



By: TA | AP Insight

Iran - the main loser of peace in Gaza



While the Gaza peace deal received broad support across the region, Iran found itself cut-off, confronted with the collapse of its once-powerful "Axis of Resistance."

As the Middle East broadly welcomes a **ceasefire** in the Israel-Hamas war, Iran finds itself at one of its weakest moments since its 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Tehran has operated its self-described "**Axis of Resistance**" over several decades, supporting militant groups and nations allied with it against Israel and the United States.

But as Israel bombed the Gaza Strip, it also turned its crosshairs toward top leaders abroad in groups like Hamas, Lebanon's Hezbollah and even the top echelon within Iran's military and its nuclear program — killing many and disrupting their ability to fight back.

As President Donald Trump prepares for a Middle East trip that likely will see him praised by Israel and Arab nations, Iran won't be at the table as it still struggles to **recover** from June's 12-day war.

How Tehran's theocracy responds in the weeks and months ahead, whether that means lashing out or trying to rebuild its hobbled economy at home, will be crucial.

"Undoubtedly this is a not a proud moment for Iran," said Ali Vaez, the Iran project director at the International Crisis Group. "Its alliance system in the region is in ruins but it doesn't mean that the 'Axis of Resistance' is no more."

Like a bankrupt gambler

Iranian state media has sought to describe the Gaza **ceasefire** as a victory for Hamas, despite the war destroying the Gaza Strip and killing over 67,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza Health Ministry.

Iran's Foreign Ministry welcomed "any decision ... that guarantees halting the

genocide of Palestinians."

Perhaps more tellingly, an adviser to Iran's 86-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei suggested the ceasefire would only lead to conflict elsewhere in the region.

The start of the ceasefire in Gaza may be the behind-the-scenes end of the ceasefire somewhere else - Ali Akbar Velayati

"The start of the ceasefire in Gaza may be the behind-the-scenes end of the ceasefire somewhere else!" Ali Akbar Velayati wrote on X, referencing Hezbollah, Yemen's Iranian-backed Houthi rebels and Iraq.

The fear of further Israeli strikes, particularly on Iran, remains acute in the public's mind as much of its air defenses likely were **destroyed** by Israel in June.

Khamenei has not resumed his usual routine of weekly speeches to audiences.

Meanwhile, Iran without explanation avoided holding a major military commemoration marking the end of the Iran-Iraq war in September, which typically sees top officials watch drones and missile launchers parade past them.

Iran's economy also has **suffered** under international sanctions and as global energy prices fall.

"Iran has always focused on its interests, we do not have resources anymore, our economy has weakened," said Tehran-based analyst Saeed Leilaz. "Our support to Hamas were a reaction to U.S. to divert conflicts from our borders."

Others are less optimistic.

"Iran is like a bankrupt gambler after winning some small money in the first rounds," said Amir Kazemi, a university student in Tehran. "When Hamas attacked Israel, Iran was happy about it. But now, after the ceasefire, Iran finds

nothing in its pocket.”

Mideast looks far different

In the immediate years after Iran's **revolution**, its theocratic government sought to export its Shiite revolutionary ideology more widely in the Middle East.

That morphed following its devastating 1980s war with Iraq into more of an effort to provide a level of deterrence as Arab nations around it purchased sophisticated American bombs, warplanes and tanks Tehran couldn't access due to sanctions.

The U.S. military's presence across the Persian Gulf also expanded following the 1991 Gulf War, with Arab nations granting basing rights to American forces to Tehran's constant anger.

The peak of the “Axis of Resistance” came in the chaotic years after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq and Yemen's subsequent collapse into a civil war.

Today, the Mideast looks far different

Then, it could count on Hezbollah, Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, the Houthis, Iraqi militant groups and even Hamas — a Sunni militant group.

Today, the Mideast looks far different. Rebels **overthrew** Assad last year, Israeli strikes killed Hezbollah and Hamas' top leaders, while Iraqi militant groups faded into the background.

The Houthis, while still capable of launching **attacks** on Israel and commercial shipping in the Red Sea corridor, find themselves now targeted by increasingly precise Israeli strikes.

And the 12-day war in June left Iran likely no longer enriching uranium for its nuclear program, which the West long has worried could be **weaponized**.

Collapsing regional clout

Iran, meanwhile, has yet to receive any major support from either China or Russia, despite providing Beijing with likely discounted oil and Moscow with the drones it uses in its war on Ukraine.

Tehran has also shied away from confronting women increasingly abandoning the hijab, or headscarf, instead executing prisoners it already holds at a rate unseen in decades.



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“The ceasefire is reflective of Tehran’s collapsing regional clout following the unraveling of its long-powerful ‘Axis of Resistance’ since 2024,” said Ali Fathollah-Nejad, the director of the Berlin-based Center for Middle East and Global Order. “The ceasefire will free Israeli military capacities that would now be used against Iranian interests — whether in Lebanon against Hezbollah or directly against Iran.”

For his part, Trump seized on Iran accepting the ceasefire as “terrific” news. However, there's been no move toward renewed public negotiations with Tehran over its nuclear program.

“Time is not on Iran’s side but their problem is no one is really giving them an exit ramp,” Vaez said.

But whether Tehran would take the ramp also remains in question as its leaders still debate

what turn to now take.