq security partnership.”[17] An unspecified US official told Reuters on September 30 that the United States will reduce its military personnel from 2,500 to less than 2,000, most of whom will be redeployed to the Iraqi Kurdistan Region from federal Iraq.[18] The official added that the United States is in the process of transferring control of Ain al Asad Airbase in Anbar Province to the Iraqi federal government.[19] A Shia Coordination Framework member said on October 1 that the framework “welcomes” the Department of Defense’s announcement.[20] The Shia Coordination Framework is a loose coalition of Iraqi Shia parties, most of which Iran backs. A US Embassy in Baghdad spokesperson characterized the force reduction as a transition to a “more traditional bilateral security partnership.”[21] Iranian-backed Iraqi militias have repeatedly threatened to attack US forces if the United States postpones its military withdrawal from Iraq.[22] Iranian-backed Iraqi militias have not responded to the Department of Defense’s announcement at the time of this writing.

US President Donald Trump issued an executive order on September 29 declaring that the United States will consider “any armed attack” on Qatar as a “threat to the peace and security” of the United States.[23] President Trump’s executive order also obligates the United States to take all “appropriate” measures, including “diplomatic, economic, and, if necessary, military” measures to defend US and Qatari interests.”[24] Qatar is a major non-NATO US ally, which provides it with military and economic privileges but does not entail any security commitments from the United States.[25] Trump’s order marks the most significant declaration of US commitment to defend Qatar since 1992 and follows Israel’s September 9 strikes on Hamas leaders in Doha.[26] Both the United States and Qatar have expressed their public dissatisfaction with Israel for its strikes in Qatar. The largest US military base in the Middle East is in Qatar.[27] Trump’s executive order comes shortly after US Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced that Qatar and the United States are finalizing an “enhanced defense cooperation agreement” during a trip to Doha on September 16.[28] The United States and Qatar have concluded several defense cooperation agreements since 1992 that have addressed US military access to Qatari facilities, US training of Qatari forces, and US arms sales to Qatar.[29] None of these agreements, including the Trump executive order, explicitly commits the United States to defending Qatar from external attacks with military force.

Trump renewed the United States’ commitment to defend Qatar on the same day that he publicized his 20-point plan for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.[30] Qatar, which had acted as the primary mediator between Hamas on one hand and Israel and the United States on the other from Fall 2023 to early September 2025, suspended its role as a mediator following Israel’s strikes on Doha.[31] Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al Thani announced on September 30 that Qatar would return to its role as mediator after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called him and apologized on September 29 for striking Hamas leaders in Doha.[32] Thani confirmed on October 1 that Doha had passed Trump’s ceasefire plan to Hamas negotiators.[33]



- 1 **TEHRAN, IRAN.** The Iranian regime appears to be trying to mitigate internal economic pressure by taking steps to remove itself from the Financial Action Task Force blacklist, which currently hampers Iran's access to the international financial system. It is very unlikely that Iran will halt financial support for the Axis of Resistance, which makes its removal from the blacklist doubtful even if it has adopted international treaties on transnational crime and terrorist financing.
- 2 **BAGHDAD, IRAQ.** The US Department of Defense announced on September 30 that it reduced the US military presence in Iraq. A US Embassy in Baghdad spokesperson characterized the force reduction as a transition to a "more traditional bilateral security partnership."
- 3 **DOHA, QATAR.** US President Donald Trump issued an executive order on September 29 declaring that the United States will consider "any armed attack" on Qatar as a "threat to the peace and security" of the United States. Qatar is already a major non-NATO US ally, which provides it with military and economic privileges but did not entail any security commitments from the United States prior to Trump's executive order.

Key Takeaways

1. **Iran's Access to Global Markets:** The Iranian regime appears to be trying to mitigate internal economic pressure by taking steps to remove itself from the Financial Action Task Force blacklist, which currently hampers Iran's access to the international financial system. It is very unlikely that Iran will halt financial support for the Axis of Resistance, which makes its removal from the blacklist doubtful even if it has adopted international treaties on transnational crime and terrorist financing.
2. **US Forces in Iraq:** The US Department of Defense announced on September 30 that it reduced the US military presence in Iraq. A US Embassy in Baghdad spokesperson characterized the force reduction as a transition to a "more traditional bilateral security partnership."
3. **US-Qatar Relations:** US President Donald Trump issued an executive order on September 29 declaring that the United States will consider "any armed attack" on Qatar as a "threat to the

peace and security” of the United States. Qatar is already a major non-NATO US ally, which provides it with military and economic privileges but did not entail any security commitments from the United States prior to Trump’s executive order.

Iran

The Iranian Guardian Council ratified a law on October 1 to harshen punishments for espionage and cooperation with Israel and other “hostile countries.”[34] The Iranian parliament approved the bill on June 29.[35] The Guardian Council ratified another law on October 1 to regulate non-military drones. The Iranian parliament likely passed these bills in an attempt to address counterintelligence concerns and protect against drone attacks after the Israel-Iran War.[36] Israel smuggled small drones into Iran and then launched them from secret locations to target Iranian ballistic missile infrastructure in the opening hours of the Israel-Iran War.[37] The Iranian regime has arrested hundreds of purported “Israeli spies” since the beginning of the Israel-Iran War to address the regime’s fear of real and perceived Israeli penetration in Iran.[38]

A high-ranking Iranian delegation may have briefly visited Minsk, Belarus, on September 30. An Iranian media outlet shared Flight Radar screenshots that show a plane registered to the Iranian regime departed Minsk on October 1, flying toward Iran.[39] Unverified social media posts claimed that Iranian Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Secretary Ali Larijani may have been aboard the plane as part of an Iranian delegation to Minsk.[40] The SNSC is a body responsible for deciding Iran’s national security and defense policies within the stated intent of the supreme leader.[41] Iranian regime-affiliated media did not confirm the diplomatic visit.[42] Larijani’s travel could be related to earlier agreements between the two countries. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian signed 12 memoranda of understanding on bilateral trade and military technology cooperation with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko on August 20.[43] Iran seeks Belarusian help to restore Iranian air defense systems and electronic warfare equipment that Israel damaged during the Israel-Iran War, according to an August 2025 Ukrainian Foreign Intelligence Service assessment.[44]

