Iran marked annual World Jerusalem Day, intended to show Iranian and global Muslim support for the Palestinian cause and the "liberation of Jerusalem." Iran exploits Jerusalem Day for strong anti-Israeli propaganda and incitement.

According to a senior Iranian official, Iran is prepared for direct war in Iraq if ISIS advances towards the sites holy to Shi'a Islam.

Iran denied Jordan's claim of having detained an Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps – Qods Force (IRGC-QF) operative suspected of planning to carry out a terrorist attack in the kingdom.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, speaking before Iranian army commanders, said Iran did not make distinctions between Shi'ites and Sunnis or between Yemen, Syria, Iraq or Palestine when it provided support for regional countries fighting terrorist aggression. He said Iran had always supported the "oppressed" of the world and would always continue to do so (Iran President's website, June 27, 2015).

Yahya Rahim Safavi, IRGC commander and former senior advisor to Iran's armed forces, stated that Iran was prepared for direct war in Iraq if ISIS advanced towards the sites holy to Shi'a Islam. Speaking at a conference in the city of Karaj (west of Tehran), he said that in recent years the "evil triangle" of Western countries, Zionism and some of the Arab states had been seeking to destroy the human and economic capabilities of the "resistance axis." Their objective, he said, was to strengthen Israel's security, divide some of the Islamic states, prevent the spread of the "Islamic awakening" and sell millions of dollars worth of arms to the countries of the Middle
East. He said Iranian support for the fight against ISIS in Iraq and Syria was meant to prevent it from approaching Iran's borders and endangering its security (Tabnak, June 28, 2015).

- Ali-Akbar Velayati, advisor to Iran's Supreme Leader for international affairs, told Iran's daily newspaper Kayhan that representatives of Iran, Iraq and Syria would meet in the near future to discuss ways of collaborating against the terrorist groups supported, he claimed, by the United States, Israel and the "reactionary" Middle Eastern states.

- As to the situation in Syria, Velayati said he was convinced today more than ever that the Syrian regime would remain firm and survive, regardless of the pressure exerted on it by the terrorists and their supporters. He claimed the Syrian people supported the government and were aware of the importance of maintaining Syria's territorial integrity and national interests.

- Regarding the situation in Yemen, Velayati claimed Iran was the only country in the world openly and unequivocally supporting the Yemeni people. He said the war against the Yemenis was being waged from the air, by sea and on land, and no country supported Yemen as Iran did. He said the Iranian foreign ministry was determined to stand by the Yemeni people, although it would take time to form a coalition to deal with the war being waged against them (Kayhan, July 4, 2015).

- Hossein Hamedani, a high-ranking member of the IRGC who also commands its Imam Hossein headquarters, speaking at a ceremony to commemorate the IRGC casualties of the Iran-Iraq War, said there had been a time when Iran's greatest goal was to reach Basra, and while it had not succeeded then, today Iran was fighting the enemies of Islam not only in Basra but in Baghdad, Samara and along the Mediterranean coast.
Hossein Hamedani He claimed that thanks to the Iranian presence in Iraq, popular militias had been established, as they had been in Syria, and they played a significant role in the victories over the radical Sunni organizations and in preventing the fall of Baghdad (Defa Press, July 8, 2015).

### Iranian Intervention in Syria

- Syrian President Bashar Assad signed a law for a billion dollar credit line from Iran. Iran authorized the credit in accord with a second credit agreement signed in May 2015 by the Syrian Commercial Bank and the Iranian Export Development Bank and passed by the Syrian parliament last week. The Syrian regime is expected to use the credit to import goods and finance various projects. The first credit agreement between Syria and Iran, valued at $3.6 billion, was signed in July 2013 and primarily used by the Syrian regime to import oil (SANA News Agency, July 8, 2015).

