

INFER Issue Report

Iran's Progress Towards a Nuclear Weapon

February 2024

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Iran’s Progress Towards a Nuclear Weapon

Iran has been steadily building its nuclear weapons capability since 2019, when it first began ignoring limitations set under the JCPOA. This heatmap analyzes crowd forecasts from the signals below to show whether INFER’s forecasts indicate that momentum towards Iran building a nuclear weapon is increasing, decreasing, or staying the same across various indicators.

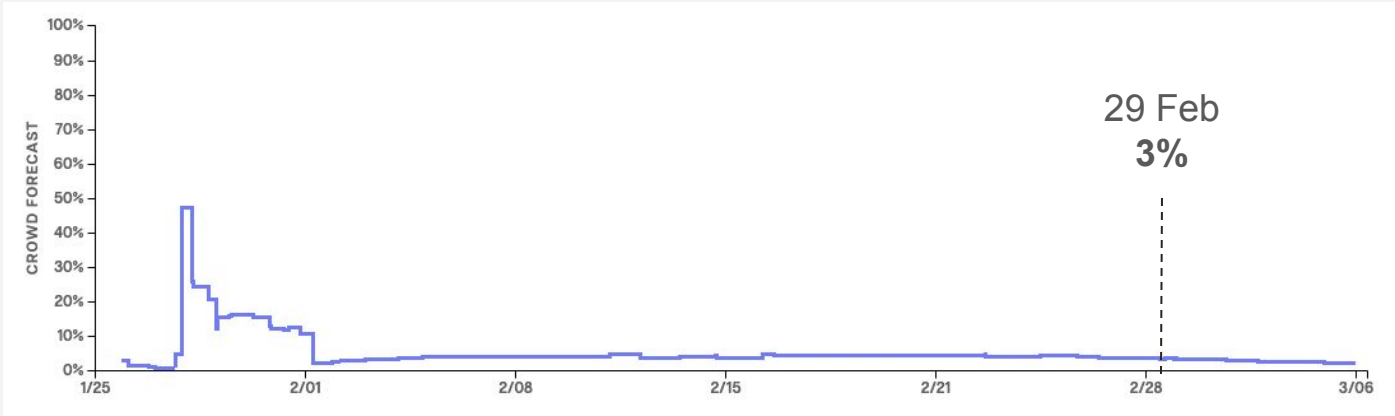
Decreasing Momentum Status Quo Increasing Momentum

Drivers	Signals		INFER Probability Forecast		
			31 Dec	31 Jan	29 Feb
Attacks on Nuclear or Military Facilities	Attack on an Iranian nuclear or missile facility in the next six months		11%	13%	12%
Coordination between Iran’s enemies and competitors	Muslim-majority country normalizes relations with Israel in the next six months		N/A	1%	1%
	Middle Eastern or North African country recognizes Israel’s statehood by 31 Dec 2024	Saudi Arabia	5%	5%	6%
		Oman	3%	3%	3%
		Qatar	2%	2%	2%
		Kuwait	2%	2%	2%
		Tunisia	2%	2%	2%
Military support from Russia and China	Russia delivers missile systems or fighter jets to Iran before 1 Feb 2025	Su-35	21%	15%	14%
		S-400 or S-500	8%	8%	8%
Leadership changes	[RESOLVED] Ali Khamenei flees Iran or ceases to be Supreme Leader before 1 Mar 2024		1%	1%	RESOLUTION: NO FINAL FORECAST: 0%
Nuclear development	IAEA discovers uranium enriched to 90% or more in Iran by 31 Dec 2024		6%	6%	6%
	Iran eliminates, reduces, or grows its stockpile of uranium enriched up to 60% by 31 Dec 2024*	Eliminates	0%	0%	0%
		Reduces by 50%+	1%	1%	0%
		Reduces by less than 50% or stays the same	4%	3%	5%
		Increases	94%	96%	94%
International agreements and sanctions	JCPOA participant country begins the process of imposing “snapback” sanctions on Iran by 31 Dec 2024		3%	3%	3%
	Iran announces it will leave the JCPOA before 1 Jan 2025		7%	5%	5%
	Iran agrees to limit uranium enrichment to 5% or less in next six months		1%	1%	1%
Regional Conflict	Iran goes to war with another country in the next year		N/A	12%	3%

* Low probability forecasts on this multi-choice question have differing implications for Iran’s progress towards a nuclear weapon depending on whether forecasters place a higher probability on Iran growing, shrinking, or keeping their stockpile the same.

Question Spotlight

Will Iran be at war with another country in the next year?



Since 31 January, forecasters assigned a very low likelihood that Iran would be at war with another country in the next year (by 31 January 2025), settling on 3% on 29 February. This low likelihood was justified by forecasters as:

- **Domestic priorities:** Iran is hesitant to directly confront Israel and the U.S. militarily, as it prioritizes domestic stability and regime survival. [[@Rishab-Bhattarai](#)]
- **Long-term objectives:** Engaging in war in the near future does not align with Iran’s long-term objectives, and they are likely to avoid it. Economic sanctions and the desire for normalization further disincentivize conflict. [[@Revmag](#), [@Gr33nD](#)]
- **Defensive posture:** Iran has indicated it will not initiate a war but would respond strongly to aggression, suggesting a defensive posture rather than an offensive one. [[@rumi](#)]

In contrast, forecasters said that war with Iran might actually be more likely because:

- **Tensions could lead to escalation:** Tensions remain high between Iran and Israel/the West, risking military escalation either initiated by Iran or adversaries [[@jrl](#)]
- **Unintentional conflict:** Miscalculation and brinkmanship could lead to conflict, even if neither side desires it [[@jrl](#)]
- **Iranian proxy activity:** A serious attack by an Iranian proxy may provoke the U.S. or Israel into war with Iran [[@geoffodlum](#)]
- **Israeli initiation:** Israel could launch strikes against Iran’s nuclear program that escalate into full conflict [[@belikewater](#)]

As of 29 February, 49 people forecasted a total of 75 times in this question. The forecasters who have participated tend to be more accurate than average.