



Spotlight on Iran and the Shiite Axis

March 11-18, 2026

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Highlights¹

- ▶ As part of the military campaign in Lebanon, the IDF eliminated senior operatives acting on behalf of the IRGC. The Lebanese Foreign Ministry protested to Iran over the joint attacks with Hezbollah against Israel and denied that the four Qods Force operatives killed in an Israeli strike were diplomats.
- ▶ The Houthis have continued to emphasize that they are monitoring developments in the campaign involving Israel, the United States, and Iran, but have not yet intervened in the fighting.
- ▶ Pro-Iranian militias in Iraq continued attacks using missiles and drones against American bases and facilities in Iraq, Jordan, and the Gulf states. The military spokesman for Kata'ib Hezbollah was eliminated.
- ▶ In his first message, Iran's new Supreme Leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, emphasized Iran's support for the "Resistance Front" and declared it an integral part of the values of the Islamic Revolution.
- ▶ "World Jerusalem Day" rallies were held across Iran despite the military campaign. Senior Iranian officials used the events to stress Iran's commitment to the Palestinian cause and the destruction of the State of Israel.

The Military Campaign in Iran and Lebanon

- ▶ During the past week, IDF forces continued strikes in Iran (alongside the United States) and in Lebanon. As part of the activity, the IDF also targeted assets related to Qods Force support for Hezbollah and other terrorist organizations operating against Israel. Key events include:
 - ◆ On March 10, 2026, Abouzar Mohammadi, an IRGC commander operating in Hezbollah's missile unit in Lebanon, was eliminated in Lebanon. He served as a central figure in military coordination between Hezbollah and Iran and acted as a liaison between the organization and senior Iranian officials. He was also a key figure in building Hezbollah's missile capabilities and in restoring them after Operation Northern Arrows. Mohammadi was a significant knowledge hub regarding Hezbollah's strategic weapons and directed missile launches toward Israel (IDF Spokesperson, March 12, 2026).

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

- ◆ The IDF eliminated in Lebanon the commander of the Imam Hussein Division, Ali Muslim Tabaja; his deputy, Jihad al-Safira; and the division's drone commander, Sajed al-Handasa. The division serves as a Qods Force military framework to strengthen the pro-Iranian axis and provides important operational capabilities for Hezbollah (IDF Spokesperson, March 12, 2026).

- ◆ Hisham Yassin, a Lebanese national who served as a commander in the Palestine Corps of the Qods Force, was eliminated in an IDF strike in the village of Aramoun in the Shouf Mountains on March 12, 2026 (Israeli media, March 14, 2026).

► The Lebanese Foreign Ministry summoned the chargé d'affaires at the Iranian embassy in Lebanon, Tawfiq Samadi Khoshkhoo, to a meeting with the ministry's director general, Ambassador Abd al-Sattar Issa. This followed statements by the Iranian embassy in Lebanon and Iran's UN representative claiming that four "diplomats" were killed in an Israeli strike. The Lebanese official rejected the claim that the four Iranians targeted at a hotel in the al-Rouche area had diplomatic status or that their presence in Lebanon was known to the authorities. The ministry also expressed reservations regarding IRGC statements about joint operations with Hezbollah and demanded official written responses. Lebanon conveyed a formal message rejecting any interference in its internal affairs (Al-Joumhouria, March 13, 2026).

The Houthis

► A "Houthi military source" stated that the Houthis are monitoring the movements of the "Israeli enemy," the United States, and "resistance movements on the other side," and are prepared for any development. He added that their response this time would involve "different military tactics and weapons" compared to the past (Al-Akhbar, March 13, 2026).

► A "senior Houthi military official" noted that Houthi intervention in the current confrontation depends on an official request from Iran. He emphasized that their support for Iran and readiness to assist it have been clearly declared on many occasions. He added that while Iran possesses sufficient capabilities to confront both the United States and Israel, if assistance is requested, the Houthis would rely on tactics used in the past, such as closing the Bab al-Mandeb Strait and imposing a naval blockade on Israel (Al-Quds, March 14, 2026).

► Houthi political bureau member Hezam al-Asad issued a statement in Hebrew: "The leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran are openly walking among their citizens, while Netanyahu, Katz, and Ben Gvir are sitting in deep shelters and leaving their public crammed into dilapidated bomb shelters. The difference is clear: between those who lead their people... and those who ignite a war and then run away to hide." Attached to the statement were images documenting senior figures in the Iranian

regime taking part in marches and gatherings (Hezam al-Asad's X account, March 13, 2026). It should be noted that some of the senior Iranian officials who appeared in the images were eliminated by Israel in the following days.

