



Spotlight on Iran

July 17 – 24, 2024

Editor: Dr. Raz Zimmt

Highlights¹

- ▶ Iran's Supreme Leader declared at a meeting with the president-elect and members of the Iranian Majles that Gaza remained the first priority issue of the Muslim world.
- ▶ The Supreme Leader's senior military advisor praised the continued "resistance" of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, saying that if millions of Shiite pilgrims turned to Jerusalem to liberate "Palestine," Israel would not be able to resist them.
- ▶ Iranian President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian praised the Palestinians' "resistance" against Israel and stressed Iran's continued support for the Palestinian people.
- ▶ Iran's acting foreign minister warned at a UN Security Council meeting that if Israel expanded the war to Lebanon, the region would spiral out of control and that any attack on Lebanon would be met with a "decisive and regret-inducing" response.
- ▶ The Iranian foreign minister's senior advisor met in Damascus with President Assad and the Syrian foreign minister to discuss regional developments and bilateral relations.
- ▶ Iran strongly condemned the Israeli attack in Yemen. The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman warned of the expansion of the war in the region, and the acting Iranian foreign minister expressed condolences for those killed in the Israeli attack. Meanwhile, the commander of the IRGC's navy said the Houthis would continue their "resistance" based on their internal resources and weapons production.
- ▶ As the conflict between the Houthis and Israel escalated, the Houthis threatened to retaliate strongly against military targets in Israel. "Sources" said attacks would be carried out in cooperation with the "axis of resistance" and would be directed at Israeli ports and energy

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

sites. At the same time, the Houthis continued to report attacks against vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

►The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed responsibility for four attacks against targets in Israel. The IDF Spokesperson confirmed that two UAVs had been intercepted on their way to Israel from the east.

Iranian involvement in the Palestinian arena

►Meeting with Iranian President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian and members of the Iranian Majles, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei declared that the issue of Gaza remained the Muslim world’s top priority even nine months after the outbreak of the war, saying it is even more important today than in the first days of the war. Khamenei praised the “resistance,” which, he claimed, was demonstrating its strength more and more by the day, noting that the Majles could not remain silent about the Gaza issue. He added that the “resistance” was facing a large political, economic, and military system called the United States, which was fighting it alongside the “Zionist regime.” He claimed that since the United States and Israel had not succeeded in bringing Hamas and the “resistance” to their knees, they were dropping bombs at hospitals, schools, and at the heads of children, women, and civilians (Supreme Leader’s website, July 21, 2024).



The Supreme Leader meets with Majles members (Supreme Leader’s website, July 21, 2024)

►Iranian President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian spoke with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, stressing the need for joint action by Muslim countries to stop the “crimes of the Zionist regime” (Mehr, July 17, 2024).

►President-elect Pezeshkian sent a letter to Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) secretary-general Ziad Nakhalah in response to the congratulations he received from him following his election as president. In his letter, Pezeshkian praised the “resistance” of the Palestinian people against

the “barbaric aggression of the Zionist regime” and stressed Iran’s support for the Palestinians and their aspiration to liberate Jerusalem, eliminate the “Zionist regime,” and realize their rights (Nur News, July 23, 2024).

►Yahya Rahim Safavi, the senior military advisor to the Supreme Leader of Iran, said that despite the large number of fatalities in the Gaza Strip, the Palestinians had not retreated and were continuing their steadfastness. He noted that if 20 million pilgrims changed their route during the Arbaeen ceremonies² and instead of turning toward Karbala, turned toward Jerusalem to liberate “Palestine,” Israel would not be able to resist them. He noted that Israel could do nothing against the Iranian attack against it on April 13, 2024, and that no country or leader had dared to make a decision like Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei did when he decided to attack Israel. He added that it was impossible to know when Jerusalem would be liberated but referred to Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei’s statement that “the Zionist regime will not live to see the next 25 years and, with God’s help, we will pray together in Jerusalem” (ISNA, July 18, 2024).



