

# Iran Update



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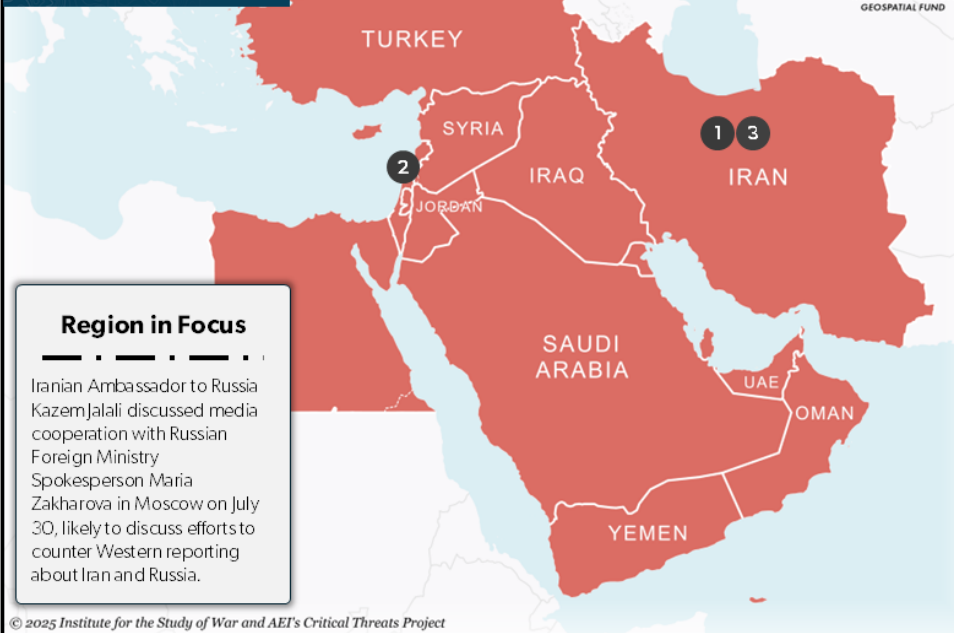
**Information Cutoff: July 30, 2025, 2:00 PM ET**

**The Iranian Parliament appears to be trying to play an influential role in shaping Iranian security policy following the Israel-Iran War by supporting and approving security-related legislation at an anomalously high rate.** Parliament recently approved a bill on July 27 that would further expand the regime's ability to suppress public dissent.[1] The bill targets unspecified "fake news" on social media and only applies to social media accounts with over 90,000 followers.[2] The regime could define anti-regime statements or unapproved narratives as "fake news" to suppress regime dissidents. The "fake news" bill is the latest of several security-related pieces of legislation that Parliament has approved since the conclusion of the war, which is consistent with the regime's efforts to securitize Iranian society following the war.[3] Parliament approved an espionage bill on June 29 that targets suspected spies or individuals aiding hostile states.[4] The regime could use the espionage bill to target any Iranian who opposes the regime, similar to the "fake news" bill. The Guardian Council still needs to approve the espionage bill in order for it to become law. Parliament separately passed a bill on July 2 to suspend Iranian cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which could undermine moderate pro-negotiations officials' ability to comply with foreign demands for Iran to cooperate with the IAEA.[5] The Iranian Parliament regularly passes legislation, including legislation related to security, but the rate at which it has done so following the war is anomalous and may reflect Parliament's efforts to play a more significant role in shaping Iranian security policy.

**Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's cabinet withdrew the "fake news" bill from Parliament on July 30, which highlights the fissures between moderate and hardliner elements in the Iranian political sphere.[6] The decision to withdraw the bill may also reflect government concerns that the legislation could trigger popular unrest.** Pezeshkian's cabinet withdrew the bill to maintain "national unity," according to the Iranian government spokesperson.[7] The Government Information Council head separately stated that Pezeshkian's cabinet withdrew the bill in order to avoid causing "concern and discomfort" to the Iranian people.[8] The decision comes after the justice minister, legal experts, and civil society members reviewed the bill on July 30 upon Pezeshkian's request and amid criticism from reformist and moderate factions that the bill would further erode trust between the regime and the Iranian people.[9] Iranian hardliners, who comprise the majority of Parliament, will likely oppose Pezeshkian's decision to withdraw the bill.

