The Amit Terrorism and Intelligence Research Institute
At the Israeli Intelligence Heritage and Commemoration Center

Spotlight on Iran and the Shiite Axis

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Key Trends

- Iran continued to highlight the central role of its regional proxies in the campaign against the United States and Israel.
- Tehran is stepping up coordination with the Shiite militias in Iraq ahead of the expiration of the Iraqi government's ultimatum for them to disarm.

Highlights[1]

- The Iranian Supreme Leader's advisor for international affairs stressed the importance of the Axis of Resistance. At the same time, the Iranian media continued to highlight the role of the proxy organizations in the regional campaign.
- The Iranian President spoke with the new head of Hamas' political bureau and emphasized Iran's support for the Palestinians.
- The commander of the Qods Force visited Baghdad and met with commanders of the pro-Iranian Shiite militias to discuss the Iraqi government's demand that they disarm by September 30, 2026.
- The pro-Iranian militias in Iraq canceled planned attacks against Saudi Arabia at the last minute but threatened that they were still prepared to carry out an "appropriate military response."
- Houthi attacks against Saudi targets continue. It was reported that a joint operations room had been established by the Houthis and the IRGC to manage the campaign against Saudi Arabia.
- A pro-Iranian militia in southern Syria claimed responsibility for an attack on an IDF base in Daraa. The claim could not be independently verified.

Iran and the Proxy Policy amid the Escalation with the United States

- Ali-Akbar Velayati, the Iranian Supreme Leader's advisor for international affairs, stressed the importance of the Axis of Resistance in the recent developments in the region. In a statement, Velayati wrote that the recent developments had been made possible by the steadfastness of the

[1] The weekly study includes the activities of Iran, the Shiite militias in Iraq and Syria, and the Houthis in Yemen.

armed forces, the resolute stance of the Iranian people, and the courage of the Axis of Resistance. According to him, the defeat of the United States and Israel had reinforced the understanding that foreign forces, which are the main cause of instability, should leave the region (Ali-Akbar Velayati's X account, August 8, 2026).

- The Iranian media also continued to emphasize the importance of the Axis of Resistance in the current campaign against the United States. A commentary published by the SNN News Agency under the headline "From Yemen to Lebanon: The Resistance Fighters' Show of Force" claimed that the components of the "Resistance Front" in Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen had played a decisive role in changing the balance of the fighting following the outbreak of the current war (Operation Roaring Lion). The following are the main points of the article (SNN, August 8, 2026):
  - By opening the northern front against Israel, Hezbollah succeeded in forcing Israel to divert a significant portion of its military resources, disrupting US and Israeli intelligence and operational preparations, and taking the United States and Israel by surprise because they had not expected its direct involvement in the war. Hezbollah's entry into the fighting through a series of operations created a "strategic shock" and undermined the Israeli government's efforts to persuade residents of northern Israel to return to their homes. At the same time, Hezbollah's attacks from the north, alongside Iranian missile attacks, placed heavy pressure on Israel, intensified domestic criticism of it, and forced it to divert military and political resources to the northern front. It was further claimed that Hezbollah had attacked Israeli Air Force bases and radar sites with missiles and drones, impairing Israel's detection and air defense capabilities, and, in coordination with the Iranian missile attacks, had succeeded in overloading Israeli defense systems to the point of paralyzing their operational capabilities.
  - The pro-Iranian militias in Iraq constituted another strategic component of the war. The Iraqi government opposed the use of its territory and airspace for attacks on Iran, thereby thwarting some US plans. In addition, the Iraqi militias carried out attacks against US bases in Iraq and the Gulf states and assisted Iran in attacking "terrorist groups" and separatist organizations in the Kurdistan Region. In doing so, according to the article, they increased the cost of the US presence in the region and turned Iraq into another major front in the multi-front campaign against the United States and Israel.
  - The emergence of new fronts against the United States was not limited to land borders and direct attacks. One of the main arenas incorporated into the war equation was the region's strategic waterways. In this context, the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, because of its importance to

global trade and energy transportation, became one of Washington's principal alternatives. However, it was precisely there that Yemen, as Iran's ally, completed the strategic maneuver. The Houthis turned the strait from an alternative route to the Strait of Hormuz into a new front against the United States. In addition, they announced their entry into the war through missile and drone attacks against military targets in Israel and stressed that such operations would continue until the "aggression" against the "Resistance Front" ceased.

