



# Iran Summary

## July 2024

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**Major Events in July 2024 (included below in bold):** Masoud Pezeshkian was [sworn in](#) as the ninth president of the Islamic Republic. Israel carried out targeted assassinations against the leaders of Iran’s proxy terror groups, [killing](#) Hezbollah’s most senior military commander Fuad Shukur, and the commander of Hamas’s military wing, [Muhammad Deif](#). Hamas’s political leader Ismail Haniyeh was also [killed](#) in a reported strike in Tehran, Iran, but no one has taken credit for his killing. The strike against Shukur was in response to a Hezbollah rocket attack on a soccer field in the northern Israeli Druze village of Majdal Shams on July 27 that [killed](#) 12 children and injured at least 44 others. The Iran-backed Houthis [launched](#) a drone attack on Tel Aviv on July 19 that killed one person and injured at least ten others in the first Houthi attack to successfully target a major Israeli city, prompting Israel’s first-ever military strike in Yemen. U.S. intelligence officials uncovered a plot by Iran [to assassinate](#) Donald Trump, prompting the Secret Service to increase security measures around the former U.S. President and current presidential candidate. The U.S. Director of National Intelligence, Avril Haines, [warned](#) that Iran has both encouraged and funded anti-Israel protests in the United States. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken [warned](#) that the Islamic Republic is “probably one or two weeks away” from having breakout capacity to produce fissile material for a nuclear weapon. Click [here](#) to view JINSA’s updated Iran Projectile Tracker.

## Attacks on U.S. Troops and Personnel in the Region:

- Iran-backed militias [carried out](#) five attacks against U.S. troops and personnel in Iraq and Syria, after largely halting such strikes against U.S. troops and personnel in February.
  - » The attacks interrupted a nearly three-month pause of Iran-backed proxy attacks against U.S. forces. Iran-backed militias had [carried out](#) one attack on U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria in April following major U.S. [airstrikes](#) against Iran-linked targets in response to a January 28 attack that killed three U.S. service members.
  - » On July 30, U.S. forces [carried out](#) a defensive airstrike in the Musayib, south of Baghdad, Iraq, “targeting combatants attempting to launch one-way attack uncrewed aerial systems (OWAUAS),” according to an unnamed U.S. official.
    - The official said, “Based on recent attacks in Iraq and Syria, U.S. Central Command assessed that the OWAUAS posed a threat to U.S. and Coalition Forces.”
  - » Iran-backed militias [carried out](#) three separate attacks on U.S. and coalition forces at Mission Support Site Euphrates in Syria on July 25, 26, and 27. One rocket hit the base during the attacks, but no injuries were reported.

- On July 26, U.S. forces [returned fire](#), carrying out an airstrike on a rocket launching position used to attack the base. Militia forces were no longer at the site when the strike took place, and incurred no casualties.
- » On July 25, an Iraqi security source [told VOA News](#), “four rockets fell in the vicinity” of Ain al-Assad air base in Iraq. Another security official said an attack occurred with “a drone and three rockets.” No injuries or damage was reported, as all four projectiles landed outside the base.
- » On July 16, two armed drones [targeted](#) U.S. and coalition forces at Ain al-Assad airbase in Iraq. No casualties were reported.

## The Iran-Backed Houthis and Maritime Aggression:

- The Iran-backed Houthis carried out at least 41 strikes on vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, which are among the world’s most vital maritime waterways, disrupting international trade. Houthi fighters on two boats also exchanged [gunfire](#) with MT *Bentley I*, an Israel-owned, Panama-flagged, and Monaco-operated tanker vessel as it sailed through the Red Sea carrying vegetable oil from Russia to China.
- On July 27, Israel’s Navy successfully [intercepted](#) a Hezbollah unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) targeting the Karish gas rig offshore of northern Israel.
  - » According to the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), the UAV was [shot down](#) by the Israeli Navy’s ship-mounted Iron Dome system known as C-Dome.
- **On July 19, the Iran-backed Houthis [launched](#) a drone attack on Tel Aviv, Israel, which killed one and wounded at least 10 others. This was the first Houthi attack to [successfully target](#) a major Israeli city.**
  - » The drone, [reportedly](#) an Iran-made Samad-3 model that had been upgraded to extend its range, [crossed](#) through Israel’s multilayered air defenses.
  - » Chief spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari [said](#) the drone was detected by air defenses, but a “human error” occurred, which resulted in the failure to intercept the attack. The drone attack did not activate any air raid warning sirens because Israel’s detection system was not activated.
- On July 13, a smuggling vessel originating from the Horn of Africa and destined for the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen, which was reportedly carrying foreign experts and materials for missile production, was reported [missing](#) in the Red Sea.
  - » According to a report by the UAE-based *Al-Ain News* website, Iranian experts and senior Houthi security leaders participated in a special meeting in Sanaa to discuss the ship’s disappearance.

