



Spotlight on Iran and the Shiite Axis

September 10—17, 2025

Editor: Dr. Raz Zimmt



Highlights¹

- ▶ Iran took advantage of the Israeli attack against the Hamas leadership in Doha to intensify efforts to mobilize the Arab and Islamic world against Israel. During the emergency Arab-Islamic summit in Qatar, Iran's President and foreign minister stressed that statements and condemnation are not enough and that practical steps against Israel are needed.
- ▶ The Iranian foreign minister met with his Lebanese counterpart and claimed that Iran is not interfering in Lebanon's internal affairs and that the decision to disarm Hezbollah is up to the organization and the Lebanese government.
- ▶ The IDF attacked Houthi military targets in Sana'a and Al-Jawf, as well as the port of Hodeidah, which is used for smuggling weapons from Iran. The Houthis claimed that dozens of people were killed in the attacks, many of them journalists, and threatened a broad response against Israel along with continued "support" for the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.
- ▶ The Houthis claimed responsibility for launching three ballistic missiles, including one with a cluster warhead, and seven drones against targets in Israel. The IDF Spokesperson confirmed two cases of intercepting drones and three interceptions of ballistic missiles.
- ▶ Kata'ib Hezbollah reportedly decided to release the Israeli-Russian researcher Elizabeth Tsurkov without compensation following growing pressure from the Iraqi government and the United States. A source in the militia claimed they gave up so as not to embarrass the government.
- ▶ The commander of Iran's Law Enforcement Forces visited Baghdad and met with the Iraqi interior minister and the chairman of the umbrella organization of the pro-Iranian Shiite militias.

Iran and the militias amid developments in the Palestinian arena

Iran

- ▶ Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian spoke with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and discussed with him the Israeli attack against the Hamas leadership in Doha. He noted that the

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

behavior of the “Zionist regime” indicates that it is not committed to any framework or any rules and launches an attack against any country at any time. He stressed the need for a unified and determined position on the part of the Muslim world to prevent the continuation of the “inhumane acts of this regime” against Muslim countries (Iranian President’s website, September 10, 2025).

► Ahead of his departure to the emergency summit of the leaders of Arab and Islamic countries in Doha, Iranian President Pezeshkian said that the “Zionist regime” had attacked most Islamic countries, from Lebanon and Syria to Qatar, Iran, Yemen, and Iraq, and is carrying out a “humanitarian catastrophe and genocide” in the Gaza Strip. He criticized the support of the United States and some European countries for Israel and expressed hope that the leaders of the Islamic countries would reach an agreement during the Doha summit and strengthen their unity in the face of Israel’s actions. He suggested using legal bodies and international organizations to deal with Israel’s “crimes” and stressed that Islamic countries could, through political, economic, cultural, and social unity, consider practical steps, including severing ties with Israel (Iranian President’s website, September 15, 2025).

► In his speech at the emergency conference in Doha, the Iranian President said that the Israeli attack on Qatar was intended to thwart diplomatic efforts to end the “genocide” in the Gaza Strip. He criticized the international community’s indifference to Israel’s activity in the Gaza Strip over the past two years, noting that the world is content with observation and empty statements of condemnation, while children are dying of hunger and more than 64,000 Palestinians have been killed. Pezeshkian stressed that words alone are not enough to stop the “genocide,” and that Israel must be isolated, its supply of weapons and funding cut off, and its leaders brought to trial. He noted that the attack in Doha proved that no Arab or Muslim country is protected from Israeli “aggression” and that Islamic countries must unite against it (Iranian President’s website, September 15, 2025).



The Iranian President at the summit in Doha (Iranian President's website, September 15, 2025)

► Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi spoke with Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani and discussed the Israeli attack in Doha. He described the attack as a “flagrant violation” of the fundamental principles of the UN Charter and international law and stressed the need for decisive action by the countries of the region and the international community in light of Israel’s ongoing flagrant violations of international norms. He stressed that the “Zionist regime” constitutes a real and immediate threat to regional and international peace and security, and that stopping the “crimes of the Zionist regime” requires unity and practical coordination among the countries of the region, including severing all economic and diplomatic ties with it (Iranian Foreign Ministry website, September 10, 2025). Araghchi also met with the Qatari foreign minister during the foreign ministers’ summit in Doha and stressed the need for effective and joint action by the Islamic world to confront the “aggression of the Zionist regime” against Muslim countries, stop the “genocide” in the Gaza Strip, and prosecute “representatives of the occupying regime.” During his visit to Doha, he also discussed developments in the Palestinian arena with his counterparts from Egypt, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, and Somalia (Iranian Foreign Ministry website, September 14, 2025).

