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 stresses the need for a ceasefire in the Palestinian and Lebanese arenas as an additional condition for reopening the Strait of Hormuz and for a possible arrangement with the United States.
- Iran is increasing pressure on the Shiite militias in Iraq not to hand over their weapons to the Iraqi government.

Highlights[1]

- Amid Iran's hardening position toward the United States, senior Iranian officials and media outlets emphasize that Tehran views a ceasefire in the Palestinian and Lebanese arenas as an additional condition for a possible arrangement with the United States and for reopening the Strait of Hormuz.
- The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman condemned the IDF strikes in southern Lebanon.
- It was reported that Iran had warned the Syrian government against the entry of Syrian military forces into Lebanese territory to take action against Hezbollah.
- The Qods Force commander warned the pro-Iranian Shiite militias during his visit to Baghdad against handing over their weapons to the Iraqi government.
- The Governor of the Central Bank of Iran visited Baghdad and met with senior Iraqi government officials.
- Houthi attacks against Saudi targets continue. Houthi military sources confirmed that attacks were also carried out inside Saudi Arabia, but the Houthis did not claim responsibility for the attacks, nor was there any confirmation from Saudi or Arab sources.
- The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) reported that a vessel had been attacked in the Bab al-Mandeb Strait area by an unidentified object.

Iranian Involvement in the Palestinian Arena

- A commentary published by the Fars News Agency (August 12, 2026) highlighted Iran's demand for a ceasefire in the Palestinian arena as a condition for a possible arrangement with the United States. The article stated that Iran's Supreme Leader had presented the concept of "unity of the arenas" and

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

stipulated an end to the war in all arenas of the "Resistance Front" as the first condition for ending the war under the memorandum of understanding signed with the United States. However, the Tehran leadership's new decision to add the condition of a ceasefire in Palestine, particularly in the Gaza Strip, and to state it explicitly alongside the demand for a ceasefire in Lebanon, is a welcome strategic step with far-reaching implications. The inclusion of this condition, recently reflected in statements and positions expressed by senior Iranian officials – including the current and former secretaries of the Supreme National Security Council and the Foreign Minister – is particularly prudent. One of the conditions for creating deterrence is for the enemy to know that every time it imposes a new war on Iran, it will encounter more demands and stricter conditions than those presented on the eve of the war.

- The Iranian Foreign Ministry issued a statement condemning remarks by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu concerning his opposition to the establishment of a Palestinian state and to withdrawal from the Golan Heights. The statement said that the "head of the criminal gang ruling occupied Palestine" was in no position to express an opinion regarding the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, since Palestine belongs to the Palestinian people and the racist delusions of the "genocidal Zionist regime" cannot change that fact. In addition, the Golan Heights are an integral part of Syrian territory, and the colonialist aspirations of an "occupying and plundering entity" cannot alter this legal and historical reality. In its statement, the Foreign Ministry stressed the legal, moral, and humanitarian obligation of all countries, particularly Islamic countries, to assist the Palestinian people in realizing their right to self-determination and freeing themselves from the yoke of the "Zionist regime's" occupation, apartheid, and colonialism. The statement further said that the Palestinian issue remains the most important humanitarian and moral issue in the contemporary world and that support by the United States and several Western countries for the "Zionist regime" enables its continued expansion and the escalation of its crimes in the region. The statement emphasized Iran's position in support of the Palestinian people's struggle to liberate their land from occupation, the return of Palestinian refugees to their homeland, the realization of their right to self-determination, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital (Iranian Foreign Ministry Telegram channel, August 13, 2026).

Iranian Involvement in Lebanon

- Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei condemned the IDF strikes in southern Lebanon. Baghaei stressed Lebanon's legal and legitimate right to use all means to defend its existence against the "aggression of the Zionist regime," as well as the Islamic Republic's solidarity

with Lebanon in its efforts to defend its national sovereignty, independence, and dignity (Fars, August 15, 2026).

