IRANWATCH DAILY | September 17, 2025

Brief Notes

Islamic Republic Hangs Another 'Israeli Spy': The Islamic Republic executed Babak Shahbazi, convicted of "spying" for Israel's Mossad. The Judiciary's Mizan News Agency reported that Shahbazi, arrested in January 2024, admitted to cooperating with Mossad for financial gain and the opportunity to live abroad. Mizan claims Shahbazi gathered and sold sensitive information about Iranian data centers and security installations to Mossad. It described him as working on "industrial cooling devices" as a contractor for companies that worked on telecommunications, military, and security sites. Shahbazi was initially arrested after writing a letter to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy offering to fight for Kyiv. His execution, upheld by the Supreme Court, comes amid a wave of arrests and executions for alleged espionage since the 12-Day War. Additionally, indictments against four other individuals were announced on September 11.

New Terrorist Organization Designations: The U.S. designated four Tehran-backed Iraqi Shia militias as terrorist organizations: Al-Nujaba Movement, Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhada, Kataib al-Imam Ali, and Ansar Allah al-Awfiya. The State Department said the move is part of efforts to counter the Islamic Republic's influence and prevent its allied groups from attacking U.S. personnel and facilities. Washington previously designated other Tehran-backed Iraqi Shia militias, including Kataib Hezbollah and Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq.

Official Sentenced to Lashes for Same-Sex Scandal: A court has sentenced Reza Seghati, the former director-general of the Gilan Province Department of Culture and Islamic Guidance, to 100 lashes and internal exile after finding him guilty of "lavat tafkhizi" (non-penetrative homosexual contact) in a widely publicized sex scandal that began last year due to the circulation of a leaked video showing Seghati engaging in sexual activity. The ruling also applies to the other man in the leaked video, with Seghati sentenced to two years of exile and the other man to one year.

Snapback Sanctions to Move Forward

The foreign ministers of France, Germany, and the UK, along with the EU's foreign policy chief, held a call with Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi to discuss Tehran's nuclear program and the looming reimposition of UN sanctions under the JCPOA's snapback mechanism.

According to the German Foreign Ministry spokesperson, "Iran has not yet taken the reasonable and precise measures necessary to achieve the extension of Resolution 2231…at this point the steps taken by Iran have not been sufficient to avert snapback." The E3 urged the Islamic Republic to resume negotiations, allow inspections of sensitive nuclear sites, and address its stockpiles of highly enriched uranium.

Also today, fifty U.S. Senate Republicans wrote to E3 foreign ministers urging them to hold firm on triggering snapback mechanisms and enforce UN sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

Elsewhere, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told his French counterpart Jean-Noel Barrot that Tehran is ready for a "fair and balanced resolution" with the E3 (France, Germany, UK) over its nuclear program, stressing the "peaceful nature" of the Islamic Republic's activities and citing its new cooperation framework with the IAEA signed on September 9. Araghchi dismissed the E3's August 28 triggering of the UNSCR 2231 snapback mechanism as politically and legally invalid. Barrot, according to Arachchi's Telegram channel, urged continued dialogue to reduce tensions.

Tehran's Security Chief Meets MBS in Riyadh

Yesterday, Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Larijani visited Riyadh for meetings with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, National Security Advisor Musaed al-Aiban, and Defense Minister Khalid bin Salman.

The visit followed Israel's September 9 strike on Hamas leaders in Doha, which the Islamic Republic portrays as having unified Arab states around its longstanding view of Israel as the "primary destabilizing" actor in the region.

State media highlighted commitments to "expand systematic economic and security cooperation with Saudi Arabia," including military ties and investment facilitation, while Saudi coverage framed the discussions broadly around regional developments and bilateral relations.

The visit comes after the accelerated pace of Tehran–Riyadh engagement since their March 2023 normalization deal mediated by China. Both sides are signaling interest in cooperation, but diverging narratives suggest different levels of willingness to publicize the scope of their coordination.

Saudi media gave extensive coverage to Larijani's visit to Riyadh. Analysts on Al Arabiya said Tehran views Saudi Arabia as a "pivotal country" in shaping its political, security, and economic strategy. Adding that the trip offered Tehran a chance to "build trust in Iranian regional policies."

On the Radar

- The Islamic Republic's Foreign Ministry condemned the U.S. State Department's statement marking the third anniversary of Mahsa Amini's death as "hypocritical, duplicitous, and impudent." Tehran accused

Washington of "belligerent and criminal interference" in its internal affairs, citing U.S. support for Israel in the 12-Day War.

- Regime law enforcement killed two "armed thugs" during clashes near a police station in Tabas, South Khorasan Province. Authorities reported seizing drugs, weapons, ammunition, vehicles, and motorcycles.
- The Sunni militant group Jaish al-Adl claimed responsibility for yesterday's killing of two police officers in Sistan and Baluchestan Province. In a Telegram statement, the group said, "The military forces of the regime, especially officials and personnel active in its suppression units, are considered pillars of tyrannical rule. Therefore, these forces are legitimate targets in the defensive jihad ... Jaish al-Adl makes it clear to all regime forces that, in the event of a confrontation with the organization's fighters, they should lay down their weapons and comply with the fighters' orders to minimize harm to themselves."
- Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei urged IAEA member states to back the Islamic Republic's draft resolution at the IAEA General Conference, warning that U.S. "intimidation policies" threaten international law. The draft, introduced in response to U.S. and Israeli strikes on the Islamic Republic's nuclear sites during the 12-Day War, is supported by China, Russia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Belarus. A vote is expected on September 18, according to the Islamic Republic's envoy Reza Najafi.
- The Judiciary reported that a court in Hormozgan Province sentenced an individual to death for allegedly assisting in 140 unauthorized abortions, pending Supreme Court review. The Islamic Republic law bars any self-initiated abortion except when the mother's life is in danger. Authorities say 364 related cases are under investigation and have set up provincial committees to combat abortions and the distribution of abortion drugs. The sentencing comes amid the Islamic Republic's shift toward pro-natalist policies, with the 2021 "Rejuvenation Plan" encouraging higher birth rates after Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei condemned past population control policies.
- The Islamic Republic has lashed out at Ecuador after President Daniel Noboa designated the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), Hamas, and Hezbollah as terrorist organizations. Zahra Ershadi, the Islamic Republic Foreign Ministry's Director General for the Americas, called the move "illegal and baseless," accusing Quito of "bowing to pressure" from the U.S. and Israel. She warned the decision would harm bilateral ties and set "a dangerous precedent in international relations." Ecuador announced the designations on September 16. The United States, Canada, and Australia have also designated the IRGC in recent years.

→ *For inquiries or more information, please contact* ***k.isfahani@nufdiran.org***