► Abdolrahim Mousavi, the Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, spoke with Qatar’s Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defense Affairs, Saud bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, and discussed the Israeli attack in Doha. Mousavi strongly condemned the attack and said that Iran’s armed forces would not allow Qatar to stand alone against its enemies, especially the “criminal Zionist regime,” which he said was the main cause of tension and instability in the region. Mousavi added that the unreserved support of the West, and particularly the United States, for Israel’s “occupation, oppression, and killing” of the Palestinian people and its “aggression” against other countries in the region, which has intensified in recent years, is the main factor encouraging Israeli

“aggression.” According to him, the whole world knows very well that without the direct and indirect support of the West, “this criminal regime” would not be able to continue to exist (Tasnim, September 11, 2025).

The Houthis

► In his weekly speech, Abd al-Malik al-Houthi, the leader of the Houthi movement, referred to the Israeli attack against the Hamas leadership in Qatar, saying that it was “aggression against the Hamas negotiating delegation and against Qatari sovereignty.” He criticized the reactions of the Arab countries to the Israeli attacks and claimed that no Arab country that had normalized relations with Israel had announced the severance of relations with Israel following its actions in the Gaza Strip, Qatar, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen, even though the “aggression” against Qatar violated the dignity of all the Gulf states. Al-Houthi added that although the “aggression” had failed, it was “a significant violation and an important warning to all Arab and Islamic countries.” According to him, the “Israeli enemy” did not take into account Qatar’s role in the negotiations or its international and regional relations (*Al-Masirah*, September 11, 2025).

► Mohammad Ali al-Houthi, a member of the Houthis’ political bureau, said that the condemnation issued by the Arab-Islamic emergency summit in Doha following the Israeli attack was “boring” and would not lead to a solution. He stressed that this would not deter Israel and that any decision that does not determine that Israel is a “terrorist entity” is not a solution (Mohammad Ali al-Houthi’s X account, September 15, 2025).

Iran and the Lebanese arena

► Iranian Foreign Minister Araghchi said that the issue of Hezbollah’s weapons and its disarmament is an internal Lebanese matter, and that the Lebanese themselves must decide on it. He added that Hezbollah constitutes an important and inseparable part of Lebanon’s political structure, and that the organization itself had proposed holding national talks with the participation of all the sects and groups in the country to formulate a defensive strategy and reach a final conclusion on how to defend Lebanon. Araghchi stressed that Iran has always supported Hezbollah, but this does not mean interference in Lebanon’s internal affairs. According to him, the weapons of the “resistance” have so far succeeded in curbing Israel’s ambitions, and in the event of weakness, Israel’s audacity would increase, as has been evident in Syria. He further noted that Iran had warned Lebanon of this danger, but the decision regarding the course of action lies solely with the Lebanese themselves, and especially with Hezbollah (Iranian TV, September 11, 2025).

► Foreign Minister Araghchi met in Doha with his Lebanese counterpart, Yousef Raji, and discussed with him the situation in the region and Lebanon. Regarding the issue of disarming Hezbollah, Araghchi emphasized his country's commitment to respect Lebanon's sovereignty and refrain from interfering in its internal affairs (Lebanese foreign minister's X account, September 14, 2025).



The foreign ministers of Iran and Lebanon (Lebanese foreign minister's X account, September 14, 2025)

► Iranian President Pezeshkian met on the sidelines of the summit in Doha with Lebanese President Joseph Aoun. The Iranian President stressed that his country strives to expand cooperation and strengthen its relations with Lebanon and the rest of the countries of the region on the basis of mutual respect. The Lebanese President said that his country aspires to friendly relations with Iran and expressed hope that it would be possible to overcome any obstacle on the way to developing relations between the countries and expanding cooperation between them (Iranian President's website, September 15, 2025).