## Hezbollah Attacks and Israeli Operations Against Iranian Proxies:

- **On July 31, Hamas’s political leader Ismail Haniyeh was [assassinated](#) in Tehran. Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Hamas blamed Israel for Haniyeh’s death, but Israel has neither confirmed nor denied its involvement.**
  - » The leader of the Iran-backed terror group was in Tehran for the inauguration of Iran’s new president, Masoud Pezeshkian.

- » According to the *New York Times*, Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamanei reportedly [ordered](#) Iranian forces to strike Israel directly in retaliation.
- **On July 27, the Iran-backed Hezbollah terror group [launched](#) a rocket that struck a soccer field in the Druze town of Majdal Shams in northern Israel, [killing 12 children and injuring at least 44 others](#).**
  - » The rocket was part of a barrage of approximately 30 projectiles fired by the terror group toward Israeli territory from Lebanon. The strike was carried out using the Iran-made Falaq-1 rocket, which can travel up to six miles and possesses a 115-pound warhead. This heavy rocket is difficult to intercept and can create a large blast upon impact.
  - » Israel’s security cabinet [authorized](#) Prime Minister Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant to decide on the “nature and timing” of the response against Hezbollah. Iranian President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian warned that any possible Israeli attack on Lebanon “could [backfire](#) and have severe consequences for the Zionists themselves.”
  - » In response to the deadly attack, on July 30, Israel [carried out](#) an airstrike targeting Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukur, also known as al-Hajj Mohsin, in Beirut—Israel’s first known strike targeting Hezbollah in the capital city since Hezbollah launched its ongoing attacks on Israel on October 8.
    - The strike also [killed](#) an Iranian military advisor, Milad Bedi.
    - Israel’s Minister of Defense, Yoav Gallant, [tweeted](#) shortly after the strike, “Hezbollah crossed our red line.”
- **On July 13, the IDF confirmed it [carried out](#) a major airstrike in southern Gaza targeting Muhammad Deif, the commander of the Iran-backed Hamas’s military wing. Deif, who was confirmed killed in the strike, was a chief architect of the terror group’s October 7 massacre.**

## Malign Activities Abroad:

- On July 25, Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz warned France’s Foreign Minister Stéphane Séjoirné of an Iranian-backed plot to attack Israeli athletes and tourists at the 2024 Paris Olympics.
  - » Israel’s National Security Council and the French government [issued](#) “unprecedented security measures,” due to the threat of Iran-backed terror organizations who seek to “carry out attacks on Israeli/Jewish targets around the Olympics.”
- **On July 16, *CNN* [reported](#) that U.S. authorities obtained intelligence of a plot by Iran to try to assassinate former U.S. President Donald Trump. According to the report, the Secret Service increased security around the former president due to the threat.**
  - » The Secret Service and the Trump Campaign were [made aware](#) of the threat prior to the attempted assassination of Trump on July 13 in Butler, Pennsylvania. According to multiple reports, the incidents do not appear to be connected.
  - » *The New York Times* [reported](#) that the Iranian threat arose from Tehran’s “longstanding desire to take revenge for the strike ordered by Mr. Trump in January 2020 that killed [IRGC Quds Force] Gen. Qassim Suleimani.”
  - » On July 16, Iran’s Permanent Mission to the United Nations released a statement [denying](#) involvement in the assassination plot, declaring the accusations to be “unsubstantiated and malicious.”

- In a press release on July 9, U.S. Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines [warned](#) that Iran has both encouraged and funded U.S. anti-Israel protests as part of Iran’s U.S. influence campaign.
  - » Haines said, “we have observed actors tied to Iran’s government posing as activists online, seeking to encourage protests, and even providing financial support to protestors.”

## Russia/China Ties:

- On July 19, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that United States intelligence agencies have [warned](#) that Russia may supply the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen with advanced anti-ship missiles “in retaliation for the Biden administration’s support for Ukraine.” According to the report, munitions supplied by Russia would “represent a qualitative leap” in the Houthis’ capabilities.
- On July 19, Malaysia’s coast guard [located](#) a Chinese tanker linked to Iranian oil smuggling activities, the *Ceres I*, after it collided with another vessel off the coast of Singapore. The tanker has reportedly smuggled at least eight million barrels of sanctioned Islamic Republic oil since 2019.
- On July 13, Iran’s newly-elected president, Masoud Pezeshkian, [wrote](#) in an op-ed published in the state-controlled *Tehran Times* that China and Russia have consistently stood by Iran through challenging times, adding that Iran’s “25-year roadmap with China represents a significant milestone towards establishing a mutually beneficial ‘comprehensive strategic partnership.’” Pezeshkian included that Iran looks forward to “collaborating more extensively with Beijing as we advance towards a new global order.”
  - » In the op-ed, Pezeshkian also said, “Russia is a valued strategic ally and neighbor to Iran and my administration will remain committed to expanding and enhancing our cooperation.”
- On July 13, Iran’s Parliament Speaker [announced](#) that all transactions between Iran and Russia are now conducted without the use of U.S. dollars.
  - » On July 6, the Governor of Iran’s Central Bank [reported](#) that Tehran and Moscow had interconnected their local payment systems to bolster financial and economic ties amid efforts to counter the impacts of U.S. sanctions.
- Russian President Vladimir [Putin](#) met with Iran’s Speaker of the Parliament to discuss stronger bilateral ties during the 10th BRICS Parliamentary Forum, the annual meeting of the intergovernmental association of major developing countries, held in St. Petersburg, Russia, on July 11 and 12.