The United States sanctioned 22 entities and 22 individuals on October 1 for supporting Iran’s defense industry and nuclear and missile programs. The US sanctions come after the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) reimposed snapback sanctions on Iran on September 27. The US Treasury Department sanctioned 21 entities and 17 individuals involved in the acquisition of goods and technology for Iran’s Defense and Armed Forces Logistics Ministry and for supporting Iran’s missile and military aircraft production.[45] The State Department sanctioned five other individuals and one other entity.[46] The US Treasury Department sanctioned the following entities, among others:

- **Beh Joule Pars Commercial Engineering Company:** This company coordinates the procurement of accelerometers, gyroscopes, and microelectromechanical system components for entities that are subordinate to the Aerospace Industries Organization (AIO), including the Shahid Hemmat Space Group. AIO oversees Iran’s ballistic missile program.[47]
- **Tamin Sanat Amen Company:** This company is subordinate to Beh Joule Pars and operates in Iran’s oil, gas, petrochemical, and steel manufacturing sectors.
- **Abzar-e Daghigh-e Taha Company:** This company procures gyroscopes and provides services to the Shahid Bagheri Industrial Group (SBIG), which is subordinate to AIO.
- **Pasargad Helicopter Company (PHC):** This company has attempted to procure American helicopters and spare parts for the Iran Helicopter Support and Renewal Company (PANHA).[48]

The United States sanctioned PANHA in 2018 for providing maintenance, overhaul, and manufacturing support for military helicopters used by the Iranian armed forces.[49]

The US State Department separately sanctioned five Iranian individuals and one Iranian entity affiliated with Iran's Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research (SPND) on October 1.[50] The SPND played a leading role in Iran's nuclear weapons research program before 2003. [51]

Iraq

See topline section.

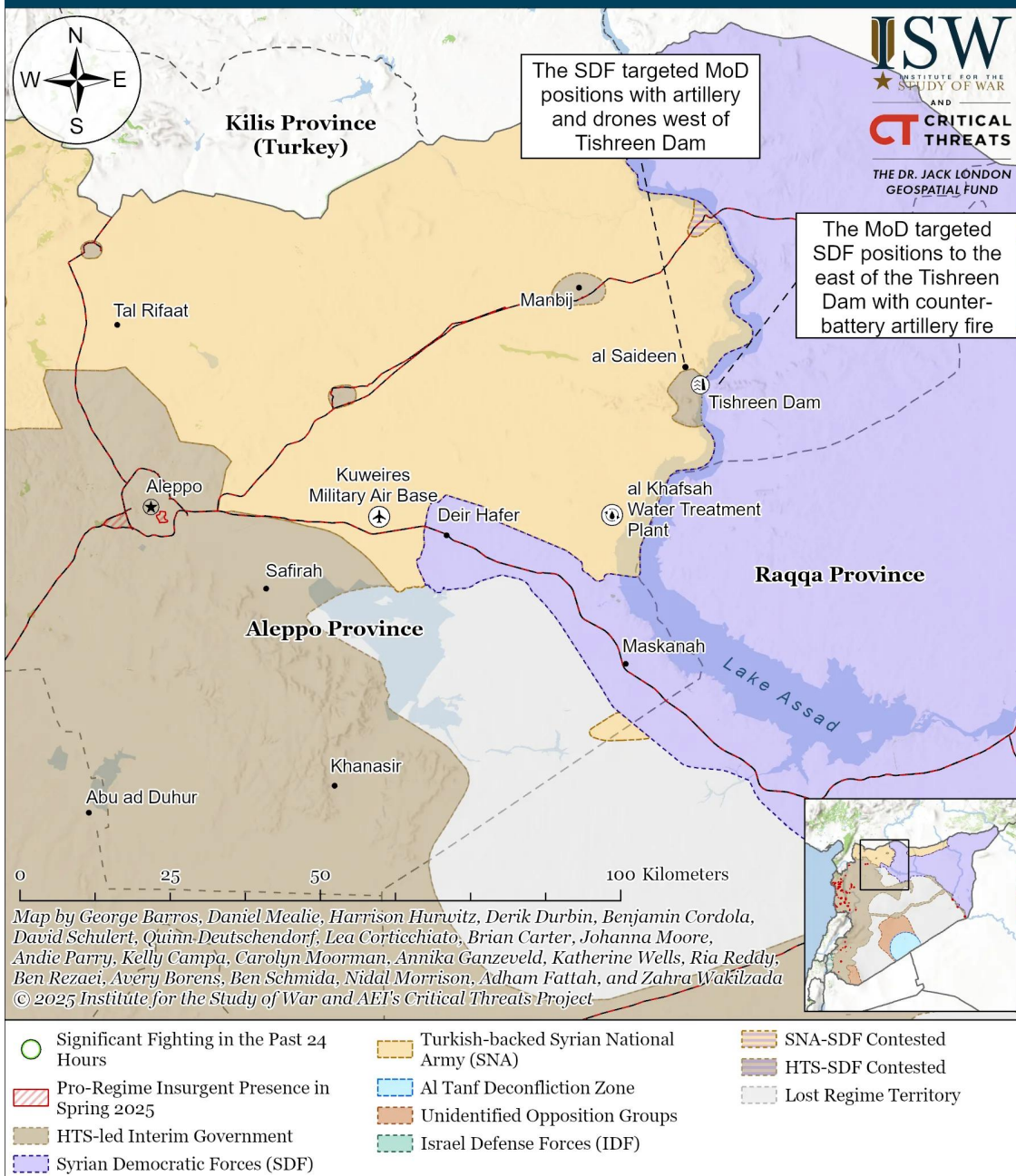
Syria

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that Turkey is waiting for the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the Syrian government to reach a diplomatic solution on integration amid reports that Turkey deployed military assets near SDF-government frontlines in Aleppo Province.[52] Erdogan said on October 1 that Turkey will "preserve Syria's territorial integrity" — which is a euphemism for military action against the Kurdish-dominated SDF — if the Syrian transitional government and the SDF fail to complete an integration agreement.[53] Erdogan added that "if diplomatic initiatives are left unanswered, Turkey's policy and position are clear," which is presumably a reference to Turkish military intervention in Syria.[54] Erdogan's comments on Syria follow reports that Turkey deployed military assets to Kuweires Airbase in Aleppo Province on September 28.[55] The new assets included bridge layers long enough to cross some narrow sections of the Euphrates River, but Kuweires is relatively far from the river and an unlikely place to stow the bridgelaying equipment because it is less than ten kilometers from the frontline. Turkish officials have repeatedly threatened military action against the SDF as integration negotiations between the two sides have stalled.[56] The Turkish Defense Ministry said that SDF engagements with the Syrian Ministry of Defense (MoD) are a threat to "regional peace and stability" on September 25.[57]

