

Iran Update



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Information Cutoff: 2:00 pm ET

Iran unveiled a new solid-fueled medium-range ballistic missile with electronic protective measures (EPM), new navigation and homing systems, and a maneuverable reentry vehicle on May 4.^[1] The new missile, Qassem Basir, is an upgraded version of Iran's Haj Qassem missile.^[2] The new missile has a reported range of approximately 1,200 km.^[3] Iranian Defense and Armed Forces Logistics Minister Brigadier General Aziz Nasir Zadeh stated that the missile is equipped with a maneuverable reentry vehicle (MaRV), infrared homing, an inertial navigation system, and EPM.^[4] These features appear designed to address failures in Iran's April and October 2024 missile attacks on Israel. The vast majority of the missiles in both strikes were either intercepted or malfunctioned and failed to reach their targets.^[5] Both attacks ultimately failed to inflict serious damage due to the inaccuracy of the missiles. The attacks demonstrated that the Iranian missile and drone arsenals failed at present to provide the deterrent effect that Iranian leaders had envisioned. Nasir Zadeh told Iranian media that the Qassem Basir missile was developed to address those challenges. The infrared homing system improves accuracy by detecting and locking onto targets based on heat signatures. The MaRV allows the warhead to shift trajectory during the reentry phase, helping it evade missile defenses that rely on fixed-path predictions. The EPM protects the missile's guidance system from jamming and other forms of electronic interference.

Iranian officials continued to threaten US bases, likely to try to shape Western decision-making and discourage a potential strike on Iran. Nasir Zadeh warned on May 4 during the unveiling of the Qassem Basir that Iran holds large missile stockpiles and will target US and Israeli assets in the region if necessary.^[6] Speaker of Parliament Mohammed Bagher Ghalibaf similarly stated on April 29 that any attack on Iran will "expose all US bases" in the region.^[7] Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Aerospace Force Commander Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajji Zadeh previously stated that Iran does not need to increase the range of its missiles because its missiles can already reach all US bases in the region.^[8] Qassem Basir missiles, along with Iran's other short- and medium-range systems, can reach Tel Aviv and US bases in Iraq and Syria. The Qassem Basir, which was designed after Iran employed other missiles against the US THAAD and Israeli Arrow ballistic missile defense systems, could be an important piece of future strike packages.

Iranian officials continued to categorically reject full dismantlement of Iran's nuclear program and zero uranium enrichment after statements from US officials about full dismantlement and zero enrichment. Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi stated on May 2 that Iran has the right to maintain a "complete nuclear fuel cycle", including uranium enrichment, as a Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty signatory.^[9] Armed Forces General Staff affiliated Defa Press similarly published an article on May 3 titled "Why is uranium enrichment Iran's inalienable right."^[10] The article emphasized that Iran will not "surrender" its peaceful nuclear program and will continue to pursue nuclear energy and uranium enrichment. Foreign Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Esmail Baghaei echoed these statements and rejected any calls to dismantle Iran's nuclear industry.^[11] These statements come as senior US officials expressed support for full dismantlement and zero

uranium enrichment. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio stated on May 1 that Iran can retain a peaceful nuclear program if it "imports enriched uranium."^[12] US President Donald Trump stated on May 4 that "total dismantlement...is all [he] would accept."^[13]

The Houthis may have used multiple ballistic missiles in an attempt to overwhelm Israeli and US ballistic missile defenses on May 4. One Houthi ballistic missile struck near Israel's sole international airport, forcing Israel to shut down flight operations.^[14] Local sources said that the Houthis launched multiple systems towards Israel.^[15] An analyst for a Saudi media outlet also claimed that the Houthis have multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles.^[16] Either tactic could improve the Houthis' ability to penetrate ballistic missile defenses and would represent an effort by the Houthis to operationalize lessons learned from the success and failure of previous attacks. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) claimed that the Arrow 3 interceptor missile experienced a technical failure that caused it to fail to shoot down the Houthi missile.^[17] The missile crashed into a parking lot near Ben Gurion Airport. The impact injured eight people and shut down airport operations. The May 4 attack is part of the Houthis' effort to blockade Israel and damage the Israeli economy. The Houthis have said that their maritime attack campaign targets shipping to damage Israel's economy, and attacks on Ben Gurion Airport could similarly damage the economy.

The successful May 4 attack demonstrates the risks inherent in relying on ballistic missile defense and airstrikes to defend against and respond to Houthi attacks. The Houthis will almost certainly continue to attack Israel and maritime shipping unless the United States renders them unwilling or unable to do so.^[18] Ballistic missile defense will not stop every missile, and a single Houthi missile could have outsized strategic effects if it is not intercepted. The Houthis are learning new lessons to improve their ability to bypass Israeli and Western air defenses that they can employ elsewhere in the region or share with their partners in Iran.

