



# Spotlight on Iran and the Shiite Axis

November 6—13, 2024

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## Highlights<sup>1</sup>

- ▶ Senior Iranian officials stressed Israel's alleged ongoing failure in the ongoing campaign against Hezbollah and Hamas. The Supreme Leader of Iran declared that jihad in Lebanon, Gaza, and "Palestine" would lead to victory and that Israel is being defeated in the regional campaign.
- ▶ The Iranian vice president participated in the Arab-Islamic summit in Saudi Arabia. He stressed the need to establish an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon and criticized the failure of international institutions to stop Israel's actions in the two battle zones.
- ▶ Senior Iranian officials participated in a conference commemorating Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in Tehran. The senior officials paid tribute to Nasrallah and stressed Hezbollah's ability to continue its campaign against Israel.
- ▶ Iraq's national security advisor met in Tehran with senior Iranian government officials, including the IRGC commander and the Qods Force commander. The visit took place amid reports concerning Tehran's intention to respond to the Israeli attack on Iran by launching a military attack on Israel from Iraqi territory.
- ▶ The Islamic Resistance in Iraq issued 25 claims of responsibility for attacks against targets in Israel. The Saraya Awliya al-Dam militia claimed responsibility for three more attacks. The IDF Spokesperson announced the interception of more than ten drones. Another drone fell in the Mitzpe Ramon area, with no casualties. Kata'ib Hezbollah claimed they had not been asked to assist in the Iranian response against Israel.

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

- ▶ The pro-Iranian militias continued their attacks against American bases in Syria. US forces responded with airstrikes against militia targets in eastern Syria.
- ▶ The Houthis claimed responsibility for two ballistic missile attacks against Israel. The IDF Spokesperson said the missiles were intercepted before penetrating Israeli territory.
- ▶ The Houthis claimed responsibility for attacks against an aircraft carrier and two American destroyers. The US Department of Defense confirmed the attempted attack. There were no casualties, and no damage was caused. The Americans attacked Houthi military targets in the Sana'a area.

## Iranian involvement in the Palestinian arena

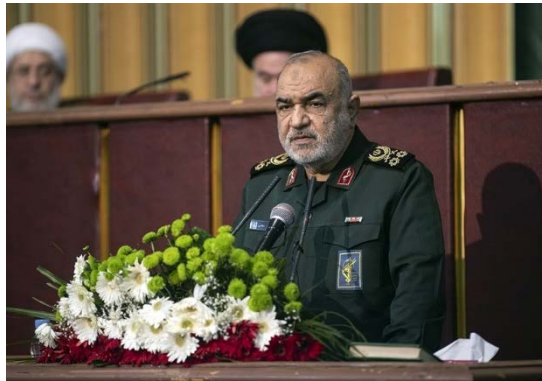
- ▶ Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei told members of the Assembly of Experts that jihad in Lebanon, the Gaza Strip, and “Palestine” would ultimately lead to victory and that the shaheeds had brought great honor and strength to Islam and the “resistance front” in recent days. He stated that Hezbollah had evolved from a small group into a powerful and undefeated organization, while Hamas continues to resist, representing a setback for the “Zionist regime,” which had aimed to eliminate the organization (Tasnim, November 7, 2024).



**The Supreme Leader of Iran meets with members of the Assembly of Experts  
(Supreme Leader's website, November 7, 2024)**

- ▶ IRGC commander Hossein Salami said in a speech to the Assembly of Experts that in the past, there had been direct and indirect confrontations between Iran and Israel, but they were sporadic and gradually intensified. He noted that the intelligence failure of the “Zionist regime” on October 7, 2023, made it realize its vulnerability and proved that the time between tactical action and strategic defeat is very short for it. Salami added that Israel lacks strategic depth and its ability to suffer defeat is very limited, so its first defeat could lead to its extinction. According to him, due to the regional, social, and economic conditions and internal tensions

in Israel, it now faces serious existential challenges, and without American support, it could not survive even one day. Referring to the war in the Gaza Strip, Salami said that despite all the “crimes” Israel had committed over the past year, it had not recorded a single achievement. He said Israel thought that by removing Hezbollah’s leadership and commanders it would be possible to stop the organization’s influence, but the organization had recovered despite the losses it had suffered, continued to stand against it, and the balance changes daily in favor of the “resistance” (Tasnim, November 6, 2024).