SDF and MoD forces exchanged artillery fire near Tishreen Dam, Aleppo Province, on October 1.[58] Both sides blamed the other for initiating the engagement.[59] Syrian state media reported that the SDF targeted MoD positions to the west of the Tishreen Dam with artillery and drones on October 1.[60] A local source reported that MoD counter-battery fire targeted SDF positions east of Tishreen Dam.[61] The SDF released a statement on October 1 that accused the MoD of targeting the Tishreen Dam with artillery, which reportedly hit the dam itself and nearby civilian homes.[62] No casualties have been reported at the time of writing. The SDF and MoD last engaged each other near Tishreen Dam on September 22.[63]

Assessed Control of Terrain around Aleppo

October 1, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET



Arabian Peninsula

The Houthis launched a drone targeting Eilat, southern Israel, on October 1.[64] The Israel Defense Forces intercepted a drone from Yemen on October 1.[65] The Houthis have not claimed responsibility for the drone attack at the time of this writing. The Houthis have launched hundreds of drones and ballistic missiles targeting Israel since October 2023.[66]

The Houthis claimed responsibility on September 30 for a cruise missile attack targeting the Dutch-flagged and owned cargo ship *MV Minervagracht* in the Gulf of Aden.[67] The Houthis disabled the Dutch cargo ship and injured two of its crew on September 29.[68] The Houthis have targeted international shipping to impose an economic “blockade” on Israel since October 2023.

Palestinian Territories & Lebanon

See topline section.

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Iran Update, October 2, 2025



Ben Rezaei, Adham Fattah, Kelly Campa, Zahra Wakilzada, Avery Borens, Brian Carter

Toplines

Former Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy Commander Hossein Alaei emphasized the role that Iran’s ballistic missile capabilities and national unity played in its “success” during the Israel-Iran War in June 2025.[1] Alaei claimed that Iran demonstrated the strength of its ballistic missiles and national unity during the war in an interview with Nour News on October 1.[2] Alaei claimed that Iran’s demonstration of these strengths caused the United States and Israel to call for a ceasefire.[3] Alaei also claimed that Iranian missiles became more precise throughout the war and that no segment of the Iranian population chose to side with Israel in support of internal division.[4] Alaei’s reflections almost certainly reflect only some segments of the regime’s national security community, and CTP-ISW cannot determine whether Alaei’s statements are reflective of a broader trend in Iranian strategic thought or if it is isolated to only a small number of thinkers.

Alaei’s statements regarding Iran’s ballistic missiles and national unity suggest that some elements of the regime’s national security community believe that the regime has enough domestic support to engage in a prolonged conflict with Israel and could inflict more damage through continued missile strikes.[5] These reflections indicate that some Iranian officials believe that at least some elements of its previous efforts to deter and defend against Israeli strikes could be successful in the future, presumably with some modifications. Israel accomplished its campaign objectives—the degradation of Iran’s nuclear and ballistic missile programs—in the Israel-Iran War, but it needed to end the war rapidly and at a moment of its own choosing.[6] Israel forced Iran to rapidly end the war by creating the perception of a credible existential threat to the Iranian regime.[7] Israel struck Iranian institutions and other assets used by the Iranian regime to ensure regime stability.[8] A series of strikes against these institutions and assets that the Israelis design to demonstrate a credible threat to the regime’s stability could be expanded or contracted depending on how the regime responds and Israel’s desire for a ceasefire. Israel calculated that the Iranian regime’s overwhelming interest in ensuring regime survival would compel it to agree to a ceasefire. Alaei appears to be implying that the war illustrated that, in the future, Iranian missiles could be more successful if Israeli interceptor stockpiles are depleted. Alaei also suggests that national unity would have sustained a longer war, but it is unclear if expanded Israeli strikes would change Iranian calculations about regime stability.

Alaei’s assumptions that the ballistic missile attack campaign and national unity were part of Iran’s “success” seem to disregard the reality that Israeli operations did not intend to collapse the regime or even seriously threaten it. Israel only aimed to demonstrate its military capability to destroy Iran’s ability

to control its population. Israel retains that capability, and as noted above, could decide to expand or contract its military campaign against regime targets and threaten regime stability as it deems necessary to accomplish its objectives.

Alaei also emphasized that Iran can strike the United States and Israel due to its geographic position in the Persian Gulf.[9] Alaei described Iran's location in the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman as the security and military "center of gravity of the region." Alaei's statement may be attempting to highlight the potential threat that Iran could pose to US forces and allied partners.[10] The IRGC Navy has historically harassed commercial and military vessels in the Persian Gulf to signal its ability to disrupt maritime traffic and pressure the United States and its partners.[11]

Notably, Nour News chose to interview Alaei as the first guest in its new "Pathway" series, given that Alaei has historically criticized the regime and Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. Nour News is affiliated with the Iranian Supreme Leader Adviser to the Defense Council, Ali Shamkhani. Alaei served as the first IRGC Navy Commander from 1985 to 1990 and later as IRGC chief of staff from 1997 to 1999.[12] Shamkhani similarly served as the IRGC Navy Commander from 1990 to 1997 and then as Defense and Armed Forces Logistics Minister from 1997 and 2005.[13] Shamkhani would have probably coordinated with Alaei in both roles. Alaei has repeatedly challenged the regime's policies, including in his 2009 letter about the regime's prison abuses, a 2011 editorial that indirectly criticized Khamenei, and his opposition to Iran's support for former Syrian President Bashar al Assad.[14] Alaei also publicly sympathized with anti-regime protesters in 2020 and suggested abolishing Iran's morality patrol.[15] Alaei's criticism of the regime was underscored in his interview with Nour News. Alaei noted that both Iranian reformists and hardliners had managed the nuclear file but emphasized that all negotiations occurred under the Supreme Leader's supervision, placing ultimate responsibility on Khamenei.[16] Alaei dismissed Iran's foreign policy as no better than "acceptable" on the nuclear issue, which implicitly faulted Khamenei for the failure to achieve a resolution.[17]

