

# IRAN 2026

## Iranian Military Capability

Force Structure, Strategic Assets & Operational Posture

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As of March 2026 | Post-Operation Epic Fury Assessment

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# Iran at a Critical Inflection Point

Iran's armed forces are at a critical inflection point: degraded by consecutive US-Israeli strikes (June 2025 & 28 Feb 2026), yet retaining residual capacity for asymmetric retaliation and strategic reconstitution. Prior to current hostilities, Iran ranked 16th globally in military power with ~610,000 active troops and 350,000 reserves.

**MISSILES****01**

Inventory reduced to ~1,500–2,000; 2/3 of launchers destroyed. Production capacity: several hundred/month.

**NUCLEAR****02**

Enrichment facilities severely damaged Jun 2025. Underground fortification accelerated. Reconstitution: years.

**PROXIES****03**

Axis of Resistance at decade-low. Hezbollah degraded, Syrian proxies dissolved. Houthis most operational.

**AIR FORCE****04**

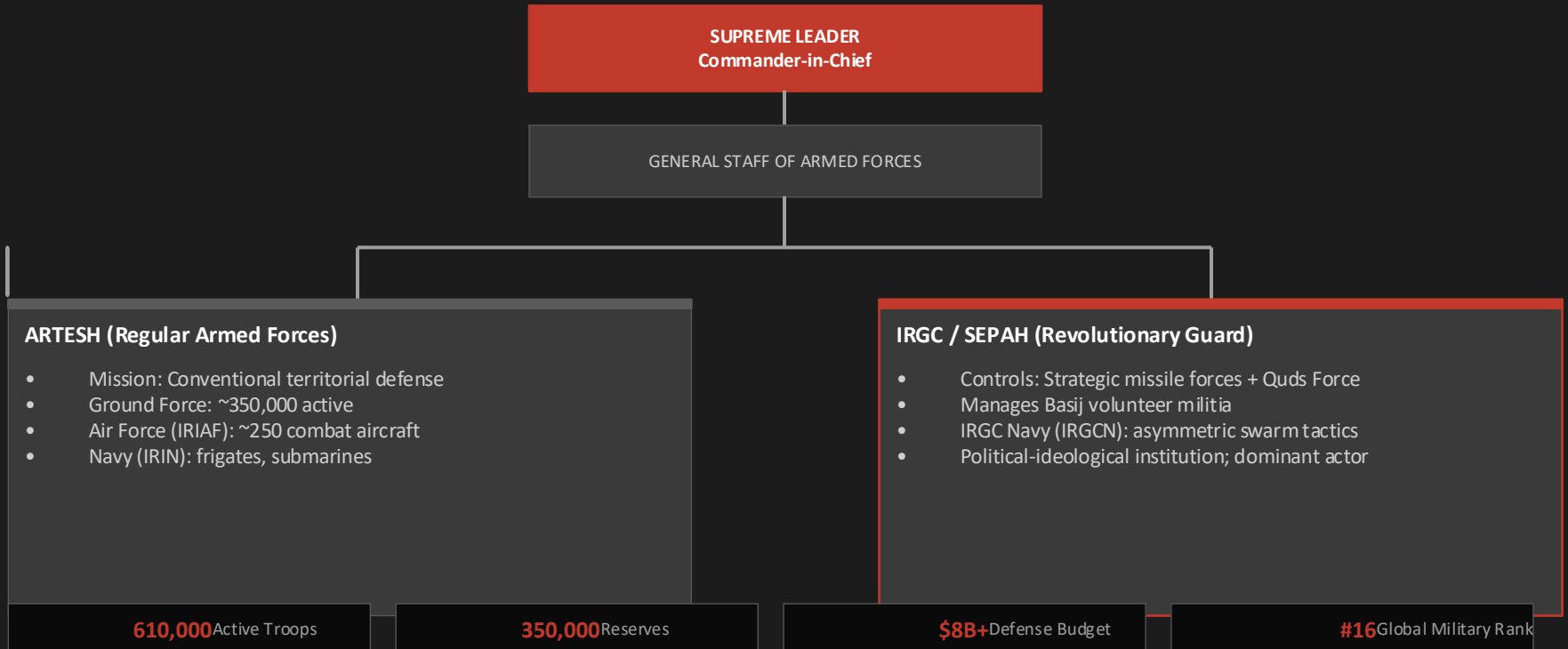
~250 combat aircraft; most critical vulnerability. Su-35 delivery from Russia could partially offset gap.