Israel responded to the May 4 attack with airstrikes on Houthi facilities in Hudaydah Port and a likely weapons production site in Bajil District, eastern Hudaydah Governorate, on May 5.^[19] Houthi authorities also evacuated staff from Sanaa Airport immediately following their successful airstrike, anticipating Israeli retaliation even before Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu formally vowed a response on May 5.^[20]

The Syrian transitional government will likely allow Suwaydawi armed factions to retain heavy weapons, at least in the short term, in a concession designed to build Druze support for the Damascus government. Suwayda Governor Mustafa Bakour has led negotiations with Druze leaders since April 30 to establish mechanisms to address the recent violence between Sunni militants, Druze militias, and government forces in Druze-majority towns and regions in southern Syria.^[21] Top Druze sheikhs announced on May 3 that they agreed on several provisions with Damascus.^[22] These provisions included ceding control of the Damascus-Suwayda road to the state and deploying the General Security Services (GSS) in the province.^[23] Syrian media reported that Sheikh Hikmat al Hijri, a Druze leader who has consistently rejected integration into the Syrian government, also demanded during the negotiations that the government allow Suwayda armed factions to retain heavy weapons.^[24] Bakour confirmed that the government approved the requests issued by Druze leaders, although he did not explicitly acknowledge that the government agreed to the heavy weapons provision.^[25] Damascus may have agreed to Hijri's demand in order to develop goodwill with prominent Druze sheikhs and military leaders in the short term, as the transitional government begins to integrate Suwaydawi fighters into state security services.

The Druze likely view the retention of weapons stockpiles as potential self-defense against attacks on the community following the recent confessional violence in Jaramana and Ashrafiyeh.[26] Nearly all of the Druze factions distrust the government to varying degrees and likely seek to retain equipment and stockpiles as an insurance policy against possible future attacks from both non-government and government-affiliated groups.

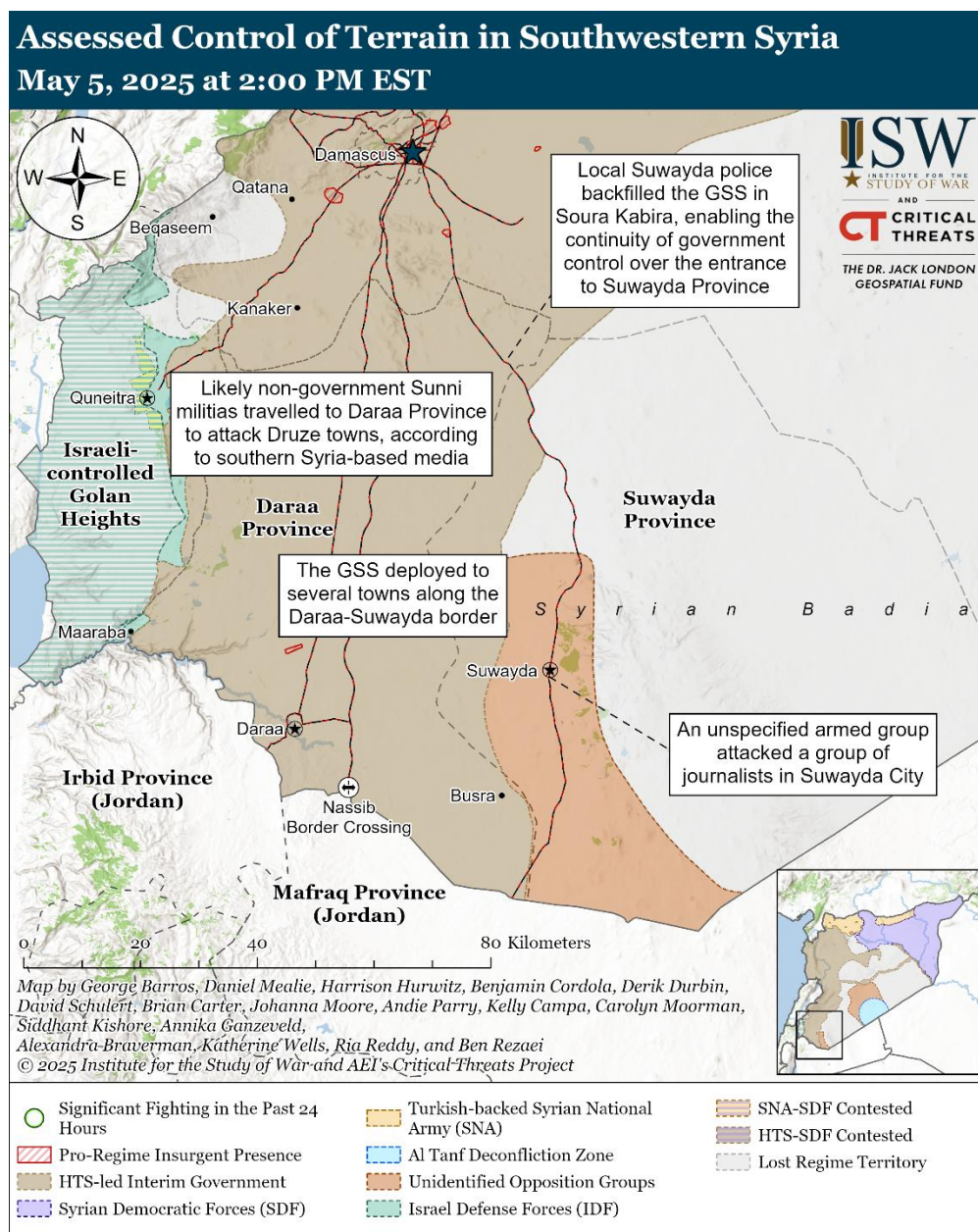
Damascus is likely to attempt to gradually increase its control over Druze areas over the long term, however. Southern Syria-based media reported that the Druze-Damascus agreement is only intended to serve as an initial “formula” for coordination between Druze and the Syrian state and that its future will depend on how its implementation unfolds.[27] Damascus aims to centralize its control over Syrian territory, and it would be inconsistent with these aims to allow Druze fighters to retain heavy weaponry over the long term. The Syrian Constitutional Declaration declared that weapons will only belong to the state, and the Syrian government has thus far forcibly disarmed armed groups—particularly those integrating into security forces—and confiscated their stockpiles.[28] The government collected heavy weapons and equipment from Druze militias in Jaramana, Rif Dimashq, on May 4, although this likely reflects government concerns about Jaramana’s regime networks and affiliations.[29]

