



Spotlight on Iran and the Shiite Axis

September 18 – 25, 2024

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Highlights¹

- ▶ Iran strongly condemned Israel's operations in Lebanon, including the detonation of the communications devices, the killing of Ibrahim Aqil, and the extensive airstrikes. However, at this stage, Iran refrains from committing to direct military involvement in the campaign alongside Hezbollah, focusing instead on diplomatic efforts. These efforts are being led by the president and foreign minister, who are actively participating in the UN General Assembly deliberations.
- ▶ Additional Iranian threats to avenge Ismail Haniyeh's death: The Iranian General Staff warned Israel and the United States that it intends to avenge Haniyeh's death, and the head of the Supreme Leader's office stated that Iran's response is expected soon.
- ▶ Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei said that if the Islamic nation used its internal power, it could remove Israel from the heart of the Muslim community. Iranian President Pezeshkian used his speech at the UN General Assembly to accuse Israel of "genocide" and "crimes against humanity."
- ▶ Iran is reportedly mediating talks between Russia and the Houthis over a shipment of anti-ship missiles that could increase the threat to vessels in the Red Sea.
- ▶ The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed responsibility for 13 drone and cruise missile attacks against targets in Israel this past week, five of them in one day. The Israeli Air Force fighter jets and air defense units intercepted most of the launches. Three drones exploded in the Golan Heights and the Arava. There were no casualties.
- ▶ The pro-Iranian Shiite militias also announced that they would assist Hezbollah with a shipment of fighters and weapons in the event of an Israeli land invasion of southern Lebanon.

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

- ▶ The militias in Iraq stepped up their security measures following the explosion of Hezbollah's communications devices. At least 40 Houthi fighters were reportedly killed or wounded in the series of explosions in Lebanon.
- ▶ A senior security advisor to Kata'ib Hezbollah in Iraq was killed in an attack attributed to Israel in Syria.
- ▶ Senior Houthi officials threatened that they would continue launching rockets into Israeli territory, saying they are prepared for a long confrontation.

Iranian involvement in the Palestinian arena

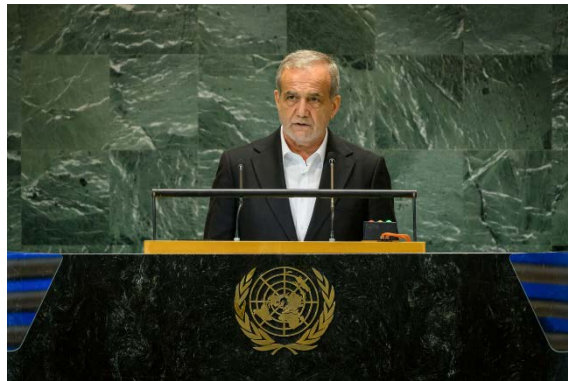
- ▶ Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, during a meeting with senior regime officials and ambassadors of Muslim countries on the occasion of Muslim Unity Week, said that if the Islamic nation harnessed its internal strength, it could remove the “Zionist regime” from the heart of the Muslim world. He further urged Muslim countries to sever economic ties with the “criminal terrorist gang ruling Palestine,” reduce political relations with it, intensify media attacks against it, and make it unequivocally clear that they stand with the Palestinian people (ISNA, September 21, 2024).



The Iranian Supreme Leader at a meeting in Tehran (ISNA, September 21, 2024)

- ▶ Supreme Leader Khamenei said in a speech delivered on the occasion of Holy Defense Week, attended by the country's security leadership, that “Palestine must return to its owners, and the Sharia commandment and duty of all Muslims is to return the al-Aqsa Mosque to its owners.” According to him, those who help the Palestinians are also involved in “jihad.” Hezbollah, having stood by the Gaza Strip, is also involved in “jihad.” He expressed confidence that “the final victory in this battle will belong to the resistance front and Hezbollah,” claiming Israel is targeting women, children, hospitals, and schools as it tries to pretend to have the upper hand. Referring to the Israeli killings of senior Hezbollah commanders, Khamenei said that “this is not damage that will destroy the organization” (SNN.IR, September 25, 2024).

► Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, in his speech to the UN General Assembly, said Israel is “committing genocide under the guise of self-defense and even murdered our guests on Iranian territory.” He added that Israel’s “terrorism” cannot go unanswered, noting that “over the past year, the world has witnessed its true nature and crimes against humanity.” He called on the international community to stop the violence and achieve a permanent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. Pezeshkian also claimed that Tehran was only acting in self-defense and that it wanted “peace for everyone, and is not looking for war” (IRNA, September 24, 2024).



Pezeshkian speaking at the UN (IRNA, September 24, 2024)

- The General Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces issued a statement promising revenge for the killing of Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran. The announcement warned Israel and the United States that just as Iran avenged the deaths of Qods Force commander Qassem Soleimani and Hassan Mahdavi, IRGC commander in Syria and Lebanon, the passage of time does not affect its desire to avenge Haniyeh’s death. It added that in light of the failure of international institutions, especially the UN, to withstand the continuation of Israel’s “crimes” with US support, Muslim countries should enhance their deterrent power through unity (Tasnim, September 19, 2024).
- Mohammad Mohammadi Golpayegani, head of the Iranian leader’s office, said that Iran’s response to Haniyeh’s killing is expected soon (IRNA, September 20, 2024).
- Mohammad-Reza Naqdi, head of the IRGC’s coordination division, said that Iran’s response against the “Zionist regime” would exceed expectations and that the end of Israel had to come. He noted that the peoples’ patience had run out and that launching a few missiles could no longer suffice, but that the “Zionist regime” had to be completely wiped off the face of the earth (Jamaran, September 21, 2024).



Mohammad-Reza Naqdi (Jamaran, September 21, 2024)

► A Jewish-Israeli businessman was arrested in Israel in August 2024 on suspicion of committing security offenses involving ties with Iranian regime intelligence officials to assassinate senior Israeli officials. The defendant was twice smuggled into Iran and received payment to target senior Israeli officials, including Prime Minister Netanyahu, Defense Minister Gallant, ISA chief Bar, and former Prime Minister Bennett, in revenge for the killing of Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran (Israeli media, September 19, 2024).

Iranian involvement in Lebanon and Syria

► At a cabinet meeting, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian referred to the explosion of Hezbollah’s communications devices in Lebanon, saying the incident was a shame for Western countries, especially the United States, which did not shy away from any means to advance its “inhuman” goals.² He noted that the use of means designed to improve comfort and human welfare for assassinations attests to the collapse of humanity. Pezeshkian added that the incident proves once again that Western countries and the United States fully support the “crimes,” killings, and assassinations of the “Zionist regime,” and that the way to remedy the situation and cut off the chain of crimes committed by the “Zionist regime” and its supporters against the Palestinians and the Islamic world is through Muslim unity (ISNA, September 18, 2024).

For further information, see the ITIC's study from September 20, 2024, "[Hezbollah Communications² Devices Explode](#)"



**Iran's president visits wounded Lebanese who were transferred to Iran for medical treatment
(Tasnim, September 20, 2024)**

► Iran's ambassador to Lebanon, Mojtaba Amani, who was wounded in the series of explosions in Lebanon on September 17, 2024, and transferred to Iran for treatment, wrote that he was honored that his blood had “merged with the blood of the wounded members of the Lebanese people” following what he described as an “alarming terrorist crime against Lebanon.” He added that Lebanon was the country that had stood firm since the first day of the campaign in the Gaza Strip (Mojtaba Amani's X account, September 18, 2024). Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi visited Amani in a hospital in Tehran and was informed that the ambassador would soon be able to return to work in Beirut (Mehr, September 19, 2024).

► IRGC commander Hossein Salami sent a letter to Hezbollah secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah stressing that the “resistance front” would soon respond decisively to the “crimes of the Zionist regime” stemming from its failures. Salami noted that Israel's security, intelligence, and military foundations had been undermined over the past year, and that Israel is unable to withstand direct confrontation. According to him, it is committing these “crimes” in an attempt to delay its collapse and mask its defeat, but this, he argued, only marks another significant failure. He added that Israel had not achieved any of the goals of the war in the Gaza Strip despite the support of Western governments and that it would achieve nothing by detonating pagars and electronic devices against women, men, and children in Lebanon (Tasnim, September 19, 2024).