## Iran Update

July 30, 2025



### Region in Focus

Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali discussed media cooperation with Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova in Moscow on July 30, likely to discuss efforts to counter Western reporting about Iran and Russia.

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- 1 TEHRAN.** The Iranian Parliament appears to be trying to play an influential role in shaping Iranian security policy following the Israel-Iran War by supporting and approving security-related legislation at an anomalously high rate, including a bill that would further expand the regime's ability to suppress public dissent. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian cabinet's withdrawal of the bill from parliament on July 30 highlights the fissures between moderate and hardliner elements in the Iranian regime.
- 2 BEIRUT.** The United States is reportedly pressuring the Lebanese Council of Ministers to vote on a resolution to disarm Hezbollah. Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam is attempting to obtain support for a disarmament resolution from Hezbollah and the Amal Movement before convening the council for a vote, which will likely further stall US-Lebanon negotiations given that Hezbollah continues to refuse to disarm.
- 3 TEHRAN.** Iran may be trying to replace its US-owned Global Positioning System (GPS) with the PRC's BeiDou satellite navigation system. Iran's interest in BeiDou is part of a broader increase in Iranian military and defense cooperation with the PRC following the war.

**The United States is reportedly pressuring the Lebanese Council of Ministers to vote on a resolution to disarm Hezbollah.** The United States and Lebanon have exchanged multiple proposals to disarm Hezbollah during ongoing negotiations over the past six weeks but have been unable to reach an agreement.<sup>[10]</sup> The Lebanese government gave US Special Envoy Thomas Barrack an updated proposal during his visit to Beirut in early July, which Israel rejected.<sup>[11]</sup> Five unspecified sources told Reuters on July 29 that the United States will no longer engage in direct negotiations or “pressure Israel” to stop operations in Lebanon until the Lebanese Council of Ministers votes on a resolution that commits the Lebanese government to disarming Hezbollah.<sup>[12]</sup> The 24-member Council of Ministers is Lebanon's executive body that sets and implements the Lebanese government's policies.<sup>[13]</sup> A council decision would make Hezbollah's disarmament Lebanese state

policy and publicly affirm the government's commitment to do so. Unspecified political sources told Lebanese media that French President Emmanuel Macron advised Salam to hold a council session to pass a resolution to monopolize the state's arms during their July 24 meeting.[14]

**Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam is attempting to obtain support for a disarmament resolution from Hezbollah and the Amal Movement before convening the council for a vote, which will likely further stall US-Lebanon negotiations given that Hezbollah continues to refuse to disarm.** Unspecified sources told Lebanese media that Salam is avoiding convening the council before obtaining an internal disarmament agreement with Hezbollah and the Amal Movement, which is a close ally of Hezbollah.[15] Salam agreed to hold a council session on August 5 to discuss Hezbollah disarmament, but Lebanese sources have indicated that no decision will be made at the session.[16] It is unlikely that Hezbollah would support a resolution that calls for its disarmament given its persistent rejection of calls to disarm. Hezbollah has long used ongoing Israeli operations in Lebanon and the 1989 Taif Agreement to justify its retention of weapons.[17] The Taif Agreement calls for the disarmament of all Lebanese militias except Hezbollah and states that Lebanon would take all necessary steps "to liberate all Lebanese territories from [Israel]."[18] Hezbollah Secretary General Naim Qassem has persistently rejected calls for the group to disarm and said on July 30 that supporters of disarmament "serve the Israeli project." [19] Lebanese Parliament Speaker and Hezbollah ally Nabih Berri suggested on July 25 that recent Israeli operations in Lebanon and southern Syria have reinforced Hezbollah's fears that Israel will remain in Lebanon and continue to pose a challenge to Hezbollah.[20]

