

Iran Update



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Information Cutoff: 2:00 PM ET

Some Iranian officials continued to signal openness to resuming nuclear talks with the United States, but Iranian officials have not altered their previous set of conditions.[1] Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi stated on July 24 that Iran is ready to resume talks with the United States and added, "The sooner, the better." [2] Gharibabadi said that Iran will open talks only if the United States comes to the table with "sincerity" for a "win-win solution," and not use the talks as a "cover for another military attack." [3] Gharibabadi is the Iranian chief nuclear negotiator and has coordinated high-level engagement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and E3 (the United Kingdom, France, and Germany) envoys. [4] Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi previously stated on July 1 that Iran will not resume nuclear talks unless it first receives assurance that the United States will not launch military attacks during negotiations. [5] Gharibabadi also described the E3-imposed end-of-August deadline for reaching an agreement as "flexible." [6] A *Wall Street Journal* reporter previously noted that the E3 proposed extending the snapback deadline during a July 17 call with Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi. [7]

A delay in the snapback deadline is unlikely to shift Iran's position on domestic uranium enrichment, though additional leverage applied after a delay could cause Iran to shift its position. [8] Iran and the E3 will meet on July 25 in Istanbul to discuss Iran's nuclear program and snapback-related sanctions. [9] Iran may calculate that reaching a deal with the E3 and the United States would delay or prevent snapback sanctions by demonstrating Iran's willingness to resolve the nuclear issue. The E3 reportedly aims to engage Iran and secure verifiable steps—such as restoring Iranian cooperation with the IAEA and the removal of Iran's 60 percent enriched uranium stockpile—before the snapback deadline takes effect. [10]

Araghchi emphasized Iran's commitment to domestic uranium enrichment ahead of the upcoming July 25 E3 meeting. [11] Araghchi added that the upcoming Iran and E3 meeting is important for European officials to understand that Iran's position remains "unchanged," and that enrichment will continue as a "non-negotiable right." [12] Gharibabadi warned on July 23 that continued E3 pressure to reimpose snapback sanctions could push Iran to withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). [13] Iranian officials repeatedly threatened to withdraw from the NPT if the E3 triggers the snapback sanction mechanism. [14]

Gharibabadi announced on July 23 that an IAEA technical team will visit Iran in the coming weeks to discuss a “future engagement framework.”[15] Gharibabadi stated that the technical team will not be allowed access to damaged nuclear sites.[16] Iranian personnel have been unable to access the nuclear sites due to damage caused by the strikes, which makes the question of a technical visit to the sites mostly irrelevant at this time because the IAEA cannot access centrifuge halls or other enrichment facilities that are underground.[17] Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian claimed during his interview with Tucker Carlson on July 7 that the US strikes on Iran’s nuclear facilities destroyed much of the equipment and infrastructure, and Iranian personnel cannot easily access the sites.[18] Pezeshkian added that Iran must wait to determine whether it can regain access.[19] IAEA announced on July 4 that it withdrew all inspectors from Iran.[20] Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei previously stated on June 30 that Iran would allow inspectors to remain in the country, but could not guarantee their safety following recent strikes on nuclear infrastructure.[21] The Iranian Parliament passed a bill on June 25 to suspend all cooperation with the IAEA, mandating the suspension of inspections until the IAEA recognizes Iran’s right to enrich uranium.[22]

The Syrian transitional government’s continued demand that the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) disarm is a double standard that the government has not applied equally to all factions. SDF spokesman Farhad Shahdi told Syrian media on July 23 that the SDF refuses to disarm because it fears attacks from forces affiliated with the government.[23] Shahdi emphasized that the SDF must be integrated as a military bloc, rather than as individuals, which has been a recurring point of contention between both sides.[24] This would allow the SDF to maintain a Kurdish force to defend Kurds in northeastern Syria, which have come under threat from forces that are now affiliated with the government throughout the civil war.