IRGC commander Hossein Salami visits wounded Lebanese in Iran (Khabar Online, September 19, 2024)

- ▶ Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also sent a letter to Nasrallah following the killing of Ibrahim Aqil in Beirut.³ He expressed his commitment to making the voices of the Palestinian and Lebanese people heard at the UN General Assembly, condemning Israel for violating international law and endangering peace and security in the region and the world. He stressed that the struggle and the “resistance” against Israel would continue until the liberation of the Palestinian people from the occupation (Khabar Online, September 21, 2024).
- ▶ Arriving at the UN General Assembly in New York, Araghchi said Israel was striving to expand tensions and war in the region but would not achieve its goals. He noted that the “crimes of the Zionist regime,” especially in recent days, would be the focus of his talks at the UN General Assembly and that Iran was closely monitoring Israel’s “terrorist crimes.” He also said the killing of Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran would not go unanswered (Tasnim, September 21, 2024).
- ▶ Foreign Minister Araghchi said in an interview with Iranian television that Israel believes it can get out of the impasse it is trapped in by expanding the war and dragging others, especially the United States and Iran. He noted that Iran is fully aware of it and would not fall into this trap. He also said Israel was caught in a swamp in the Gaza Strip and had not succeeded in realizing its goal of eliminating Hamas even after a year of war against a guerrilla group in a small area (Mehr, September 23, 2024).

For further details, see the ITIC's study from September 23, 2024, “[Reactions to the Elimination of Ibrahim Aqil and the Top Command of the Radwan Force](#)”³



Iranian Foreign Minister Araghchi (Mehr, September 23, 2024)

- ▶ Iranian Foreign Minister Araghchi told reporters in New York that Iran would not remain indifferent to Israel’s recent attack on Lebanon and would comprehensively support Lebanon. He denied the statements attributed to President Pezeshkian in a conversation with American journalists in New York about Iran’s willingness to reduce tensions with Israel. According to Araghchi, the president condemned Israel’s “crimes” and its attack on Lebanon (IRNA, September 23, 2024).
- ▶ Iran’s President Pezeshkian said Lebanon must not be allowed to become another Gaza Strip under Israeli control. He emphasized Hezbollah could not stand alone against Israel, a country armed with advanced weapon systems and supported and equipped by Western countries. He warned that if international organizations failed to restrain Israel, Iran would take action accordingly (CNN, September 24, 2024). Subsequently, Foreign Minister Araghchi said that Hezbollah’s ability to defend Lebanon against any attack should not be underestimated, stressing that the organization could completely destroy the bases and settlements of the “Israeli enemy.” He added that this does not absolve Arab and Islamic countries from their responsibility to confront the threat posed by Israel (Abbas Araghchi’s X account, September 25, 2024).
- ▶ The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman strongly condemned the “extensive airstrikes by the Zionist regime” in southern Lebanon and criticized the silence and even support of the United States and some of Israel’s Western supporters for the “crimes of the Zionist regime.” He warned of the consequences of the “new adventure of the Zionists” and called for immediate action by the UN Security Council to stop Israel’s “crimes” (Iranian Foreign Ministry website, September 23, 2024).
- ▶ Mohammad-Reza Gharaei Ashtiani, deputy chief of staff of the Iranian armed forces, said at a ceremony marking Holy Defense Week, commemorating the Iran-Iraq war, that Israel’s operation in Lebanon not only failed to achieve its objectives but also worsened conditions for

Israel. He emphasized that both the United States and Israel are fully aware that Iran's defensive capabilities and military power could alter the outcome of any potential scenario or attack against it (ISNA, September 21, 2024).