## Nuclear:

- On July 19, Secretary of State Antony Blinken [said](#) that Iran is “probably one or two weeks away” from having breakout capacity to produce fissile material for a nuclear weapon.
- On July 15, top U.S. and Israeli officials [met](#) to discuss Iran’s military activity and advancements in nuclear capabilities.
- On July 2, *Newsweek* reported that Iran is [attempting](#) to source yellowcake uranium from Niger, taking advantage of the West African nation’s recent political turmoil to try to increase its stocks of material for producing enriched uranium.

- » Since the July 2023 coup in Niger, which saw the U.S.-friendly government ousted, the country's new military junta, led by General Abdourahamane Tchiani, has begun fostering relationships with Iran and Russia.

## Domestic/Human Rights:

- On July 30, Masoud Pezeshkian was [sworn in](#) as the ninth president of the Islamic Republic at a ceremony that included officials from the regime's proxy terror groups Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and the Houthis.
  - » During the ceremony, members of parliament broke out in chants of "Death to Israel, Death to America."
  - » On July 5, Masoud Pezeshkian won Iran's snap presidential [election](#), which was called following the death of Ebrahim Raisi in late May.
    - A significant number of Iranians [boycotted](#) the presidential election in protest. According to the regime, the first round of voting saw the lowest turnout in Iran's presidential election history at 39.96 percent, although turnout in the second round increased to 49.8 percent. The actual voter turnout was likely lower than the regime's reported numbers.
- According to Oslo-based Iran Human Rights (IHRNGO), as of July 30, the Islamic Republic had [executed](#) 295 people in 2024.
  - » According to the IHRNGO, Iran [often](#) "increases executions after presidential elections" in an effort to "deter protests and dissent against the new leader."
  - » As of July 25, Iran Human Rights reported that since July 20, on average Iran's judiciary has executed a prisoner every [eight](#) hours.
- On July 25, 60 female political prisoners at Tehran's Evin Prison [staged](#) an "overnight sit-in" to protest the death of their fellow inmate, Pakhshan Azizi. Azizi, deprived of legal counsel, is the second woman this month to be sentenced to death for "armed rebellion against the state."
  - » The prisoners have condemned the "violation of the right to life of the Iranian people by the execution machine of the Islamic Republic." Political prisoners across Iran have called for international human rights organizations to address the new wave of executions.
  - » On July 4, Iran's Revolutionary Court [sentenced](#) female labor activist Sharifeh Mohammadi to death on the charge of "armed rebellion against the state," based on an allegation of membership to an opposition group.

## Cyber:

- On July 26, a major French train operator [announced](#) that their high-speed network had suffered "malicious acts," including arson attacks, which caused travel disruptions for 800,000 passengers in the hours leading up to the Olympic opening ceremony.
  - » Israel's Foreign Minister, Israel Katz, said that the assault on France's rail infrastructure was influenced by "Iran's axis of evil and radical Islam."
  - » Gabi Portnoy, head of Israel's National Cyber Directorate, said, "Iran is exploiting an apolitical international sporting competition to promote digital terrorism against Israel..."

- On July 25, Israel’s National Cyber Directorate [reported](#) that Iran-backed hackers were behind an online intimidation campaign targeting Israel’s delegation to the 2024 Paris Olympics.
  - » According to the report, the hackers posted the athletes’ bank account information, home addresses, and ID numbers on [Telegram](#).
  - » Iran-backed hackers also posed as a French [far-right](#) student organization and sent threatening messages to the athletes, including invitations to their own funerals. Israeli swimmer Meiron Amir Cheruti received the message: “You are welcome to attend the funeral of Meiron Amir Cheruti, born on October 19, 1997, died on July 27, 2024.”
- According to *Newsweek*, Iran-backed Hamas has reportedly [acquired](#) “sophisticated criminal malware” to target Israeli infrastructure and entities.
  - » According to the report, Hamas has [begun](#) “renting complex computer viruses,” likely from Iran, Russia, China, or North Korea.

## Recent JINSA Publications on Iran:

- July 31: “[Israel Reportedly Eliminates Senior Hamas and Hezbollah Leaders](#),” Ari Cicurel
- July 29, “[Deadly Hezbollah Attack May Spark Full-Scale War](#),” Yoni Tobin
- July 24: “[Our Iran Policy Has Failed. Time for a New Strategy](#),” *The Dispatch*, Jonathan Ruhe
- July 8: “[Between Israel and Hezbollah, Biden is choosing shame – and risking war](#),” *New York Post*, Michael Makovsky, PhD
- July 6: “[A Peace to Delay War: How Diplomacy Can End Hezbollah’s War of Choice](#),” *RealClearDefense*, Jacob Olidort and Jonathan Ruhe