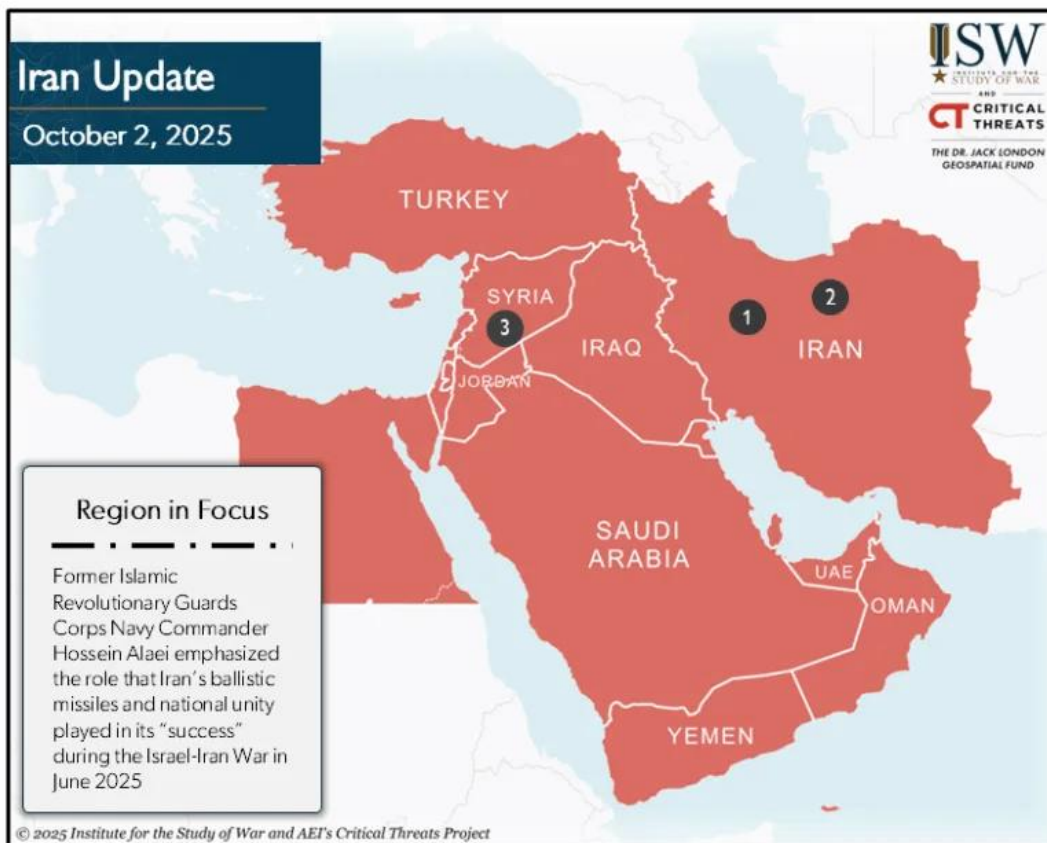
Iran is attempting to improve and fix vulnerabilities in its air defense systems that Israel exploited during the Israel-Iran War. An Iranian Armed Forces General Staff (AFGS)-controlled outlet reported on October 1 that the Iranian army has replaced and strengthened its air defense systems and short-range air defenses to counter drones.[18] It is unclear what type of short-range systems the Iranians have strengthened or whether these systems include electronic warfare systems. The outlet also claimed that Iran is attempting to acquire HQ-9 long-range surface-to-air missile (SAMs) batteries to counter Israeli F-35 fighter jets. Iranian Parliamentary National Security and Foreign Policy Commission head Abolfazl Zohrevand previously claimed in September 2025 that the People's Republic of China (PRC) would supply Iran with HQ-9 SAMs.[19] CTP-ISW has observed no evidence that the PRC delivered these systems. It is unlikely that an HQ-9 SAM could shoot down an F-35 fighter jet, however.[20] Israel destroyed the target engagement radars of four Russian S-300s, which bear technical similarities to Chinese HQ-9 SAMs, in Iran in April and October 2024.[21] The IRGC Ground Forces also conducted an air defense drill in its eastern air defense zone south of Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province, on October 2 to bolster its air defenses.[22] Iran conducted a similar exercise in northwestern Iran on September 24.[23]

Senior Syrian and Russian defense officials have continued to discuss possible defense cooperation, signaling a possible shift towards deeper Syrian-Russian defense relations. Syrian Chief of the General Staff Major General Ali al Naasan, Assistant Defense Minister for the Northern Region Brigadier General Fahim Issa, Air Force Commander Brigadier General Assem al Hawari, Navy Commander Brigadier General Mohammad al Saud, 52nd Division Commander Brigadier General Haitham

al Ali, and other Syrian officials arrived in Moscow on October 2 to discuss “coordination mechanisms” with Russian defense officials.[24] The inclusion of Fahim Issa, who is responsible for northern Syria, suggests that the two parties discussed the remaining Russian presence in Syria, particularly in Qamishli, Syria, which is surrounded by Kurdish-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)-controlled territory. Fahim Issa is a Syrian Turkmen ethno-nationalist who is extremely hostile to Kurds and the SDF.[25] Issa is also close to Turkish ethno-nationalists aligned with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.[26] Turkey has threatened to attack the SDF if the SDF fails to integrate with the Syrian state before December 31, 2025.[27]

The Syrian Defense Ministry’s visit to Russia suggests that Syrian officials may seek to increase military cooperation with Russia in the coming months, possibly through the exchange of military expertise. The Syrian delegation visited the Russian military’s Central National Military Park near Kubinka, Moscow Oblast, and viewed Russian air defense systems, reconnaissance and fixed-wing attack drones, anti-tank guided missiles, and armored vehicles.[28] Russia is currently facing a serious materiel shortage, and its commitment to fighting in Ukraine will take priority over arms exports to Syria, despite previous Syrian interest in procuring Russian equipment.[29] Syrian officials may seek to increase cooperation with Russia to learn from the Russian military, however.