**IRGC Commander Salami (Tasnim, November 6, 2024)**

- ▶ IRGC commander Salami told a conference in the city of Mashhad that the “enemy” had arrived on the battlefield with all the capabilities at its disposal, while Iran was fighting with it using only some of its capabilities. He added that the “Zionist regime” had not achieved anything since the outbreak of the war in the Gaza Strip and that the IDF had managed to take control of only three points in the Gaza Strip: the Philadelphi route, the Netzarim area, and limited areas in the northern Gaza Strip. Referring to the developments in Lebanon, Salami said Hezbollah had managed to compensate for the damage caused to it and regain control of the battlefield. He noted that despite the extensive attacks in Lebanon, Israel had not managed to take over any important part of southern Lebanon and that Hezbollah fighters, who do not know the fate of their families, continue to fight courageously, causing a gradual decline in the self-confidence and hope of the Zionists to win. Salami also referred to the American elections, saying that their results proved that the “resistance” in the Gaza Strip could change “warmongering” American administrations (Tasnim, November 8, 2024).
- ▶ Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said at a political meeting in Tehran that if all Islamic countries were united, the “Zionist regime” would not dare to spill the blood of the peoples of “Palestine” and Lebanon as it does. He added that Iran’s priority is to develop relations with Muslim countries and its neighbors (IRNA, November 7, 2024).

► President Pezeshkian spoke with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and discussed relations between the two countries and the Arab-Islamic summit in Riyadh. Pezeshkian expressed his confidence that the summit would have practical results in “stopping the crimes of the Zionist regime and the war in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon,” but said he would not attend due to scheduling constraints (Iranian president’s website, November 10, 2024).

► At his weekly press conference, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei addressed the summit in Riyadh attended by Iran’s vice president. He expressed hope that the meeting would include action that would bring an end to the war by the “Zionist regime.” He said the main reason for the continuation of the “Zionist crimes” was American support for Israel, which included transferring weapons and blocking any resolution against it in international forums. He added that the international community looks forward to preventing the continuation of the “crimes of genocide and the crimes of the Zionist regime” (IRNA, November 11, 2024).

► Iran’s first vice president, Mohammad Reza Aref, spoke at the Riyadh summit about the failure of international institutions to bring an end to the “genocide” of the Palestinians and the “crimes of the Zionist regime” in Lebanon. He noted that the United States is the main supporter of Israel and that the world looks forward to fulfilling the promise of the new American administration to end the war in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon. Aref stressed the need for an immediate ceasefire in both arenas, the transfer of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip and Lebanon, and the restoration of essential infrastructure damaged in the war. He added that Iran’s proposal to solve the Palestinian problem is to hold a referendum among all Palestinians, including Muslims, Christians, and Jews, to determine their own fate (Tasnim, November 11, 2024).

► Iran’s representative to the UN, Amir Saeed Iravani, called for Israel’s suspension from the UN General Assembly due to its “blatant violation of the UN Charter and international law.” He noted that Israel commits “war crimes and crimes against humanity,” disregards the rulings of the International Court of Justice, poses a direct threat to international peace and security, and must be held accountable for its actions (Fars, November 7, 2024).

## Iranian involvement in Lebanon and Syria

► On November 9, 2024, a conference was held in Tehran in memory of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, entitled “The Nasrallah School.” The conference was attended by representatives from 13 countries and senior Iranian government officials, including the foreign minister, the

speaker of the Majles, the head of the judiciary, and the commander of the Qods Force. The following are the main points of the speeches:

- ◆ Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Nasrallah was a symbol of resistance and courage not only for Lebanon but for the entire Muslim world and freedom-loving peoples. He said Nasrallah had succeeded in changing the equation in the region and turning the “resistance” into an influential factor in the regional and even global balance of power. Araghchi added that the “Zionist regime” not only endangers regional stability and security but poses a serious challenge to the world order. The foreign minister also said that the international community must fulfill its responsibility and act to stop Israel’s “crimes,” and warned that if the war expands, its consequences will not be limited to the region. He stressed the need to achieve a ceasefire in Lebanon, Iran’s support for the “oppressed peoples of the region,” and the right of the “resistance” to act against the occupation and “aggression” (Iranian Foreign Ministry website, November 9, 2024).



