

# Spotlight on Iran and the Shiite Axis

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## Key Trends

- ▶ The Iranian regime took advantage of Khamenei's funeral ceremonies for a demonstration of strength and unity by the Axis of Resistance following the war against the United States and Israel.
- ▶ Iranian officials continued to emphasize the link between developments in the Lebanese arena – and even the Palestinian arena – and potential progress in negotiations between Iran and the United States.

## Highlights<sup>1</sup>

- ▶ Iranian officials held meetings with representatives of the Axis of Resistance on the sidelines of the funeral ceremonies for Iran's former Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei. They stressed Iran's commitment to its proxies in the region and emphasized the link between developments in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip and the continuation of negotiations between Iran and the United States.
- ▶ It was reported that Iran is preparing to transfer approximately \$1 billion to Hezbollah, primarily to rebuild its military capabilities.
- ▶ An Iranian aircraft landed at Sana'a Airport for the first time since the imposition of the Saudi blockade on the Houthis in 2015.
- ▶ Armed operatives in Syria released a video in which they allegedly announced the establishment of an organization intended to fight the "Israeli occupation" in the south of the country.

## Khamenei's Funeral: A Demonstration of Axis of Resistance Unity

- ▶ On July 3, 2026, funeral ceremonies began in Iran for Iran's former Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, who was eliminated at the beginning of the war between Iran, the United States, and Israel on February 28, 2026. On the sidelines of the ceremonies, Iranian officials held meetings with representatives of the Axis of Resistance who had arrived to attend the funeral. During the meetings,

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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.

Iranian officials emphasized their country's support for its regional proxies and the continuation of the "resistance" against Israel and the United States.

## Lebanon

► Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi met with members of the Hezbollah delegation that had arrived in Tehran (Mehr, July 4, 2026). Majles Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf also met with the Hezbollah delegation, headed by senior Hezbollah official Mohammad Fneish. Qalibaf stated that Hezbollah's struggle in the recent war had constituted a historic turning point and had demonstrated to the world the unbreakable bond between the "resistance" groups and Iran. He noted that one of Iran's red lines in negotiations is the issue of the Axis of Resistance and Lebanon. Fneish said that the war in Lebanon stopped thanks to the intervention of the Islamic Republic, which "forced" the United States and Israel to implement the conditions stipulated in the memorandum of understanding (IRNA, July 5, 2026).



**Iranian Foreign Minister meets with the Hezbollah delegation (Mehr, July 4, 2026)**

► Araghchi met with Sheikh Ali al-Khatib, deputy chairman of the Shiite Islamic Council in Lebanon, and discussed the latest developments in Lebanon and the region (ILNA, July 7, 2026).

► Majles Speaker Qalibaf met with a delegation of Lebanese parliamentarians led by senior Amal Movement official Khalil Hamdan. Qalibaf stated that vengeance for the death of Khamenei could only be the liberation of all Muslims from the injustice and oppression of the United States and the "Zionist regime." He noted that all components of Lebanese society must work to implement the clause concerning Lebanon in the memorandum of understanding between Iran and the United States, as its implementation could prevent the creation of divisions in Lebanon. Qalibaf added that the great lesson to be learned from Khamenei's path is the duty to maintain the unity of the Islamic community and the unity of the Shiites (imna.ir, July 3, 2026). During his visit to Tehran, Hamdan also met with Iranian Foreign Minister Araghchi, who praised the "steadfastness of the Lebanese people in the face of military aggression and the threats of the Zionist regime." He emphasized Iran's

position that an absolute end must be brought to the “aggression of the Zionist regime” and ensure the full withdrawal of the “occupiers” from Lebanese territory. Hamdan, for his part, expressed gratitude for Iran’s support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon and for its efforts to bring about a cessation of IDF attacks in the country (Mehr, July 4, 2026).



**Qalibaf’s meeting with Khalil Hamdan (imna.ir, July 3, 2026)**

### The Palestinian arena

► Iranian Foreign Minister Araghchi met with members of the leadership council of Hamas (Tabnak, July 4, 2026). Majles Speaker Qalibaf met with the chairman of the leadership council of the Hamas political bureau, Mohammad Darwish, who headed the delegation to the funeral ceremony. He noted that Iran is not at peace with the United States and will not recognize Israel. He emphasized that Iran assists Muslims and the Axis of Resistance, whether through missiles – when there is a need for it – or through negotiations when political pressure is required (Tabnak, July 5, 2026).