Damascus will also form a fully Suwaydawi police force with a Damascus-appointed commander, likely in order to ensure the police remain responsive to the state.[30] Local Suwayda police have already integrated into the Interior Ministry, according to Governor Bakour.[31] Bakour said that a non-Suwaydawi officer will command these police forces.[32] Bakour’s insistence that a non-local remain in command of police suggests that Damascus intends to implement a chain of command that will be responsive to the state, regardless of the force’s Suwaydawi composition. Local Suwaydawi police began to deploy to positions on May 4 and backfilled the GSS in Soura Kabira, the northern entrance to Suwayda Province.[33]

Several armed groups, including likely Sunni militias, have continued to conduct attacks targeting Druze populations in Suwayda Province. Sunni militias from outside eastern Daraa and Suwayda provinces appear to be attempting to incite anti-Druze sentiment and attacking Druze areas in western Suwayda. Southern Syria-based media reported that Sunni militias traveled to the eastern Daraa countryside to attack Druze towns from nearby hills.[34] These groups reportedly arrived armed with mortars and small arms and attempted to mobilize locals against the Druze in villages and through social media.[35] These attacks appear to be distinct from those conducted by Sunni tribal fighters, who have continued to engage Druze militias in several locations across Suwayda Province, including the western countryside, since April 30.[36] Several anti-Druze narratives circulated on social media on May 4 and May 5, including false claims that Druze fighters shut down mosques in Suwayda Province.[37] These narratives likely seek to mobilize support amongst Sunni hardline elements against the Druze population, particularly in the aftermath of the circulation of an audio recording in which a Druze sheikh allegedly insulted the Prophet Mohammad on April 28.[38]

The Suwayda Military Council (SMC) may also be conducting attacks targeting pro-government elements within Suwayda Province. The group, which is a Druze armed faction with reported ties to Israel and Assad-era generals, recently rejected any loyalty to the Damascus government and condemned government forces’ deployments to Suwayda Province.[39] An unknown armed group attacked a group of Suwaydawi journalists in Suwayda City on May 5.[40] The journalists were reportedly covering the implementation of the security agreement with Damascus.[41] Several Syrian sources accused the SMC, or armed groups “affiliated with al Hijri,” of conducting the attack.[42] SMC leader Tariq al Shoufi recently declared that the SMC is loyal to Sheikh Hikmat al Hijri and is “at [his] disposal.”[43] It is unclear why a group affiliated with Hijri—who is party to the agreement—would attack journalists unassociated with the agreement’s implementation. Men of Dignity leader Laith al Balous

warned on May 2 that unspecified “gangs” have conducted several attacks targeting Druze in Suwayda Province rather than ”al Hijri loyalists.”[44] Balous said he intended to cooperate with the GSS to deter these groups from conducting attacks.



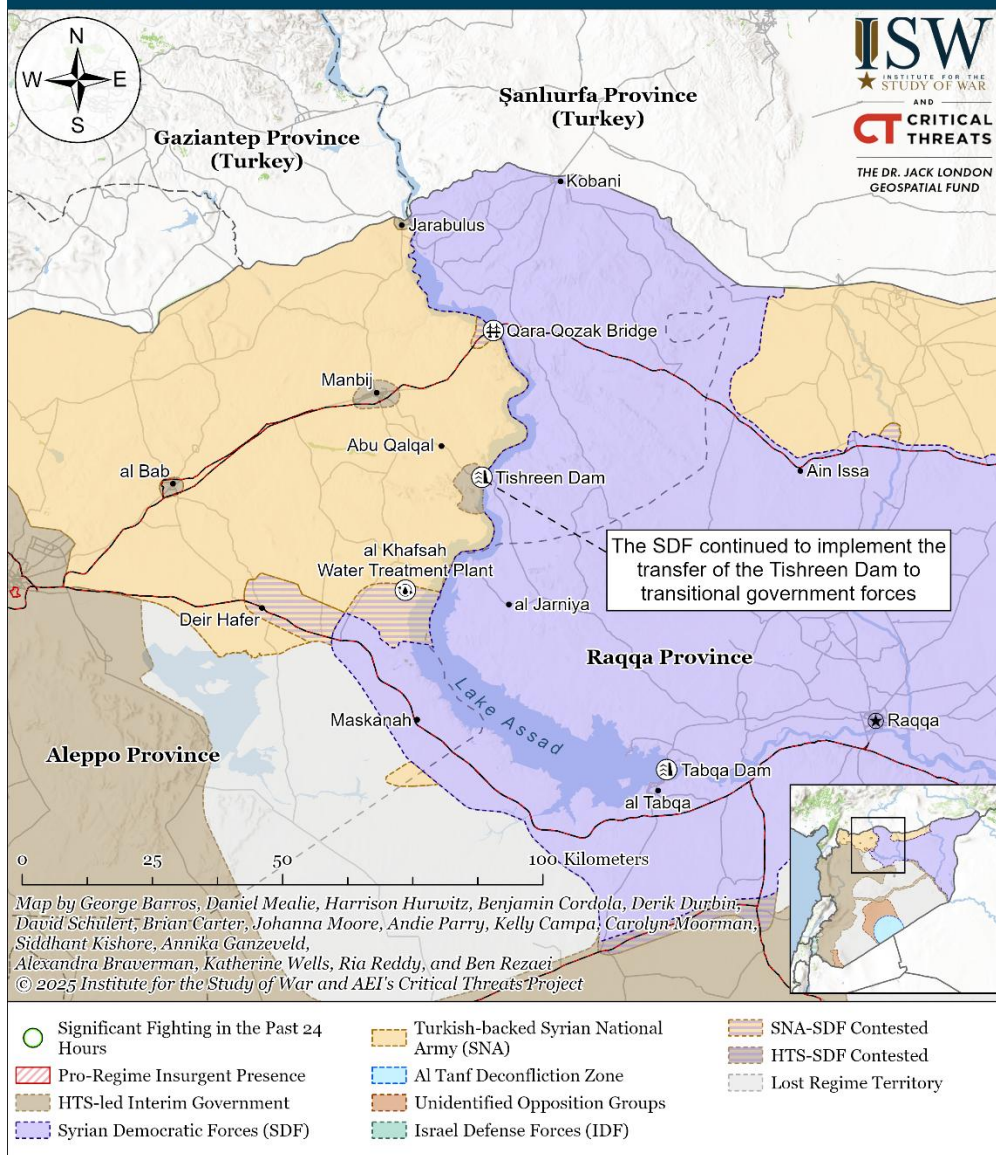
The US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) continued to implement the transfer of the Tishreen Dam to transitional government forces on May 5. The Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) executive council co-chairs announced the end of “resistance” at the Tishreen Dam on May 5 and remembered soldiers and civilians killed during the operation to hold the dam under SDF control.[45] AANES, which is the governing authority in northeast Syria and is affiliated with the SDF, had called for civilians to travel to the Tishreen Dam and protest Turkish-backed military operations there in January 2025.[46] The announcement of the end of “resistance” at the Tishreen Dam signifies that the SDF is no longer maintaining

