



Spotlight on Iran and the Shiite Axis

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Highlights¹

- ▶ Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi visited Lebanon and met with senior state officials and the Hezbollah secretary-general. He stressed the need to confront the ongoing IDF attacks in Lebanon and expressed Iran's support for Lebanon's sovereignty and for expanding cooperation between the two countries.
- ▶ Araghchi called on the Syrian government to refrain from moving closer to Israel amid the renewed security talks between the two countries.
- ▶ The leader of Kata'ib Hezbollah stated that the group has a "religious and moral duty" to stand by Iran and warned the United States that a war against Iran "is not a picnic."

Iran and the Lebanese Arena

▶ Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi arrived in Lebanon on January 8, 2026, amid tensions between the two countries and pressure on Hezbollah to disarm. Upon his arrival, Araghchi stated that the main purpose of his visit was to hold talks with senior Lebanese officials regarding regional developments and the challenges facing Lebanon and the region. He noted that the region is facing severe challenges and that the threats emanating from the "Zionist regime" have never been as serious as they are today. He further stressed that areas of Lebanese territory are still under Israeli "occupation" and that over the past year, Israel has repeatedly "violated" the ceasefire. He added that Iran is holding consultations with all countries in the region and that another objective of his visit is to promote relations between the two countries. According to him, trade volume between Iran and Lebanon exceeded \$110 million over the past year, and Tehran seeks to expand ties with Beirut based on mutual respect and shared interests (snn.ir, January 8, 2026). The following are the main points of the visit (Iranian Foreign Ministry Telegram channel, January 8–9, 2026):

- ◆ On the first day, Araghchi met with the Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Islamic Shiite Council in Lebanon, Sheikh Ali al-Khatib. Araghchi noted the historic role of the Shiites in Lebanon and stressed the importance of the council in promoting national unity in the country.

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

Regional developments were also discussed, as well as the need to continue efforts to maintain security and stability in the region in the face of the “ongoing aggression of the Zionist regime.”

◆ In his meeting with the Lebanese Minister of Economy and Trade, Amer Bisat, the two discussed ways to strengthen cooperation between the two countries in the fields of economy, trade, tourism, agriculture, science, and culture. Araghchi noted that renewing the activity of the Iran–Lebanon Joint Economic Committee would provide a foundation for strengthening bilateral trade relations and emphasized the importance of convening the committee as soon as possible.

◆ Araghchi later visited the tomb of former Hezbollah secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah. He stressed Iran’s support for Lebanon’s independence, territorial integrity, and its natural right to “resist” and defend itself against the “occupation and aggression of the Zionist regime.” He added that Iran seeks to strengthen and expand its relations with Lebanon in all fields within the framework of the shared interests of the two peoples (Iranian Foreign Ministry Telegram channel, January 8, 2026).



Araghchi's visit to Nasrallah's tomb (Iranian Foreign Ministry Telegram channel, January 8, 2026)

◆ On the second day of the visit, Araghchi met with his Lebanese counterpart, Youssef Rajji, and discussed bilateral relations. Araghchi stressed the need to strengthen consultations with Lebanon at all levels, based on mutual respect and shared interests, in light of the unprecedented threats to peace and security in the region posed by the “Zionist regime.” He also emphasized the need to preserve Lebanon’s independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity in the face of the “aggression of the Zionist regime” and destructive foreign interference. He added that decision-making regarding Lebanon’s domestic affairs and foreign policy is an internal Lebanese matter that should be determined on the basis of understanding and national dialogue among the relevant elements of Lebanese society.

◆ In his meeting with Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, Araghchi stressed Iran's commitment to expanding relations with Lebanon in all fields. He reiterated Iran's position of respect for Lebanon's national sovereignty and unity, referred to the continued "occupation" and repeated "violations" by Israel, and emphasized Iran's support for Lebanon in defending its sovereignty and stability. He also met with Prime Minister Nawaf Salam; Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri; and Lebanon's Sunni Mufti, Sheikh Abd al-Latif Derian. In his meeting with Hezbollah secretary-general Naim Qassem, Araghchi also stressed Tehran's readiness to strengthen its ties with Beirut (Al-Manar, January 9, 2026).



