

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

IRINN

FEBRUARY 23, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

IRAN 2026: STRATEGIC DEFIANCE & DOMESTIC CRISIS

PROJECTS STRENGTH AGAINST RENEWED AMERICAN PRESSURE WHILE MANAGING ECONOMIC FRACTURES AND VOLATILE REGIONAL TRANSITION IN SYRIA.

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE



ACTIVE RESISTANCE & "12-DAY WAR" NARRATIVE



DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS OPEN (GENEVA TALKS)



SEVERE ECONOMIC HEADWINDS (60% INFLATION)



SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCE & SOCIAL COHESION (RAMADAN)

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

AFTERMATH OF "12-DAY WAR" & NUCLEAR BRINKMANSHIP



- NO SUBMISSION TO THREATS
- WITKOFF ADMISSIONS ON MP 2.0 FAILURE
- 160 MARTYRS, 6,000 WOUNDED (US-ISRAELI AGGRESSION)

SYRIAN POLITICAL TRANSITION & TERRORIST RESURGENCE



- JOLANI REGIME AS ZIONIST INSTRUMENT
- IMMINENT ETHNIC CLEANSING WARN
- ISIS TRANSFER TO IRAQ ("TIME BOMB")

DOMESTIC LABOR CRISIS & WAGE DEADLOCK



- STALLED 2026 MINIMUM WAGE TALKS
- WORKERS DEMAND 40M TOMAN
- INFLATION 60% P2P, 45% ANNUAL
- STRAINED SOCIAL CONTRACT

JUDICIAL & REGULATORY OVERHAUL



- CRACKDOWN ON CORRUPTION BOTTLENECKS
- REAL ESTATE REGISTRATION SCRUTINY (KATEB SYSTEMS)
- PUSH FOR LEGAL PURIFICATION

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS



- ##### LABOR & INDUSTRY
- WAGE NEGOTIATION TENSION
 - MAKKORAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT



- ##### DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY & TECHNOLOGY POLICY
- SANGER CRITIQUE OF WIKIPEDIA
 - INDIGENOUS SHIP SIMULATORS



- ##### ENERGY & WATER SECURITY
- 150M CM WATER DEFICIT
 - RECORD SOUTH PARS GAS PRODUCTION (830M CM/DAY)
 - GEOTHERMAL & SOLAR PROJECTS



- ##### CORRUPTION & RULE OF LAW
- KOUROSH COMPANY EXTRADITION
 - AI-DRIVEN LAW REDUCTION (3,050 MOTHER LAWS)

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

- 2026 BUDGET LAW (1405): MARRIAGE LOANS, CURRENCY REDENOMINATION (-4 ZEROS)
- STANDARDIZED REAL ESTATE CONTRACT LAW: ELECTRONIC REGISTRATION MANDATORY
- LABOR LAW ARTICLE 41 DEBATE
- FOREIGN MINISTRY WARNS OF EU RECIPROCAL TERRORIST DESIGNATIONS
- JUDICIARY ON DETERRENT SENTENCING
- COUNCIL ELECTION DISQUALIFICATION PROTESTS

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES



- ##### WEAPONIZATION OF INFORMATION
- CRITIQUE OF WESTERN PLATFORMS (WIKIPEDIA)
 - DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY PUSH
 - PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN & AI QURANIC ED.



- ##### ECONOMIC REALISM VS. IDEOLOGICAL IDEALISM
- TENSION: RESISTANCE (IDEOLOGICAL) VS. NEGOTIATION (REALIST)
 - MEDIA FRAMING: RESISTANCE AS PATH TO "GOOD DEAL"



- ##### REGIONAL FRAGMENTATION AS EXISTENTIAL THREAT
- SYRIA FRAGMENTATION AS ZIONIST PROJECT
 - JOLANI REGIME AS SALAFIST AGENDA & ISRAELI PROXY

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT



RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS



- ##### FOR INTERNATIONAL POLICY (GENEVA DEMANDS)
- ACCOUNT FOR IRAN'S "VICTORY NARRATIVE"
 - PREPARE FOR EU MILITARY RISKS
 - FOCUS ON ISIS-IRAQ CONDUIT



- ##### FOR PRIVATE SECTOR/INVESTORS
- HIGH-RISK INVESTMENT CLIMATE
 - RENEWABLE ENERGY OPPORTUNITIES
 - ELECTRONIC REAL ESTATE REGISTRATION MANDATORY
 - MONITOR MEXICO'S SECURITY (GUADALAJARA IMPACT)

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IRAN PROJECTS STRATEGIC
DEFIANCE AGAINST RENEWED
AMERICAN PRESSURE WHILE
MANAGING DOMESTIC ECONOMIC
FRACTURES AND A VOLATILE
REGIONAL TRANSITION IN SYRIA.

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

The Iranian state media narrative on February 23, 2026, is centered on a posture of "active resistance" following a recent direct military confrontation with the United States and Israel, referred to as the "12-day war." Foreign Minister Araghchi and other officials have utilized the reported [surprise and frustration](#) of the Trump administration regarding Iranian resilience to reinforce a domestic message of national strength. While diplomatic channels remain open—with a third round of indirect talks scheduled for Geneva—Tehran is concurrently escalating its rhetoric against the European Union, threatening to designate the [military forces of 27 EU members](#) as terrorists in response to similar measures taken against Iranian entities.