- A fighter from the Fatemiyoun Battalion (Afghans fighting in the IRGC ranks in Syria) killed in Syria was buried in the city of Mashhad (northeastern Iran) on July 9, 2015. The date of his death was not reported (Fars News Agency, July 9, 2015).
Iranian Intervention in Iraq and Jordan

- Amin Shoki, an Iranian militant from the city of Sousangerd in the Khorasan Province (southwestern Iran), was killed by ISIS fire in Iraq (Abna News, June 27, 2015).

- At the end of June Qasem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC Qods Force, returned to Iran after a prolonged stay in Iraq. While there he participated in a ceremony dedicated to four IRGC members killed in the fighting in Syria in recent weeks (Alef, June 30, 2015).
The London-based Arabic website Al-Arabi Al-Jadid reported that according to high-ranking Iraqi political and military sources, the IRGC will play a significant role in the battles expected to begin shortly in the ISIS-controlled Al-Anbar Province. A high-ranking Iraqi minister told a website that under pressure from the Iraqi militias, Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi had agreed to allow 4,000 IRGC fighters to participate in the fighting, following the failure of the Iraqi army and local militias to liberate the province from ISIS control. He reported that some of the IRGC forces had already arrived in Al-Anbar and while others would enter with the Iraqi army and popular militia forces. Muhammad Farhan al-Fahdawi, an Al-Anbar tribal chieftain, reported that IRGC
forces had arrived at the Al-Mazra'ah base north of Fallujah and deployed missiles and heavy artillery (Al-Arabi Al-Jadid, June 30, 2015). The website's reliability is uncertain and there is no confirmation of the report from other sources.

Ayyub Hassan Faleh al-Rubaie, aka Abu Azrael, commander of the Imam Ali Battalions, an Iraqi militia fighting against ISIS, was recently documented by the Iranian media during a visit to the Iranian city of Mashhad. Abu Azrael, also called "the Iraqi Rambo," is a great public favorite, especially on the social media, because of his image as a fighter bravely opposing ISIS.

Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, chairman of the Expediency Discernment Council, told the Iranian Arabic-language newspaper Al-Wefaq that Iran considered Iraq as important as Iran itself. He spoke of the historical ties between the two countries and of Iraq's religious and geographical importance for the Iranian people. He said Iran's support for Iraq was considerable and that Iran gave Iraq all the aid it needed. He quoted former Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, who said Iraq did not regard Iran as threatening or dangerous in any way, and that Iran had rescued and helped Iraq. Rafsanjani stressed that Iran had no aspirations in Iraq and regarded Iraq's security as its own (ILNA, July 5, 2015).

The Jordanian government recently reported it had detained an IRGC-QF operative on suspicion of planning to carry out terrorist attacks in the kingdom. On July 6, 2015, the Jordanian daily newspaper Al-Ra'i reported that the suspect held dual Iraqi-Norwegian citizenship. When he was apprehended, 45 kilograms (approximately 100 pounds) of explosives were found in his possession. He was accused of hiding a large quantity of explosives and of planning to carry out terrorist attacks in Jordan.
According to a posting on the www.thenewkhalij.com website, during the 1990s the suspect, Khadem al-Rubaie, worked in the Iranian intelligence division for foreign operations and was involved in the murder of former Iranian Prime Minister Shapour Bakhtiar, who was assassinated in Paris in 1991. During the 1980s al-Rubaie worked for the Iranian Supreme Islamic Revolutionary Council in Iraq, which operated under Iranian aegis against Saddam Hussein's regime.

IRGC spokesman Ramazan Sharif denied the Jordanian claim, calling it anti-Iranian "phobia and propaganda" (AP, July 7, 2015). A source in the Iranian foreign ministry also denied the claim, saying that Iranian policy was based on fully honoring the security, stability and territorial integrity of the countries in the region (IRNA, July 7, 2015).

Iranian Intervention in Yemen

Hossein Amir Abdollahian, deputy foreign minister for Arab and African affairs, denied the Al-Arabia TV report claiming that several Iranian military advisors had been killed in Yemen. He claimed Iran did not have a single military advisor in Yemen and that the Iranian embassy in Sana'a acted openly and above board (ISNA, July 4, 2015).