Meeting between the presidents of Iran and Lebanon in Doha (Iranian President's website, September 15, 2025)

► Majles Deputy Speaker Hamid-Reza Haji Babaei met in Beirut with Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri. The meeting was also attended by Deputy Chairman of the Iran-Lebanon Parliamentary Friendship Group, Abbas Golrou, and Majles Welfare Committee member Zahra Sadat Lajevardi. Haji

Babaei praised Berri's role in supporting the "resistance" and Shiite unity in Lebanon, saying that all Islamic Republic authorities emphasize the importance of Shiite unity in the current sensitive circumstances and are confident that Lebanon and the "resistance" movement will pass this sensitive stage peacefully. He condemned Israel's continued "occupation" of Lebanese territory and the IDF's continued attacks on the country. According to him, Israel's main policy is based on weakening its neighbors. In addition, the deputy speaker of the Majles criticized the United States and its policy in the region, noting that the Americans are willing to endanger the security of the entire region to ensure the security of the "Zionist regime." He added that all their plans are in line with "Netanyahu's criminal government." Berri expressed his appreciation to Iran and its leader for their support for Lebanon and the "resistance" and underscored the need for continued parliamentary cooperation between Iran and Lebanon in the face of the common threats (ISNA, September 10, 2025).



Nabih Berri with members of the Iranian Majles delegation (ISNA, September 10, 2025)

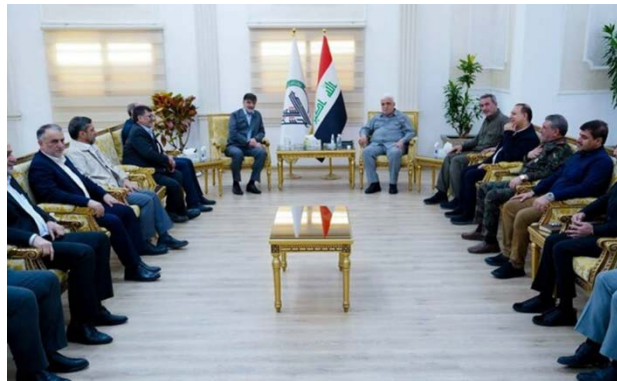
Iran and the Iraqi arena

► Iranian President Pezeshkian met on the sidelines of the Arab-Islamic summit in Doha with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia al-Sudani. The two discussed regional developments, including the Israeli attack on Qatar, and relations between the two countries. Pezeshkian stressed Iran's desire to expand cooperation and upgrade the level of relations with Iraq in all fields. He noted that achieving unity among the Islamic countries is the most effective way to deal with the "crimes of the Zionist regime" (Iranian President's website, September 15, 2025).



**Meeting of the President of Iran with the Prime Minister of Iraq
(Iranian President's website, September 15, 2025)**

► Ahmad-Reza Radan, the Commander of Iran's Law Enforcement Forces (LEF), arrived in Baghdad for an official visit and met with Faleh al-Fayyad, chairman of the Popular Mobilization Forces (the umbrella framework of the pro-Iranian Shiite militias). The two discussed ways to strengthen security cooperation between Iran and Iraq and mechanisms for expanding joint coordination to deal with security challenges. Al-Fayyad stressed the importance of upgrading the level of intelligence cooperation between the two countries to strengthen the security of the common borders and ensure their stability against any "possible terrorist threat." During his visit, Radan also met with Iraqi Interior Minister Abd al-Amir al-Shammari (ISNA, September 13, 2025).



The commander of Iran's Law Enforcement Forces meets with the chairman of the Popular Mobilization Forces (ISNA, September 13, 2025)

The Houthis in Yemen

The direct confrontation between the Houthis and Israel

► On September 10, 2025, Israeli Air Force fighter jets attacked Houthi military targets in Sana'a and al-Jawf, Yemen. According to the IDF, military camps, the headquarters of the Houthis' Military Information Department, and a fuel storage site were attacked. It was reported that the military camps were used by the Houthis to plan and carry out terrorist activities against Israel, and that the

headquarters of the Military Information Department was responsible for disseminating messages of incitement and propaganda in the media and leading the Houthis' propaganda and psychological terrorism efforts (IDF Spokesperson, September 10, 2025).

