The Amit Terrorism and Intelligence Research Institute
At the Israeli Intelligence Heritage and Commemoration Center

Spotlight on Iran and the Shiite Axis

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Key Trends

► New appointments at Iran's embassies in Lebanon and Iraq.

► Continued Iranian diplomatic activity amid the conflict between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis.

► Growing tensions between the Iraqi Prime Minister and the pro-Iranian militias in the country.

Highlights[1]

- Tehran appointed a new chargé d'affaires at the Iranian embassy in Lebanon.
- The Iraqi Prime Minister visited Tehran accompanied by senior figures in the pro-Iranian Shiite militias and met with senior Iranian officials, who presented a list of demands, including the return of hundreds of precision missiles transferred to the militias.
- A senior Qods Force official was reportedly appointed as Iran's new ambassador to Iraq.
- Iran again denied any involvement in the clashes between the Houthis and Saudi Arabia.
- The Iraqi Prime Minister reportedly threatened to arrest pro-Iranian militia operatives if they intervene in a possible conflict between Iran and the United States and authorized the security forces to respond to any "security violation" by the militias.

Iranian Involvement in Lebanon

- The Iranian embassy in Lebanon held a farewell ceremony for Tofiq Samadi, the outgoing chargé d'affaires, and a reception for Hamid Sani, the new chargé d'affaires. The ceremony was attended by Iran's ambassador-designate to Beirut, Mohammad Reza Sheibani, whom the Lebanese government decided in March 2026 to expel from the country; embassy staff; and Lebanese political figures, media personnel, and representatives of the cultural and social spheres. Sheibani stressed at the ceremony that the strong ties between the Lebanese and Iranian peoples would continue to serve as a basis for further dialogue and for expanding cooperation between the two countries in a manner that would advance their common interests (Tasnim, November 5, 2026).

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



Change of Iran's chargé d'affaires in Lebanon (Tasnim, November 5, 2026)

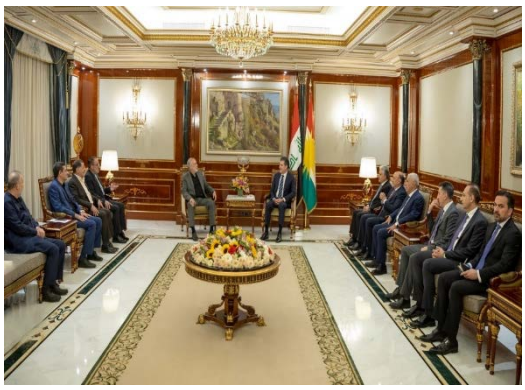
Iranian Involvement in Iraq

- Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi met in Tehran with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Majles Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf. Al-Zaidi was accompanied on the visit by Falih al-Fayyadh, chairman of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF, the pro-Iranian Shiite militias in Iraq), and Hadi al-Amiri, commander of the Badr Organization (Tasnim, November 9, 2026). The Iraqi Prime Minister's visit took place amid regional efforts to mediate between Iran and the United States to prevent a resumption of the regional war.

- Al-Zaidi's visit reportedly took place near the border with Iran, after he crossed a few kilometers into Iranian territory with a small security escort. In his meeting with Majles Speaker Qalibaf and senior IRGC officials, al-Zaidi worked to thwart the intention of Qods Force commander Esmail Qaani to come to Baghdad, so as not to harm the sensitive relations with the Trump administration and the countries of the region. The report also noted that the senior Iranian officials presented the Iraqi Prime Minister with a series of demands, foremost among them the immediate return of several hundred precision missiles secretly transferred in recent years to the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq. This was due to Tehran's concern over a possible resumption of the war. The senior Iranian officials also demanded the repayment of at least part of Iraq's outstanding debts to Iran. Al-Zaidi offered to try to obtain US consent for the flow of essential basic goods to markets in Iran through the border crossings. At the same time, Iran pressed to ensure that the next head of the Iraqi Intelligence Service would not have a pro-American orientation (Al-Modon, November 11, 2026).