Shahabeddin Mohammadi Araqi, the deputy head of international and humanitarian affairs for the Iranian Red Crescent Society, said the Society was prepared to send another ship to Yemen via Oman, this one carrying with more than 140 tons of equipment, after the necessary procedures had been coordinated. He said the Red Crescent had established a logistic center in the Omani port of Salalah and sent Iran a list of the equipment needed by Yemen (Fars News Agency, June 29, 2015). In May Iran dispatched the *Iran Shahed* to Yemen, carrying a cargo of 2,500 tons of food, water, medicines, blankets and tents. The shipment eventually reached its destination, but was significantly delayed because Iran was forced to allow UN inspectors in Djibouti to examine the ship's cargo.

Parviz Fattah, chairman of the Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation, said the Foundation had opened two bank accounts to accept donations for the people of Yemen. He also said a headquarters had been established to aid the citizens of Yemen, composed of representatives of various Iranian entities, among them the broadcasting authority, the Basij and the Red Crescent Society. He said between July 10 and 18, 2015 Iran would mark "solidarity with the people of Yemen" week, during
which donations could be deposited in the accounts, which would remain open after July 18. On July 16 mosques and military bases in Iran would accept donations of various items for the needy of Yemen (Tasnim News, July 6, 2015).

**Iranian Intervention in the Palestinian Arena**

- On July 10, 2015, Iran marked World Jerusalem Day, an annual event initiated by the Ayatollah Khomeini, founder of the Iranian Islamic Revolution, and held since 1979. Its stated objective is to express the support of Iran and the Muslim world for the Palestinian cause and the "liberation of Jerusalem." On the eve of Jerusalem Day high-ranking Iranian officials appealed for massive public participation in the marches in the main cities. This year the Jerusalem Day marches were held in the shadow of the ongoing campaigns in Syria, Iraq and Yemen. Because of the developments in those countries, high-ranking Iranian officials stressed that this year it was particularly important to mark Jerusalem Day in order to send the message that Iran and the Muslim world had not abandoned the Palestinian cause despite the challenges posed by Sunni terrorism. This year the marches featured not only their usual themes of condemnation and incitement against Israel and the United States, but also criticism of Saudi Arabia for its continuing military activity in Yemen.

- According to the final announcement issued by the Jerusalem Day organizers, the Palestinian question, the "liberation of Jerusalem" and the effort to wipe out "the cancerous tumor called Israel" were the Muslim world's top priorities. It added that the only way to resolve the issue was by a referendum to determine the future of Palestine and the return of the refugees to their country. This year support was also expressed for the struggle the regional countries were engaged in against radical Sunni groups. The organizers of Jerusalem Day described ISIS's crimes in Iraq, Syria and Libya, and Saudi Arabia's aggression against Yemen as conspiracies and "a proxy war" waged by the United States and Israel to create schism among Muslims and ensure Israel's security. The announcement also expressed support for Iran's nuclear negotiating team, and called on the negotiators to respect the Supreme Leader's red lines and defend Iran's nuclear rights (Fars News Agency, July 10, 2015).
On the eve of Jerusalem Day, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani called on all Iranians to use the marches to express their hatred of the Zionist regime and the terrorist forces operating in the Middle East. He claimed that the participation of civilians in the marches during the nuclear negotiations would document support for their rights and honor, and that the more impressive the marches were, the greater respect for the Iranian nation would be and the stronger its regime would look in the eyes of the world (Fars News Agency, July 8, 2015).