- ▶ Another political bureau member, Muhammad al-Bukhaiti, claimed there is “full coordination” among the components of the Axis of Resistance, including the Houthis. He also said that the decision to stand by Iran in any confrontation had already been made by the Houthi leadership, and that it was examining the developments and would act when it saw fit (Al-Mayadeen, March 14, 2026).
- ▶ The Houthis' Foreign Ministry accused the United States and Israel of being “the most dangerous threat to security and peace in the modern era” and called on the international community to take a firm and responsible stance to stop their “aggressive actions” that “push the region and the world toward tension and instability.” According to the ministry, the attack against the American bases in the region does not constitute an attack against the countries hosting them, and these countries should reconsider the presence of these bases, since they are not intended to protect the countries but only American interests (Telegram channel of the Houthi Foreign Ministry, March 7, 2026).
- ▶ The Houthis' political bureau issued a statement of condolences following the deaths of senior Iranian officials Ali Larijani and Gholam Reza Soleimani. It was reported that their sacrifice would not weaken Iran or break its spirit but would increase its strength and resilience. In addition, the political bureau called on the Islamic nation to continue to stand by the Iranian people in the face of “American-Israeli aggression” (Al-Masirah, March 18, 2026).

The pro-Iranian militias in Iraq

- ▶ During the past week (March 11–18, 2026), the Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed responsibility for at least 163 attacks using missiles, rockets, and drones against “enemy headquarters” in Iraq and the region. Since the beginning of the campaign on February 28, 2026, it has claimed responsibility for more than 450 attacks, mainly targeting American facilities in Baghdad, the Kurdish region in northern Iraq, neighboring countries, and Jordan. The group also claimed that US forces were forced to relocate due to the attacks and offered a financial reward of 150 million Iraqi dinars (about \$115,000) for information on their new locations (Telegram channel of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, March 11-18, 2026). Saraya Awliya al-Dam, a front militia with ties to Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq that also declares its affiliation with the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, claimed responsibility for at least 110 attacks against American targets in Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Kuwait (Saraya Awliya al-Dam Telegram channel, March 11-18, 2026). The Kata'ib Sarkhat al-Quds militia, which is a front

militia of Harakat al-Nujaba, announced that it had attacked American targets in Iraq, Kuwait, and Bahrain with drones (Telegram channel of Kata'ib Sarkhat al-Quds, March 11-18, 2026).



Poster by Saraya Awliya al-Dam on the attacks since the beginning of the campaign (Saraya Awliya al-Dam Telegram channel, March 17, 2026)

- ▶ In the past week, attacks – for which no party has claimed official responsibility – have continued against the bases and assets of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), the umbrella organization of pro-Iranian militias in Iraq, in various areas across Iraq. The PMF reported more than thirty attacks against its operatives that claimed the lives of 48 of its fighters, who, according to the organization, were not involved in attacking American bases in Iraq or in the region (Telegram channel of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, March 11-18, 2026).
- ▶ Amid the attacks, several senior members of the pro-Iranian militias were reportedly hiding in the embassy compound in Baghdad (the “Green Zone”) for fear that they would be targets for elimination. According to a “senior military official in Iraq,” about forty airstrikes have been carried out against the headquarters of the pro-Iranian militias since the beginning of the campaign, and these attacks were carried out by the United States and not by Israel (Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, March 13, 2026).
- ▶ Kata'ib Hezbollah announced the death of its military spokesman, Abu Ali al-Askari, also known as Abu Ali al-Amiri (Kata'ib Hezbollah Telegram channel, March 14, 2026). The secretary-general of Kata'ib Hezbollah, Ahmed Mohsen Faraj al-Hamidawi, officially announced the death of al-Askari and reported that his successor was Abu Mujahid al-Assaf (Saberin News, March 16, 2026). In its first announcement, al-Assaf blamed the American presence in Iraq for the ongoing instability and warned those who collaborated with the “occupation” (Baghdad Today, March 17, 2026). After the announcement of al-Askari’s death, the number of airstrikes against American targets in Iraq increased, especially against the American embassy in Baghdad (Asharq Al-Awsat and Shafaq News, March 17-18, 2026).



Announcements of the death of al-Askari/al-Amiri

(Left: Saber in News, March 16, 2026. Right: Kata'ib Hezbollah Telegram channel, March 14, 2026)

- ▶ In response to the announcement of the death of al-Askari and the other senior Kata'ib Hezbollah officials, the secretary-general of the Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq militia, Qais al-Khazali, issued a statement of condolence, in which he promised that their blood had not been spilled in vain and would serve as fuel for the continuation of the confrontation with the American-Zionist enemy (Qais al-Khazali's X account, March 14, 2026).
- ▶ Akram al-Kaabi, secretary-general of Harakat al-Nujaba, attacked the leaders of countries that allow the “criminal gangs” of the United States and Israel to establish bases on their territory, from which they operate against Muslims in the region. He warned these leaders that when the war ends, the “enemy of peace and humanity” (President Trump) will come to them and make further demands. He also called on the peoples of these Arab countries to establish armed factions to free their countries from the “impurity of the Zionists and the Americans” (Telegram channel of the Nujaba militia, March 11, 2026).

