

# Spotlight on Iran and the Shiite Axis

June 24—July 1, 2026

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## Key Trends

- ▶ Iranian opposition to the framework agreement reached between Israel and Lebanon.
- ▶ Iranian efforts to exploit the negotiations with the United States to extend its influence to the Palestinian arena as well.
- ▶ Continued Iranian activity in Iraq amid growing pressures to disarm the Shiite militias.
- ▶ Increasing friction between IDF forces and local residents and armed operatives in southern Syria.

## Highlights<sup>1</sup>

- ▶ Iranian officials criticized the framework agreement signed between Israel and Lebanon, emphasizing the need for a full Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon as a condition for completing negotiations with the United States.
- ▶ Iran reportedly raised the Palestinian issue as part of the negotiations with the United States in Switzerland.
- ▶ The Iranian foreign minister visited Baghdad and met with senior Iraqi government officials. The Iraqi prime minister expressed satisfaction with the pace of weapons handovers by the pro-Iranian militias.
- ▶ IDF forces in southern Syria eliminated two armed operatives who approached the border fence in the Golan Heights and were suspected of acting on behalf of Iran. Clashes broke out between IDF forces and local residents and armed operatives in a village in the Yarmouk Basin area.

## Iran's Involvement in Lebanon

- ▶ Qods Force commander Esmail Qaani wrote in a statement that “the Zionists” must leave all of Lebanon because it is an arena of “resistance” and steadfastness and not a playground for “the occupiers.” He warned that “if the Zionists do not withdraw today of their own free will, they will be forced to flee tomorrow in shame and defeat” (Fars, June 25, 2026).

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

- ▶ Majles Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said in a speech at the conference of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States, held in Baku, that from Iran’s perspective, the ceasefire and the end of the war in Lebanon are just as important as achieving a ceasefire and ending the war in Iran itself (Nour News, June 24, 2026). Later, Qalibaf spoke with the Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, Nabih Berri, discussing the latest developments in Lebanon (ISNA, June 28, 2026).
- ▶ Alaeddin Boroujerdi, a member of the Majles National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, stated that support for Lebanon and the “Axis of Resistance,” including Hezbollah, the Popular Mobilization Forces in Iraq, and the “resistance” organizations in “Palestine” and Yemen, is a fundamental priority. He noted that Iran would not allow Lebanon to be harmed and, if necessary, would use the same language that the “Zionist regime” understands (icana.ir, June 26, 2026).
- ▶ “A source close to the Iranian negotiating team” told the news agency of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) that Israel’s withdrawal from Lebanon is one of the conditions for the final agreement with the United States and constitutes a key red line for the Iranian team. The source added that the memorandum of understanding between Iran and the United States guarantees the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon and that this issue was also emphasized within the framework of the dispute resolution implementation mechanism, which was established with Iranian participation and included in the text reached during the talks in Switzerland. According to him, during the past few days, there has been a significant decrease in the scope of attacks in Lebanon, which indicates the effectiveness of the steps taken by Iran. He emphasized, however, that the Islamic Republic will not settle for anything less than achieving a permanent ceasefire and a full Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon (IRIB Telegram channel, June 25, 2026).
- ▶ Iranian officials expressed opposition to the framework agreement signed between Israel and Lebanon.<sup>2</sup> Ali Akbar Velayati, the Iranian Supreme Leader’s advisor on international affairs, stated that freedom without political independence is a golden cage and that Hezbollah is the backbone and true defender of Lebanon’s existence and independence (Ali Akbar Velayati’s X account, June 28, 2026). The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Esmail Baghaei, said that the Islamic Republic of Iran emphasizes the need to preserve the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon, as well as the dignity and security of all Lebanese citizens, and views this as a necessary condition for the continued existence and durability of any arrangement regarding the end of the war and the occupation by “the Zionist regime” against Lebanon. He emphasized that Iran insists on the need for

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<sup>2</sup> For further details, see the Amit Institute’s study from June 29, 2026, “[The Israel-Lebanon Framework Agreement: Insights and Responses](#)”

the United States to take all necessary measures to force “the Zionist regime” to stop all “aggression” or military activity against all areas of Lebanon and calls for the prompt establishment of a timetable for an unconditional withdrawal from all “occupied territories” in Lebanon (ISNA, June 28, 2026).