Yadollah Javani, senior political advisor to the representative of the Supreme Leader to the IRGC, declared Jerusalem Day a day of unity and solidarity against Zionism for all Muslims. He said the participation of Iranians in the marches would send a message to the friends of the Iranian Islamic Revolution and to its enemies that today the Iranian people adhered to the principles of the revolution even more than in the
past, and that Iran would not surrender to blackmail or threats, and would not stop supporting the oppressed of the world, especially the Palestinian people. He added that the enemies of Islam, led by the Zionists and the Saudis, were trying to make the world forget Jerusalem Day, and that the day had to serve as proof that the developments of the Middle East would not marginalize the issue of Jerusalem, which was the most important issue for the Muslim world (Tasnim News, July, 2015).

Ramazan Sharif, IRGC spokesman and chief of staff of the Council of Islamic Propaganda and Al-Quds Intifada, held a press conference where he said World Jerusalem Day would again prove that the Islamic nation, when faced common enemies such as the United States and the Zionist regime, and with the difficult situations in Iraq, Syria and Yemen, would not abandon Palestine, which, he said, was at the top of the Muslim world's list of priorities. The beginning of the destruction of Israel and the era of the end of the "criminal Zionist regime" was at hand, said Sharif. Not only the thousands of rockets possessed by Hezbollah, Hamas and the other "resistance cells," but also the weakness of Israel, its internal dissentions and the temporary nature of the Jews living there were ringing a death knell and proclaiming the collapse of the regime. The world, he said, had to deploy for the post-Zionist crisis (Tasnim News, July 7, 2015). Sharif also referred to Iran's support for the Palestinians, saying that Iran had the right to advise the Palestinian resistance groups and that the Palestinian groups were not dependent on Iranian aid, having developed their own military capabilities against Israel (Sepah News, July 9, 2015).
Last week the Hamas government announced the disbanding of the Saberin organization which had operated under Iranian aegis in the Gaza Strip in recent year. Saberin ran a series of Shi’ite religious charitable societies funded by Iran (arabi21.com, July 2, 2015).

Hamas’ action was apparently mainly taken for internal reasons, but may also be related to the ongoing tension between Iran and the Hamas political leadership which began with the outbreak of the civil war in Syria. While Tehran deepens its involvement in Syria by supporting the Assad regime, Hamas turned a cold shoulder to Iran and declared its support for the Syrian opposition.

The fall of the Muslim Brotherhood’s rule in Egypt in the summer of 2013 and Operation Protective Edge in the summer of 2014 renewed hope in Tehran for rehabilitating its relations with Hamas by regaining a foothold in the Gaza Strip and increasing its influence in the Palestinian arena. During the past year it has often been reported that Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal intends to visit Tehran. There have also been reports from sources in the Gaza Strip that the Hamas leadership has discussed renewing relations with Iran because it needs Iranian aid to rebuild the organization’s infrastructure, damaged during Operation Protective Edge. However, with the beginning of Saudi Arabia’s Operation Decisive Storm, Hamas issued a statement of support for the ousted Yemeni president and in effect expressed support for the Saudi attack on the Houthi rebels. Iran regarded the statement as a slap in the face and proof that Hamas preferred promoting relations with Saudi Arabia and the Sunni camp to closer relations with Tehran. The ties between Iran and Hamas’ military-terrorist wing have continued, however, despite the political tensions.
Iranian Religious and Propagation Activities around the Globe

- Hojjat-ul-Islam Ahmadi Shahrakhti, who lectures at a religious seminary in Qom, arrived in Indonesia for a visit at the end of June. He delivered lectures on religious subjects to practicing Muslims, both Sunni and Shi'ite, throughout the country, visited local Shi'ite clerics and mosques, and met with cultural and media figures (Hawza News, June 30, 2015).

- Hojjat-ul-Islam Mohammad al-Hassoun, head of the Center for Islamic Studies in Qom, paid a Ramadan visit to Thailand, where he met with Aziz Pitak-Kumpol, the spiritual leader of the Thai Muslims. They discussed the need for a religious dialogue between Shi'ites and Sunnis, and agreed that the Thai Muslim leader would visit Iran in the near future (Hawza News, July 7 2015).