Iran and Support for the Axis of Resistance

- ▶ In the first message of Iran's new Supreme Leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, to the Iranian people, read on Iranian television by an announcer on March 12, 2026, he emphasized Iran's support for the “resistance front.” He thanked the “fighters of the resistance front” and noted that Iran considers the “countries of the resistance front” to be its best friends, and that the issue of the “resistance” and the “resistance front” are an inseparable part of the values of the Islamic Revolution. He also said that the cooperation between the components of the front would shorten the way out of the “Zionist conspiracy.” He praised the “brave and believing Yemen,” which did not stop defending the “oppressed people of Gaza,” the “dedicated Hezbollah,” which came to the aid of the Islamic Republic despite all the obstacles, and the “Iraqi resistance” (website of the Supreme Leader of Iran, March 12, 2026).

Iran and the Palestinian Arena

- ▶ “World Jerusalem Day”² events were held on March 13, 2026, across Iran, attended by senior political and security officials who survived the American-Israeli strikes, including Ali Larijani, head of the Supreme National Security Council, who was eliminated four days later (Tasnim, March 13, 2026).
- ▶ In an interview with reporters during the Jerusalem Day march in Tehran, the head of the judiciary, Gholam-Hossein Ejei, declared Iran’s support for the Palestinian people and said that Iran is committed to the Palestinian cause (Mizan News, March 13, 2026). Ahmad Khatami, the Friday prayer leader in Tehran, said in his sermon that the establishment of peace and stability requires the disappearance of Israel and that no trace of it would remain. He added that as long as the United States and the “Zionist regime” still existed, humanity would not have peace and that, with God’s help, the fighters of Islam would make the enemies regret it by destroying them (Al-Alam, March 13, 2026).



“World Jerusalem Day” parades in Tehran (Tasnim, March 13, 2026)

The Houthis in Yemen

- ▶ On March 11, 2026, “sources in Somaliland” reported that Israel was preparing to establish a military base in Somaliland, from which it could gather intelligence and possibly even act against the Houthis in Yemen, located about 260 km from the other side of the Gulf of Aden (Bloomberg, March 11, 2026). In this context, a “Houthi military source” said that they are closely monitoring all Israeli movements in Somaliland and that the “hostile military base” is on the list of targets for the next conflict with Israel. He added that the scenario of attacking military bases in the Horn of Africa and

² Since 1979, “World Jerusalem Day” has been marked on the last Friday of Ramadan, according to the decision of Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. The event was intended to express the support of Iran and the Muslim world for the Palestinian cause and the liberation of Jerusalem. The events are being exploited to discredit Israel, call for its elimination, and defy the United States.

preventing the passage of ships belonging to the “Israeli enemy” and its allies would repeat itself, subject to “Israeli aggression” (Al-Akhbar, March 13, 2026).

► Houthi leader Abd al-Malik al-Houthi gave a speech marking “World Jerusalem Day,” in which he stressed that the day was meant to commemorate the “Zionist project to destroy Palestine” and the establishment of “Greater Israel” by conquering the entire region and expanding “Zionist influence” beyond it, with the help of the United States and other Western countries. According to al-Houthi, this project poses a danger to the entire Arab and Islamic nation, whose elements choose to side with the American position that is intended to serve Israel. In addition, al-Houthi claimed that the Jews are a corrupting element that contains all the elements of evil and whose goal is to corrupt all human societies. He added that the “aggression” against Lebanon and Iran is illegal and intended to remove Iran and Lebanon as obstacles to the Israeli-American takeover of the region, and that the Islamic nation must stand by the attacked countries. At the same time, he praised Iran’s steadfastness and its destructive response toward the United States and Israel, as well as the reactions of resistance fighters in Lebanon, Iraq, Gaza, and Yemen. Regarding the Arab countries attacked by Iran, al-Houthi expressed regret that they had been dragged into a confrontation by the United States, which had involved them in a direct confrontation with Iran (Al-Masirah, March 12, 2026).

The Militias in Syria

► The Islamic Resistance Front in Syria – “Possessors of Might” released a video ostensibly documenting attacks against Israel. The video concluded with a message in Hebrew: “What began yesterday is not over. Expect what comes next!” (Telegram channel of the Islamic Resistance Front in Syria, March 16, 2026).