**The Iranian foreign minister at a conference commemorating Nasrallah  
(Iranian Foreign Ministry website, November 9, 2024)**

- ◆ Mohammad Javad Zarif, Iran’s vice president for strategy, said that the “Zionists” should know that Hezbollah was created when they occupied Lebanon and that their ongoing acts of violence in Gaza and Lebanon only serve to strengthen “resistance.” He stressed they would never succeed in destroying the “resistance,” saying they have to abandon the idea that it depends on foreign support. According to him, the “resistance” is the result of the occupation, and as long as the occupation persists, it will be strong. Zarif added that the Supreme Leader had proposed a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: holding a referendum among the original residents of “Palestine” to determine

their fate, which could pave the way for a peaceful future in the region (SNN, November 9, 2024).

◆ Majles speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf claimed that Israel is extremely humiliated because, despite the deaths of several Hezbollah leaders and commanders, its airstrikes and ground maneuvers, it had not managed to advance inside Lebanese territory, and Hezbollah continues to fire into Israel (Tasnim, November 9, 2024).

► Mojtaba Amani, Iran’s ambassador to Beirut, who was injured in a pager explosion in Lebanon on September 17, 2024, was first seen in public on November 12, 2024, in a meeting he held with Iranian Foreign Minister Araghchi ahead of his return to Beirut. Araghchi gave the ambassador instructions for his return to Lebanon and stressed the need to take all political and international measures to immediately stop the “crimes of the Zionist regime against Lebanon” (ISNA, November 12, 2024).



**The Iranian ambassador to Lebanon (ISNA, November 12, 2024)**

► In his first television interview since his injury, Amani referred to the pager explosions, calling it a “war crime.” He said Hezbollah had purchased the devices but denied they had been bought from Iran. He claimed Hezbollah had not used pagers for military purposes, adding that he was an example of having the device in his possession for “emergency messages.” Amani stressed that although it was a “lethal blow” for Hezbollah, the “resistance” in Lebanon came out with its head held high and did not surrender (al-Alam, November 12, 2024).

◀ Foreign Minister Araghchi met with his special envoy to the West Asian region, Mohammad-Reza Rauf Sheibani, who gave him a report on his recent mission to Lebanon. Sheibani reportedly reported to the foreign minister about the “successes and achievements of the resistance of the Lebanese people and Hezbollah” in the campaign against Israel (Iranian Foreign Ministry website, November 10, 2024).

► Iran condemned the attack attributed to Israel in the al-Sayyida Zaynab quarter in southern Damascus on November 10, 2024. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei condemned the “repeated attacks” against Syria’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, saying that the continuation of the “crimes of the Zionist regime” is the result of unconditional support from the United States and some European countries for Israel. He called on the international community to take practical steps against Israel, including an arms embargo, expulsion from the UN, and the prosecution of Israel’s leaders (Fars, November 10, 2024).

## Iranian involvement in Iraq

► On November 9, 2024, Iranian Military Attaché in Baghdad Maj. Gen. Majid Qalipour met with Iraqi National Security Advisor Qassem al-Araji to discuss ways to strengthen security and stability in both countries and advance understandings on border control and the fight against terrorism and smuggling. Al-Araji stressed that Iraq strongly rejects the use of its airspace to attack Iran or any other country in the region (IRNA, November 9, 2024).

► On November 10, 2024, al-Araji visited Tehran and met with Iranian Foreign Minister Araghchi. The two discussed the latest developments in the Middle East and stressed the need for continued cooperation to achieve full and permanent security for the borders of the two countries and to stop the war in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon (al-Araji’s X account, November 10, 2024). The Iraqi advisor reportedly conveyed a message from the United States regarding the possible Iranian response to the Israeli attack on Iran on October 25-26, 2024 (Sky News in Arabic, November 10, 2024).

► During his visit to Tehran, al-Araji also met with Ali-Akbar Ahmadian, the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council; IRGC commander Hossein Salami; and Qods Force commander Esmail Qaani (Tasnim, November 11, 2024). The Iraqi national security advisor’s meetings with senior Iranian government officials took place amid reports concerning Tehran’s intention to respond to the Israeli attack by launching a military attack on Israel from Iraqi territory.