**Iranian Foreign Minister meets with the Hamas delegation (Tabnak, July 4, 2026)**

► Qalibaf also met with a senior delegation from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), headed by the organization’s deputy secretary-general, Jamil Mezher. Qalibaf said that the issue of “Palestine” has been and will remain the primary and fundamental concern of Iran’s revolutionary society and that it continues to be at the forefront of Iran’s attention. He noted that the Islamic Revolution has demonstrated in practice that it does not distinguish between Shiites and

Sunnis and that Iranians are not only united with the Sunnis but are also willing to sacrifice their lives to preserve that unity. He added that the Axis of Resistance is now united and that Iran bears responsibility for the security and fate of all its components, including Gaza, Lebanon, Yemen, and Iraq. According to Qalibaf, just as the Islamic Republic defends its defense and missile capabilities, it will also defend the Axis of Resistance. Qalibaf further stated that Iran had raised the situation in the Gaza Strip during the negotiations and would continue to pursue the issue seriously (icana.ir, July 5, 2026).

### **The Houthis**

► Qalibaf met with Mohammad al-Nuaimi, a member of the Houthi Supreme Political Council (SPC) in Yemen. Qalibaf noted that the Ansar Allah movement (the Houthis) and the Yemeni people have proven that they stand against steps contrary to the rules of international law and against the injustice of the oppressors, displaying an expression of the unified strength of the Axis of Resistance in the economic, military, and political arenas. He added that Iran and the Axis of Resistance had stood together against the United States and Israel and that the memorandum of understanding between Iran and the United States constitutes a military and political failure for the United States and an achievement for the Axis of Resistance. According to him, the Houthis have always stood alongside the “resistance” and defended Gaza, Lebanon, and “Palestine” despite all difficulties (icana.ir, July 5, 2026).

► Ali Akbar Velayati, the advisor to Iran’s Supreme Leader, met with a delegation on behalf of the Houthis and stated that Iran’s stance against the colonialist countries seeking to eliminate the “resistance” is resolute, clear, and unchangeable. He noted that the blockade on Yemen must be lifted immediately and that its continued existence is unacceptable. The members of the Houthi delegation emphasized that they draw inspiration from the path of Iran’s leaders and the leaders of the “resistance” who were killed (Jamaran, July 7, 2026).

### **The militias in Iraq**

► An official delegation of the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq arrived in Tehran to attend Khamenei’s funeral. The delegation included the chairman of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), Falih al-Fayyadh; the secretary-general of the Nujaba Movement (Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba), Akram al-Kaabi; and other senior militia officials (PMF Telegram channel, July 3, 2026). In a statement, al-Kaabi noted that attending the funeral was no less important than participating in the fighting against the “despicable Zionists” on the battlefields of jihad. He added that the presence of millions of people would be like “a bone in the throat of the oppressive enemy” and that the chants of “Death to

America and Death to Israel” would be like “arrows of truth striking their conspiracies, lies, and crimes” (Akram al-Kaabi’s X account, July 3, 2026).



**Right: Delegation of the pro-Iranian militias beside Khamenei’s coffin (Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq official website, July 3, 2026). Left: al-Kaabi (left) and the secretary-general of the Sayyid al-Shuhada Brigades, Abu Alaa al-Wala’i, in Tehran (Sayyid al-Shuhada Brigades Telegram channel, July 3, 2026)**

## Iran’s Involvement in Lebanon

► It was reported that Iran is preparing to transfer approximately \$1 billion to Hezbollah through alternative financial mechanisms designed to circumvent sanctions. Most of the funds are intended to rebuild the organization’s military capabilities, while only a smaller portion is designated for the rehabilitation of the Shiite population affected by the war (Nidaa Al Watan, July 1, 2026).

## Iran’s Involvement in the Palestinian Arena

► It was reported that IDF representatives warned during a security discussion in the Knesset that Iran is purchasing and financing some of the goods entering the Gaza Strip. According to the report, Hamas operatives are taking control of hundreds of aid trucks financed by Iran as they enter the Strip (i24NEWS, July 2, 2026).