► The Houthis' military spokesman, Yahya Saria, claimed that the Houthi air defense systems had dealt with Israeli planes in Yemeni airspace, and that several surface-to-air missiles had been fired at the planes, and some of them had to leave before carrying out their attacks. In another statement, Saria denied the IDF's claims that military targets such as rocket launchers had been attacked. He claimed the attacks were aimed at "civilian targets," including the offices of local newspapers in which several journalists were killed (Yahya Saria's Telegram channel, September 10, 2025). A "senior Houthi military source" told Al-Mayadeen network that the "Israeli aggression" was directed only at "civilian targets," including the government center in Al-Jawf province. He added that the attack on the government center was "proof of the enemy's failure," and stressed that this "aggression" would not prevent the Houthis from continuing to support the Palestinians (*Al-Mayadeen*, September 10, 2025).



IDF airstrikes against the Houthis (*Al-Masirah*, September 10, 2025)

► The Houthi Ministry of Health reported that 46 people were killed and 165 others, including many women and children, were wounded in the attacks in Sana'a and in Al-Jawf province (*Al-Masirah*, September 11, 2025). The Houthi-affiliated newspapers *September 26* and *Al-Yaman* reported that 32 of their journalists were killed as a result of "the Israeli aggression" against the newspapers' headquarters in the capital, Sana'a. According to the announcement, the attacks by the "Israeli enemy" against media outlets and journalists are evidence of "bankruptcy and attempts to silence the voice of truth" (*Al-Masirah*, September 14, 2025).



Journalists who, according to the Houthis, were killed in IDF airstrikes

(*Al-Masirah*, September 14-15, 2025)

- A “well-informed military source” threatened that the “Israeli aggression” would push the Houthi forces to expand their bank of targets deep into the “entity” and change their operational tactics and attack several different cities in a single operation. He claimed that this would confuse the “enemy” and weaken its capabilities, especially its air defense capabilities. According to him, based on initial reactions in Sana’a, in response to the “aggression,” a large, combined military operation would be carried out, from the air and at sea, in which a large number of missiles and drones would be used. It was also noted that these operations have been planned since the Israeli attack against the Houthi government ministers on August 28, 2025 (*Al-Akhbar*, September 11, 2025).
- On September 16, 2025, Israeli Air Force planes attacked the port of Hodeidah, which, according to the IDF, is used to transport Iranian regime weapons used by the Houthis in attacks against Israel (IDF Spokesperson, September 16, 2025). Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saria claimed that the Houthi air defense forces “caused great confusion among the enemy planes and even forced some of them to withdraw from the airspace” (Yahya Saria’s Telegram channel, September 16, 2025). According to reports, a total of 12 airstrikes were carried out against three docks at the port of Hodeidah and against other infrastructure at the port (Houthi and Arab media, September 16, 2025).
- Senior Houthi figures condemned the Israeli attacks and threatened responses against the “aggression” alongside continued “support” for the Palestinians:
 - ◆ Mahdi al-Mashat, chairman of the Houthis’ Supreme Political Council, said after the attacks in Sana’a and al-Jawf that the “aggression” had failed and that all the “Zionists” must remain on alert, as the Houthis’ response is inevitable. According to him, the Israeli airstrikes give the Houthis a greater opportunity to respond with all their might (*Al-Masirah*, September 10, 2025).