**DRONES / CYBER****05**

Global drone leader; Shahed-136 in mass production. Cyber ops increasingly prominent vs. Israel & US.

## SECTION 1

# Force Structure & Organization



SECTION 2

# Strategic Weapons: Missiles & Drones

## BALLISTIC MISSILE ARSENAL



### Principal Missile Systems

|                       |           |                   |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| <b>Shahab-3</b>       | ~2,000 km | MR ballistic      |
| <b>Ghadr / Emad</b>   | ~1,950 km | Precision variant |
| <b>Sajjil-2</b>       | ~2,200 km | Solid-fuel        |
| <b>Fattah-1</b>       | ~1,400 km | Hypersonic glide  |
| <b>Kheibar Shekan</b> | ~2,000 km | Precision solid   |

## UAV / DRONE SYSTEMS

**38,000+**

Shahed-136 launched against Ukraine to date

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>Shahed-136</b> | One-way attack; ~2,000 km; Geran-2 (Russia)  |
| <b>Shahed-129</b> | Multi-role ISR/strike; ~1,700 km range   |
| <b>Mohajer-6</b>  | ISR/strike; exported to Russia & proxies   |
| <b>Karrar</b>     | Jet-powered; adapted for strike roles  |
| <b>Ababil-3</b>   | Tactical; swarm-capable<br><i>Alabuga (Russia) facility: ~10,000 units/yr capacity   Cost: ~\$193,000/unit</i> |

## SECTION 2.3

# Nuclear Program Status

MOST STRATEGICALLY CONSEQUENTIAL CAPABILITY DOMAIN — DEGRADED BUT RECONSTITUTING

## PRE-STRIKE STATUS (June 2025)

- ~972 lbs (441 kg) of uranium enriched to 60% purity by mid-June 2025 — up from 606 lbs in Feb 2025
- DIA (May 2025): Iran could produce weapons-grade uranium for a first device in under one week
- ODNI (Nov 2024): Sufficient fissile material for more than a dozen nuclear weapons if further enriched

## POST-STRIKE DEGRADATION & RECONSTITUTION

- Natanz, Fordow, and Isfahan enrichment facilities severely damaged; highly enriched material production severely restricted
- Scientific expertise and foundational infrastructure retained — reconstitution capacity preserved
- Underground fortification accelerated: Fordow mountain site + new 'Pickaxe Mountain' facility near Natanz
- Isfahan surface site: new production structure (identical to Karaj centrifuge facility) rebuilt Dec 2025–Jan 2026

**ASSESSMENT:** Full plant rebuild = years; bomb-grade enrichment = months. Differential Reconstruction Doctrine prioritizes nuclear alongside missiles & air defense.

## SECTION 3

# Conventional Military Capabilities

## GROUND FORCES

- Largest component; Artesh + IRGC ground units
- Domestically produced armor: Karrar MBT (T-72 variant), APCs, artillery
- Focus on territorial defense; limited expeditionary capability
- Significant aging of platforms reduces conventional edge

## AIR FORCE (IRIAF)

- CRITICAL VULNERABILITY: ~250 combat-capable aircraft
- Aging Western fleet: F-14, F-4, F-5; Soviet-era: MiG-29, Su-24
- Su-35 (4++ gen) from Russia: up to 48 aircraft + Yak-130 trainers — transformative if delivered
- Full combat readiness: years away; pilot training required

## NAVAL FORCES

- IRIN: Moudge-class frigates, Kilo-class & Ghadir-class submarines
- IRGCN: fast attack craft, asymmetric swarm doctrine
- Feb 2026 'Smart Control of Strait of Hormuz' exercise — first-ever partial closure
- Hormuz threat: ~20% of global oil trade; major economic leverage

## AIR DEFENSE

- Layered: Bavar-373 (S-300 equivalent), S-300PMU-2, Khordad-15, Sayyad-3
- Demonstrated competence: downed US RQ-4 Global Hawk (2019)
- June 2025 Israeli strikes achieved 'absolute aerial freedom' over Iran
- Post-strike rehabilitation ongoing; Feb 2026 strikes further degraded systems

## SECTION 4

# Proxy Network & Asymmetric Warfare

'AXIS OF RESISTANCE' AT LOWEST OPERATIONAL CAPACITY IN A DECADE — POST-OCT 2023 CASCADE DEGRADATION

Hezbollah (Lebanon)