The SDF’s statement about disarmament and the linkage of disarmament with the recent violence in Suwayda reflects a deeply held fear developed throughout the civil war among Syrian Kurds about the threat they face from forces now affiliated with the government, rather than a recent fear spurred by the recent violence. An unspecified Syrian government official stated in a response to Syrian media on July 24 that the transitional government will not respond to SDF preconditions that contradict state unity, rejected the SDF’s refusal to disarm, and condemned the SDF’s use of violence in Suwayda Province as a justification for refusing to integrate into the Syrian state.[25] The implication that the SDF is using the violence in Suwayda as a political tool to retain their weapons, combined with the rejection of SDF concerns, ignores legitimate SDF and Kurdish fears that the government will be unable to control elements in the Syrian security forces that seek to suppress the Kurds.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to continued negotiations, but the Syrian government has continued to emphasize disarmament of the SDF. The emphasis on disarmament is a double standard that the government has not applied to every Syrian faction equally.[26] The SDF and Syrian transitional government signed a framework agreement on March 10 outlining broad principles for the integration of the SDF’s military and civil organizations into the Syrian government and the handover of SDF-controlled sites in northeastern Syria to the government.[27] The Syrian transitional government has repeatedly demanded that the SDF disarm and dissolve its forces prior to integrating into the Syrian Defense Ministry (MoD).[28] These demands differ from the transitional government’s willingness to allow certain Syrian armed groups, like elements of the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA) and Druze forces led by Laith al Balous, which were re-flagged and integrated as

blocs.[29] Some Turkish-backed militias in the SNA are made up of Turkish ethno-nationalists who have committed atrocities against Kurds in northern Syria.[30] The government, by its own admission, cannot control all the bad actors within its security forces, some of whom would pose a potentially existential threat to Kurdish forces who disarm.[31]

Some Iranian-backed Iraqi actors continue to use sectarian events in Syria to justify the existence of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF). Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) leader Hammam Hamoudi said in an interview with the Australian Ambassador to Iraq on July 24 that the events in Suwayda Province have convinced Iraqis that they must “hold on” to the PMF, referring to the abuses Syrian security forces committed against Druze in southwestern Syria.[32] Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Hezbollah spokesperson Abu Ali al Askari said on July 23 that Iraqis from the Sunni-majority “western regions” who left to fight in support of the Syrian government must be monitored, presumably by the PMF.[33] These statements follow the leader of Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Asaib Ahl al Haq and an Iranian-affiliated Iraqi politician separately suggesting on July 21 that the violence in Suwayda Province justifies the PMF’s continued existence.[34] The PMF was established in 2014 by “institutionalizing” pre-existing and predominantly Shia militias that were engaged in the fight against ISIS, including various Iranian-backed Iraqi militias like Kataib Hezbollah and Asaib Ahl al Haq.[35] These Shia sectarian actors have remained intensely distrustful of the Syrian transitional government under Ahmed al Shara due to his historic ties to al Qaeda in Iraq, which was the predecessor to ISIS.[36] Ongoing discussions surrounding the dissolution of the PMF are probably driving some of these Iraqi militia efforts to justify their existence.[37]

Key Takeaways:

- **Iran-US Nuclear Talks:** Some Iranian officials are continuing to signal openness to resume nuclear talks with the United States, but Iranian officials have not altered their previous set of conditions.
- **SDF-Syrian Government Negotiations:** The Syrian transitional government’s continued demand that the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) disarm is a double standard that the government has not applied to every Syrian faction equally. The SDF’s recent statement about disarmament and the linkage of disarmament with the recent violence in Suwayda reflects a deeply held fear that Kurds developed during the civil war about the threat they face from forces now affiliated with the government, rather than a recent fear spurred by the recent violence.
- **Iraqi Discussions on the PMF:** Some Iranian-backed Iraqi actors continue to use sectarian events in Syria to justify the existence of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF). Ongoing discussions surrounding the dissolution of the PMF are probably driving some of these Iraqi militia efforts to justify their existence.

Iran

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian held separate meetings with conservative senior Iranian clerics Ayatollah Ali Reza Araf and Naser Makarem Shirazi during an unofficial visit to Qom on July 23 and July 24.[38] Pezeshkian and the clerics discussed strengthening clergy-Iranian government ties and socio-economic issues, including inflation, housing, and youth unemployment.[39] Shirazi met with former Reformist President Hassan Rouhani in Qom in mid-

June, according to opposition media reports.[40] Rouhani reportedly attempted to encourage Shirazi to persuade Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei to drop Iran's demand for uranium enrichment on Iranian soil and accept a ceasefire with Israel.[41] Shirazi declared on June 29 that individuals who threaten Khamenei or religious authority are "mohareb" (enemies of God) and therefore subject to the death penalty.[42] CTP-ISW previously assessed that Shirazi's fatwa may be a public rejection of Rouhani's reported discussions with Shirazi and others that sought to sideline Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.[43] Ayatollah Ali Reza Arafai also issued fatwas on June 30 that echoed Shirazi's June 29 fatwa that declared individuals "mohareb." [44] Arafai has been a member of the Guardian Council since 2019, which is the body responsible for supervising Presidential elections and screening parliamentary legislation.[45]