The Syrian defense officials’ visit to Moscow comes amid an increased number of high-level meetings between Syrian and Russian defense officials in the past month.[30] The topics discussed and officials present at other recent Syria-Russia meetings also suggest that Syria may be interested in establishing more direct military cooperation with Russia in the coming months. The Syrian Air Force Training Department head, Brigadier General Yahya Bitar, and representatives from the Defense Ministry’s training, artillery, and armor departments met with a Russian military delegation in Syria on October 2.[31] The delegations discussed ways to “develop these specialties,” presumably referring to developing the Syrian army’s training, artillery, and armor capabilities and readiness.[32] Syrian President Ahmed al Shara is expected to travel to Moscow on October 15 for the Arab-Russian summit, during which Syrian and Russian officials may continue to discuss the two countries’ relations.[33]



- 1 IRAN.** Former Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy Commander Hossein Alaei emphasized in an interview with Nour News the role that Iran's ballistic missile capabilities and national unity played in its "success" during the Israel-Iran War in June 2025. Alaei's statements suggest the regime believes that it has enough domestic support to engage in a prolonged conflict with Israel and could inflict more damage through continued missile strikes in the future.
- 2 IRAN.** Iran is attempting to improve and fix vulnerabilities in its air defense systems that Israel exploited during the Israel-Iran War. An Iranian Armed Forces General Staff (AFGS)-controlled outlet reported on October 1 that the Iranian army has replaced and strengthened its air defense systems and short-range air defenses to counter drones.
- 3 SYRIA.** Senior Syrian and Russian defense officials have continued to discuss possible defense cooperation, signaling a possible shift towards deeper Syrian-Russian defense relations. Syrian officials' visit to Moscow on October 2 suggest that Syria may seek to increase military cooperation with Russia in the coming months, possibly through the exchange of military expertise.

Key Takeaways

- 1. Iranian Strategic Re-Think:** Former Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy Commander Hossein Alaei emphasized in an interview with Nour News the role that Iran's ballistic missile capabilities and national unity played in its "success" during the Israel-Iran War in June 2025. Alaei's statements suggest the regime believes that it has enough domestic support to engage in a prolonged conflict with Israel and could inflict more damage through continued missile strikes in the future.
- 2. Iranian Air Defense:** Iran is attempting to improve and fix vulnerabilities in its air defense systems that Israel exploited during the Israel-Iran War. An Iranian Armed Forces General Staff

(AFGS)-controlled outlet reported on October 1 that the Iranian army has replaced and strengthened its air defense systems and short-range air defenses to counter drones.

3. **Syrian-Russian Defense Cooperation:** Senior Syrian and Russian defense officials have continued to discuss possible defense cooperation, signaling a possible shift towards deeper Syrian-Russian defense relations. Syrian officials' visit to Moscow on October 2 suggests that Syria may seek to increase military cooperation with Russia in the coming months, possibly through the exchange of military expertise.

Iran

Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Aziz Nasir Zadeh met with Turkish Defense Minister General Yasar Guler in Ankara on October 1.[34] Nasir Zadeh and Guler discussed bilateral cooperation and unspecified regional security issues. Guler emphasized Turkey's readiness to work with Iran to enhance regional stability and border security. Nasir Zadeh invited Guler to Tehran to follow up on the agreements that they reached. Nasir Zadeh noted that developing and strengthening defense relations with neighboring countries is one of Iran's priorities.

Turkey sanctioned and froze the assets of 18 Iranian entities and 20 Iranian individuals on October 1 for supporting Iran's nuclear program.[35] The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, Bank Sepah, and Esfahan Nuclear Technology Center are among the sanctioned entities.[36] The sanctions come after the United Nations Security Council reimposed snapback sanctions on Iran on September 27.[37]

Iraq

Nothing significant to report.

Syria

See topline section.

Arabian Peninsula

Nothing significant to report.

Palestinian Territories & Lebanon

Lebanon and Syria have continued to take steps to resolve outstanding issues between the two countries. Lebanese and Syrian officials continued to discuss Syrian detainees held in Lebanese prisons, missing Lebanese civilians in Syria, Lebanese-Syrian border demarcation, and other security issues during the second Syria-Lebanon committee meeting in Beirut on October 1.[38] Lebanese and Syrian officials formed the specialized committee on September 1 and held the first committee meeting in Damascus on September 8.[39] The officials also reportedly discussed a preliminary draft of a judicial cooperation agreement to resolve outstanding legal cases.[40] Lebanese Deputy Prime Minister Tarek

Mitri stated on October 1 that the Lebanese Parliament would ratify the draft agreement in a "matter of weeks" once all parties agree to its text.[41] 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.[42] The Syrian government has consistently demanded that the Lebanese government allow Syrian prisoners in Lebanon to serve their sentences in Syria, but Lebanese judicial officials have denied these requests.[43]

The Lebanese government has continued to try to acquire military support for the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). On October 1, Lebanese Interior Minister Ahmed al Hajjar met with the French Ambassador to Lebanon, Herve Magro, to discuss military cooperation to train the Lebanese security services and improve their capabilities.[44] Lebanese media reported on October 1 that Lebanese and Saudi officials are continuing to prepare for the upcoming Saudi-French conference in Riyadh that aims to secure financial and logistical support for the LAF.[45] Lebanese Defense Minister Michel Menassa met with German Deputy Defense Minister Niels Helmer on October 2 to discuss German support to improve the LAF's naval capabilities.[46] Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam met with the US Chargé d'Affaires in Lebanon, Keith Hanigan, on October 2 to discuss US support for the LAF and Internal Security Forces (ISF).[47] These meetings are part of the Lebanese government's efforts to acquire military support for the LAF. Lebanese officials have continuously emphasized that the LAF needs logistical and financial support to implement its plan to disarm Hezbollah.[48] The LAF plan stipulates that the LAF will disarm Hezbollah south of the Litani River by the end of November 2025.[49] The LAF has historically faced resource deficits that have limited its ability to successfully counter Hezbollah.[50]

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Andie Parry, Carolyn Moorman, Avery Borens, Ben Rezaei, Zahra Wakilzada, Parker Hempel, Annika Ganzeveld