forces there to defend against Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA) advances. This SDF withdrawal is consistent with a deconfliction agreement reached between the SDF and the transitional government around the Tishreen Dam in April 2025.^[47] The announcement is notable because the SDF had stalled the implementation of the agreement over the past month, and rumors spread in the Syrian information space that the ceasefire between the SDF and SNA had broken down and fighting was imminent.^[48] SDF representatives met with the transitional government delegation led by Hussein al Salama to discuss the implementation of the March 10 SDF-Damascus agreement, including SDF disengagement from Tishreen Dam.^[49] This ongoing coordination emphasizes that the dam transfer is underway.

The Syrian transitional government appointed Hussein al Salama (Abu Musab al Shuhayl) as head of the General Intelligence Service.^[50] Salama was born in al Shuhayl, Deir ez Zor Province, and joined Jabhat al Nusra in the early years of the Syrian Civil War.^[51] He established the Hayat Tahrir al Sham (HTS) intelligence service alongside former interim General Intelligence Service head and current Interior Minister Anas Khattab.^[52] Salama led negotiations with the SDF in the Kurdish neighborhoods of Aleppo.^[53] He also led recent negotiations with the SDF in Deir ez Zor Province on April 12.^[54]

Assessed Control of Terrain around Manbij

May 5, 2025 at 2:00 PM EST



Key Takeaways:

- Iranian Ballistic Missile Program:** Iran unveiled a new solid-fueled medium-range ballistic missile with electronic protective measures, new navigation and homing systems, and a maneuverable reentry vehicle on May 4. Iranian officials continued to threaten US bases with missile attacks, likely to try to shape Western decision-making and discourage a potential strike on Iran.
- US-Iran Nuclear Talks:** Iranian officials continued to categorically reject full dismantlement of Iran's nuclear program and zero uranium enrichment after statements from US officials about full dismantlement and zero enrichment.

- **Houthi Missile Attack:** The Houthis may have used multiple ballistic missiles in an attempt to overwhelm Israeli and US ballistic missile defenses on May 4. One Houthi ballistic missile struck near Israel's sole international airport, forcing the Israelis to shut down flight operations.
- **Druze-Syrian Government Negotiations:** The Syrian transitional government will likely allow Suwaydawi armed factions to retain heavy weapons, at least in the short term, in a concession designed to build Druze support for the Damascus government. The government will likely attempt to increase its control over Druze areas over the long term, however.
- **Continued Violence in Southwestern Syria:** Several armed groups, including likely Sunni militias, have continued to conduct attacks targeting Druze populations in Suwayda Province.
- **SDF-Syrian Government Negotiations:** The US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) continued to implement the transfer of the Tishreen Dam to transitional government forces on May 5.

Iranian Decision-Making, Internal Dynamics, and Foreign Policy

Iran experienced a series of fires and explosions at civilian and military industrial sites between May 3 and May 5. These fires and explosions come after the fire and explosion at Shahid Rajaei Port in Bandar Abbas on April 26 and an explosion at a gunpowder factory in Esfahan Province on April 29.[55] The gunpowder factory operated under the supervision of the Iranian Supreme National Security Council.[56] There is no evidence at this time that saboteurs caused these incidents, but the sudden uptick is likely to fuel anxiety within the Iranian regime and raise questions about potential infiltration or security failures. The full list of incidents between May 3 and May 5 is listed below.