**Araghchi's meeting with the Lebanese president
(Iranian Foreign Ministry Telegram channel, January 9, 2026)**

Iran and the Palestinian Arena

► Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi met in Tehran with his Omani counterpart, Badr bin Hamad al-Busaidi. According to an Iranian Foreign Ministry statement, the two also discussed developments related to "occupied Palestine," the continuation of the "genocide perpetrated by the Zionist regime in the Gaza Strip," and the need for serious action by the international community and regional countries to stop the "crimes" against the Palestinian people (Tasnim, January 11, 2026).



Meeting of the Iranian and Omani foreign ministers (Tasnim, January 11, 2026)

Iran and the Militias amid Developments in Syria

► In a press conference in Lebanon, Araghchi addressed reports regarding progress in talks between Syria and Israel. He stated that it is important for Syrian officials to understand that the “Zionist regime” does not seek stability or calm in Syria and that any move toward rapprochement with Israel would help it achieve its malicious objectives in the country. He added that Iran supports Syria’s national unity and independence, opposes any move to partition the country, and demands an end to the “occupation” of Syrian territories (Tasnim, January 9, 2026).

► The Islamic Resistance Front in Syria – Possessors of Might (*Uli al-Baas*, or UAB) issued a “strong condemnation” of the “dubious alliances of the de facto authority (the Syrian regime) with the Zionist enemy.” In its statement, the organization accused the regime of “blatant betrayal” of the rights of the Syrian people and their hopes for a free and secure future. It further stated that it would maintain a firm stance against a regime that “sells the homeland in losing deals” and that it would not allow the Zionist enemy or such “treacherous regimes” to achieve their colonial objectives. The organization added that it would continue to act to liberate Syria from the hands of these “puppet regimes” (Islamic Resistance Front in Syria Telegram channel, January 7, 2026).

Iran and the Iraqi Arena

► Iran’s military attaché in Baghdad, Majid Gholipour, met with Iraq’s National Security Advisor, Qassem al-Araji. They discussed ways to continue cooperation in the fields of border control, prevention of smuggling, and maintaining security and stability in the region. At the same time, Iran’s ambassador to Baghdad, Mohammad Kazem Al-e Sadeq, conveyed a message from Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi to Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein (Tasnim, January 7, 2026).



The Iraqi National Security Advisor meets with the Iranian military attaché (Tasnim, January 7, 2026)

► Al-Araji also held a phone conversation with Iran’s Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Larijani, during which he stressed the need to prevent attempts by terrorist groups to infiltrate across the border between the two countries. It was reported that the two discussed regional

developments and focused on the importance of monitoring the shared border and strengthening coordination and cooperation (Iraqi News Agency, January 13, 2026).

Militias' support for the Iranian regime

- The secretary-general of Kata'ib Hezbollah, Abu Hussein al-Hamidawi, made it clear to the Iranian regime and its Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, that the militia stands by them in light of the protests against the regime. He added that the “head of the front of falsehood” continues preparations to attack Tehran and that, therefore, a “religious and moral duty” requires standing by the Iranian people. Al-Hamidawi also warned the United States that “a war against Iran is not a picnic – once the fire is ignited, it will not be extinguished” (Kata'ib Hezbollah Telegram channel, January 12, 2026).
- In this context, a “prominent leader among the Iraqi militias” stated that Iraq would take part in any action imposed on the “Axis of Resistance” and would act based on the “unity of purpose against the American occupation and the Israeli entity.” According to him, what is happening in Iran is part of an American-Israeli game aimed at “igniting the internal situation in Iran.” The “leader” stressed that attempts to weaken the regime are a “losing gamble” and that Iran is a resilient state (*Al-Akhbar*, January 12, 2026).