► The head of the Iranian Pilgrimage Organization, Seyyed Abbas Hosseini, announced the suspension of the travel of Iranian citizens to Shiite holy sites in Syria for security reasons. He noted that the only Iranian airline flying to Syria at this stage is Mahan Air, which operates flights to Latakia, and that the resumption of flights of Iranian pilgrims would be possible only when conditions improved (ISNA, September 21, 2024).

Iranian involvement in Iraq and Yemen

► During Qods Force commander Esmail Qaani's visit to Iraq last week, he reportedly urged the leaders of the pro-Iranian Shiite camp (the "coordination framework"), with whom he met, to tone down their criticism of Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia' al-Sudani and avoid undermining him in light of accusations of his alleged involvement in spying on senior Iraqi officials and politicians. Qaani noted that maintaining stability in Iraq is of paramount importance amid rising regional tensions (Reuters, September 24, 2024).

► "Three Western and regional sources" claimed that Iran was mediating secret talks between Russia and the Houthis regarding the possibility of transferring Russian Yakhont anti-ship missiles to Yemen. "Seven sources" noted that Russia had not yet decided whether to transfer the missiles, which could improve the Houthis' capabilities to hit commercial vessels in the Red Sea and intensify the threat against American and European warships operating in the region (Reuters, September 24, 2024).

Activities of the Shiite militias

Iraq

Militia attacks against Israel

► This past week, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed responsibility for 13 attacks against targets in Israel, including five attacks on September 22, 2024, the highest daily number since the beginning of the war in the Gaza Strip. Eleven of the airstrikes were carried out using UAVs, and two others were carried out by al-Arqaab cruise missiles (Islamic Resistance in Iraq Telegram channel, September 18-25, 2024). In seven of the cases, IDF fighter jets and air defense units shot down UAVs and cruise missiles launched from Iraq, most of them in the southern Golan Heights. In addition, two drones fell in open areas in the Golan Heights, and

another hit an empty building in the Arava. There were no casualties (IDF Spokesperson and Israeli media, September 17-25, 2024).



Right: Two al-Arqaab cruise missiles being launched (Islamic Resistance in Iraq Telegram channel, September 22, 2024). Left: Al-Arfad drones being launched (Islamic Resistance in Iraq Telegram channel, September 24, 2024)

- ▶ Hussein al-Mousawi, spokesman for the Nujaba Movement, claimed that the militia had managed to achieve several “significant” hits deep inside Israeli territory and that “important targets” of Israel had been destroyed, without specifying them. He added that the United States and Israel were unable to determine the movement’s military capabilities (al-Amid Telegram channel, September 22, 2024).
- ▶ In view of the increasing attacks of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq against Israel and Israeli attacks against Hezbollah in Lebanon, Shiite coordination committee member Rahim al-Aboudi said there was a high probability of an Israeli attack in Iraq. According to him, with the airstrikes in Lebanon, and after Israel has already attacked the port of al-Hudaydah in Yemen, it is possible that “the next wave will be in Iraq” (Al-Araby al-Jadeed, September 19, 2024). In this context, an “Iraqi government source” reported that the government had instructed the Iraqi Army headquarters to prepare to deal with any aerial vehicle that penetrates Iraqi airspace (ALYMENET Telegram channel, September 23, 2024).
- ▶ Qais al-Khazali, secretary-general of the Asa'ib Ahl al-Haqq militia, said that the fighting in the Gaza Strip and the “occupied Palestinian territories” belonged to the entire Islamic nation and that everyone had to take part in it. He also claimed that the “axis of resistance” was about to become a central factor in changing the balance of power in the near future, stressing that “the victory of the resistance is inevitable, and it will not be long before it is completely achieved” (al-Masirah, September 19, 2024).