- The warnings issued to the Arab Gulf states against any cooperation with the United States and the threats against their oil infrastructure demonstrated that the scope of the front extended far beyond Bab al-Mandeb alone.
- Ultimately, the confrontation with Iran forced the United States to conduct a thorough reassessment of its previous assumptions not only regarding Iran itself but also regarding the balance of power throughout West Asia.

Iran and Developments in the Palestinian Arena

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian spoke with Khalil al-Hayya, head of Hamas' political bureau, and congratulated him on his appointment. Pezeshkian praised the Palestinians' steadfastness and resilience in the face of the "crimes of the Zionist regime" and stressed that the hearts and spirit of the Iranian people and leadership were always with the Palestinian people and that Iran would continue to support the Palestinians to the best of its ability. He thanked al-Hayya for his role in promoting coordination among the Palestinian organizations and declared that Iran would support any initiative, decision, or measure adopted by the Palestinian leadership within the framework of the negotiations. Referring to the recent Israeli and US attacks against Iran and to the regional situation, Pezeshkian said that despite the challenges, the Palestinian issue continues to be at the heart of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy and remains a top priority for the Iranian leadership and the Supreme Leader. He stressed that Iran would spare no effort to assist the Palestinian people and called for strengthening unity and cohesion among the Islamic countries to protect the interests of the Muslim nation. He also asked al-Hayya to convey his greetings to the other leaders and operatives

of the Palestinian organizations and added that Iran would continue working to strengthen cooperation among the Islamic countries and reduce disagreements between them.

Masoud Pezeshkian (Tasnim, August 5, 2026)

For his part, Khalil al-Hayya praised Iran's conduct and its ability to cope with regional crises. According to him, its future achievements will benefit Iran, the region, and the Islamic world. Al-Hayya expressed optimism about the future of the Axis of Resistance and assessed that it would ultimately achieve its objectives in the countries of the region. Referring to the war in the Gaza Strip and the situation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, al-Hayya thanked Iran for its continued support for the Palestinians and declared that the Palestinian people would remain committed to their goals and the legacy of the shaheeds despite the pressure and fighting. Al-Hayya asked to draw on the experience of Iran and its senior officials in the negotiating process to safeguard the interests of the Palestinian people and expressed hope that political and diplomatic efforts, alongside military resistance, would lead to the realization of the Palestinian people's goals. He expressed hope that he would soon meet with the Iranian President (IRNA, August 5, 2026).

Iranian Involvement in Lebanon

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei condemned the continued Israeli attacks in southern Lebanon and stressed that the US administration, because of its full support for the "occupying regime," is a partner in and facilitator of all the "crimes of the Zionist regime" in Lebanon, "occupied Palestine," and the entire region. Baghaei praised the "resistance" and the courageous steadfastness of the Lebanese people in the face of the Israeli attacks and stressed the Islamic Republic of Iran's full solidarity with Lebanon in its efforts to defend its sovereignty, dignity, and independence against the Israeli attacks (IRNA, August 11, 2026).

Iranian Involvement in Iraq

Qods Force Commander Esmail Qaani reportedly arrived in Baghdad and met with several commanders of the pro-Iranian Shiite militias. During his meetings, Qaani discussed the issue of

bringing weapons under state control and several other matters. The visit took place against the backdrop of Iraqi Prime Minister Ali Faleh al-Zaidi's announcement that September 30, 2026, was the deadline for all militias to hand over their weapons to the Iraqi state (Al Arabiya, August 10, 2026).