Domestic stability is challenged by severe economic headwinds and administrative

transitions. The High Labor Council is deadlocked over 2026 wage increases, with worker representatives highlighting a [point-to-point inflation rate of 60%](#) and a widening gap between the minimum wage and the actual cost of living. This economic anxiety is juxtaposed with the spiritual observance of Ramadan, which the state uses to emphasize social cohesion and regional "soft power" through reports on Muslim traditions in Europe and Asia. Simultaneously, the judicial and legislative branches are pushing for [legal "purification"](#) and digital real estate registration to curb corruption and administrative inefficiency.

Regionally, the collapse of the Syrian government and the rise of the Jolani-led HTS regime are being framed by Iranian analysts as a [Zionist-sponsored fragmentation project](#) designed to create a "bombshell" of instability. Security concerns are further heightened by reports of ISIS elements being transferred to Iraq and the fall of the 2026 World Cup host city, Guadalajara, to [Mexican drug cartels](#). These external crises are presented as evidence of a "predictably unpredictable" world where only sovereign resilience—rather than Western alliances—guarantees security.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

The Aftermath of the "12-Day War" and Nuclear Brinkmanship

- Foreign Minister Araghchi dismisses rumors of a "temporary agreement," asserting that Iran will not [submit to military threats](#) as a precondition for negotiations.
- State media highlights admissions by Trump envoy Steve Witkoff regarding the failure of [Maximum Pressure 2.0](#) to break Iranian resolve.

- Analysts claim the January 2026 conflict resulted in [160 Iranian martyrs](#) and 6,000 wounded, accusing the West of ignoring the human rights of victims of US-Israeli aggression.

Syrian Political Transition and Terrorist Resurgence

- The Jolani regime in Syria is characterized as an [instrument of American-Zionist interests](#), with state media warning of imminent ethnic cleansing against Syrian minorities.
- Concerns are raised regarding the [transfer of thousands of ISIS members](#) from US-controlled prisons in Syria to Iraq, described as a "time bomb" for regional stability.

Domestic Labor Crisis and Wage Deadlock

- The 2026 (1405 SH) minimum wage negotiations are stalled; labor representatives demand wages reflecting a [40 million toman](#) monthly cost of living, while employers warn of economic insolvency.
- Official data reveals point-to-point inflation has hit 60%, with [annual inflation at 45%](#), further straining the "social contract."

Judicial and Regulatory Overhaul

- Chief Justice Mohseni-Ejei orders a crackdown on "bottlenecks of corruption" and the [high cost of financial crime](#), urging the completion of cases before the Persian New Year.
- The Real Estate Registration Law is under scrutiny as [private platforms struggle](#) to integrate with state systems (Kateb), hindering the transition to "standardized contracts."

International Instability and "Western Decline"

- Reports emphasize the [fall of Guadalajara to cartels](#) and US Supreme Court rulings declaring Trump's tariffs illegal as signs of systemic Western failure.
- Greenland's Prime Minister formally rejects [Trump's offer of a hospital ship](#), asserting territorial sovereignty against American expansionism.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Labor & Industry

- Negotiations for the upcoming year's minimum wage are fraught with tension as labor representatives argue that [92% of the economy](#) is either state-run or service-based, making the "employer insolvency" argument invalid for large sectors.
- The "Makkoran" (Makran) coastal development project enters an [operational phase](#), aiming to attract population through industrial and maritime job creation.

Digital Sovereignty & Technology Policy

- A lengthy feature focuses on Wikipedia co-founder Larry Sanger's critique of the platform's [ideological capture by the Left](#) and intelligence agencies, framing it as a tool for Western propaganda rather than a neutral encyclopedia.
- Iranian specialists report the [indigenous production of ship simulators](#), saving \$3.5 million in foreign exchange and bypassing Western maritime training sanctions.

Energy & Water Security

- Tehran is facing a [150 million cubic meter water deficit](#) compared to last year; officials are imposing strict management on "excessive consumers" as the "house-cleaning" season begins.
- Iran claims a new record in [South Pars gas production](#), reaching 830 million cubic meters per day to combat winter energy imbalances.
- The first geothermal power project in Meshginshahr and a massive [solar farm in Isfahan](#) are highlighted as critical steps toward renewable energy security.

Corruption & Rule of Law

- The Judiciary is prioritizing the [extradition of the "Kourosh Company" CEO](#) following a massive mobile phone pre-sale fraud that affected thousands.
- Parliament is attempting to [reduce 12,000 laws to 3,050](#) "mother laws" using AI to eliminate contradictory regulations that facilitate corruption.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Legislative activity is focused on the finalization of the 2026 national budget and the administrative preparations for the May 2026 local elections. Significant debate remains over the integration of electronic voting systems to ensure [election health and prevent double-voting](#).

BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **2026 Budget Law (1405):** Includes provisions for [marriage loans](#) and the removal of four zeros from the national currency, with a four-month transition period planned.

- **Standardized Real Estate Contract Law:** Aimed at making [ordinary documents \(non-official deeds\) invalid](#) for new green-colored property deeds.
- **Labor Law Article 41:** The perennial debate on [inflation-linked wage increases](#) versus employer capacity.

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **Foreign Ministry Briefing:** Spokesman Baghaei warns of [reciprocal terrorist designations](#) against EU military forces.
- **Judiciary Council Meeting:** Mohseni-Ejei emphasizes that [deterrent sentencing](#) is essential for economic stability.
- **Election Headquarters Presser:** Candidates for council elections have until [midnight tonight](#) to protest disqualifications.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Weaponization of Information and Educational Soft Power

A recurring theme is the systemic critique of Western information platforms. By hosting Larry Sanger to criticize Wikipedia's [lack of neutrality](#) and intelligence agency interference, the state is building a case for "Digital Sovereignty." This is coupled with the promotion of domestic "Philosophy for Children" programs and [AI-driven Quranic education](#), suggesting a push to insulate the younger generation from Western "cognitive warfare."

Economic "Realism" vs. Ideological "Idealism"

There is a visible tension in the press between the "ideological" wing, which celebrates

[resistance and self-sufficiency](#), and the "realist" wing (often criticized in conservative papers like Javan), which advocates for negotiations to alleviate the [60% inflation rate](#). The state media seeks to bridge this by framing resistance as the only path to a "good deal," using the "12-day war" as a proof-of-concept for Iranian deterrence.

Regional Fragmentation as an Existential Threat

The situation in Syria is no longer reported as a civil war but as a [calculated demographic and geographic re-engineering](#) of the Middle East. Analysts suggest that the Jolani regime's "secular" rebranding is a facade for a [Salafist agenda](#) supported by Israel to dismantle the Syrian state and eventually target Iran's borders.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks)

- Labor unrest or localized protests are possible if the High Labor Council fails to reach a wage agreement that accounts for the [60% point-to-point inflation](#).
- Reciprocal sanctions between Iran and the EU will likely escalate, potentially [disrupting maritime or air transit](#) in the Persian Gulf.

Medium Term (1-6 Months)

- The May 2026 Council elections will serve as a bellwether for domestic sentiment following the "12-day war." High disqualification rates of reformers could [depress turnout](#) despite official claims of "warmed up" competition.

- The currency redenomination (removing four zeros) will create [significant administrative friction](#) and could trigger short-term price gouging as retailers adjust.

Long Term (1-5 Years)

- The development of the Makran coast and [South-North transit corridors](#) through Azerbaijan indicates a long-term pivot toward a trade-based, non-oil economy that is less vulnerable to US maritime interdiction.
- Syrian instability will likely lead to a permanent [Iranian-Russian military entrenchment](#) in Iraq as a buffer against a hostile HTS-led Damascus.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For International Policy:

- Diplomatic engagement must account for Iran's "victory narrative" regarding the [12-day war](#); Tehran perceives itself as having survived a "Maximum Pressure" military test, likely increasing its demands in Geneva.
- The EU must prepare for operational risks to its military assets in the Middle East if the [terrorist designation](#) threat is enacted by the Iranian Parliament.
- Regional stability efforts should focus on the [ISIS-Iraq conduit](#), as the transfer of prisoners from Syria remains a high-risk trigger for a new insurgency.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- The investment climate in Iran remains high-risk due to "[overnight regulatory changes](#)"; however, significant opportunities are emerging in the renewable energy sector (solar/geothermal) as the state seeks to [solve its energy imbalance](#).
- Real estate transactions in Iran now require [electronic registration](#); failure to comply with the "official deed" requirement for new properties renders contracts legally void.
- Supply chain managers should monitor [Mexico's security situation](#) closely; the cartel takeover of industrial hubs like Guadalajara will likely impact automotive and electronic components moving through North America.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Today's Media Trends is a public interest experiment in applying deep thematic trend analysis to television news coverage from around the world to explore how responsibly applied advanced AI can help journalists and scholars better understand the overarching trends, themes and patterns of our global world.

No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

Each morning, in collaboration with the Internet Archive's TV News Archive, we apply Google's Gemini 3 to deeply examine yesterday's coverage from each television news channel to tease out the overarching themes and trends of its news coverage into a richly annotated thematic analysis. Each high-level insight is connected back to the original broadcast, allowing journalists and scholars to understand the dominate themes and trends and instantly click out to the underlying sources for details.

By helping journalists and scholars see the broader trends and patterns of global news coverage, this analysis helps them identify relevant stories and coverage they might not otherwise have encountered and uncover connections, emphases and narrative shifts that enable more comprehensive reporting and deeper, evidence-based research.

This report is entirely machine generated using Gemini 3 and may include errors and omissions. Please verify all findings. No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

For questions or suggestions, please contact kalev.leetaru5@gmail.com. You can also learn more about the GDELT Project at <https://blog.gdeltproject.org/> and the Internet Archive's TV News Archive at <https://archive.org/details/tv>.