## Iran’s Involvement in Iraq

► Majles Speaker Qalibaf met with the President of the Kurdistan Region in Iraq, Nechirvan Barzani, who arrived in Tehran to attend Khamenei’s funeral. Qalibaf noted that the United States and Israel had set their sights on the Kurdistan Region and hoped to use its territory to operate against the Islamic Republic, but the cooperation, vigilance, and discretion of the region’s leadership prevented the realization of those goals. He expressed hope that relations between Iran and the Kurdistan Region in Iraq would continue to develop (Mehr, July 3, 2026). During his visit to Tehran, Barzani also met with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to discuss regional developments (ISNA, July 4, 2026).



**Qalibaf's meeting with Nechirvan Barzani (Mehr, July 3, 2026)**

## The Houthis in Yemen

► The Houthi Deputy Foreign Minister, Abdulwahid Abu Ras, praised Iran for “breaking the blockade imposed on Sana’a Airport” and the “Yemeni steadfastness that succeeded in breaking the hand of the Saudi aggressor,” after an Iranian aircraft landed at Sana’a Airport on July 3, 2026, for the first time since the beginning of the Saudi blockade of Houthi-controlled areas in Yemen in 2015 (Houthi Foreign Ministry Telegram channel, July 3, 2026). Subsequently, Abu Ras met with the Iranian ambassador to Sana’a, Ali Mohammad Rezaei, to discuss cooperation between the Houthis and Iran, particularly efforts to break the blockade imposed on the Houthis. Abu Ras stated that “the Yemeni people” had decided to end “the aggression and the blockade and demand their legitimate rights” while taking “concrete steps at all levels.” During the meeting, the Iranian ambassador reaffirmed Iran’s support for the Houthis’ efforts to end “the aggression” and the blockade (Houthi Foreign Ministry Telegram channel, July 5, 2026).

## The Pro-Iranian Militias in Iraq

► “Security sources” in Iraq reported that a force from the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service attempted to take control of an agricultural compound south of Baghdad that had been seized by an armed group. An exchange of fire ensued, but no casualties were reported. One of the sources stated that the group had refused to surrender its weapons to the state. According to “unverified information” from “another source,” the target of the operation may have been one of the senior officials of the militias subordinate to the PMF. The incident occurred amid a large-scale operation by the Iraqi government to arrest individuals involved in corruption. The Iraqi government did not comment on the incident (Asharq Al-Awsat, July 3, 2026).

## Militias in Syria

- ▶ The Islamic Resistance Front in Syria - Possessors of Might (Uli al-Ba's, or UAB) reported that three fighters from its ranks were killed on the battlefield. The militia did not disclose their full names and photos, claiming that doing so would endanger their families. Furthermore, the militia did not elaborate on the circumstances of their deaths and the location of the battle in which they were killed (The Islamic Resistance Front in Syria Telegram channel, July 2, 2026).
- ▶ A group calling itself the “Movement for Deterring the Occupation” released a video showing several armed operatives who claimed to belong to the “Hauran Tribal Region.” One of the operatives announced the establishment of the group in response to the “repeated attacks” against them by the “Israeli occupation,” the “deafening silence” of the regime of Syrian President Ahmed al-Shara, and “its disregard for what is taking place in southern Syria.” The operatives pledged to work for the release of Syrian detainees held in Israeli prisons and called on Syrian youth to join the group (Movement for Deterring the Occupation Telegram channel, July 2, 2026). It should be noted that, beginning in February 2026, the Telegram channel published messages that included, among other things, the group’s founding declaration and photographs of graffiti which, according to the group, had been painted throughout Syria, calling on Syrians to join its ranks.



**The armed operatives in the video**  
(Movement for Deterring the Occupation Telegram channel, July 2, 2026)

- ▶ Against the backdrop of the announcement, the Islamic Resistance Front in Syria accused the regime in Damascus of being behind the establishment of organizations and fronts that flaunt slogans of struggle and jihad without revealing evidence of any achievements or actions. The organization claimed that this is a conspiracy by the Syrian regime designed to expose potential activists and place them on lists that will lead to their arrest and disappearance. In addition, the militia called on Syrians to boycott these groupings and not allow this “despicable conspiracy” to take place (The Islamic Resistance Front in Syria Telegram channel, July 6, 2026).