The deployment of the militias in Iraq in view of the escalation of fighting on Israel's northern border

- ▶ “Exclusive sources” reported that Iraqi militia leaders and representatives had gathered in Baghdad to discuss the situation in Lebanon amid Israeli airstrikes. According to the sources, it was agreed to support Hezbollah’s war effort in terms of manpower and ammunition, and to enter directly into the campaign alongside Hezbollah in the event of a possible ground invasion by Israel. It was also agreed that the militias would continue to escalate their operations “from afar” by launching missiles and drones from the territories of Iraq and Syria. They will also expand the scope of the confrontation against any side supporting the “Zionist entity,” especially against the American bases in Syria and Iraq (Al-Araby al-Jadeed, September 23, 2024).
- ▶ Akram al-Kaabi, secretary-general of the Nujaba Movement, threatened that the militia would act against Israeli communities in all of “Palestine,” saying that the Islamic Resistance in Iraq was prepared to use the latest weapons, missiles and, rockets (Taghreedat al-Hashd Telegram channel, September 18, 2024).
- ▶ Kata’ib Sayyid al-Shuhada secretary-general Abu Alaa al-Wala’i said in a message to Hezbollah secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah that the “resistance” in Iraq was waiting for an order to send an “Iraqi human flood” that would fill and man the borders of Lebanon and its positions. He also stressed that “if Hezbollah loses a thousand fighters, we will provide it with a hundred thousand fighters to fight the Israeli occupation” (Abu Alaa al-Wala’i’s Telegram channel, September 20, 2024).
- ▶ Due to the escalation in Israeli attacks against Hezbollah, most of the leaders of the pro-Iranian militias left the city of al-Mayadeen in eastern Syria and moved to the Qusayr area in Homs Governorate before continuing towards Lebanon. At the same time, several military sites of the militias in the city of al-Mayadeen were reportedly evacuated (Deir ez-Zor24, September 24, 2024).
- ▶ According to reports, 250 operatives from the Iraqi militias were sent to the southern Lebanon area to join Hezbollah in possible fighting against Israel. It was also noted that the operatives came with a lot of fighting equipment and funds to support Hezbollah’s fight against Israel (raad_arabi X account, September 18, 2024).
- ▶ The office of Iraq’s top Shiite cleric leader and Shiite supreme religious authority, Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, called for every possible effort to be made “to immediately stop the ongoing

Israeli aggression, defend the Lebanese people, and ensure their humanitarian needs” (Shafaq News, September 23, 2024). The Shiite militias expressed support:

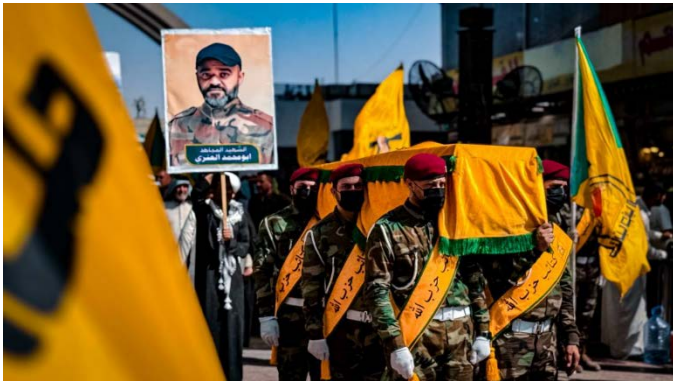
- ◆ Falih al-Fayyad, chairman of the Popular Mobilization (the umbrella organization of pro-Iranian militias in Iraq), said the organization would provide Lebanon with all the necessary medical and humanitarian assistance and called on all Iraqi bodies to do so, inter alia in coordination with the Iraqi government (Popular Mobilization Telegram channel, September 23, 2024).
- ◆ Asa'ib Ahl al-Haqq secretary-general Qais al-Khazali called for humanitarian aid and donations to Lebanon “to emphasize our ties and solidarity with the Lebanese people and with our brothers in the Hezbollah Islamic resistance” (Qais al-Khazali’s X account, September 23, 2024).
- ◆ Nazem al-Saeedi, chairman of the planning council of the Nujaba movement, called on the Islamic Resistance in Iraq to respond to al-Sistani’s call to provide logistical support to Lebanon and its “resistance” (Nujaba Telegram channel, September 23, 2024).