Yahya Rahim Safavi (ISNA, July 18, 2024)

►IRGC commander Hossein Salami told a conference of IRGC ground forces commanders in the city of Mashhad that the “resistance” of the Palestinian people and the Gaza Strip had left its historic mark on the world and that the “resistance” activities in Iraq and Lebanon alongside the Iranian attack on Israel on April 13, 2024, would gradually change the political map of the Muslim world and the Middle East. He added that the reference to Iran by the two US presidential candidates in their televised debate showed that Iran was a rising power (IRNA, July 22, 2024).

² Arbaeen: a day of mourning for Shiites to mark forty days since the death of Imam Hussein bin Ali and many other members of the Ali bin Abi Talib family in the Battle of Karbala in 61 Hijra (680 CE). On this day, it is customary to make a pilgrimage to the tomb of Imam Hussein in Karbala.

►Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani condemned the Israeli Knesset’s decision to vote in favor of a declaration stating that the Knesset opposed the establishment of a Palestinian state. He said the Knesset resolution once again demonstrated to the world the “racist character of the Zionist regime” after nine months of “continued war crimes and genocide of Palestinians.” He noted that the “Israeli apartheid regime” posed a threat not only to the Palestinian people but also to world peace and international security. He stressed that in light of the inaction on the part of governments and international organizations in ensuring the rights of the Palestinian people and enforcing international law against Israel, the Palestinian people had the right to “resist” and fight against the occupiers until their rights were fully realized (Nasser Kanani’s X account, July 19, 2024).

►In response to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague that the settlements in Judea, Samaria, and East Jerusalem violate international law, Kanani said the international community, especially the UN Security Council, had to take practical steps to stop “regime attacks against the Palestinian people and the illegal occupation of Palestine.” He said the court’s decision reflected the deep concern of the international community over Israel’s “criminal actions” (ISNA, July 20, 2024).

Iranian involvement in Syria and Lebanon

►Iranian Acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri-Kani once again warned Israel against expanding the war to Lebanon. In a speech at the Security Council discussion on the situation in the Gaza Strip, Bagheri said that if Israel expanded the war in Lebanon, the region would spiral out of control. He noted that the “leaders of the Zionist regime” had recently deluded themselves into thinking that expanding the war to Lebanon could extricate them from the Gaza quagmire, but that was a false delusion and a dangerous miscalculation. Bagheri added that any large-scale attack on Lebanon would be met with a decisive and regret-inducing response from the international community, the peoples of the region, and the “resistance” groups. He placed the responsibility on the United States for any “possible aggression by the Zionist regime” against Lebanon (ISNA, July 17, 2024).



Acting Iranian Foreign Minister Bagheri (ISNA, July 17, 2024)

► During his visit to New York, Bagheri met with Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib to discuss regional developments and relations between the two countries. Bagheri stressed Iran’s support for stability and security in Lebanon as well as for the “resistance in Palestine.” He said Iran was striving to stop the Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip to prevent the expansion of the war in the region. He stressed that Muslim countries had to make Israel regret its threats against Lebanon (Iranian Foreign Ministry website, July 18, 2024).



The meeting between the Iranian acting foreign minister and the Lebanese foreign minister in New York (Iranian Foreign Ministry website, July 18, 2024)

► Ali Asghar Khaji, the Iranian foreign minister’s senior advisor for special political affairs, met with Syrian President Bashar Assad and Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad to discuss relations between the countries, cooperation in various fields, and regional developments (Fars, July 22, 2024).

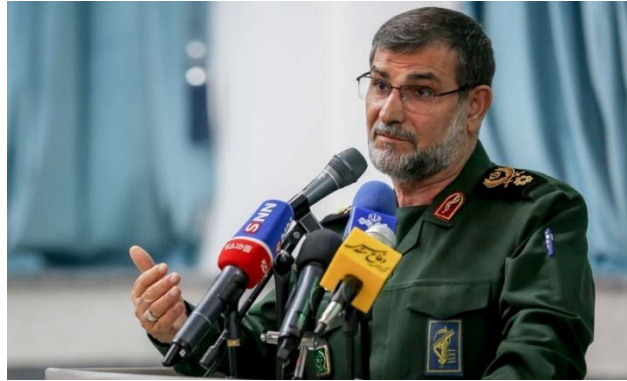


The advisor to the Iranian foreign minister meets with the Syrian president (Fars, July 22, 2024)