SEVERELY DEGRADED

Leadership decimated; infrastructure struck; second-strike capacity neutralized

Syrian Proxies

DISSOLVED

Assad regime fell Dec 2024; land bridge severed; Mediterranean link broken

Houthis (Yemen)

MOST OPERATIONAL

Maritime drone/missile attacks ongoing; Red Sea threat sustained; key logistics route

Iraqi Militias

FRAGMENTED

Covert transfers via Iraq; reduced cohesion after senior commander kills Feb 2026

Palestinian Groups

UNDER PRESSURE

Gaza campaign; Hamas infrastructure heavily degraded by 2025 IDF operations

*DOCTRINE SHIFT: Gen. Mousavi (2026) — Iran has moved from defensive to offensive doctrine adopting asymmetric warfare principles. Maritime rerouting through Yemen now primary proxy supply channel.*

## SECTION 5

# Strategic Assessment: Differential Reconstruction

## TRACK 1

## Diplomatic Facade

Public willingness to negotiate with the West — masking concurrent military reconstitution activities. Exploits ambiguity to gain time for infrastructure rebuilding.

## TRACK 2

## Military Reconstitution

Rapid rehabilitation of air defense systems and ballistic missile capability replenishment. Priority focus on restoring deterrence capacity after two rounds of degradation.

## TRACK 3

## Nuclear Deep-Bunkering

Accelerated deep-underground fortification at Fordow and new mountain excavation sites. Designed to place nuclear program beyond range of conventional air power.

**RUSSIA–IRAN ALLIANCE OF MUTUAL DEPENDENCY:**

Iran → Russia: Shahed drone production (Alabuga) | Russia → Iran: Su-35 jets, air defense components, technical expertise

**STRAIT OF HORMUZ — ULTIMATE LEVERAGE**

~20% of global oil transits Hormuz. Feb 2026 'Smart Control' exercise = first-ever partial closure. Even temporary disruption = massive global economic shock.

**CRINK ALIGNMENT EMERGING**

China–Russia–Iran–North Korea axis declared JCPOA terminated (Oct 2025); UN sanctions legally void under this framework. Implications for reconstitution support.

## SECTION 6

# Outlook & Scenarios

## 0-3 MONTHS

## SHORT-TERM

- Acute volatility following 28 Feb 2026 strikes
- Retaliatory strikes on Israel, US bases, Gulf states — degraded accuracy vs. pre-2025 levels
- Khamenei killing + senior command loss → succession crisis
- Internal protests (36,000+ killed in crackdown) add unprecedented domestic instability
- Regime may be galvanized or fragmented — binary inflection

## 3-12 MONTHS

## MEDIUM-TERM

- Reconstitution trajectory depends on: (1) post-Khamenei leadership stability; (2) Russian/Chinese material support continuation; (3) scale of US/Israeli follow-on operations
- Missile production baseline enables eventual recovery if facilities undamaged
- Nuclear deep-underground track at Fordow + mountain sites: most critical to monitor
- Proxy network partial restoration possible via maritime/covert channels

## 12+ MONTHS

## LONG-TERM

- STRATEGIC PARADOX: strikes degraded current capability but strengthen ideological case for nuclear weapons
- If regime survives: more decisive commitment to nuclear deterrent given conventional strikes proved no deterrent
- CRINK framework could provide covert nuclear reconstitution support
- Regional order fundamentally redrawn; Iran's deterrence calculus permanently altered

# KEY INTELLIGENCE JUDGMENTS

J-1

Iran has absorbed two rounds of major strikes and retains asymmetric retaliatory capacity. The regime is damaged but not collapsed.

J-2

The nuclear program is Iran's most consequential reconstitution priority. Deep-underground hardening makes future kinetic interdiction progressively harder.

J-3

The Axis of Resistance is structurally weakened but not eliminated. Houthi maritime threat and Iraqi militia pressure remain credible multi-front tools.

J-4

The CRINK alignment (China–Russia–Iran–North Korea) provides Iran material and diplomatic cover for reconstitution that unilateral Western pressure cannot easily interdict.

J-5

**STRATEGIC PARADOX: Every conventional strike that fails to terminate the regime reinforces Iran's determination to acquire a nuclear deterrent. The absence of WMD proved no protection.**