## Iran’s Involvement in the Palestinian Arena

► Majles Speaker Qalibaf referred in his speech at the conference of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States to regional developments and said that the Palestinian issue is the central axis of security and stability in West Asia. According to him, it will not be possible to establish a stable security order in the region without a just solution to the Palestinian issue. He emphasized that from Iran’s point of view, the Palestinian people – like any other people in the world – have the right to self-determination, and that the final solution to the Palestinian problem should be determined through a referendum among the original inhabitants of “Palestine”: Muslims, Christians, and Jews (Nour News, June 24, 2026).

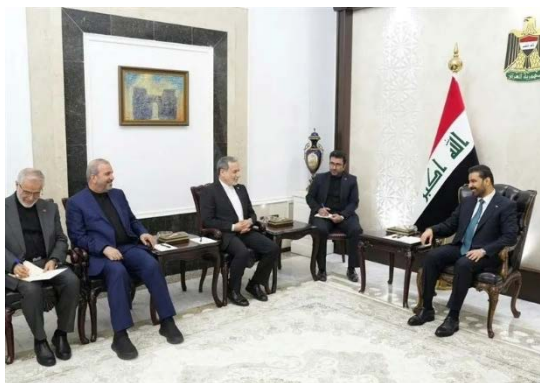


**The Iranian Majles Speaker at the conference in Baku (Nour News, June 24, 2026)**

► A “diplomatic source” reported that developments in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were raised at Iran’s initiative during the negotiations conducted between Iran and the United States in Switzerland. According to the report, Iran’s attempt to introduce the Palestinian issue into the discussions reflects its aspiration to create a linkage not only between developments in the Iranian and Lebanese arenas, but also with the Palestinian arena (Kan 11, June 27, 2026).

## Iran's Involvement in Iraq

► Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi visited Iraq. In a joint press conference with his Iraqi counterpart, Fuad Hussein, Araghchi said that his visit was intended to thank the government and people of Iraq for their support for Iran during the war, congratulate the new Iraqi government headed by Ali al-Zaidi, coordinate the details of the funeral procession of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, at the Shiite holy sites in Iraq, and discuss the political, economic, and security relations between the two countries. He noted that Iran remains committed to maintaining its close and strategic relations with Iraq and is prepared to continue cooperation with the new government in all fields. Araghchi added that he had updated his Iraqi counterpart on the details of the war, the negotiations, and the memorandum of understanding between Iran and the United States, and on recent developments regarding the Strait of Hormuz and Lebanon (Tasnim, June 28, 2026). During the visit, Araghchi met with Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi and discussed with him the memorandum of understanding between Iran and the United States for ending the war, as well as international and regional efforts to establish security and stability in the region. Araghchi emphasized his country's support for Iraq and the joint activities and coordination aimed at advancing relations and cooperation between the two countries. He also met with Iraqi President Nizar Amidi, Iraqi Parliament Speaker Haibat al-Halbousi, and Iraqi National Security Advisor Qasim al-Aboudi (IRNA, June 28, 2026).