Iranian involvement in Yemen

- ▶ Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani condemned the Israeli attack on Yemen's port of al-Hudaydah, saying that the Yemeni people were paying the price for supporting innocent civilians in the Gaza Strip. Kanani added that the attack reflected Israel's "aggressive nature" and warned against escalating tensions and the expansion of the war in the region as a result of the "dangerous adventurism of the Zionists." He stressed that quiet would not return to the region as long as the Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip continued (Mehr, July 20, 2024).
- ▶ Acting Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani spoke with Houthi spokesman Mohammad Abdeslam and expressed condolences over the Israeli attack in Yemen. The two also discussed regional developments. Bagheri said the "resistance" of the Gaza Strip, Yemeni support for the Palestinians, and the Iranian attack on Israel on April 13, 2024, had inflicted a "strategic defeat on the Zionists" (Iranian Foreign Ministry Telegram channel, July 22, 2024).
- ▶ Ali Akbar Velayati, the Supreme Leader's senior advisor for international affairs, spoke with Houthi spokesman Mohammad Abdeslam about the latest developments in the region. Velayati praised Yemen's achievements in the war with Israel and strongly condemned the Israeli attacks in Yemen. Abdeslam said Yemen had taken a positive stance in support of "Palestine" but Western countries and the United States were trying to extinguish the "fire of jihad" by supporting Israel. He said they intended to continue supporting "Palestine" (Mehr, July 24, 2024).
- ▶ Ali-Reza Tangsiri, commander of the IRGC Navy, said the Houthis were a major player in the "axis of resistance" and would continue their resistance based on their internal resources and weapons production. He also said Hezbollah in Lebanon was prepared to respond to any act of aggression by Israel and that the Palestinian "resistance" groups would also continue their

“resistance” despite the Israeli attacks and heavy losses in the Gaza Strip (Iranian SNN news agency, July 23, 2024).



The commander of the IRGC Navy (snn.ir, July 23, 2024)

Activities of the Shiite militias

Yemen

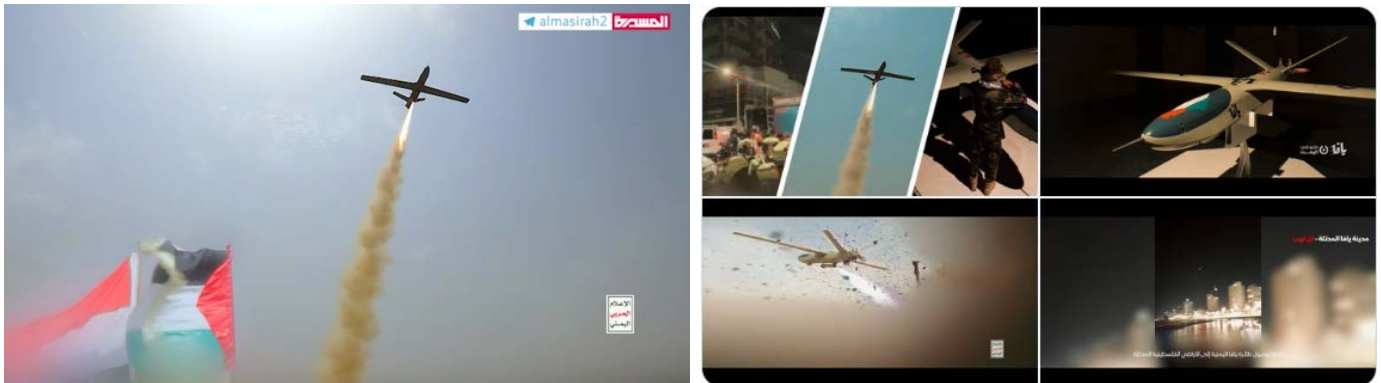
The escalation between the Houthis and Israel

