# IRANWATCH DAILY | August 21, 2025

## Brief Notes

**Tehran Again Warns Adversaries Against 'Adventurism':** The Islamic Republic's Defense Ministry today marked "Defense Industry Day" with a statement, which read: "Iran's enemies have realized they will receive a very harsh slap from the country's armed forces in response to any adventurism or miscalculation in the region… Various world media outlets have repeatedly highlighted the astonishing missile power of our beloved country… [The Islamic Republic] will continue to produce, build and prepare advanced, technological weapons and equipment to respond to enemy threats, deepen active defense diplomacy, and rely on indigenous capabilities."

**Iraqi Militia Chief Rejects Disbanding PMF:** Head of the Tehran-backed Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), Faleh al-Fayyad, today said that disbanding the conglomeration of Shia paramilitary groups would be "suicide" for the Iraqi government. At the same time, he argued that the PMF should indeed be regulated to "close the door to those seeking to exploit it," but not disbanded. He defended the PMF by saying it is prepared to defend embassies and foreign missions in Iraq, including the U.S. embassy, if assigned to do so by the Iraqi prime minister.

**Rial Back on Steady Track of Devaluation:** The rial has lost 28% of its value since the November 2024 re-election of President Donald Trump. Following the 12-Day War, the value of the rial rose briefly due to the market's reaction to the U.S.-brokered ceasefire and Islamic Republic market manipulation, however, the rial is back on a steady track of devaluation ($1: IRR 959,500).

## Water, Power Outages Trigger Protests

People took to the streets in multiple cities throughout Iran today, protesting ongoing water and power shortages exacerbated by the Islamic Republic's mismanagement, negligence, and corruption.

In Shiraz, protesters sang the pre-revolutionary "Ey Iran" and chanted, "Iranians would rather die than accept subjugation."

The protests in Shiraz continued well into the night with demonstrators addressing the regime and chanting, "Let Palestine be and do something for our own struggles."

"Not Gaza, not Lebanon, I will sacrifice my life for Iran," was also chanted by today's protesters in Shiraz. This chant has been a staple of protests in Iran since 2009.

The protests were not limited to Shiraz. In Kazerun, a city near Shiraz, people chanted, "Bread, electricity, life."

## Mounting Diplomatic Pressure on Tehran

The United States today sanctioned 13 entities based in Hong Kong, China, the UAE, and the Marshall Islands, as well as eight vessels as as part of wider campaign aimed at stemming the flow of revenue the Islamic Republic uses to "fund its destabilizing activities, including its support for terrorism abroad and the oppression of its own people."

The move came a day after the UK added a number of Iranian individuals as well as trade and petrochemical companies to its sanctions list, accusing them of fueling the Islamic Republic's attempts to "undermine stability in the Middle East and global security."

Tehran reacted to the British sanctions by saying the move was based on "groundless pretexts and unfounded accusations."

These developments come amid mounting expectations that the UK, Germany, and France, collectively known as the E3, will soon initiate the snapback mechanism to reimpose UN sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

Read more: E3 Prepared to Trigger Snapback by End of August

## On the Radar

- The Artesh Navy, the Islamic Republic's conventional/"regular" naval forces, as opposed to the IRGC Navy, today launched a two-day exercise in the northern Indian Ocean and the Sea of Oman. According to state media, surface and subsurface vessels, aerial units, sea-based missile sites, and electronic warfare units are among the capabilities that will be utilized in the exercise.
- The South African National Defense Force (NDF) has released a statement defending its head, General Rudzani Maphwanya, following his official visit to Tehran. The statement claims that the Defense Ministry authorized the visit. The NDF statement comes after South African President Cyril Ramaphosa's August 14 remarks that he would discuss Maphwanya's "ill-advised" trip to Tehran and any potential consequences for the trip soon.
- President Masoud Pezeshkian today concluded his visit to Minsk, where he signed 12 cooperation agreements with Belarus. He offered Tehran's expertise in "neutralizing sanctions" and proposed a strategic partnership model akin to the regime's deal with Russia. Pezeshkian is now back in Tehran, ending his two-country tour.

- Tehran has labeled Washington's increased reward of $50 million for information leading to the arrest and/or conviction of Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro and new anti-narcotics operations in the Caribbean as "warmongering."
- Spokesperson of the Foreign Ministry Esmaeil Baghaei has condemned U.S. sanctions on two judges and two prosecutors of the International Criminal Court (ICC), saying the move is an "unprecedented assault on justice… It further exposes America's blatant complicity in war crimes and genocide in Palestine.

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