The deployment of the militias following the explosions of Hezbollah’s communications devices

- ▶ Popular Mobilization commander Abu Fadak reportedly ordered all pro-Iranian militia operatives in Iraq to turn off their communications devices and bury them one-meter-deep in the ground and not use them because they are similar to those of Hezbollah (IraqiWazir X account, September 17, 2024).
- ▶ Kata’ib Sayyid al-Shuhada spokesman Kadhim al-Fartousi said that although the situation in Iraq was different from that of Lebanon, the “resistance” organizations had taken preventive measures so that the events would not recur (Iran International, September 20, 2024).
- ▶ Pro-Iranian militias in Iraq have reportedly ordered sweeping inspections of electronic devices as they “rethink how to protect their communications.” According to the report, the militias in Iraq are examining equipment and issuing new guidelines for the use of personal devices by their operatives. A “senior member” of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq noted that the “resistance” exercises caution regarding the use of electronic devices, fully aware that such tools are frequently utilized for surveillance and eavesdropping.” He added that fighters are prohibited from using smartphones and instead rely on "basic" phones, which are only activated when necessary. Moreover, militia leaders communicate via landline connections or hand-delivered paper notes (The Washington Post, September 22, 2024).

Senior Kata'ib Hezbollah operative killed in an attack attributed to Israel in Syria

► On September 20, 2024, Kata'ib Hezbollah in Iraq announced that Abu Haidar al-Khafaji, who served as security advisor to the militia in Damascus, had been killed in a “Zionist attack.” According to the militia’s announcement, he was involved in fighting the “Wahhabi infidel gangs” (i.e., ISIS) on Syrian soil and was among the defenders of the al-Sayyida Zaynab temple in Damascus when the “gangs” tried to target him (Kata'ib Hezbollah official website, September 20, 2024). Thousands attended al-Khafaji’s funeral, which started from the mosque on Palestine Street in Baghdad and moved to the city of al-Hillah, south of Baghdad (Saberin News Telegram channel, September 22-23, 2024).



Right: Abu Haidar al-Khafaji (Kaf Telegram channel, September 20, 2024). Left: Kata'ib Hezbollah operatives carrying al-Khafaji’s coffin (Saberin News Telegram channel, September 23, 2024)

Yemen

Casualties among Houthi fighters in the explosions in Lebanon

► A Houthi operative in Lebanon reportedly posted a video in which he said that he was wounded in the explosion of Hezbollah’s pagers in Lebanon. According to him, around 40 Houthi operatives were killed or wounded in the explosions (Shafaq News, September 19, 2024). According to another report published a day before the explosions, Houthi fighters were staying with Hezbollah operatives in southern Lebanon as part of preparations for the possibility of an Israeli land invasion (Lebanon Files, September 16, 2024).

Houthi condemnations of escalation in Lebanon

► “Houthi movement sources” reported that operational coordination with the “resistance” in Iraq and Lebanon continued. According to the sources, the response to the Israeli attacks against Lebanon will not be limited only to Hezbollah but will come from other fronts of the “axis of resistance,” including Yemen (al-Akhbar, September 24, 2024).