► In the early morning hours of July 19, 2024, a drone exploded in Tel Aviv, killing an Israeli civilian and injuring eight others. The IDF Spokesperson noted that it was an Iranian-made Samad 3 UAV launched from Yemen (IDF Spokesperson and Israeli media, July 19, 2024). On July 20, 2024, in response to the drone strike and previous Houthi attacks against Israel, Israeli Air Force planes attacked military targets in the port of al-Hudaydah, in Houthi-controlled territory in Yemen (IDF Spokesperson, July 20, 2024). According to sources in Yemen, at least 14 people were killed in the attack, more than 90 others were wounded, and at least six are considered missing (al-Masirah, July 20-21, 2024; Sky News in Arabic, July 21, 2024). On July 21, 2024, Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saria announced that ballistic missiles had been launched at “important targets” in the Eilat area (Yahya Saria’s Telegram channel, July 21, 2024). The IDF confirmed that the Arrow 3 air defense system had intercepted a surface-to-surface missile launched from Yemen and that the missile did not penetrate Israeli territory (IDF X account, July 21, 2024).³

► On July 23, 2024, Houthi forces presented the Yafa (Jaffa) drone, which they claim was used to attack Tel Aviv. According to the Houthis, the drone was manufactured in Yemen and has a long-range, multi-mission operation, carries an explosive warhead and can evade radar and

³ For further information, see the ITIC's study from July 24, 2024, “[Escalation of the Confrontation Between Israel and the Houthis – Background and Significance](#)”

air defense systems. The video also shows alleged footage of the drone being launched at Tel Aviv (the Houthis' military media wing X account, July 23, 2024).



Right: Video unveiling the Yafa drone. Left: The alleged launch at Tel Aviv (the Houthis' military media wing X account, July 23, 2024)

► Houthi navy spokesman Rafiq al-Jand threatened that Yemen would respond strongly in the coming days “in accordance with Israeli aggression in al-Hudaydah.” He noted that the next response would again be directed at Tel Aviv, which had recently entered the Houthi target bank. According to him, the response will be based on the principle of gradual expansion of the conflict while “Israeli aggression in the Gaza Strip” continues. Al-Jand added that the “fifth phase” of the confrontation with Israel would include “unexpected surprises.” However, he claimed that the Houthis had no intention of targeting civilian targets of the “occupation” and that the targets they were monitoring were purely military. He also warned that any Arab country that conspired with Israel would be part of the target bank and would be dealt with as part of the attacks since it would be considered an “enemy state” (Quds News Agency, July 21, 2024).

◀ According to “Sources” in Yemen, the characteristics of the “fifth stage” of the campaign against Israel are different from the previous stages. They said the Houthis’ goal was to establish new rules of confrontation that would surprise the “enemy” and affect its capabilities. In addition, they said that the “sixth phase” would follow but they did not specify what its nature would be. The sources claimed that some of the Houthi operations would be carried out in cooperation with the “axis of resistance” in the arenas of “Palestine,” Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq, and noted that a joint operations room would be established with the arenas, in which information and data would be exchanged. They added that the forces would expand the scope of their operations to stop supplies to Israel through the Cape of Good Hope (South Africa) and escalate their attacks in the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean. Additionally, they

would add more targets to their target bank, such as the ports of Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Haifa. In addition, the “sources” said that the Israeli attack on the oil tanks at the port of al-Hudaydah had caused the Houthis to bring many gas fields in Israel into their target bank, among them Leviathan in the Mediterranean, adding that energy and power plants throughout Israel, as well as the supply of oil to Israel via the Mediterranean, would also be targets (al-Akhbar, July 23, 2024).

► “Informed sources” said the Houthis had received messages from Arab countries neighboring Israel expressing their concerns about expanding the scope of the conflict and calling for an “end to Yemen’s air escalation” against Israel. According to the sources, the Houthis viewed the messages as “provocative.” It was also reported that regional mediators conveyed messages from the United States and Gulf states confirming the willingness of neighboring countries to repair the damage caused by the Israeli attack in Yemen. The Houthis responded that “the war with Israel will not stop except by stopping the war in the Gaza Strip and the massacres against the Palestinian people, and the Yemeni response will exceed all the calculations of the Israeli enemy” (al-Akhbar, July 24, 2024).

► Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi reportedly spoke with the Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tariq and asked for his country’s mediation with the Houthis to stop the escalation with Israel. He warned that “exaggeration” in carrying out operations from Yemeni soil against targets in the “occupied territories” would lead to an explosion in the situation in the region. “Egyptian military sources” said that there was a full military alert at the level of all units stationed on the border to monitor Egyptian airspace and that the air defense systems were aimed at shooting down “any foreign object” that entered Egyptian airspace, out of concern that civil aviation traffic would be affected by operations carried out from Yemeni territory towards Israel (al-Akhbar, July 22, 2024).

► Houthi Transportation Minister Abd al-Wahab al-Dara visited the port of al-Hudaydah and claimed that the situation at the port was stable and that there was no cause for concern. According to “sources” at the port, the port is operating at “full capacity,” the workers are working around the clock to receive all the ships, and there is no concern regarding the supply chain of food, medicine, or oil products (Saba, July 22, 2024).

► The foreign minister of Yemen’s Houthi government, Hisham Sharaf, sent a letter to UN Secretary-General António Guterres and UN Security Council President Russian Ambassador Vasily Nebenzia following the Israeli attack in Yemen. He called the attack a “blatant violation”

of international law saying it reflected “the attitude of the Zionist enemy entity with regard to attacking civilian sites.” Sharaf stressed that Israel’s attack on Yemen “will not go unpunished” and called on the General Assembly and Security Council to condemn Israel’s “aggression” and address the foundations of the tension in the Red Sea, which, he claimed, were “represented by ending the military aggression in the Gaza Strip” (Saba, July 21, 2024).

► On July 22, 2024, the UN Security Council convened a special session on the escalation between Israel and the Houthis. Israel’s Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Jonathan Miller said that Israel had no conflict with Yemen or its residents, but noted that the port of al-Hudaydah was used for terrorist purposes and was therefore a legitimate military target. US Representative Robert Wood said that according to intelligence indications, the drone that hit Tel Aviv was manufactured in Iran, and the only way to act against the Houthis was to act against Iran. He expressed support for Israel and its right to defend itself and called on the council to “respond and hold Iran and the Houthis accountable.” UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo warned that “One rash move, one miscalculation could trigger a catastrophe that goes far beyond the borders and, frankly, beyond imagination.” She stressed that it was important for the port of al-Hudaydah to continue operating because it is a lifeline for millions of Yemeni residents. The representatives of China and Russia called for calm and preventing further escalation, linking Houthi actions to the war in the Gaza Strip (UN website, July 22, 2024).

Anti-vessel attacks

► Over the past week, the Houthis continued to report attacks against vessels. Houthi Armed Forces spokesman Yahya Saria reported on the attacks (Yahya Saria’s X account, July 17-24, 2024):

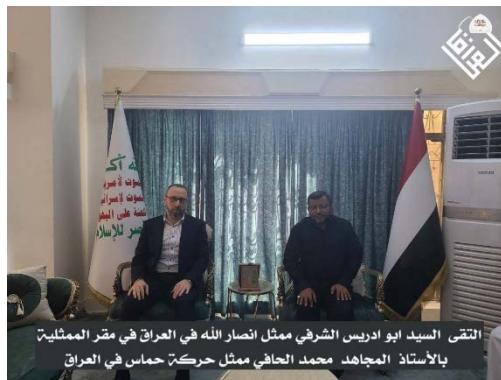
- ◆ **July 19, 2024:** Attack on the ship Lobivia in the Gulf of Aden using ballistic missiles and drones. It was claimed that the hit was precise and direct.
- ◆ **July 21, 2024:** Attack on the American ship Pumba in the Red Sea using ballistic missiles and drones. It was claimed that there was a direct hit.

► The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) agency confirmed the attacks against the Lobivia and Pumba and published reports from the ships’ crews of damage to the vessels. However, the agency reported that the two ships were not in danger and that their crews sustained no injury (UKMTO X account, July 19-20, 2024).