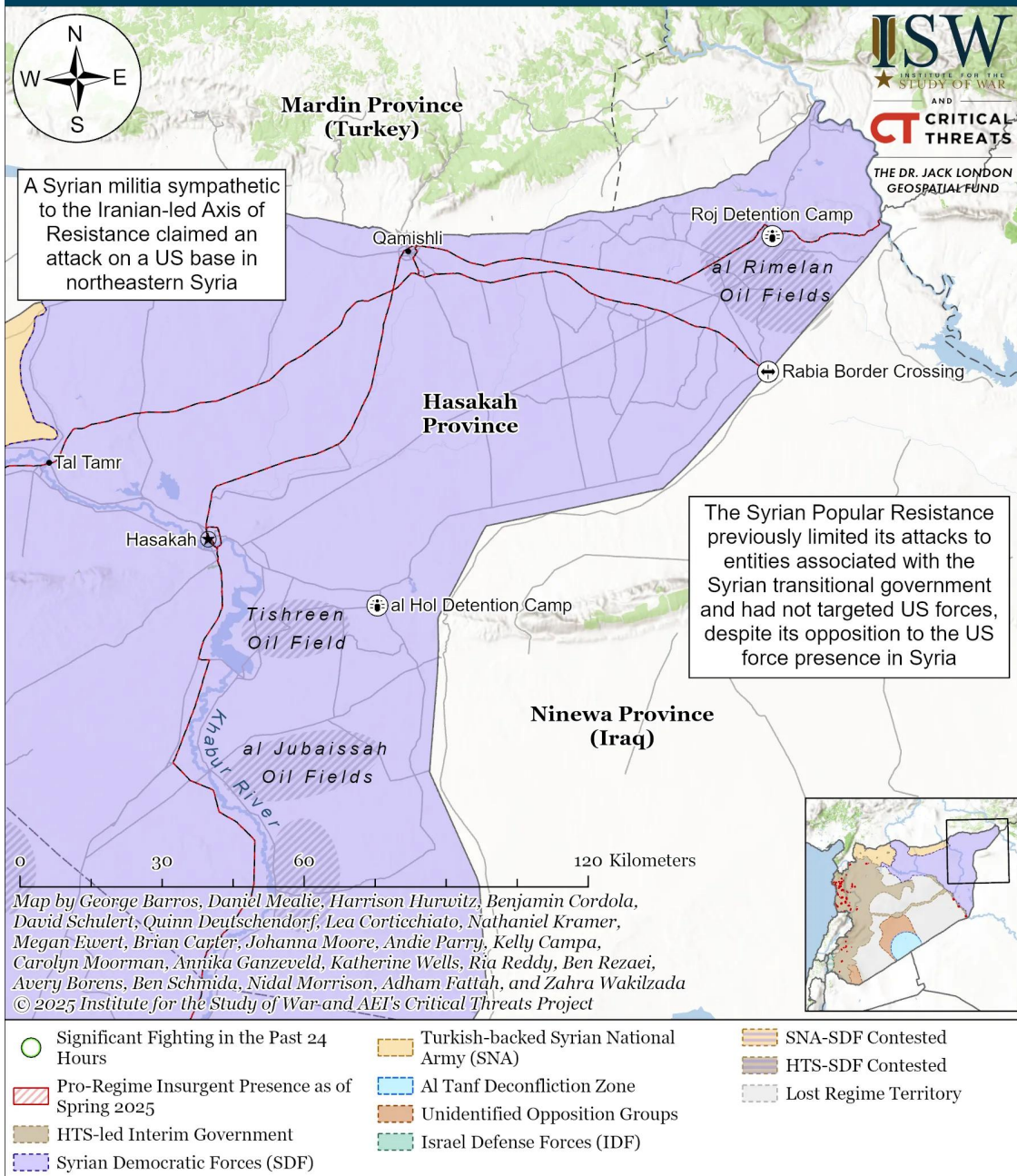
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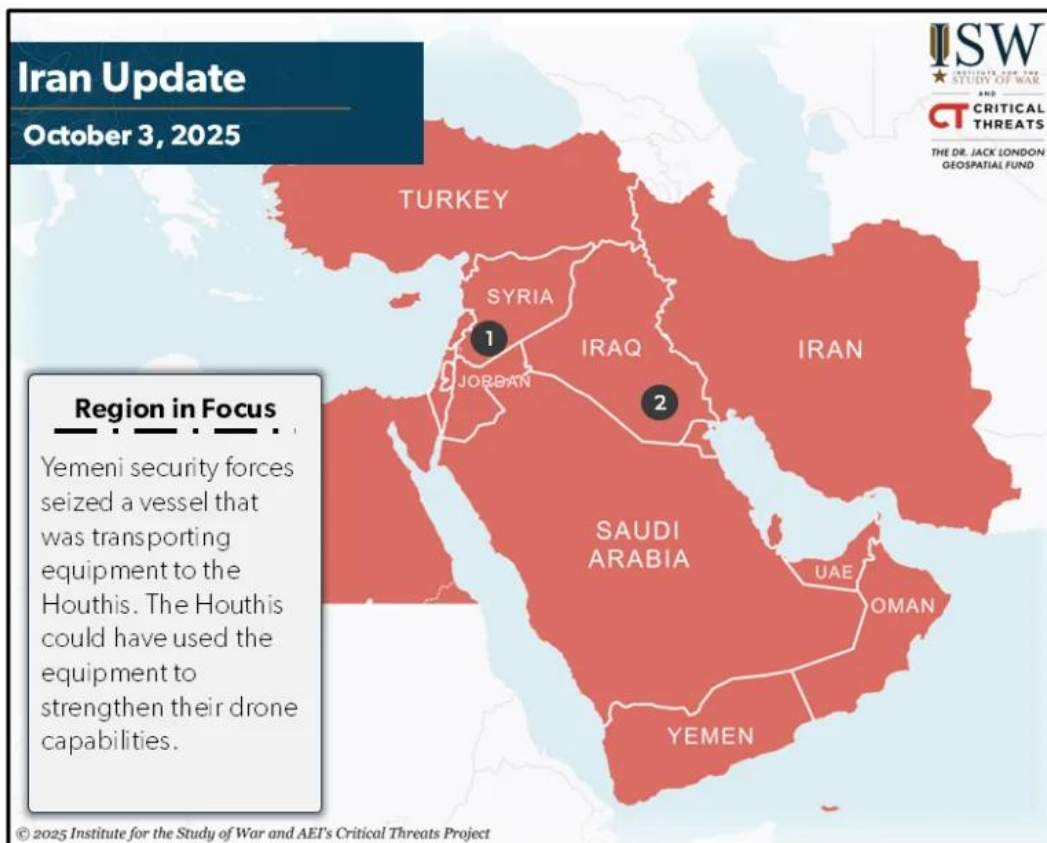
A Syrian militia sympathetic to the Iranian-led Axis of Resistance claimed an attack on a US base in northeastern Syria on October 2.[1] This attack marks the first time that the militia has claimed to attack US forces. The Syrian Popular Resistance announced that it and “allied forces” targeted US forces with unspecified weapons south of Hasakah City.[2] Syrian social media accounts posted videos purporting to show US air defense systems activating over al Shaddadi Base, Hasakah Province, on October 2.[3] The United States has not confirmed the attack at the time of this writing, and CTP-ISW is unable to independently verify the group’s claim.