Pezeshkian also met with Grand Ayatollah Ali al Sistani's representative in Iran, Javad Shahrestani, in Qom on July 23.[46] Sistani is the highest Shia religious authority in Iraq.[47] Both officials discussed the importance of government institutions working with religious authorities to address Iran's socio-economic problems. Iranian media readouts of the meeting do not mention any discussion on Iran-Iraq relations. Pezeshkian previously met with Shahrestani in Qom to discuss similar topics in October 2024.[48]

Iran is facing a severe water shortage crisis, which may stoke further anti-regime sentiment and internal unrest if sustained over time. IRGC-affiliated media reported on July 23 that half of the Iranian urban population is facing water shortages.[49] Rainfall levels across the country have reportedly decreased by 40 percent in 2025.[50] The East Azerbaijan Regional Water Company CEO warned on July 23 that the most populated city in northwestern Iran, Tabriz, has less than 3 months' worth of drinking water reserves.[51] Tehran Provincial Water Company reported that the reservoirs used to supply water to Tehran Province are at their lowest levels in a century.[52] Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian acknowledged that his government needs to take urgent action to remedy the water crisis during a cabinet meeting on July 19.[53] Iranian Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi announced on July 15 that Iran is looking to import water from neighboring countries and that negotiations have already taken place with Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.[54] Iran closed government offices in at least 14 provinces on July 23 in an effort to relieve some stress on water and energy infrastructure.[55] Local authorities in some regions have even cut water supplies to consumers for hours at a time amid a severe heatwave.[56]

The water crisis may stoke internal unrest. Anti-regime media posted footage of a protest outside of the governor's office in Sabzevar, Razavi Khorasan Province, which featured chants such as "Water, power, life: our absolute rights." [57] Severe water shortages in Khuzestan Province in 2021 sparked protests that spread across Iran.[58] Iranian security forces suppressed these protests using live ammunition, and dozens were killed.[59]

US Central Command (CENTCOM) denied that the USS *Fitzgerald* entered Iranian waters in the Persian Gulf on July 23. CENTCOM also called the interaction between an Iranian Navy helicopter and US destroyer USS *Fitzgerald* near the Gulf of Oman on July 23 "safe." [60] "Safe" in this context means that the interaction did not endanger US personnel or assets. Iranian media previously claimed on July 23 that the Iranian Navy helicopter harassed the USS *Fitzgerald* in the Gulf of Oman after the USS *Fitzgerald* approached Iranian territorial waters.[61]

Iranian Artesh Air Force Commander Brigadier General Hamid Vahedi inspected the Artesh Air Force 9th Tactical Airbase in Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan Province, on July 24.[62] Senior Iranian military commanders routinely inspect military bases to assess operational readiness.[63] Iran will likely continue to conduct inspections of military bases after the Israel-Iran War.[64] Bandar Abbas is a key Iranian port that is vital to its maritime trade. It also hosts many military facilities.



Iran-Belarus parliamentary friendship group members met Belarusian Council of the Republic Speaker Natalia Kochanova in Minsk, Belarus, on July 24.[65] The Iran-Belarus parliamentary friendship group is an official interparliamentary body that facilitates legislative diplomacy and bilateral ties between Iran and Belarus.[66] The Iranian delegation head proposed the establishment of a direct Tehran–Minsk flight route.[67] The delegation also discussed joint economic,

scientific, and medical projects, including over 45 current bilateral agreements.[68] Iran and Belarus signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in April 2025 to expand bilateral trade along the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).[69] The INSTC is a trade route that connects India, Iran, Russia, and Central Asia via road, rail, and sea to reduce transit time and costs between South Asia and Europe.[70] The visit follows broader Iranian efforts to strengthen ties with Russia-aligned states, including through defense coordination. Iran has attempted to establish a drone factory in Belarus since May 2023 to support the Russian invasion of Ukraine and showcase Iranian military equipment.[71]

Iraq

See the topline section.

Syria

See the topline section.

Arabian Peninsula

An unspecified local source told a Yemeni journalist on July 23 that Israeli airstrikes targeting Hudaydah Port on July 21 killed seven Houthi special naval force members involved in Houthi attacks on international shipping in the Red Sea.[72] The Yemeni journalist also reported that Israel struck a Houthi vessel attempting to leave Hudaydah Port on July 21. The strike on the vessel would not be visible on satellite imagery if the strike sank the vessel.

The Palestinian Territories and Lebanon

Nothing significant to report.