- ◆ The deputy head of the Houthis' information bureau, Nasreddine Amer, said that no "Zionist aggression" would affect the actions of the Houthi forces. He said they would continue to support the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and respond to any "aggression" against the state (Nasreddine Amer's Telegram channel, September 10, 2025). After the attack on the port of Hodeidah, he accused the "enemy" of attacking civilian and economic infrastructure to exert pressure on the Yemeni people in order to dissuade them from continuing their support for the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip (Nasreddine Amer's Telegram channel, September 16, 2025).
- ◆ Hezam al-Asad, a member of the Houthis' political bureau, claimed that the "Zionist aggression" was directed at "civilian targets" and residential areas in the capital, Sana'a, as a "desperate and criminal attempt" to achieve a false media victory. He made it clear that they are firm and adhere to their position to support and defend the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip at any cost. He claimed that the Houthi air defense operations against the Israeli planes proved the "high readiness and high-quality development capability of the Yemeni Air Force" (Hezam al-Asad's X account, September 10, 2025).
- ◆ Mohammad al-Farah, a member of the Houthis' political bureau, said the attacks on the port of Hodeidah constitute a "war crime and a flagrant violation" of international law, in the shadow of American support and inaction by the UN. He added that the "cruel aggression of the Zionist enemy" against vital "civilian facilities" proves the "enemy's" hostility towards the Yemeni people and called on the Islamic nation to act "to stop the genocide of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and lift the siege" (Mohammad al-Farah's X account, September 16, 2025).
- In parallel with the Israeli attacks in Yemen, during the past week, Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saria claimed responsibility for six different waves of attacks using three ballistic missiles, one of which had a cluster warhead, and seven drones against various targets in southern Israel and in the "occupied Jaffa" area. According to Saria, all the attacks achieved their objectives (Yahya Saria's Telegram channel, September 10-17, 2025). The IDF Spokesperson reported two separate cases of intercepting a drone and three cases of intercepting ballistic missiles launched from Yemen (IDF Spokesperson, September 10-17, 2025). It was also reported that another missile fell on its way to Israel (Israeli media, September 17, 2025).
- The leader of the Houthi movement, Abd al-Malik al-Houthi, said in his weekly speech on September 11, 2025, that during the week, 38 missiles and drones were launched at Israel, with 23 of

the drones aimed at targets in Hadera, Jaffa, Ashdod, Ashkelon, the Negev and Eilat. He praised the “successful operation” that hit Ramon Airport on September 7, 2025, and said that another “important operation” was aimed at Ben Gurion Airport. He claimed that two attacks were also carried out against two merchant ships belonging to the “enemy” in the northern Red Sea (*Al-Masirah*, September 11, 2025).

► The Houthi Foreign Ministry has called on all foreign military navies to leave the Red Sea region to enhance security. The ministry said in a statement that Yemen was committed to the security of international shipping in the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, and that its actions are aimed at the “Israeli enemy” as a means of pressure to stop its “crimes” in the Gaza Strip. It was also said that the United States and Britain had turned the Red Sea into an arena of conflict and sought to establish alliances that are not connected to the interests of the peoples of the region (Saba News Agency, September 17, 2025).

US activity against the Houthis

► The US Department of the Treasury imposed sanctions on 32 individuals and entities, as well as on four vessels involved in the Houthis’ global fundraising, smuggling, and illicit procurement networks. It was noted that this is the Treasury’s most extensive imposition of sanctions against the Houthis to date. The Department of the Treasury clarified that the American administration will continue to apply maximum pressure against those who threaten the security of the United States and the region (US Department of the Treasury, September 11, 2025).

The pro-Iranian militias in Iraq

► “Iraqi sources” reported that the Kata’ib Hezbollah militia, which kidnapped Israeli-Russian researcher Elizabeth Tsurkov in March 2023, was convinced in early September 2025 that it had to get rid of her quickly, even as part of a disadvantageous deal. According to the report, the arrangements for the release of Tsurkov were complex and included communication between several militias and various security elements in Iraq, and her transfer through two different sites until she was picked up by Iraqi security services. It was also reported that Tsurkov was released following a “political blockade” and negotiations that had been underway intensively since August 2025 and following pressure from the Iraqi government and the United States, and that no compensation was given for her release from captivity. According to “various political sources,” contrary to Iranian reports, the release of Imad Amhaz, a senior Hezbollah naval officer who was

captured by IDF forces in northern Lebanon in November 2024, is not planned, and this is not known in Lebanon. “A political source in Iraq close to the pro-Iranian militias” said that the position on the Tsurkov affair has caused division among the pro-Iranian militias, to the point that Kata’ib Hezbollah “feel the bitterness of betrayal, even from militias loyal to Iran.” According to a source in Kata’ib Hezbollah, the militia had agreed to concede in favor of general security and in order not to embarrass the government and support it (*Asharq Al-Awsat*, September 12-13, 2025).