The Syrian Popular Resistance previously limited its attacks to entities associated with the Syrian transitional government and had not targeted US forces, despite its opposition to the US force presence in Syria.[4] Unspecified US officials told US-based al Monitor on October 2 that the United States has paused its planned reduction of forces in Syria due to concerns about the Syrian transitional government’s stability.[5] The Syrian Popular Resistance warned in August 2025 that it would expand its target bank and operational reach because of its opposition to the United States, Israel, and the Syrian transitional government.[6] The Syrian Popular Resistance formed immediately after the fall of Assad in December 2024 to oppose the Syrian transitional government.[7] The group’s last claimed attack was in March 2025, when it claimed to poison the meals and water of Syrian government soldiers using a “biological weapon.”[8] The Syrian Popular Resistance has venerated former Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah and former Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force Commander Qassem Soleimani on its channel in addition to its regular pro-Assad content, suggesting that the group is ideologically aligned with the Axis of Resistance.[9] The Syrian Popular Resistance celebrated Iran’s attack on US forces in Qatar during the Israel-Iran War in June 2025, further underscoring the group’s ideological alignment with Iran.[10]

Assessed Control of Terrain around Hasakah

October 3, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET





- 1 **Syria.** A Syrian militia sympathetic to the Iranian-led Axis of Resistance claimed an attack on a US base in northeastern Syria on October 2. This attack marks the first time that the militia has claimed to attack US forces. The Syrian Popular Resistance previously limited its attacks to entities associated with the Syrian transitional government and had not targeted US forces, despite its opposition to the US force presence in Syria.
- 2 **Iraq.** Iranian-backed Iraqi actors are continuing to try to detract voter support from their political opponents ahead of the November 2025 Iraqi parliamentary elections. A Middle Eastern news outlet that is likely affiliated with Iranian-backed actors claimed on September 30 that Sunni Sovereignty Alliance head Khamis al Khanjar is involved in a US-supported effort to return Baathists to power in the upcoming elections.

Key Takeaways

1. **Reported Attack on US Forces in Syria:** A Syrian militia sympathetic to the Iranian-led Axis of Resistance claimed an attack on a US base in northeastern Syria on October 2. This attack marks the first time that the militia has claimed to attack US forces.
2. **Iraqi Elections:** Iranian-backed Iraqi actors are continuing to try to detract voter support from their political opponents ahead of the November 2025 Iraqi parliamentary elections. A Middle Eastern news outlet that is likely affiliated with Iranian-backed actors claimed on September 30 that Sunni Sovereignty Alliance head Khamis al Khanjar is involved in a US-supported effort to return Baathists to power in the upcoming elections.

3. **Houthi Weapons Shipment Interdiction:** Yemeni security forces seized a vessel that was transporting equipment, including manufacturing equipment, surveillance gear, and raw materials, to the Houthis on October 2. The Houthis could have used the equipment to strengthen their drone capabilities.

Iran

Iranian Artesh Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani inspected the combat and operational readiness of units deployed on Kharg Island in the Persian Gulf on October 2.[11] Irani emphasized the critical position of Kharg Island in Iran's maritime domain and added that the Artesh Navy plays an important role in ensuring the security of the Persian Gulf and open waters. Iran exports around 90 percent of its crude oil from Kharg Island.[12]