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Some Iranian officials continued to signal openness to resuming nuclear talks with the United States, but Iranian officials have not altered their previous set of conditions.[1]

Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi stated on July 24 that Iran is ready to resume talks with the United States and added, "The sooner, the better." [2] Gharibabadi said that Iran will open talks only if the United States comes to the table with "sincerity" for a "win-win solution," and not use the talks as a "cover for another military attack." [3] Gharibabadi is the Iranian chief nuclear negotiator and has coordinated high-level engagement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and E3 (the United Kingdom, France, and Germany) envoys. [4] Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi previously stated on July 1 that Iran will not resume nuclear talks unless it first receives assurance that the United States will not launch military attacks during negotiations. [5] Gharibabadi also described the E3-imposed end-of-August deadline for reaching an agreement as "flexible." [6] A *Wall Street Journal* reporter previously noted that the E3 proposed extending the snapback deadline during a July 17 call with Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi. [7]

A delay in the snapback deadline is unlikely to shift Iran's position on domestic uranium enrichment, though additional leverage applied after a delay could cause Iran to shift its position. [8] Iran and the E3 will meet on July 25 in Istanbul to discuss Iran's nuclear program and snapback-related sanctions. [9] Iran may calculate that reaching a deal with the E3 and the United States would delay or prevent snapback sanctions by demonstrating Iran's willingness to resolve the nuclear issue. The E3 reportedly aims to engage Iran and secure verifiable steps—such as restoring Iranian cooperation with the IAEA and the removal of Iran's 60 percent enriched uranium stockpile—before the snapback deadline takes effect. [10]

Araghchi emphasized Iran's commitment to domestic uranium enrichment ahead of the upcoming July 25 E3 meeting. [11] Araghchi added that the upcoming Iran and E3 meeting is important for European officials to understand that Iran's position remains "unchanged," and that enrichment will continue as a "non-negotiable right." [12] Gharibabadi warned on July 23 that continued E3 pressure to reimpose snapback sanctions could push Iran to withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). [13] Iranian

officials repeatedly threatened to withdraw from the NPT if the E3 triggers the snapback sanction mechanism.[14]

Gharibabadi announced on July 23 that an IAEA technical team will visit Iran in the coming weeks to discuss a “future engagement framework.”[15] Gharibabadi stated that the technical team will not be allowed access to damaged nuclear sites.[16] Iranian personnel have been unable to access the nuclear sites due to damage caused by the strikes, which makes the question of a technical visit to the sites mostly irrelevant at this time because the IAEA cannot access centrifuge halls or other enrichment facilities that are underground.[17] Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian claimed during his interview with Tucker Carlson on July 7 that the US strikes on Iran’s nuclear facilities destroyed much of the equipment and infrastructure, and Iranian personnel cannot easily access the sites.[18] Pezeshkian added that Iran must wait to determine whether it can regain access.[19] IAEA announced on July 4 that it withdrew all inspectors from Iran.[20] Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei previously stated on June 30 that Iran would allow inspectors to remain in the country, but could not guarantee their safety following recent strikes on nuclear infrastructure.[21] The Iranian Parliament passed a bill on June 25 to suspend all cooperation with the IAEA, mandating the suspension of inspections until the IAEA recognizes Iran’s right to enrich uranium.[22]

The Syrian transitional government’s continued demand that the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) disarm is a double standard that the government has not applied equally to all factions. SDF spokesman Farhad Shahdi told Syrian media on July 23 that the SDF refuses to disarm because it fears attacks from forces affiliated with the government.[23] Shahdi emphasized that the SDF must be integrated as a military bloc, rather than as individuals, which has been a recurring point of contention between both sides.[24] This would allow the SDF to maintain a Kurdish force to defend Kurds in northeastern Syria, which have come under threat from forces that are now affiliated with the government throughout the civil war.