- A fire broke out at a cardboard factory in Alborz Province on May 3 and reportedly spread to other industrial areas before authorities contained it.[57]
- There was a reported explosion at a power plant in Alborz Province close to the cardboard factory during a storm and a 4.0 magnitude earthquake, but Iranian officials have not yet confirmed whether natural events caused the incident.[58] Iranian media dismissed any link between the fire at the cardboard facility and the nearby power station, however.[59]
- A fire at a petrochemical factory in Qom Province on May 4 injured five workers and left two others in critical condition with severe burns.[60] Local officials stated that a chemical tank exploded and triggered the fire.
- A fire at a motorcycle factory in Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province, on May 4 damaged a warehouse covering about 43,000 square feet.[61]
- A fire also broke out at an IRGC ammunition depot in Kazeroun, Fars Province, on May 5.[62]
- A fire at the Shahid Rajaei Port in Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan Province, which previously broke out on April 26, reportedly spread to other containers on May 5. [63] The authorities have not yet contained the Shahid Rajaei Port fire. A new fire broke out near an oil tank at the port on May 5.[64]

Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi met with senior Pakistani officials in Islamabad, Pakistan, on May 5, to discuss Pakistan-India tensions, brief Pakistani officials on US-Iran talks, and advance bilateral ties.[65] Araghchi met with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, following Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's offer to help ease tensions between India and Pakistan.[66] Araghchi is scheduled to travel to India to participate in the Iran-India Joint Economic Commission on May 8.[67]

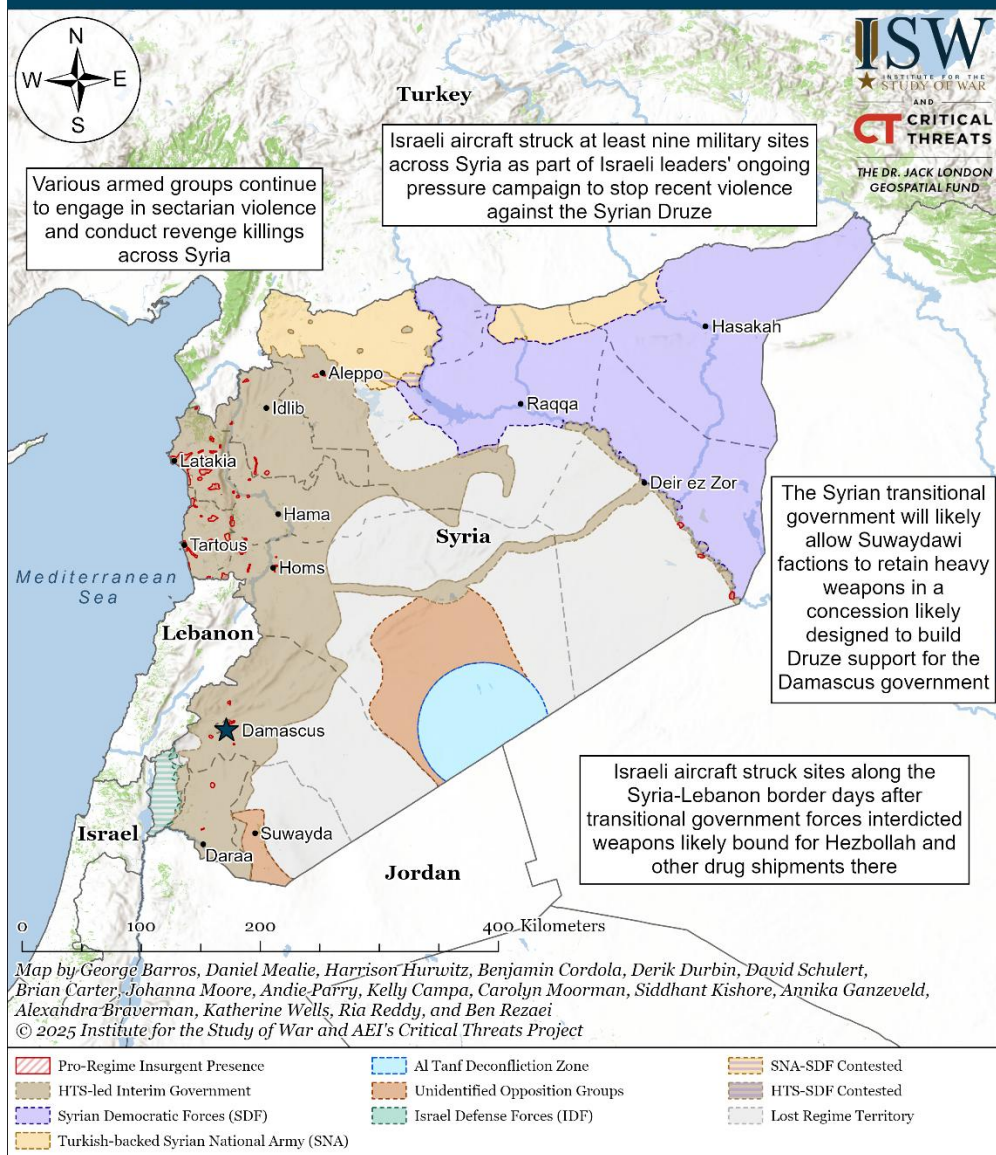
The Iranian rial appreciated from 849,000 rials to one US dollar on May 2 to 842,000 rials to one US dollar on May 5.[68]

Syria

Israeli aircraft struck at least nine military sites across Syria on May 2 as part of Israeli leaders' ongoing pressure campaign to stop recent violence against the Syrian Druze and remove transitional government forces south of Damascus.[69] Twelve Israeli fighter jets targeted anti-aircraft guns and surface-to-air missiles to ensure that Israeli aircraft maintain "freedom of air operations." [70] Israel previously used an airstrike near the Syrian Presidential Palace to send a "clear warning message" to Syrian President Ahmed al Shara as part of the pressure campaign on May 1. [71] The Israeli airstrikes are unlikely to pressure Shara into "allowing the Druze...to protect themselves" because Shara has already begun to form the joint Druze-transitional government forces needed to secure Druze communities on his own accord. [72] Shara also remains very unlikely to respond to Israel in a hostile or direct fashion due to his lack of military capacity and will instead focus on unifying Syria under his control.

Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria

May 5, 2025 at 2:00 PM EST



Israeli aircraft struck sites along the Syria-Lebanon border after transitional government forces interdicted weapons likely bound for Hezbollah and other drug shipments in the border region.^[73] General Security Services interdicted hundreds of kilograms of TNT on its way to Lebanon from western Homs on May 3.^[74] Syrian forces also seized dozens of Iranian-made 107 mm rockets and other weapons from a warehouse in Qusayr near the Lebanese border.^[75] The GSS separately confiscated anti-tank missiles in Homs on May 5.^[76] The Lebanese Armed Forces and the GSS seized captagon laboratories on the Lebanese and Syrian sides of the border, respectively, on May 5.^[77]

Syrian transitional government forces continued to dismantle Iranian-affiliated networks and insurgent groups in eastern Syria. Syrian General Security Services arrested a member of the Iranian-backed Zainabiyoun militia accused of human rights abuses in Deir ez Zor City on May 2.^[78] The GSS also detained three former

members of Iranian-backed militias during the arrest campaign in Albu Kamal.[79] The campaign also targeted a former Assad-regime military official accused of conducting attacks on GSS forces.[80] GSS forces discovered a tunnel on the Syrian border that connects a former Iranian IRGC base in Syria to Iraq on April 30.[81]

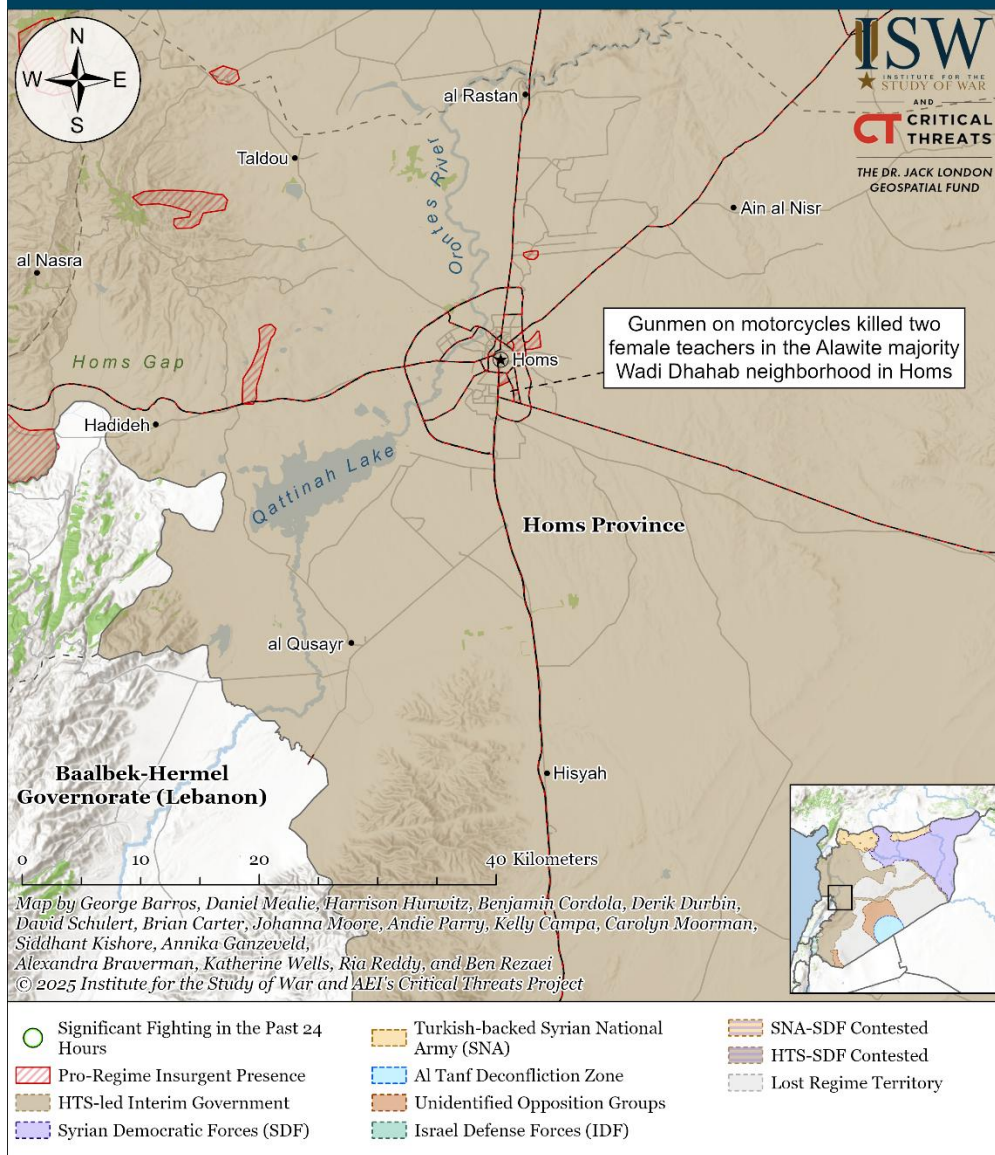
The Syrian transitional government has continued to crack down on Palestinian political-military organizations, likely as a “confidence-building measure” with the United States to receive sanctions relief.[82] Transitional government forces detained and questioned Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC) Secretary-General Talal Naji in Damascus on May 3.[83] The PFLP-GC is based in Syria and fought on behalf of Bashar al Assad during the Syrian Civil War. [84] Syrian media reported that government forces released Naji later on May 3 after the Palestinian Authority and Hamas leadership mediated with Damascus.[85] PFLP-GC also supported Hamas during the October 7 War. Anti-Israel militia Islamic Resistance Front in Syria also demanded Naji’s release and the cessation of all anti-Palestinian activities in Syria.[86] The Islamic Resistance Front in Syria uses iconography widely associated with Iranian-backed actors and has referred to the current government as an “internal enemy,” suggesting that the group is opposed to the current government and may hold Assadist views.[87]