- ▶The Houthi Foreign Ministry warned the “Zionist entity” against continuing its “aggression” against Lebanon. According to an announcement issued by the ministry, the goal of the “Zionist entity” in the escalation in Lebanon is to escape its defeat in the Gaza Strip so that it can talk about a fake victory and drag the region into all-out war (Shabakat Sadid Telegram channel, September 22, 2024).
- ▶Houthi movement spokesman Mohammed Abdeslam condemned the “aggression of the Zionist enemy” against Lebanon. He said that the “ongoing crimes of the Zionists” would not have continued without the backing of the Americans, who provide the “criminal entity” with means of “killing and genocide.” Abdeslam stressed Yemen’s support for Lebanon and the “resistance” and called on Arab and Islamic countries to stop remaining silent and stand by the interests of the nation by supporting the Palestinian cause and the “resistance” movements in “Palestine” and Lebanon (Mohammed Abdeslam’s X account, September 23, 2024).
- ▶The Houthi “change and development” government issued a statement condemning the “brutal aggression” of the “Israeli enemy” forces against Lebanon, which has led to hundreds of casualties among the country’s citizens. “The Israeli aggression clearly violates international law and the sovereignty of Lebanon and is a reminder of the disregard for human life in Palestine and Lebanon by the occupation, which is backed by the US and the UK. We demand that the UN and its relevant agencies provide immediate humanitarian assistance to the victims of this aggression.” (al-Masirah, September 23, 2024).
- ▶The Houthi political bureau condemned the ongoing “genocide” perpetrated by the “Zionist enemy” against the citizens of Lebanon, thereby violating the sovereignty of the state, with American support. The “arrogance of the Zionists” reportedly emphasizes the success of Hezbollah’s attacks, which reached deep inside the entity and sensitive facilities in Haifa and beyond. The statement added that Yemen and its armed forces “continue to assist out of religious and humanitarian responsibility. Our blood is one, we have one enemy, and our fate is one” (al-Masirah, September 23, 2024).
- ▶Hezam al-Asad, a member of the Houthi political council, issued a post in Hebrew about the escalation of the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah. The post reads, “Netanyahu, after having failed in Gaza, is trying to hide his defeat by attacking civilians and murdering children in Lebanon. But reality today will impose itself; He promised to return the settlers to the north, but today he is evacuating the settlers from Haifa and the center. The safest solution for Jews

in occupied Palestine is to leave via Lod Airport. We are in Yemen.” (Hezam al-Asad’s X account, September 24, 2024).

◀ Muhammad al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthi political bureau, noted that despite the large casualties among military commanders and civilians in the clashes in the Gaza Strip and southern Lebanon, these losses were very few compared to “our losses as a result of internal wars ignited by the enemy itself.” He added that “the biggest blow we will deal to the enemy is the unification of the ranks in Yemen, Syria, and Iraq” (Mohammad al-Bukhaiti’s X account, September 21, 2024).

Houthi threats against Israel

▶ Houthi leader Abd al-Malik al-Houthi said in a speech marking the September 21 Revolution that the Houthis had not stopped supporting the Palestinians despite the economic and humanitarian pressure exerted on them. Referring to the launch of the ballistic missile at Israel’s center on September 15, 2024, al-Houthi said the launch was “a major operation that affected and shook enemy soil.” According to him, the missile penetrated all of Israel’s defense systems, and therefore this is an important achievement in the context of the “requirements of the fifth stage” (al-Masirah, September 21, 2024).

▶ Houthi Defense Minister Mohammad al-Atifi stressed Yemen’s “steadfastness regarding the Palestinian issue, al-Aqsa Mosque, and support for the oppressed in the Gaza Strip.” According to him, the army has prepared well to take part in a long-term confrontation against the “violent Zionist entity” and those who support it. He warned that Yemen’s military and technological production system was undergoing great development and that the “forces of aggression and mercenaries” should know that “our hands will hit you wherever you are” (Houthi forces’ media arm X account, September 19, 2024).

▶ In another statement issued by Defense Minister al-Atifi, he threatened that the Houthis would continue to “inflict painful blows deep inside the Zionist enemy,” following the launch of the drone to Tel Aviv on July 19, 2024, and the launches to Eilat since the beginning of the fighting. He added that the Houthis would continue to launch “convoys” of ballistic missiles, hypersonic missiles, cruise missiles, and drones. Al-Atifi noted that they are engaged in an open, sensitive, and long war and that they take into account all the possibilities in this conflict and prepare the “Zionist enemy” for many surprises (Houthi forces’ media arm X account, September 22, 2024).

► Hossein al-Azi, a member of the Houthi political bureau, said the war was becoming more intense and that it was a prelude to great changes that would certainly benefit the oppressed on earth. He claimed that the “war against the Zionists” would explode on a broader scale but it would last at most two years, and then a “new and different era” would be born (Hussein al-Azi’s X account, September 23, 2024).

Foiling Houthi activity

► The US Central Command (CENTCOM) reported that during the past week, its forces destroyed two Houthi UAVs over the Red Sea (CENTCOM X account, September 18-25, 2024).