The SDF’s statement about disarmament and the linkage of disarmament with the recent violence in Suwayda reflects a deeply held fear developed throughout the civil war among Syrian Kurds about the threat they face from forces now affiliated with the government, rather than a recent fear spurred by the recent violence. An unspecified Syrian government official stated in a response to Syrian media on July 24 that the transitional government will not respond to SDF preconditions that contradict state unity, rejected the SDF’s refusal to disarm, and condemned the SDF’s use of violence in Suwayda Province as a justification for refusing to integrate into the Syrian state.[25] The implication that the SDF is using the violence in Suwayda as a political tool to retain their weapons, combined with the rejection of SDF concerns, ignores legitimate SDF and Kurdish fears that the government will be unable to control elements in the Syrian security forces that seek to suppress the Kurds.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to continued negotiations, but the Syrian government has continued to emphasize disarmament of the SDF. The emphasis on disarmament is a double standard that the government has not applied to every Syrian faction equally.[26] The SDF and Syrian transitional government signed a framework agreement on March 10 outlining broad principles for the integration of the SDF’s military and civil organizations into the Syrian government and the handover of SDF-controlled sites in northeastern Syria to the government.[27] The Syrian transitional

government has repeatedly demanded that the SDF disarm and dissolve its forces prior to integrating into the Syrian Defense Ministry (MoD).[28] These demands differ from the transitional government's willingness to allow certain Syrian armed groups, like elements of the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA) and Druze forces led by Laith al Balous, which were re-flagged and integrated as blocs.[29] Some Turkish-backed militias in the SNA are made up of Turkish ethno-nationalists who have committed atrocities against Kurds in northern Syria.[30] The government, by its own admission, cannot control all the bad actors within its security forces, some of whom would pose a potentially existential threat to Kurdish forces who disarm.[31]

Some Iranian-backed Iraqi actors continue to use sectarian events in Syria to justify the existence of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF). Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) leader Hammam Hamoudi said in an interview with the Australian Ambassador to Iraq on July 24 that the events in Suwayda Province have convinced Iraqis that they must “hold on” to the PMF, referring to the abuses Syrian security forces committed against Druze in southwestern Syria.[32] Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Hezbollah spokesperson Abu Ali al Askari said on July 23 that Iraqis from the Sunni-majority “western regions” who left to fight in support of the Syrian government must be monitored, presumably by the PMF.[33] These statements follow the leader of Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Asaib Ahl al Haq and an Iranian-affiliated Iraqi politician separately suggesting on July 21 that the violence in Suwayda Province justifies the PMF's continued existence.[34] The PMF was established in 2014 by “institutionalizing” pre-existing and predominantly Shia militias that were engaged in the fight against ISIS, including various Iranian-backed Iraqi militias like Kataib Hezbollah and Asaib Ahl al Haq.[35] These Shia sectarian actors have remained intensely distrustful of the Syrian transitional government under Ahmed al Shara due to his historic ties to al Qaeda in Iraq, which was the predecessor to ISIS.[36] Ongoing discussions surrounding the dissolution of the PMF are probably driving some of these Iraqi militia efforts to justify their existence.[37]

Key Takeaways:

- **Iran-US Nuclear Talks:** Some Iranian officials are continuing to signal openness to resume nuclear talks with the United States, but Iranian officials have not altered their previous set of conditions.
- **SDF-Syrian Government Negotiations:** The Syrian transitional government's continued demand that the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) disarm is a double standard that the government has not applied to every Syrian faction equally. The SDF's recent statement about disarmament and the linkage of disarmament with the recent violence in Suwayda reflects a deeply held fear that Kurds developed during the civil war about the threat they face from forces now affiliated with the government, rather than a recent fear spurred by the recent violence.
- **Iraqi Discussions on the PMF:** Some Iranian-backed Iraqi actors continue to use sectarian events in Syria to justify the existence of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF). Ongoing discussions surrounding the dissolution of the PMF are probably driving some of these Iraqi militia efforts to justify their existence.

Iran

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian held separate meetings with conservative senior Iranian clerics Ayatollah Ali Reza Araf and Naser Makarem Shirazi during an unofficial visit to Qom on July 23 and July 24.[38] Pezeshkian and the clerics discussed strengthening clergy-Iranian government ties and socioeconomic issues, including inflation, housing, and youth unemployment.[39] Shirazi met with former Reformist President Hassan Rouhani in Qom in mid-June, according to opposition media reports.[40] Rouhani reportedly attempted to encourage Shirazi to persuade Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei to drop Iran's demand for uranium enrichment on Iranian soil and accept a ceasefire with Israel.[41] Shirazi declared on June 29 that individuals who threaten Khamenei or religious authority are "mohareb" (enemies of God) and therefore subject to the death penalty.[42] CTP-ISW previously assessed that Shirazi's fatwa may be a public rejection of Rouhani's reported discussions with Shirazi and others that sought to sideline Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.[43] Ayatollah Ali Reza Araf also issued fatwas on June 30 that echoed Shirazi's June 29 fatwa that declared individuals "mohareb." [44] Araf has been a member of the Guardian Council since 2019, which is the body responsible for supervising Presidential elections and screening parliamentary legislation.[45]