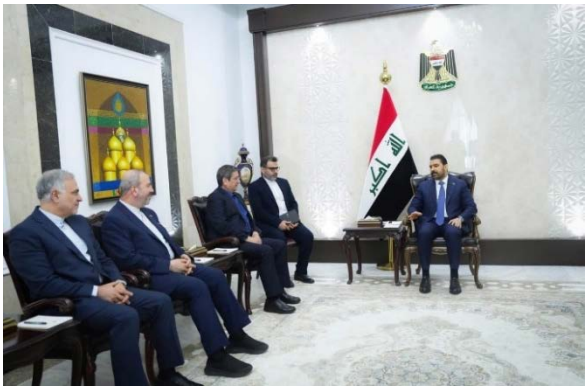
- The Lebanese news agency Unews, which is affiliated with Hezbollah, reported (August 13, 2026) that Iran had warned the Syrian government that any Syrian military entry into Lebanese territory would be met with a severe response inside Syria and along its borders. According to the report, the Iranian threat included the entry of forces from Iraq into Syria, the opening of a fighting front in the city of Homs, support for the activities of Alawite armed groups in western Syria, and encouragement of the Kurdish militias to return to the city of Aleppo in northern Syria. The message, which was also conveyed to Turkey, Qatar, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, included a warning that any "Syrian adventure" against Hezbollah would not be confined to the Beqaa Valley but would develop into a broad regional confrontation that would also encompass Syrian territory. In addition, officials in Ankara conveyed a warning to the government in Damascus that Iran would strike more than 100 strategic targets in Syria, foremost among them the Presidential Palace in Damascus, in the event of Syrian intervention against Hezbollah in Lebanon.
- Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf reiterated Iran's commitment to the ceasefire in Lebanon under the memorandum of understanding with the United States, signed in June 2026. He noted that he had been involved in Lebanese affairs since 1985 and had deep ties to the country. According to him, he had close friendships with each of Lebanon's fallen fighters and remained in contact with fighters on the front line in Lebanon to this day. Qalibaf added that Iran had included the "Resistance Front," Lebanon's sovereignty, and its territorial integrity in the first clause of the memorandum of understanding, despite President Trump's original demand that the issues of missiles, the nuclear program, and the "resistance" not be included in its wording (Entekhab, August 15, 2026).

Iranian Involvement in Iraq

- A senior Iraqi official claimed that Qods Force Commander Esmail Qaani had stressed during his visit to Baghdad the previous week that the Iranian regime would not fall and that Iran's allies in Iraq had to decide as soon as possible on the nature of their relations with Iran, particularly with the IRGC. According to the official, Qaani was angered by briefings from the pro-Iranian Iraqi militias regarding regional and international difficulties restricting their ability to act on Iran's behalf in the near future, alongside the domestic pressure exerted by the government in Baghdad. He noted that Tehran would show no tolerance for "manifestations of betrayal" by some of the militias that Tehran claimed had secretly acted against it, and that immediately after the end of the confrontation between Iran

and the United States, Tehran would conduct a “harsh reckoning” with anyone who betrayed it during the crisis. The official added that Qaani made it clear to the militias that the only thing Iran permitted them to do as part of political flexibility was to promise to discuss the weapons issue, but handing over the weapons was a “red line” for Iran, since it was effectively the “owner of the weapons.” Qaani also assessed that the current Iraqi government would not last long and would soon fall (Al-Modon, August 15, 2026).

- Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi spoke with his Iraqi counterpart, Fuad Hussein, and discussed recent security developments and the circumstances surrounding the drone attack on the office of the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Masrour Barzani, which was attributed to Iran. Fuad Hussein described the attack as a dangerous precedent and warned of its negative repercussions for the security of Iraq and the region. Araghchi stressed that there was no information indicating that the attack had originated from Iranian territory (Iranian Foreign Ministry Telegram channel, August 17, 2026).
- Governor of the Central Bank of Iran Abdolnaser Hemmati visited Iraq and met with Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi; Iraqi Finance Minister Faleh Sari; and Governor of the Central Bank of Iraq Nizar Nasser Hussein. During his meetings in Baghdad, the Iranian governor discussed Iraq’s debts to Iran and economic and financial cooperation between the two countries. The Iraqi Prime Minister said during his meeting with Hemmati that his government was working to turn Iraq into a hub of shared economic interests among the countries of the region, in a manner that would help establish stability and end confrontations (IRNA, August 17, 2026).



Meeting of the Governor of the Central Bank of Iran with the Prime Minister of Iraq (IRNA, August 17, 2026)

The Houthis in Yemen

- The Houthi Foreign Ministry issued a statement by Deputy Foreign Minister Abd al-Wahid Abu Ras, claiming that “the Israeli enemy entity continues its dangerous escalation in occupied Palestine” while disregarding all agreements, laws, and conventions. According to Abu Ras, Israel’s “crimes”

enjoy “American cover, European partnership, and Arab and Islamic inaction.” He further noted that Arab regimes, foremost among them the Saudi regime, are weakening the Islamic nation from within through endless conflicts that drain its energies and resources in the service of the “Zionist project.” Finally, Abu Ras claimed that “wherever Zionist ambitions go, Saudi money follows to finance them” (Houthi Foreign Ministry Telegram channel, August 14, 2026).