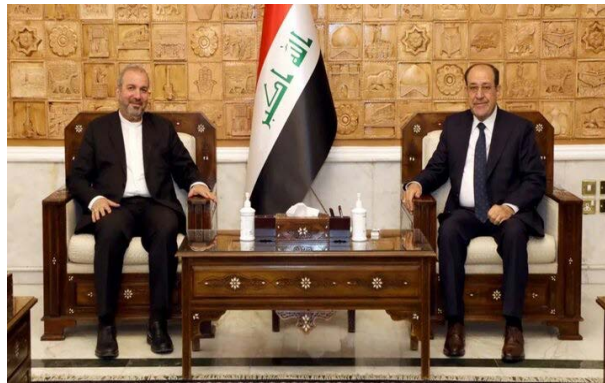


**Meeting between the Iranian Foreign Minister and the Iraqi Prime Minister (IRNA, June 28, 2026)**

► An Iranian commentator expressed reservations about the timing of the Iranian foreign minister's visit to Baghdad amid recent developments in Iraq, which he said pose a challenge to Iranian influence in the country. In a commentary article, he wrote that the launch of the anti-corruption campaign by Iraqi Prime Minister al-Zaidi; placing the disarmament of the Shiite militias on the agenda; a series of dismissals of Iraqi officials close to Iran, including National Security Advisor Qasim

al-Araji; growing American pressures on Iraq to reduce its economic ties with Iran; and the importance the new prime minister attaches to improving relations with the United States and the Arab states – all cast a shadow over Araghchi’s visit to Baghdad. Therefore, Araghchi’s visit to Iraq should have taken place earlier, to demonstrate that Iran is not on the sidelines of Iraq’s international relations, or alternatively, closer to the Iraqi prime minister’s planned visit to Washington, in order to convey the necessary messages to the various capitals (Iranian Diplomacy website, June 29, 2026).

► The Iranian Ambassador to Iraq, Mohammad Kazem Al-e Sadeq, met with the leader of the State of Law Coalition and former Prime Minister of Iraq, Nouri al-Maliki, and discussed with him relations between the two countries and the latest political and security developments in the region. The Iranian Ambassador emphasized his country’s desire to develop relations with Iraq and strengthen areas of cooperation and joint coordination between the two countries (ISNA, June 27, 2026).



**Meeting between the Iranian Ambassador to Iraq and Nouri al-Maliki (ISNA, June 27, 2026)**

## The Houthis in Yemen

► The leader of the Houthi movement, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, emphasized in a speech the steadfastness of the “Yemeni people” on their path of liberation and jihad and their adherence to “the issues of the Islamic nation, first and foremost the Palestinian issue.” Al-Houthi congratulated Iran on its “great victory over the enemies of the nation,” which, he claimed, also constitutes a significant victory for the entire “Axis of Resistance.” He emphasized the continued readiness of Houthi forces and full coordination with “our brothers” (in the “Axis of Resistance”) regarding any new escalation in any arena, and especially in the Gaza Strip. Al-Houthi stated that the Houthis are monitoring the situation in Somalia and Israel’s actions in the country (meaning Somaliland, which the Houthis do not recognize) and in the Bab al-Mandeb Strait and the Red Sea. He emphasized that “we will not stand idly by” in the face of any Israeli presence in Somalia and that “we will take the initiative at any time” to strike any Israeli activity on Somali soil. Finally, he called on the coastal

states of the Red Sea to formulate a unified position regarding Israel’s activity in this region (Almasirah, June 25, 2026).

► Mohammad al-Farah, a member of the Houthi political bureau, stated that Israel’s announcement that its forces will remain in the “security zone” in southern Lebanon until Hezbollah is disarmed confirms that the Lebanese government is coordinated with Israel with the aim of blaming Hezbollah for the continued Israeli “occupation” of the country. He further claimed that the ongoing contacts between Israel and Lebanon are not intended to end the Israeli presence in the country but rather to serve as leverage for disarming Hezbollah. In another statement, al-Farah said that the most dangerous aspect of the agreement between Israel and Lebanon is that it transfers the fighting into Lebanese territory. As a result, he claimed, there are two possible scenarios: a destructive civil war in Lebanon or direct Israeli occupation of the country (Mohammad al-Farah’s X account, June 26–27, 2026).