Various armed groups continue to engage in sectarian violence targeting Alawites in Syria. Anti-government Salafi-jihadi militia Saraya Ansar al Sunnah assassinated an Alawite sheikh and journalist in front of his home in the village of al Zafarana, Homs Province, on May 4.[88] Unspecified actors attempted to assassinate Ismail two weeks prior.[89] Saraya Ansar al Sunnah believes in a hardline Salafi-jihadi ideology similar to al Qaeda and the Islamic State and believes that Alawites are apostates and must be killed.[90] Unidentified gunmen on motorcycles killed two female teachers in the Alawite majority Wadi Dhahab neighborhood of Homs in separate, consecutive incidents. Gunmen on motorcycles killed an Alawite teacher and injured her husband while they were sitting on their balcony on May 3.[91] Gunmen on motorcycles also killed another teacher and one of her daughters on May 4.[92]

Unspecified armed gunmen continue to conduct revenge killings in Syria, underscoring the need for transitional justice. Unspecified vigilantes abducted and executed Lieutenant Colonel Khaled Ghazaleh in al Najih, Daraa Province, on May 3.[93] Khaled Ghazaleh is the fifth former Assad regime member executed in Daraa Province for abuses and forced disappearances in and around Qarfa, Daraa Province, between 2013 and 2015.[94] Unspecified vigilantes assassinated pro-Assad businessman Imad al Masri in a drive-by shooting in Hama City.[95] These attacks are due in part to a lack of transitional justice to punish those responsible for atrocities during the civil war.

Assessed Control of Terrain around Homs

May 5, 2025 at 2:00 PM EST



Iraq

An Iraqi government source told Iraqi media on May 5 that Syrian Interim President Ahmed al Shara requested a security “guarantee” from the United States ahead of his travel to the Arab Summit in Iraq.[96] The source added that the Syrian interim government is concerned about Shara’s safety. A Shia Coordination Framework member denied the validity of the report and confirmed the Iraqi federal government’s responsibility for Shara’s safety at the summit.[97] The Shia Coordination Framework is a loose coalition of Shia political parties, some of which Iran backs. Iranian-backed Iraqi politicians and militias have repeatedly condemned Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia al Sudani’s invitation for Shara to attend the summit.[98] Iranian-backed Iraqi actors continue to oppose normalization between Iraq and Syria due to Shara’s al Qaeda in Iraq roots.

The Iraqi federal government banned all Iranian Kurdish opposition political, military, economic, and social activity on April 24, as a part of the implementation of the March 2023 Iran-Iraq security agreement. The agreement requires Iraqi authorities to disarm and relocate Kurdish opposition group members away from the Iran-Iraq border, but reportedly did not include limits on Iranian Kurdish opposition activity.^[99] Iran reportedly threatened to strike Iraqi Kurdistan with unspecified systems in late February 2025 if Iraq failed to implement the agreement. ^[100]

Arabian Peninsula

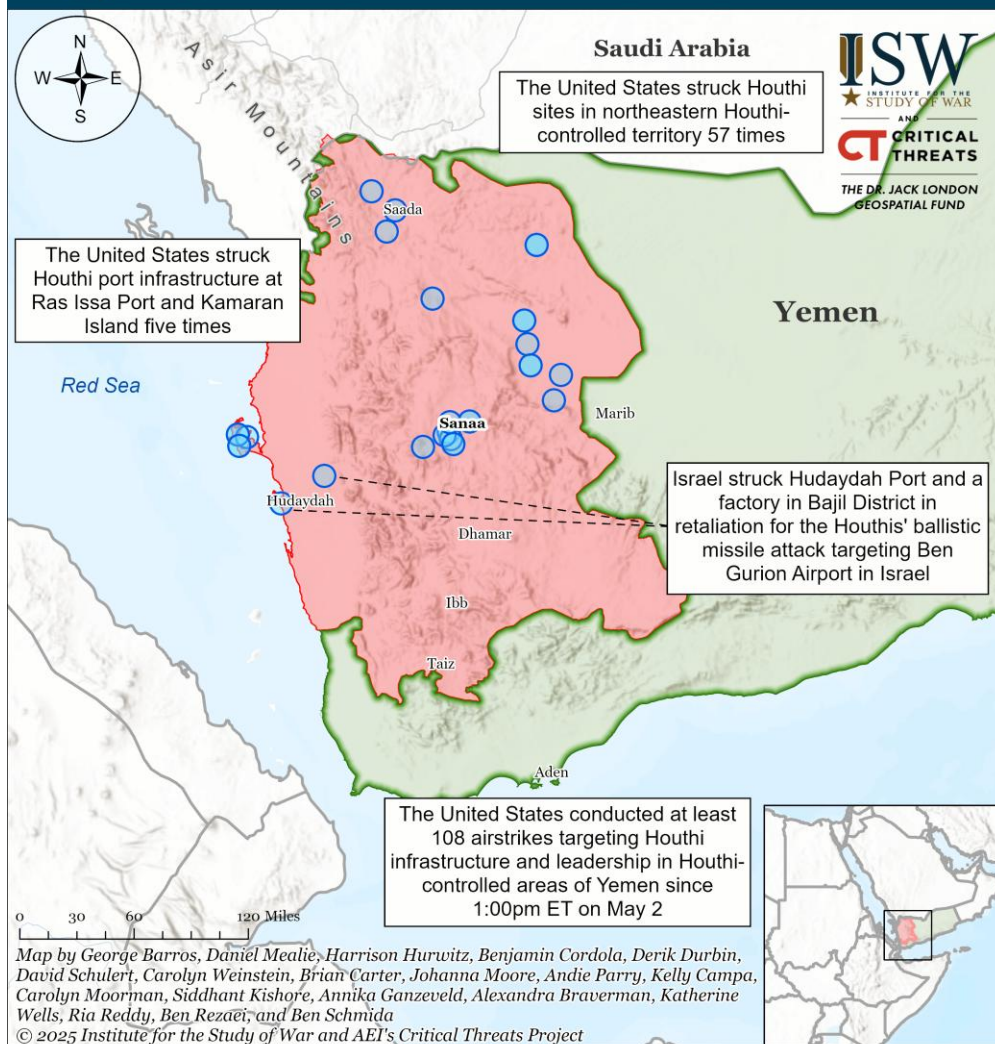
Axis of Resistance objectives:

- Harden the Houthi regime against internal dissent in Houthi-controlled areas
- Destroy the anti-Houthi opposition in order to control all of Yemen
- Erode Israeli will to continue the war in the Gaza Strip

US Central Command (CENTCOM) conducted at least 108 airstrikes targeting Houthi infrastructure and leadership in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen since 1:00 pm ET on May 2.^[101] CENTCOM conducted at least 57 airstrikes targeting Houthi infrastructure in northeastern Houthi-controlled territory in Yemen, including eastern Sanaa Governorate and western al Jawf and Marib governorates.^[102] CENTCOM also conducted at least 20 airstrikes targeting Houthi bases in and around Sanaa City, including al Shuab District, central Sanaa City, on May 4.^[103] CENTCOM struck Houthi sites near Saada City, including in the Sahar and Majz districts.^[104] CENTCOM also struck Houthi port facilities at Kamaran Island, Ras Issa, and al Salif Port at least five times.^[105]

US Strikes Against Houthi Targets

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Recent CENTCOM airstrikes successfully targeted Houthi-controlled Ras Issa Port in Hudaydah Governorate by destroying filling platforms and ship unloading pipelines, which will deprive the Houthis of a critical revenue source by disrupting the Houthis' ability to offload oil.^[106] The Yemeni Oil Company announced an emergency plan on May 5 to temporarily manage dwindling fuel supplies until Ras Issa port operations can resume, suggesting that CENTCOM had destroyed the Houthi ability to offload fuel.^[107] The Houthis retain a significant fuel stockpile throughout the country, however.^[108] The Houthis have also reportedly closed several fuel stations after CENTCOM conducted several airstrikes targeting Ras Issa Port on April 17, according to local sources.^[109] Local social media posts indicated growing fuel shortages in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen.^[110] Some pro-Houthi accounts attributed the fuel crisis to panic buying rather than supply disruption, however.^[111]

A Yemen analyst reported on May 5 that the Houthi representative to Baghdad, Ahmed al Sharifi, reportedly returned to Yemen.[112] The analyst added that Houthi operatives remain active in Iraq. The Houthis reportedly operate three offices across Iraq and a training camp in a town in Diyala Province that is controlled by Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Hezbollah.[113] CTP-ISW assessed on March 20 that increased sharing of military knowledge between Iranian-backed Iraqi militias and the Houthis may increase both groups' ability to threaten US and allied interests in the region.[114]

The Palestinian Territories and Lebanon

Nothing Significant to Report.

CTP-ISW will not be covering the new Israeli operation in the Gaza Strip. We have reprioritized our Middle East coverage to focus on Iran's nuclear program, Iranian domestic security, and Iranian efforts to rebuild its networks into the Levant, including the Palestinian Territories. Given that Israel and its partners have destroyed Hamas' military organization and severed the group's ability to resupply itself, we are now focused on how Iran seeks to rebuild its lines of communication with Hezbollah and Hamas through Syria.

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events.

CTP-ISW defines the "Axis of Resistance" as the unconventional alliance that Iran has cultivated in the Middle East since the Islamic Republic came to power in 1979. This transnational coalition is comprised of state, semi-state, and non-state actors that cooperate to secure their collective interests. Tehran considers itself to be both part of the alliance and its leader. Iran furnishes these groups with varying levels of financial, military, and political support in exchange for some degree of influence or control over their actions. Some are traditional proxies that are highly responsive to Iranian direction, while others are partners over which Iran exerts more limited influence. Members of the Axis of Resistance are united by their grand strategic objectives, which include eroding and eventually expelling American influence from the Middle East, destroying the Israeli state, or both. Pursuing these objectives and supporting the Axis of Resistance to those ends have become cornerstones of Iranian regional strategy.

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[1] <https://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1404/02/14/3305608> ;

<https://x.com/IranObserver0/status/1919090642405249230>

- [2] <https://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1404/02/14/3305608>
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[26] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-april-29-2025> ;
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