Iraq

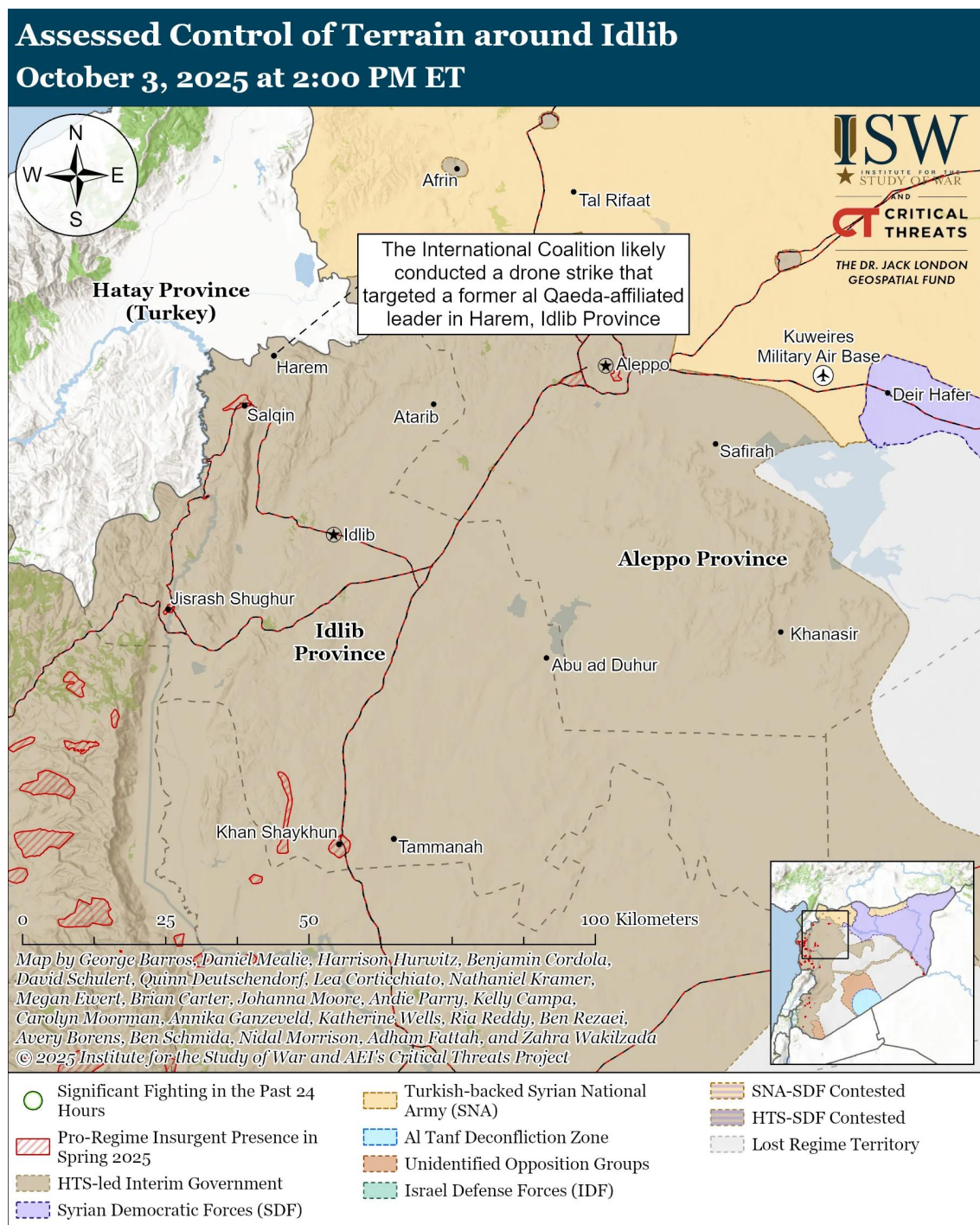
Iranian-backed Iraqi actors are continuing to try to detract voter support from their political opponents ahead of the November 2025 Iraqi parliamentary elections. A Middle Eastern news outlet that is likely affiliated with Iranian-backed actors claimed on September 30 that Sunni Sovereignty Alliance head Khamis al Khanjar is involved in a US-supported effort to return Baathists to power in the upcoming elections.[13] A senior security source in Anbar Province told the outlet that Kurdish political parties and unidentified senior officials in Prime Minister Mohammad Shia al Sudani's office are involved in this scheme. A Shia Coordination Framework parliamentarian alleged that Baathist remnants have met in multiple neighboring countries to discuss this effort and implicated unspecified civilians involved in the 2019 Iraqi protests in the scheme. The Shia Coordination Framework is a loose coalition of Shia political parties, some of which Iran backs. It is notable that Iranian outlet Defa Press, which is affiliated with the Armed Forces General Staff, circulated the report on September 30.[14] Iraqi media have not circulated this report at the time of this writing.

This report follows continued efforts by Shia Coordination Framework parties to oppose both Khanjar and Sudani ahead of the elections. A parliamentarian from Kataib Hezbollah's Haquq Movement filed a complaint with the Iraqi electoral commission on August 31 to bar Khanjar from the elections for "insulting" the Iraqi people after Khanjar reportedly said that he would defend Iraqi Sunnis from "the mob." [15] The Iraqi electoral commission requested in June for the Accountability and Justice Commission (AJC) to confirm whether Khanjar was under investigation for suspected Baathist links following State of Law Coalition head Nouri al Maliki's call for the ACJ and the Iraqi electoral commission to investigate candidates and parties for Baathist links.[16] CTP-ISW assessed on August 20 that Maliki may be using the ACJ to sideline political opponents ahead of the elections. Shia Coordination Framework parties have also accused Sudani and his coalition of corruption and Baathist ties in recent months.[17]

Syria

Syrian media reported on October 2 that the International Coalition likely conducted a drone strike targeting a former al Qaeda (AQ)-affiliated faction leader in Harem, Idlib Province.[18] The drone reportedly fired several missiles that killed former Ansar al Islam leader Abu Darda Kurdi.[19] Ansar al Islam is an AQ-affiliated faction that was formed in Iraqi Kurdistan in 2003 and has operated in Syria since 2011.[20] US Central Command (CENTCOM) has not claimed responsibility for the strike at the

time of this writing. US CENTCOM has repeatedly targeted members of designated terrorist organizations in Syria, including ISIS and AQ-affiliates, since the fall of the Assad regime.[21]



Arabian Peninsula

Yemeni security forces seized a vessel that was transporting equipment, including manufacturing equipment, surveillance gear, and raw materials, to the Houthis on October 2. The Houthis could have used the equipment to strengthen their drone capabilities.[22]

Authorities seized 58 commercial containers weighing over 2,500 tons that contained drone production technology, launch platforms, spare parts, jet engines, surveillance and jamming equipment, and raw materials used to manufacture drones and drone airframes.[23] The vessel was headed from Djibouti

Port to Hudaydah Port but diverted to Aden Port due to damage at Hudaydah Port following recent Israeli strikes.[24]

Palestinian Territories & Lebanon

Hezbollah Loyalty to the Resistance Bloc head Mohammad Raad met with senior Lebanese officials on October 2.[25] This meeting marked the first time that a Hezbollah official had directly met with Lebanese government officials since the Lebanese government agreed to the US proposal to disarm Hezbollah in August 2025.[26] Raad and Lebanese President Joseph Aoun reportedly discussed Israeli operations in Lebanon, reconstruction efforts, and Lebanese legislation on October 2.[27] Aoun and Raad agreed to “address differences” to achieve “the supreme national interests.”[28] Raad and Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) Commander Brigadier General Rodolphe Haykal also met on October 2 and discussed the relationship between Hezbollah and the LAF.[29]

The United States has taken steps to provide Lebanon with military support. Unspecified US and Lebanese sources told Reuters on October 2 that the United States approved a \$230 million military aid package for Lebanese security forces.[30] An unspecified Lebanese source noted that the funding includes \$190 million for the LAF and \$40 million for the Internal Security Forces (ISF).[31] Unspecified US congressional aides noted that the United States has already provided these funds to Lebanon.[32] A US State Department spokesperson stated that the US military aid package supports Lebanese forces’ efforts to “assert Lebanese sovereignty” and fully implement UN Security Council Resolution 1701.[33] The LAF has historically faced resource deficits that have limited its ability to successfully counter Hezbollah.[34]

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