**Cartoon by Yemeni illustrator Kamal Sharaf, a supporter of the “Axis of Resistance,” criticizing the agreement between Israel and Lebanon (Kamal Sharaf’s X account, June 27, 2026)**

► The Houthi Foreign Ministry condemned Israel’s “daily violations” of the ceasefire agreement in the Gaza Strip, accusing it of attempting to undermine the agreement and impose a new reality on the ground. The ministry warned that the continuation of “Zionist arrogance and acts of genocide” would lead to renewed escalation in the Gaza Strip and a return to square one. Furthermore, the ministry called on the mediators and the international community to exert pressure on Israel to adhere to the agreement and fully implement its first phase before proceeding to the second phase (Houthi Foreign Ministry Telegram channel, June 29, 2026).

## The Pro-Iranian Militias in Iraq

► It was reported that Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi claimed that there would be no need for the continued “resistance” after the withdrawal of the US-led coalition forces from the country, which is supposed to take place in September 2026. The report emphasized that these remarks were made against the backdrop of pressures exerted by the United States and the Iraqi government with the

aim of disarming the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq, as well as ahead of al-Zaidi's first visit to the United States in the coming weeks (Asharq Al-Awsat, June 26, 2026). Later, al-Zaidi expressed satisfaction with the progress of the weapons handovers and promised that there would be no weapons in Iraq that are not in the hands of the state and that a state-within-a-state situation would not exist, in reference to the pro-Iranian militias (Asharq Al-Awsat, June 30, 2026).

► The spokesperson for the Iraqi government, Haider al-Aboudi, also claimed that the government would allow the militias to disarm until September 30, 2026, the end date of the coalition forces' presence in Iraq. He added that after this date, any weapon found outside the "state framework" will be declared "unregulated" and will be dealt with accordingly under the law. In this context, "military sources in Iraq" stated that so far, the militias that agreed to disarm have not handed over advanced weapons such as drones and long-range missiles, which pose the greatest threat to American forces stationed across the Middle East (Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, June 29, 2026).

## The Militias in Syria

► "The Islamic Resistance Front in Syria - Possessors of Might (Uli al-Ba's, or UAB)" published a statement addressed to the "terrified prime minister of the Zionist entity." According to the militia, Israeli forces stationed in Syria operate only thanks to coordination between Israel and the Syrian regime, and that in doing so, Israel is engaging in deception toward the Druze in Syria, who mistakenly believe that Israel is protecting them from the regime. The militia further stated that these steps prove that what lies behind Israel's promises is actually repeated attempts to sow division and discord among Arabs. The militia added that these division attempts by Israel in Syria are doomed to failure and that all Syrian sectors are destined to rise above the artificial differences between them and unite against "the oppressive entity" (Islamic Resistance Front in Syria Telegram channel, June 24, 2026).

► IDF forces eliminated several armed terrorists in the village of Hader in southern Syria as they made their way toward the border in the Golan Heights (IDF Spokesperson, June 28, 2026). It was reported that, according to assessments by the Israeli defense establishment, the gunmen were sent on behalf of Iran or the Qods Force in an attempt to carry out an attack (Kan 11, June 29, 2026).

► A day later, it was reported that IDF forces operating in the Yarmouk Basin, in the Syria-Israel-Jordan tri-border area, opened artillery and helicopter fire on local residents in the village of Abdin after reports had earlier been received of gunfire directed at the forces in the area (Israeli and Syrian media, June 29, 2026).

► The “Islamic Resistance Front in Syria” claimed that Israeli forces had entered a town in the southern Syrian Golan on June 26, 2026, and established a presence there without encountering any resistance from the Syrian regime. According to the militia, this demonstrates that cooperation exists between Israel and the Syrian regime and that Syrians must therefore understand that “resistance and defense of the homeland” are no longer a political option, but rather a religious and national duty in light of the “regime’s betrayal” (Telegram channel of the Islamic Resistance Front in Syria, June 29, 2026).