- The President of the Kurdistan Region in northern Iraq, Nechirvan Barzani, met with an Iranian delegation headed by Abdolreza Mesgarian, who is in charge of the Kurdistan Region portfolio in the Qods Force. The sides discussed recent developments in Iran's relations with Iraq, and in particular with the Kurdistan Region, as well as ways to expand cooperation in various fields. They also discussed security issues and developments in the region and stressed the need for continued coordination and cooperation among the countries of the region to strengthen security and stability.

The participants also reviewed the security understandings and agreements reached between Iran and Iraq, including those concerning the Kurdistan Region (Kurdistan24.net; Iran International, November 8, 2026). Following the visit, Mesgarian was reportedly appointed as Iran's new ambassador to Iraq (Al Arabiya, November 9, 2026).



Meeting between an Iranian delegation and the Kurdistan Region President (Kurdistan24.net, November 8, 2026)

Iranian Involvement in Yemen

- Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei rejected the claim by EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas regarding Iranian involvement in the clashes between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis in Yemen. Baghaei stressed that the EU itself is complicit in serious human rights violations in Yemen through its participation in imposing sanctions and the economic blockade on the Yemeni people, and that European officials cannot evade their responsibility through statements intended to place the blame on others. Baghaei also firmly denied the claims about the presence of Iranian military experts in Yemen and stressed that the publication of these false reports is intended to conceal the facts and mislead public opinion. According to him, the Yemeni people have proven that they possess the capabilities, experience, courage, and determination required to defend their national sovereignty and human dignity, and that they do not need intervention by any party to do so. Baghaei condemned the military strikes against various areas in Yemen, particularly against civilian facilities, vital infrastructure, and residential areas. According to him, these strikes have killed more than 270 Yemeni civilians, including 130 women and children, wounded more than 650 people, and destroyed infrastructure and homes. He called for an end to the aggression against Yemen's national sovereignty and territorial integrity. He also reiterated Iran's principled position that achieving peace on the Arabian Peninsula requires an end to the military strikes, respect for the Yemeni people's right to self-determination, the lifting of the naval and air blockade on the country, and dialogue based on the roadmap agreed upon between the Yemenis and Saudi Arabia. He added that Iran is ready to

provide any possible assistance in this regard (Iranian Foreign Ministry Telegram channel, November 5, 2026).

- The Iranian Foreign Ministry strongly condemned the continued strikes against civilian targets in Yemen. The ministry's statement said that "the continued aggression against Yemen's national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the economic and air blockade on the country, are contrary to international law and the principles of Islam." The ministry particularly condemned the airstrikes against civilian infrastructure and non-military areas, including the strikes carried out on November 6, 2026, against the al-Hadarah public market in the al-Wazi'iyah District of Taiz Governorate in Yemen, in which 33 Yemenis, including 13 children, were killed and dozens more were wounded. The Foreign Ministry also condemned the airstrikes on the village of al-Shariyah in Bani Hushaysh District in eastern Sana'a Governorate and the targeting of media personnel from the Houthi Almasirah channel (Tasnim, November 8, 2026).
- Mohammad Ali-Bek, head of the Persian Gulf Department at the Iranian Foreign Ministry, met in Tehran with a delegation headed by China's Special Envoy for Middle East Affairs, Zhai Jun. The parties discussed recent developments in the region, particularly the situation in Yemen, and stressed the need for a political solution to the crisis in the country (ISNA, November 9, 2026).

The Houthis in Yemen

- Over the past week, Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree claimed responsibility for at least 15 "operations" by the Houthi forces against various targets in Saudi territory, including airports, Aramco offices and energy infrastructure, the financial center in Riyadh and other economic assets, and military targets. According to him, the attacks were carried out with a large number of ballistic missiles and drones (Yahya Saree's Telegram channel, November 4–11, 2026). Saudi-led coalition spokesman Turki al-Maliki said that coalition forces had intercepted nine ballistic missiles, 13 drones, and two cruise missiles launched by the Houthis toward various targets in Saudi Arabia (X account of the Saudi-led coalition forces, November 4–11, 2026).



