



Spotlight on Iran and the Shiite Axis

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Key Trends

- ▶ **Iranian condemnations of the continued IDF strikes in southern Lebanon, but without explicit threats of retaliation against Israel.**
- ▶ **Satisfaction in Iran with the Houthis' advances in southwestern Yemen and their takeover of the Bab al-Mandeb Strait.**
- ▶ **Contacts between Iran and Iraq in view of the attacks carried out by Shiite militias against Saudi Arabia.**

Highlights¹

- ▶ Iran denied that IRGC personnel were among those trapped in tunnels in the Hezbollah compound on the Ali al-Taher Ridge in southern Lebanon. It also condemned the Israeli strikes. The Iranian Foreign Minister spoke with the Lebanese Parliament Speaker.
- ▶ The Houthis took control of extensive areas along Yemen's western coast and of the Bab al-Mandeb Strait. It was reported that the Houthis had met with US representatives and pledged not to attack American or Israeli vessels, but only Saudi vessels. Houthi attacks against targets in Saudi territory also continued.
- ▶ The Iranians praised the Houthis' achievements and denied involvement in Houthi decision-making after it was reported that the IRGC had provided operational guidance in managing the campaign.
- ▶ The Islamic Resistance in Iraq rejected accusations that the pro-Iranian militias were responsible for the attack on Saudi Arabia's East-West oil pipeline. Iraq and Iran agreed on a joint investigation.
- ▶ The President of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan in Iraq visited Tehran and met with senior Iranian officials.
- ▶ The Islamic Resistance Front in Syria condemned Prime Minister Netanyahu's visit to the Mount Hermon summit.

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

Iranian Involvement in Lebanon

- ▶ The Iranian Fars News Agency, which is affiliated with the IRGC, denied reports that several IRGC personnel had been trapped in the Ali al-Taher tunnels. The agency reported that only 48 Hezbollah operatives had been present in the two tunnels at Ali al-Taher that were attacked by the IDF, and that eight of them were killed (Fars, September 14, 2026).
- ▶ Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi spoke by telephone with Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri. The two reportedly discussed developments in the region and the need to strengthen coordination among regional countries to confront “the Zionist regime’s expansionist ambitions and warmongering against Lebanon and other countries in the region.” Araghchi stressed Iran’s continued commitment to safeguarding Lebanon’s national sovereignty and territorial integrity in the face of attacks by Israel, which he called a “genocidal regime.” He stressed the Islamic Republic of Iran’s full support for Lebanon’s “honorable resistance” against “the occupation and aggression” of the “Zionist regime.” The Lebanese Parliament Speaker thanked the Islamic Republic for its support for Lebanon and provided an overview of the current situation in the south of the country. He stressed the legal and moral responsibility of the international community and Muslim countries to act to stop the “occupying regime’s” violations of the law, bring those responsible for the crimes to justice, and punish them (Iranian Foreign Ministry Telegram channel, September 14, 2026).
- ▶ The Iranian Foreign Ministry strongly condemned the continued IDF strikes in southern Lebanon. Alongside expressing appreciation for the Lebanese people’s resistance and steadfastness in the face of “the child-killing Israeli regime’s ambitions for domination and occupation,” the Foreign Ministry stressed the Islamic Republic’s support for Lebanon’s efforts to defend its national sovereignty and territorial integrity. It further stated that the “barbaric attacks of the Zionist regime” against Lebanon and its occupation of parts of Lebanese territory, accompanied by the commission of “very grave war crimes,” take place under the cover of overt US support for the regime. Accordingly, the US administration is considered the main partner in the “Zionist regime’s crimes” in Lebanon and must bear responsibility for them. The Iranian Foreign Ministry also condemned the “inaction of the UN Security Council in the face of the Zionist regime’s acts of aggression,” which, it said, constitute a grave threat to regional and global peace and security, and called on the UN, its Secretary-General, and all member states to take the necessary measures to stop the Israeli attacks. The ministry also called on the Islamic world and the countries of the region to fulfill their responsibility to support Lebanon in the face of “the occupying regime’s aggression,” and called on the Organization of Islamic

Cooperation to act decisively and use all its capabilities to “bring an end to the Zionist regime’s crimes, bring the regime’s criminals to justice, and punish them” (Tasnim, September 9, 2026).

Houthi Achievements in Yemen

► Houthi forces launched a large-scale offensive along Yemen’s western coast and succeeded in capturing extensive areas held by pro-Saudi Yemeni forces, inflicting heavy losses on them and forcing them to retreat eastward. Following the takeover of those areas, it was reported that Houthi forces were now positioned at the narrowest point of the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, where the distance from the Yemeni side to the African side is only about 20 kilometers (Yemeni and Arab media, September 9–16, 2026).

► Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree said that the Houthi armed forces had carried out a “large-scale and high-quality operation” designed to remove the pro-Saudi forces from Yemen’s western coastal region. According to Saree, despite massive Saudi air support for the enemy forces, the Houthi forces succeeded in capturing an area of 5,400 square kilometers in the Taiz and Hodeidah regions, inflicting hundreds of casualties on the pro-Saudi forces and downing nine Saudi aircraft. He stressed that maritime traffic is safe for all vessels except Saudi vessels (Yahya Saree’s Telegram channel, September 11, 2026).



Territories captured by the Houthis on the western coast (marked by red dots)
(Al Jazeera Instagram account, September 13, 2026)

► The Houthis also continued their attacks in Saudi territory. Saree claimed responsibility for attacks on weapons depots and command centers in the Sharurah area, military facilities and infrastructure at King Khalid Air Base in Khamis Mushait, and an Aramco facility in Yanbu, using a large number of ballistic missiles and drones. He also claimed responsibility for downing a Saudi F-15 over Yemeni territory with a Houthi-produced surface-to-air missile. Saree denied Saudi claims

regarding a Houthi attack in Mecca and asserted that Houthi forces attack only military targets and oil infrastructure (Yahya Saree's Telegram channel, September 11–16, 2026).

► “Five sources” claimed that US representatives had met with Houthi representatives in Oman several days after the Houthi campaign of territorial gains along Yemen's western coast. During the meeting, the Houthis told the Americans that they wished to maintain the ceasefire between the sides and had no intention of attacking American vessels. One of the sources also said that the Houthis had declared that they would not attack Israeli vessels, but only Saudi vessels (Reuters, September 16, 2026).

Iranian Involvement

► Iran congratulated the Houthis on their achievements following their advances on the western coast of Yemen and in the Bab al-Mandeb Strait:

- ◆ Mohammad Mokhber, advisor and aide to Iran's Supreme Leader, said that the Houthis' “great victory” had once again demonstrated that security is not a commodity that can be purchased. He added that Iran's strength in the Strait of Hormuz and the independent will of the “resistance forces” had brought the United States and its allies to a dead end at both the tactical and strategic levels, and that the citizens of the United States and its allies are the ones paying the price for Trump's ambitions and the economic crisis (Mohammad Mokhber's X account, September 11, 2026).
- ◆ Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref also expressed joy over the “victories of the heroic people of Yemen.” He called on the rulers of the region to act wisely, free themselves from [external] dependence, and unite under the banner of Islam. He added that the establishment of a powerful Islamic economic and political bloc, while adhering to the principles of good neighborliness and regional solidarity, would guarantee the interests of the Islamic nation (Mohammad Reza Aref's X account, September 11, 2026).
- ◆ IRGC spokesman Hossein Mohabi said that the victories of Ansar Allah [the Houthis] on the western coast are “the story of a divine victory and the fruit of years of steadfastness on the most difficult battlefields” (Hossein Mohabi's X account, September 12, 2026).



IRGC spokesman (Tasnim, September 12, 2026)

► “Sources in the Yemeni government,” “Iranian sources,” and “a regional official briefed by Tehran” said that the IRGC had provided operational guidance for the campaign conducted by the Houthis as part of their takeover of the city of Mocha in southwestern Yemen. “Two Iranian sources” claimed that Iran had instructed the Houthis to step up their attacks against Saudi Arabia and had promised funding, weapons, and senior officers to assist them in the campaign. “A third Iranian source” said that Iran had held several meetings with the Houthis, but the decision to advance toward Mocha had been made by the Houthis, not Iran. “Five Yemeni military sources,” relying, inter alia, on intercepted communications and testimony from prisoners, attributed the management of the campaign to Abdul Reza Shahlai of the Qods Force. According to the report, several senior IRGC commanders arrived in Yemen to oversee and command Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia (Reuters, September 10, 2026).

► In this context, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei denied any Iranian interference in matters related to Yemen. He noted that the Houthis make their own decisions in accordance with their interests. He also rejected claims that Iran had been involved in the attack on Saudi Arabia’s East-West oil pipeline, saying that these were false reports intended to increase tensions among the countries of the region (ISNA, September 14, 2026).

► Iranian Ambassador to Sana’a Ali Mohammad Rezaei met with Houthi Deputy Foreign Minister in Yemen Abdulwahid Abu Ras and congratulated him on the Houthis’ recent achievements on Yemen’s western coastal front. The sides discussed cooperation between Yemen and Iran and recent developments in the region. The Iranian Ambassador thanked Yemen for its support and assistance to Iran and the Axis of Resistance and stressed that his country stands by the Yemeni government and people in efforts to bring an end to the “aggression and siege” and achieve peace. Abu Ras reiterated the steadfastness of the Yemeni people and the full solidarity of the Yemeni government

and people with the Islamic Republic and the Iranian people in the “struggle against the United States and Israel” (Tasnim, September 13, 2026).