Pezeshkian also met with Grand Ayatollah Ali al Sistani's representative in Iran, Javad Shahrestani, in Qom on July 23.[46] Sistani is the highest Shia religious authority in Iraq.[47] Both officials discussed the importance of government institutions working with religious authorities to address Iran's socioeconomic problems. Iranian media readouts of the meeting do not mention any discussion on Iran-Iraq relations. Pezeshkian previously met with Shahrestani in Qom to discuss similar topics in October 2024.[48]

Iran is facing a severe water shortage crisis, which may stoke further anti-regime sentiment and internal unrest if sustained over time. IRGC-affiliated media reported on July 23 that half of the Iranian urban population is facing water shortages.[49] Rainfall levels across the country have reportedly decreased by 40 percent in 2025.[50] The East Azerbaijan Regional Water Company CEO warned on July 23 that the most populated city in northwestern Iran, Tabriz, has less than 3 months' worth of drinking water reserves.[51] Tehran Provincial Water Company reported that the reservoirs used to supply water to Tehran Province are at their lowest levels in a century.[52] Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian acknowledged that his government needs to take urgent action to remedy the water crisis during a cabinet meeting on July 19.[53] Iranian Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi announced on July 15 that Iran is looking to import water from neighboring countries and that negotiations have already taken place with Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.[54] Iran closed government offices in at least 14 provinces on July 23 in an effort to relieve some stress on water and energy infrastructure.[55] Local authorities in some regions have even cut water supplies to consumers for hours at a time amid a severe heatwave.[56]

The water crisis may stoke internal unrest. Anti-regime media posted footage of a protest outside of the governor's office in Sabzevar, Razavi Khorasan Province, which featured chants such as "Water, power, life: our absolute rights." [57] Severe water shortages in Khuzestan Province in 2021 sparked protests that spread across Iran.[58] Iranian security forces suppressed these protests using live ammunition, and dozens were killed.[59]

US Central Command (CENTCOM) denied that the USS *Fitzgerald* entered Iranian waters in the Persian Gulf on July 23. CENTCOM also called the interaction between an Iranian Navy helicopter and US destroyer USS *Fitzgerald* near the Gulf of Oman on July 23 “safe.” [60] “Safe” in this context means that the interaction did not endanger US personnel or assets. Iranian media previously claimed on July 23 that the Iranian Navy helicopter harassed the USS *Fitzgerald* in the Gulf of Oman after the USS *Fitzgerald* approached Iranian territorial waters.[61]

Iranian Artesh Air Force Commander Brigadier General Hamid Vahedi inspected the Artesh Air Force 9th Tactical Airbase in Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan Province, on July 24.[62] Senior Iranian military commanders routinely inspect military bases to assess operational readiness.[63] Iran will likely continue to conduct inspections of military bases after the Israel-Iran War.[64] Bandar Abbas is a key Iranian port that is vital to its maritime trade. It also hosts many military facilities.

Bandar Abbas map

Iran-Belarus parliamentary friendship group members met Belarusian Council of the Republic Speaker Natalia Kochanova in Minsk, Belarus, on July 24.[65] The Iran-Belarus parliamentary friendship group is an official interparliamentary body that facilitates legislative diplomacy and bilateral ties between Iran and Belarus.[66] The Iranian delegation head proposed the establishment of a direct Tehran–Minsk flight route.[67] The delegation also discussed joint economic, scientific, and medical projects, including over 45 current bilateral agreements.[68] Iran and Belarus signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in April 2025 to expand bilateral trade along the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).[69] The INSTC is a trade route that connects India, Iran, Russia, and Central Asia via road, rail, and sea to reduce transit time and costs between South Asia and Europe.[70] The visit follows broader Iranian efforts to strengthen ties with Russia-aligned states, including through defense coordination. Iran has attempted to establish a drone factory in Belarus since May 2023 to support the Russian invasion of Ukraine and showcase Iranian military equipment.[71]

Iraq

See the topline section.

Syria

See the topline section.

Arabian Peninsula

An unspecified local source told a Yemeni journalist on July 23 that Israeli airstrikes targeting Hudaydah Port on July 21 killed seven Houthi special naval force members involved in Houthi attacks on international shipping in the Red Sea.[72] The Yemeni journalist also reported that Israel struck a Houthi vessel attempting to leave Hudaydah Port on July 21. The strike on the vessel would not be visible on satellite imagery if the strike sank the vessel.

The Palestinian Territories and Lebanon

Nothing significant to report.

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