The strikes on the financial center in Riyadh (Almasirah, November 8, 2026)

- Saudi Arabia reportedly contacted the Houthis to ascertain the movement's conditions for ending the conflict between the two sides. According to "sources briefed on the contacts," the Houthis demanded $51 billion, which they claim is needed to "cover" the financial losses caused by the fighting in Yemen and by the years-long blockade imposed by Saudi Arabia on the Houthis. It was also reported that the Houthis are demanding that Saudi Arabia formally recognize them as the legitimate body ruling Yemen (Wall Street Journal, November 5, 2026). In response, Saudi Deputy Foreign Minister Raed Krimly "categorically" denied the details of the report, called it "a complete fabrication," and attacked its authors and their sources. He added that Yemen already has a legitimate and recognized government (Raed Krimly's X account, November 5, 2026).



Poster published by the Houthis warning countries against selling drones to Saudi Arabia (Houthi military media Telegram channel, November 4, 2026)

- "Two senior Syrian military sources" and "a senior US source" said that Syria had sent a "small number" of military advisors to Saudi Arabia to train the Saudi forces fighting the Houthis. "A senior Saudi diplomat" noted that the advisors would be able to draw on the experience they gained fighting "militia groups" during the Syrian civil war and share it with the Saudi army (Reuters, November 6, 2026). "A Syrian diplomatic source" denied that Syrian army forces had been sent to Saudi Arabia to fight the Houthi forces and said that the agreements between Saudi Arabia and Syria involve training and the exchange of knowledge and expertise (SANA, November 7, 2026).

The Pro-Iranian Militias in Iraq

- Iraqi security authorities reportedly arrested three PMF operatives in possession of 35 "missiles." The three were arrested while attempting to transport the missiles by vehicle in the Baghdad area (Shafaq News, November 6, 2026). In this context, "Iraqi security sources" said that Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi had authorized commanders in the Iraqi security forces to respond immediately to "security violations" committed by organizations operating in the country without his official approval (Asharq Al-Awsat, November 6, 2026).
- Another report stated that al-Zaidi had warned that members of the pro-Iranian militias would be arrested if they intervened in a possible conflict between the United States and Iran. It was also noted that this escalation in relations between the two sides has recently gained momentum amid difficulties in reaching an agreement on the future of the weapons held by the militias and how they would be used in the event of an escalation between the United States and Iran (Al-Mada, November 9, 2026).
- Kata'ib Hezbollah Secretary-General Ahmad Mohsen Faraj al-Hamidawi referred to the results of the US midterm elections and claimed that US President Donald Trump "and his bloodthirsty party" had suffered a crushing defeat. He further claimed that these results are a prelude to greater changes that could pave the way for a president of Arab or Muslim origin or from another minority group. Al-Hamidawi expressed hope that the results would mark the beginning of the collapse of the United States and the end of its "hegemony." He added that the removal of the United States from West Asia has now turned from an aspiration into a reality imposed by a new balance of power (Kata'ib Hezbollah Telegram channel, November 4, 2026).

The Militias in Syria

- The Islamic Resistance Front in Syria – Possessors of Might (Uli al-Ba's, UAB) published a video with the Hebrew caption "We will teach you a lesson, and the situation on the ground will prove who we are." The video showed footage purportedly documenting IDF forces in the Syrian border area, preparations and training by militia fighters, and AI-generated clips depicting strikes on IDF forces and high-rise buildings in Israel (Islamic Resistance Front in Syria Telegram channel, November 6, 2026).



Screenshot from the video (Islamic Resistance Front in Syria Telegram channel, November 6, 2026)