►The US Central Command (CENTCOM) reported that during the past week, its forces intercepted a drone and four unmanned surface vessels (USVs) in the Red Sea. In addition, three missile launchers, two surface-to-surface missiles, and four UAVs were destroyed in coalition strikes in Houthi-controlled areas in Yemen (CENTCOM X account, July 17-24, 2024).

Meeting between Houthi and Hamas representatives

►Abu Idris al-Sharafi, the Houthi representative in Iraq, hosted the Hamas representative in Iraq, Mohammad al-Hafi, at the headquarters in Baghdad. They discussed developments in “Palestine” and the importance of support by all arenas for the “Palestinian resistance” (ansarallah_iraq X account, July 24, 2024).



Meeting between Houthi and Hamas representatives (ansarallah_iraq X account, July 24, 2024)

Houthi-Saudi tension

►On July 23, 2024, Houthi spokesman Mohammad Abdeslam, who also serves as the Houthi representative for the talks with Saudi Arabia, announced an agreement between the Houthi movement and Saudi Arabia in the fields of economy and aviation. The main points of the agreement are the cancellation of recent decisions and measures against financial institutions on both sides and a commitment to refrain from such measures in the future; the resumption and increase of flights by Yemeni Airlines between Sanaa and Jordan, as well as the resumption of flights to Cairo and India; holding meetings between the parties to address managerial, technical and financial challenges; meetings between the sides to discuss economic and humanitarian matters (Mohammad Abdeslam’s X account, July 23, 2024).

►The agreement came in the context of escalating Houthi threats against the Saudi regime, driven by the kingdom’s stance on the war in the Gaza Strip and the Saudi-led measures against financial institutions in Houthi-controlled territories. On July 18, 2024, Houthi Movement leader Abd al-Malik al-Houthi said, “We understand that the reason for Saudi involvement is to serve Israel and obey the United States.” He warned Saudi Arabia of

“dangerous consequences and loss in the full sense of the word if they continue on the path of crime and aggression” (al-Masirah, July 18, 2024).

►In addition, “sources” reported that Yemen had conveyed several messages to Saudi Arabia, in which it confirmed its seriousness regarding the implementation of the equation of “airport versus airport, port versus port, and bank versus bank.” It was also reported that one of these messages led to a disruption of aircraft traffic at Riyadh Airport for half an hour, prompting Saudi Arabia to continue its regional mediation efforts to end its involvement in Yemen (al-Akhbar, July 19, 2024).

Sanctions against the Houthis

►The US Treasury Department imposed sanctions on a Chinese citizen and an Indonesian citizen, five companies from Singapore, the UAE, and the Marshall Islands, and five vessels for their involvement in financing Houthi activities that “destabilize the region.” According to the Treasury Department, the twelve are part of the network of Saeed al-Jamal, an Iranian-based Houthi financier who operates communications companies and vessels for illegal smuggling designed to provide millions of dollars in profits for the Houthis (US Treasury Department website, July 18, 2024).

Iraq

Claims of responsibility of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq

► This week, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed responsibility for four attacks against targets in Israel (Islamic Resistance in Iraq Telegram channel, July 17-24, 2024). The targets of the attacks were:

- ◆ July 21, 2024: “Vital target” in Eilat using a UAV.
- ◆ July 19, 2024: “Military target” in Haifa using an advanced cruise missile.
- ◆ July 17, 2024: “Vital Target” in Eilat using a UAV.
- ◆ July 24, 2024: “Vital target” north of Eilat using drones. The IDF Spokesperson said fighter jets had successfully intercepted two UAVs en route to Israeli territory from the east. The UAVs did not penetrate Israel and there were no casualties (IDF Spokesperson’s Telegram channel, July 24, 2024).



Cruise missile being launched at Haifa (Islamic Resistance in Iraq Telegram channel, July 19, 2024)

Nujaba secretary-general launches a drone to Eilat

► To mark Ashura on July 17, 2024, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq released a video from a previous drone launch at Eilat, showing Akram al-Kaabi, secretary-general of the Nujaba Movement, helping assemble and launch the drone. Al-Kaabi appears in the video with his face uncovered, unlike the other operatives, whose faces have been blurred (Islamic Resistance in Iraq Telegram channel, July 17, 2024).