**Iran may be trying to replace its US-owned Global Positioning System (GPS) with the People's Republic of China's (PRC) BeiDou satellite navigation system.**[21] Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC)-affiliated media reported on July 30 that repeated GPS disruptions during the recent Israel-Iran War, especially in the Persian Gulf, have led Iran to seek China's BeiDou navigation system.[22] The Iranian Information and Communications Technology Ministry confirmed on July 14 that the Iranian government deliberately jammed GPS signals inside Iran.[23] IRGC-affiliated media added on July 30 that Iran's acquisition of BeiDou would represent a step toward strategic and "technological independence." [24] The report claimed that US-Israeli strikes exposed Iran's GPS as a vulnerability and framed Iran's interest in BeiDou as part of a broader effort to challenge "Western digital hegemony." [25]

Iran's interest in BeiDou is part of a broader increase in Iranian military and defense cooperation with the PRC following the war.[26] Iranian Deputy Information and Communications Technology Minister Ehsan Chitsaz stated on July 14 that Iran is pursuing cooperation with the PRC within the framework of the 25-year Iran-PRC strategic agreement and noted that BeiDou was one of the main issues that Iranian and Chinese officials discussed during negotiations to reach that agreement.[27] Iran has also reportedly sought to acquire PRC military assets, including J-10 fighter jets and advanced AWACS systems.[28] CTP-ISW cannot verify these reports. The BeiDou system provides navigation to aircraft, submarines, and missiles.[29] A US-based think tank previously reported that the PRC uses BeiDou-aided guidance for short-range ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and long-range guided rockets.[30] Iran may seek to use the BeiDou system in similar Iranian weapons systems, particularly to improve the accuracy of short-range ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and drones. PRC media previously

reported that the BeiDou satellite navigation system is most effective with missiles with ranges under 500 kilometers.[31]

### **Key Takeaways**

- **Iranian Securitization Efforts:** The Iranian Parliament appears to be trying to play an influential role in shaping Iranian security policy following the Israel-Iran War by supporting and approving security-related legislation at an anomalously high rate. This legislation includes a bill that Parliament approved on July 27 that would further expand the regime's ability to suppress public dissent. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's cabinet withdrew this bill from Parliament on July 30, which highlights the fissures between moderate and hardliner elements in the Iranian regime.
- **Hezbollah Disarmament:** The United States is reportedly pressuring the Lebanese Council of Ministers to vote on a resolution to disarm Hezbollah. Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam is attempting to obtain support for a disarmament resolution from Hezbollah and the Amal Movement before convening the council for a vote, which will likely further stall US-Lebanon negotiations given that Hezbollah continues to refuse to disarm.
- **Iran-China Military Cooperation:** Iran may be trying to replace its US-owned Global Positioning System (GPS) with the PRC's BeiDou satellite navigation system. Iran's interest in BeiDou is part of a broader increase in Iranian military and defense cooperation with the PRC following the war.

### **Iran**

**Iranian armed forces-run Defa Press published an article on July 30 that praised Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's leadership during the 12-day Israel-Iran War.[32]** The article described Khamenei as an "architect of national cohesion" and "leader of strategic rationality." [33] The article praised Khamenei for rapidly replacing senior military commanders whom Israel killed during the war and preventing a "decision-making vacuum." [34] The article also noted that Khamenei confronted the war's "psychological, media, cognitive, and diplomatic fronts" and effectively reassured the Iranian people. [35] This article notably follows reports of efforts to sideline Khamenei amid his prolonged absence from public view during the war. [36]

It is possible that the Defa Press article was a response to a July 29 Nour News op-ed that called on the Iranian regime to alter its internal and external strategy following the war. [37] Nour News has historically been affiliated with the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) broadly but has recently aligned itself increasingly with former SNSC Secretary Ali Shamkhani. The op-ed argued that Iran's threat environment has changed after the war and urged Iran to "rearrange the country's decision-making system." [38] The op-ed proposed the creation of a "Strategic Command Center" with "cross-sectoral authority" to coordinate between "security, economic, and diplomatic centers" and develop rapid responses to evolving threats. [39] The Defa Press article may be a rejection of the proposal for a new decision-making institution by arguing that Khamenei effectively led Iran's military efforts while also effectively overseeing Iran's "soft war" efforts during the recent conflict. "Soft war" is a term that Iranian leaders use to refer to the West's alleged use of nonmilitary means, such as economic and psychological pressure and information operations, to erode the regime's legitimacy, cultivate domestic

opposition, and propagate Western values in Iran.[40] The Nour News article also advocated for a transition from "reactive security" to "proactive security" to address future threats.[41] The Defa Press article, contrastingly, argued that Iran was not in a "position of reaction" but in a position of "setting the stage" during the recent war.[42]

**Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali discussed media cooperation with Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova in Moscow on July 30, likely to discuss efforts to counter Western reporting about Iran and Russia.[43]** Iranian media reported that Jalali and Zakharova discussed "strategies to combat fake news." Jalali reportedly condemned Axios for spreading "lies" about Russo-Iranian relations, possibly referring to a July 12 report that Russian President Vladimir Putin had encouraged Iranian officials to accept the US demand for zero uranium enrichment.[44] Russia serves as a model for Iran in the cognitive warfare space.[45] Moscow's engagement with Iran is consistent with Russia's engagement with other allied states, such as the People's Republic of China (PRC), to coordinate messaging on key issues, particularly Russia's war in Ukraine.[46] Jalali and Zakharova's meeting takes place as Iranian leaders are taking steps to further crack down on the Iranian information space. The Iranian Parliament recently introduced a bill that would penalize social media users who spread "fake news," for example.[47]

**Iran's worsening water crisis has reportedly triggered protests in at least two cities across Iran since July 22.** Anti-regime media published footage on July 29 of a large protest in Khomam, Gilan Province, that featured chants such as "water and electricity are cut off, this happens every day" and "we don't want incompetent officials." [48] Security forces reportedly violently suppressed the protest.[49] A similar protest against water shortages reportedly took place in Sabzevar, Khorasan Razavi Province, on July 22.[50]

Iran's water crisis has continued to worsen and may lead to further protests. Iranian Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi stated on July 26 that 30 out of Iran's 31 provinces are facing "water stress." [51] Tehran Province Governor Mohammad Sadegh Motamedi said on July 25 that four of the dams that supply the province with water are 13 percent full. Certain areas of Tehran are reportedly experiencing water outages for up to 12 hours a day.[52] A resident of Bushehr in southwestern Iran told Western media that Bushehr residents only have access to running water for a few hours per day.[53] Water shortages have become increasingly common in Iran in recent years due to industrial expansion, climate change, and sanctions.[54] Tehran Province has entered its fifth straight year of drought, according to Iranian state media.[55] Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian warned in a cabinet meeting on July 19 that the water crisis requires "urgent action." [56] The Iranian regime is likely concerned that water shortages could cause further internal unrest. Water shortages in Khuzestan and Esfahan provinces in 2021 and Sistan and Baluchistan Province in 2023 previously triggered protests.[57]

## **Iraq**

*Nothing significant to report.*

## **Syria**

**The Syrian and Iraqi interior ministries dismantled a Captagon smuggling network in Damascus on July 30.[58]** The Syrian Interior Ministry seized 1.35 million Captagon pills and arrested several individuals.[59] A Syrian source assessed that the pills were likely bound for Iraq.[60] The Syrian and Iraqi interior ministries shared intelligence during the operation.[61] This operation marks the first time that the Syrian and Iraqi interior ministries have collaborated on anti-narcotics since the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024.[62] The Syrian Interior Ministry previously conducted joint anti-narcotics operations with Turkey along the Turkish-Syrian border in May 2025 and with Saudi Arabia in June 2025.[63] Captagon was one of the largest sources of income for the Assad regime and Iranian proxies such as Hezbollah.[64]

### **Arabian Peninsula**

**The Houthis launched a ballistic missile targeting Ben Gurion Airport in Israel on July 29.[65]** The Israeli Air Force (IAF) intercepted the Houthi missile before it crossed into Israeli territory.[66] The Houthis have launched hundreds of drones and ballistic missiles targeting Israel since the Houthis began their campaign to enforce an economic blockade on Israel in October 2023.[67]

### **Palestinian Territories and Lebanon**

*See topline section.*

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