Meeting between the Iranian Ambassador to Yemen and the Houthi Deputy Foreign Minister (Tasnim, September 13, 2026)

Iranian Involvement in Iraq

► Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi spoke with his Iraqi counterpart, Fuad Hussein, and discussed bilateral relations and developments in the region. The two ministers stressed the need to continue coordination to maintain stability and security along the shared border between the two countries and the importance of preventing escalation and an expansion of the cycle of confrontations in the region (Tasnim, September 13, 2026).

► President of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan in Iraq Bafel Talabani visited Tehran and met with senior Iranian officials, including Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, Majles Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, and advisor to Iran’s Supreme Leader Ali Akbar Velayati. President Pezeshkian told Talabani that the United States and Israel seek to weaken the capabilities of the countries of the region and exploit their resources and natural wealth by creating disputes and conflicts among the peoples of the region. Therefore, he said, the causes of instability and disputes should be reduced by increasing cooperation and dialogue. He noted that Iran expects all sides to adhere to the principles of good neighborliness and refrain from excessive demands and improper conduct. He also stressed the need to develop relations between Iran and the Kurdistan Region to promote prosperity and development in the border areas between the two countries (Tabnak, September 16, 2026).

► During the meeting, Araghchi referred to the good relations between Iran and the Iraqi government, the Iraqi people, and the Kurdistan Region. He stressed the considerable potential of the border areas between the two countries and described the future of relations between Iran and Iraq, particularly with the Kurdistan Region, as positive and promising. He also stressed Iran’s readiness to deepen and expand its relations with the Kurdistan Region, focusing on expanding economic and commercial ties, improving security coordination along the shared border, and

combating terrorism. Araghchi further stressed the need to expand cooperation to maintain border security in accordance with the security understandings between the countries. Talabani stressed the need for close cooperation between the two countries to implement their security agreement and disarm terrorist groups that undermine their security. He noted that Iraq and the Kurdistan Region would never allow the country's territory to become a haven for elements seeking to undermine the security of regional countries, particularly Iran's security (Iranian Foreign Ministry Telegram channel, September 15, 2026). Majles Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf stressed the need to expand security and economic relations between Iraq's Kurdistan Region and Iran to thwart US and Israeli intentions to carry out security and military operations against Iran and create disputes among neighboring countries, particularly between Iran and Iraq (snn.ir, September 15, 2026).



**Meeting between the Iranian Foreign Minister and the President of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
(Iranian Foreign Ministry Telegram channel, September 15, 2026)**

Pro-Iranian Militias in Iraq

- The Saudi Foreign Ministry alleged that the damage to the East-West oil pipeline had been caused by several drones launched from Iraqi territory. The statement said that, in light of a request by Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi to allow the Iraqi government to take measures to prevent similar attacks, Saudi Arabia had decided not to respond to the attacks at this stage (Saudi Foreign Ministry X account, September 12, 2026).
- The Iraqi government confirmed that Iraqi security forces had seized, inside the country, the launcher from which the missiles targeting the Saudi oil pipeline had been fired. "Senior Iraqi officials" said that efforts were underway in the field and within the intelligence agencies to identify those responsible for the launch, and that the dismissals of senior Iraqi security officials following the incident demonstrated that Iraq would neither tolerate nor permit any act of aggression from its territory (Iraqi News Agency, September 13, 2026). Following the attack, Iraq closed several crossings on the border with Iran and agreed to an Iranian proposal to conduct a joint investigation into the location of drone launch sites near the Iraq-Iran border (Tabnak, September 12, 2026).

► The Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella organization comprising the country’s pro-Iranian militias, denied accusations that the militias were responsible for the attack on “vital Saudi facilities” and condemned the Iraqi government, which it claimed had hastened to adopt those accusations without credible evidence. The organization stressed that the accusations were merely a diversion of attention and a failed attempt to cover up the “defeats” suffered by Saudi forces and their “proxies” in Yemen (Islamic Resistance in Iraq Telegram channel, September 12, 2026).

Syria

► The Islamic Resistance Front in Syria – Possessors of Might (Uli al-Ba’s, UAB) responded to a visit by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the summit of Mount Hermon. The militia claimed that the visit exposed the “falsehood and hypocrisy” of the Syrian regime, which remained silent in the face of the “violation of the sovereignty” of Syria, which it purports to govern. The militia stressed that the peaks of Mount Hermon would remain Arab and Syrian and said that it is monitoring the “enemy” and making preparations that would uproot its presence (Islamic Resistance Front in Syria Telegram channel, September 9, 2026).