Right: Al-Kaabi screws the propeller screw of the UAV. Left: Al-Kaabi next to one of the operatives (Islamic Resistance in Iraq Telegram channel, July 17, 2024)

► Firas al-Yassir, a member of the political council of the Nujaba Movement, noted that through the video with al-Kaabi, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq was sending an important and powerful message emphasizing the decision of the Palestine Support Front to continue its activities, and the perseverance of the “resistance in Iraq” in demanding “the expulsion of the American occupation from Iraq.” He also claimed that the video was a message to any country occupying Iraq and violating its sovereignty (Nujaba Movement X account, July 18, 2024).

Cooperation between Iraqi militias and the Houthis

► Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq secretary-general Qais al-Khazali visited the Houthis' new headquarters in Baghdad. He met with Abu Idris al-Sharafi, the Houthi representative in Iraq, and expressed

solidarity with the Houthi movement after the Israeli airstrike in the city of al-Hudaydah, Yemen, in response to the Houthis' attacks against Israel (al-Khazali's X account, July 21, 2024).



Al-Khazali (left) next to Abu Idris al-Sharafi (al-Khazali's X account, July 21, 2024)

- ▶ Haidar al-Gharawi, secretary-general of the Iraqi militia Ansar Allah al-Awfiya (AAA), met in Baghdad with Abu Idris al-Sharafi, the Houthi representative in Iraq, to discuss regional and international developments and “the great role of the Yemeni people in supporting the Palestinian people.” The two also discussed recent attacks against several Yemeni cities carried out by “allies of the Zionist entity.” They called the attacks “pathetic attempts to restore their false honor and clear proof of their defeat” (Ansar Allah al-Awfiya Telegram channel, July 23, 2024).
- ▶ According to a report whose reliability is unclear, hundreds of Houthi fighters have arrived in Iraq in recent weeks to undergo training by Iranians and experts in the manufacture of drones and missiles at special bases located on the outskirts of Baghdad and other governorates in Iraq. It was also claimed that the Iraqi government, under the direct guidance of the pro-Iranian militias, had allocated large sums of money for the Houthis and their families. According to the report, the training operation will continue to be conducted under Iranian supervision, with some Houthis remaining in Iraq and others returning to Yemen (Newseast7 X account, July 24, 2024).
- ▶ “An Iranian military source” said that he expected the Iraqi militias to enter a strong confrontation against Israel after the attack on the port of al-Hudaydah. According to the source, it was the Houthis who asked the militias to join the direct campaign between them and Israel (1news-iq.com, July 22, 2024).

Resumption of attacks against US bases

- ▶ US Department of Defense spokeswoman Sabrina Singh confirmed that US and coalition forces at the Ain al-Assad base in Iraq had been attacked by drones on July 16, 2024. She noted

that one drone was successfully intercepted and the other hit the base grounds, causing minor damage. She stressed that necessary steps were being taken to ensure the security of US forces and that they were working together with the Iraqi forces (US Department of Defense, July 18, 2024). “Sources” noted that the attack had targeted a shopping center and a gas station in the American military compound (al-Mayadeen, July 18, 2024).

►Ali al-Fatlawi, a senior Ansar Allah al-Awfiya member, said that military operations against the American presence in the country had resumed after the expiration of the four-month deadline granted by the Iraqi “resistance” organizations to the government to complete negotiations with the United States on the withdrawal of the forces from the country. He warned that any American response would be met with an escalation in operations against American targets and interests in Iraq and that they were not afraid of American reactions (Shafaq News, July 17, 2024).

►According to a “source” in the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, the attack on the Ain al-Assad base on July 16, 2024, was preparation for future attacks against American targets. The “source” added that there could be an escalation in military operations following the delay of the United States regarding the withdrawal of its forces from Iraq, as well as in response to the “Israeli crimes” committed in the Gaza Strip with American support (al-Akhbar, July 19, 2024).