- Subsequently, it was reported that the issue of bringing weapons under state control was the focus of Qaani's talks in Baghdad, particularly amid concerns that the Iraqi government might take stronger measures against the Shiite militias, potentially including the use of force to compel them to comply with its decision. During his meetings, Qaani stressed the need to avoid any armed confrontation between the militias and the Iraqi security forces to prevent a scenario of internal conflict with far-reaching political and security implications. However, he did not express Iranian agreement to the militias handing over their weapons to the Iraqi state and claimed that the demand stemmed from US dictates. Qaani stressed the importance of preserving the militias' weapons in view of what he described as growing US threats against the Axis of Resistance in the region. The report further stated that the discussions were not limited to the security issue and also addressed an Iraqi request for "genuine and serious" Iranian consent to guarantee the passage of Iraqi oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz. This came against the backdrop of financial pressures on Iraq that had already begun to impair the state's ability to meet its financial obligations, including the payment of salaries to government employees (Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, August 11, 2026).

- Another report stated that Qaani had been scheduled to meet with a delegation from the Shiite Coordination Framework in Tehran, but the plans changed and Qaani hurried to Iraq following information that al-Zaidi was planning to send large forces to Jurf al-Sakhar, one of the militias' strategic strongholds south of Baghdad. A "senior source in the Coordination Framework" said that Qaani urged senior militia officials to avoid confrontation with the security forces while also asking the leaders of the Coordination Framework to persuade the Prime Minister not to weaken the militias (Alhurra, August 11, 2026).

- "Sources in Iraq" reported that the Iraqi security forces are monitoring a network of small operational cells "directly" linked to the Iranian IRGC and operating outside the country's security apparatuses. According to the "sources," the network was established in recent months as the Iraqi government stepped up its efforts to disarm the pro-Iranian militias in the country and take control of their weapons stockpiles. They further stated that the operatives in those cells, which consist of between five and ten members each, had been recruited from the ranks of the established militias, including those that had declared their intention to hand over their weapons to the state. It was further claimed that the cells were subordinate to and directly operated by IRGC representatives in

Iraq and were trained primarily to operate drones for attacks on targets outside Iraq (Alhurra, August 7, 2026). In this context, Iraqi government spokesman Haider al-Aboudi said that the Iraqi security forces had succeeded in uncovering and dismantling an operational network that had planned to carry out operations against "certain targets" using drones. He added that the security forces had arrested the network's members and seized some of the equipment in their possession (Iraqi News Agency, August 9, 2026).

Dismantled drones seized when the operational cell was exposed (Al-Hadath, August 9, 2026)

The Pro-Iranian Militias in Iraq

On August 7, 2026, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, which includes most of the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq, announced that following appeals by Badr Organization leader Abu Hassan al-Amiri and other political leaders, it had been decided to postpone the military response to the US and Saudi attacks against the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq, in which approximately 20 Iraqi and Iranian operatives were killed on July 29, 2026. The announcement came one day after the expiration of the ultimatum the militias had issued to the Iraqi government to respond to the attacks (Islamic Resistance in Iraq Telegram channel, August 7, 2026).

In this context, "several political and government sources" said that al-Amiri had met with Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi and that it had been decided to postpone the response to allow Iraq to try to resolve the crisis with Saudi Arabia through diplomatic means. It was also noted that in return for postponing the response, the militias demanded that the Iraqi government cease taking action against them over previous attacks against Saudi Arabia (Shafaq News, August 7, 2026).

Following the announcement of the postponement of the response, Abu Alaa al-Wala'i, secretary-general of Kata'ib Sayyid al-Shuhada, said that reconsideration of the timing and scope of the response remained on the agenda and that carrying it out was an ideological and national obligation. He called on the "relevant parties" to seize the opportunity to restore "Iraq's right" in a manner

commensurate with the extent of the damage inflicted on Iraq and the Iraqi people by the Saudi-US attack (Abu Alaa al-Wala'i's X account, August 8, 2026).

Akram al-Kaabi, secretary-general of the al-Nujaba Movement, stressed in a statement that ultimately "all the brothers" would realize that the option of diplomacy with the Saudi regime, which he called "a rabid dog against the Muslims and a cowardly milch cow for the Zionists and the enemies of Islam," was useless, and therefore the only way to deal with it was to humiliate it through an "appropriate military response." He declared, "Missiles will only be answered with missiles, and fire will only be answered with fire" (Akram al-Kaabi's X account, August 8, 2026).