- The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) reported an attack on a vessel in the Bab al-Mandeb Strait area by an unidentified object. The strike on the vessel caused a fire to break out on board and injured several crew members. It was further reported that the authorities in Yemen assisted the crew and came under fire during the rescue attempts (UKMTO X account, August 11, 2026). The Houthis did not issue a detailed statement on the incident, as is their usual practice, but stated that they had attacked a vessel in the Bab al-Mandeb Strait area carrying Saudi military equipment (Houthi Combat Media X account, August 11, 2026).
- Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree claimed responsibility for attacks on concentrations of troops belonging to “Saudi Arabia and its proxies,” weapons depots, and “warships” around the port city of Mocha. According to Saree, the attacks were carried out using a large number of ballistic missiles and resulted in dozens of casualties and the destruction of weapons and vessels. In another statement, Saree reported that Houthi forces had attacked five vessels belonging to the Saudi-led coalition forces while they were in the Red Sea near Mocha. According to Saree, the attacks, which were carried out using ballistic missiles, were precise and caused several of the vessels to sink and fires to break out aboard the others. Saree also announced that Houthi forces had attacked a weapons depot belonging to the “Saudi forces” in the Marib area using several drones, causing damage to the target (Yahya Saree’s Telegram channel, August 14–17, 2026).
- Houthi military sources confirmed that Houthi forces had also carried out attacks inside Saudi Arabia. The attacks, which were carried out using drones, targeted an Aramco refinery in the city of Jizan and oil infrastructure in the city of Najran in response to Saudi Arabia’s violation of Yemeni airspace (Saba and Almasirah, August 13–14, 2026). The Houthis did not directly claim responsibility for these attacks, and they were not reported in Saudi Arabia or by other sources.
- Arab media, citing sources in the internationally recognized Yemeni government, reported that ballistic missiles launched by the Houthis had struck an airport under construction in the Bab al-Mandeb Strait area and caused damage. Other “military” sources reported attacks against various targets in the Mocha area using drones, ballistic missiles, and unmanned surface vessels (USVs), causing damage and casualties (Arab media, August 14, 2026).

- Arab media published reports citing "military sources" according to which forces opposing the Houthis had attacked Houthi targets, mainly in the Taiz and Marib areas, using drones and other means. According to the sources, approximately 200 Houthi fighters were killed in these attacks within just 48 hours, and dozens of vehicles and other military equipment were destroyed (Arab media, August 16–17, 2026).
- Elements affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood and operating under the al-Islah Party in the city of Marib, which is located in the combat zone in central Yemen between the Houthis and the forces opposing them, initiated several mediation efforts with the Houthis in an attempt to prevent an escalation of the fighting around the city, fearing that the Houthis were planning to capture it. According to these elements, the mediation efforts, conducted mainly through Hamas, have so far failed, despite Houthi statements that they do not currently intend to attack the city. Forces loyal to Saudi Arabia and the internationally recognized Yemeni government based in Aden are also deployed around Marib (Al-Akhbar, August 14, 2026).

Activity of Pro-Iranian Militias in Iraq

- Iraqi sources reported that the Iraqi government is planning military action against the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq if they fail to agree to disarm by the deadline of September 30, 2026. The sources said that Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi is prepared to confront the militias if they fail to cooperate. According to the report, the operational plan focuses on targeting two strongholds belonging to Kata'ib Hezbollah and the al-Nujaba militia south of Baghdad (Asharq Al-Awsat and AFP, August 13, 2026).
- A security source reported that Iraqi security forces had arrested Abbas Hussein Yaqoubi, head of the al-Nujaba militia's intelligence apparatus in Dhi Qar Province in southern Iraq. The source added that Yaqoubi was one of the militia's senior leaders and had been transferred to Baghdad for further questioning (Shafaq News, August 17, 2026). It was also reported that Yaqoubi was suspected of involvement in attacks against US targets and assets in Iraq. Several hours after his arrest, Yaqoubi was reportedly transferred to the custody of the Popular Mobilization Forces for "further legal proceedings." The transfer was apparently intended to defuse tensions after the government had sought to signal its resolve and demonstrate its strength vis-à-vis the militias, particularly those refusing to hand over their weapons, such as the al-Nujaba militia (Asharq Al-Awsat, August 18, 2026).
- Kata'ib Hezbollah spokesman Abu Mujahid al-Assaf issued a statement detailing the conditions set by the "Islamic Resistance" for resolving the weapons issue with the Iraqi government: a complete and "genuine" withdrawal of US forces from Iraq and guarantees that they would not

return; the withdrawal of Turkish forces from northern Iraq; and the disbandment of the Peshmerga forces, which, according to al-Assaf, pose a threat to Iraq's unity and maintain "suspicious ties with the Zionist-American enemy." Later in the statement, al-Assaf attacked Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi and claimed that the organization's patience was running out over his actions during his first 100 days in office, and that it had become clear that his "empty" statements and his failure to understand the situation in Iraq and the country's unique circumstances had only worsened the situation. Al-Assaf further claimed that al-Zaidi, acting on instructions from the United States, had ordered raids on the homes of the families of fallen and wounded fighters to intimidate them, describing this as an "unforgivable sin" (Kata'ib Hezbollah Telegram channel, August 18, 2026).