Against the backdrop of the tensions, the Iraqi Interior Ministry said it had closed "71 fake headquarters" of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), the umbrella organization of the militias, and stressed that any party operating a drone without authorization would be dealt with in accordance with Iraqi law for the prevention of terrorist activity (Shafaq News, August 10, 2026). Shortly thereafter, the PMF announced that the organization itself had closed the "fake" headquarters, that statements made by the operatives there were false, and that the operatives did not belong to the organization. The PMF stressed that it was committed to continuing to monitor and take action against anyone attempting to impersonate the organization or exploit its name (PMF Telegram channel, August 10, 2026).

The Houthis in Yemen

Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree claimed responsibility for an attack on a Saudi oil tanker in the Gulf of Aden (Yahya Saree's Telegram channel, August 5, 2026). The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) reported that the tanker had reported an "explosion" in its vicinity, which caused only minor damage, and that it continued sailing toward Djibouti (UKMTO X account, August 5, 2026).

The Houthi forces also announced an attack on a Saudi vessel carrying military ammunition near the Bab al-Mandeb Strait (Houthi Armed Forces Telegram channel, August 11, 2026). Pakistani Deputy Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar stated that three Pakistanis were killed in an attack on a merchant ship flying the Tanzanian flag near the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, and an Indonesian citizen was also reported killed in the attack (Dawn, August 12, 2026).

Yahya Saree also reported that the Houthi forces had carried out several attacks against concentrations of "Saudi" troops east and south of the areas under Houthi control, using a large number of ballistic missiles and drones. According to Saree, dozens of "Saudi mercenaries" (soldiers

of the Western-recognized Yemeni government, which is supported by Saudi Arabia) were killed and wounded in the attacks, and numerous bases and assets belonging to those forces were hit. Additional attacks were carried out against concentrations of “Saudi” troops and weapons depots near the port city of Mocha, and according to Saree, they caused dozens of casualties and destroyed large quantities of weapons and military equipment (Yahya Saree’s Telegram channel, August 6–11, 2026). It was reported that at least 52 civilians and soldiers from the Yemeni government’s security forces were killed and at least 110 others were wounded in the attacks (Saudi media, August 6–9, 2026).

Launches toward Mocha (Telegram channel of the Houthi forces, August 9, 2026)

In another statement, Saree claimed responsibility for a Houthi drone attack against a refinery belonging to the Saudi energy company Aramco in the Saudi city of Jizan, near the Yemeni border. According to Saree, the drone accurately hit its target (Yahya Saree’s Telegram channel, August 9, 2026). The Saudi Energy Ministry announced that a fire had broken out at one of Aramco’s facilities in Jizan without causing casualties (Saudi Energy Ministry X account, August 9, 2026).

“Yemeni security sources” said that IRGC personnel are present in Yemen and are overseeing the latest escalation between the Houthis and Saudi Arabia. It was also noted that Iran’s ambassador to Houthi-controlled Yemen, Ali Mohammad Rezaei, is personally involved. In this context, a joint operations room was established for the Houthis and IRGC personnel, from which the campaign against Saudi Arabia is managed, along with related activities such as promoting the Houthi narrative in the media and linking it to the confrontation between Iran and the United States. It was further reported that senior officials in the Houthi regime had been instructed to relocate their headquarters to civilian buildings, such as hotels, to avoid being targeted (Asharq Al-Awsat, August 11, 2026).

Militias in Syria

The Islamic Resistance Front in Syria – Possessors of Might (Uli al-Ba's) claimed that in response to the "enemy's ongoing violations," its fighters had attacked a base of the "Zionist enemy" at al-Jazeera Camp in the western Daraa countryside with "targeted and direct strikes" (Islamic Resistance Front in Syria Telegram channel, August 9, 2026). No statement was issued by the IDF, and the claims could not be independently verified.

Screenshots of the alleged attack (Islamic Resistance Front in Syria Telegram channel, August 9, 2026)