The Qods Force commander meets with Iraq's national security advisor  
(ISNA, November 10, 2024)

## Operations of the Shiite militias

### Iraq

#### Militia activity against Israel

► This past week (November 6-13, 2024, as of noon), the Islamic Resistance in Iraq issued 25 claims of responsibility for attacks against 22 targets in Israel using drones (Islamic Resistance in Iraq Telegram channel, November 6-13, 2024). In addition, the Saraya Awliya al-Dam militia announced an attack on three “vital” targets in Israel using swarms of drones (Saraya Awliya al-Dam Telegram channel, November 10, 2024). The IDF Spokesperson reported the interception of at least 12 drones that arrived from the east, most of them outside Israeli territory. Another drone fell in the Mitzpe Ramon area. There were no casualties (IDF Spokesperson, November 6-13, 2024).



Right: A drone launched at a “military target” in southern Israel (Islamic Resistance in Iraq Telegram channel, November 6, 2024). Left: A drone being launched by Saraya Awliya al-Dam (Saraya Awliya al-Dam Telegram channel, November 10, 2024)

► A “source close to the militias” claimed that they had succeeded in producing a new generation of drones capable of penetrating Israel’s three most advanced air defense systems.



Seventy percent of the drones launched from this generation have reached their target, he said (baghdadtoday.news, November 10, 2024).

►Haidar al-Gharawi, secretary-general of the Ansar Allah al-Awfiya militia, said in a statement marking 40 days since Hezbollah secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah was killed that “the resistance will continue, and the fighting will not stop until victory and liberation are achieved” (Haidar al-Gharawi’s X account, November 6, 2024).

►American and Israeli intelligence reportedly monitored the transfer of IRGC’s drones and ballistic missiles to pro-Iranian militias in Iraq in preparation for a possible Iranian attack on Israel. “US administration sources” reported that National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and Secretary of State Antony Blinken had warned Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia’ al-Sudani of the possibility that Israel would attack Iraq if the Iraqi government did not take steps to prevent the expected attack by militias in the service of Iran (Axios, November 6, 2024). According to Iraqi Foreign Minister Fouad Hussein, al-Sudani managed to convince senior Iraqi militia officials to commit not to put Iraq in a situation that could lead to war against it (alquds, November 6, 2024).

►In this context, Kata’ib Hezbollah noted that they had not been asked to assist Iran in response to “the latest Zionist aggression,” but that they would respond “decisively” if Israel considered attacking Iraq. The militia explained that the response to any “Zionist attack against one of the fronts will be directly from that same front and not through other elements of the resistance” (Kaf Telegram channel, November 7, 2024).

## **Transfer of militia weapons from Iraq to Syria**

►Trucks loaded with weapons and logistic equipment of pro-Iranian militias reportedly entered Syria through the border crossing between the two countries (Ayn al-Furat, November 5, 2024). In this context, Kata’ib Hezbollah claimed that the “rumors” about the transfer of weapons and the preparation of an Iranian response from Iraqi territory were nothing more than “an attempt by the enemy to gain additional American support” (Kaf Telegram channel, November 7, 2024).

►Hundreds of Iraqi militia operatives reportedly arrived in Deir ez-Zor in eastern Syria (deirEzzor24, November 8, 2024).

►Elements of the Popular Mobilization, the umbrella organization under which the pro-Iranian militias are operating in Iraq, reportedly evacuated weapons depots in the Shamsin area, about 20 kilometers south of Homs in Syria, to an unknown area, for fear of an Israeli attack. It

was noted that the warehouses had been inside a driving school in Shamsin (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, November 11, 2024).

## **Another attack attributed to a pro-Iranian militia in Saudi Arabia**

► The militia called “the Islamic Resistance from the Land of the Two Holy Mosques,” which claims to be operating from Saudi territory, issued a new claim of responsibility for attacking a “target” in Eilat with drones. The militia stressed that it would continue its activities to support “the resistance in Lebanon and Palestine and will not stop unless the Zionist aggression against Lebanon and Gaza stops” (Islamic Resistance from the Land of the Two Holy Mosques Telegram channel, November 12, 2024). This is the militia’s third claim of responsibility after previous announcements on October 26 and 31, 2024. In all cases, there has been no confirmation of the alleged attacks and no verification of the militia’s actual existence.

## **Militia attacks against US forces in eastern Syria**

► On November 9, 2024, it was reported that the American base in the Conoco gas field in eastern Syria was attacked by a drone (al-Amid Telegram channel, November 9, 2024). The al-Thawriyun (“The Revolutionaries”) cover militia claimed responsibility for the attack (Ahjhvkotf Telegram channel, November 9, 2024). On November 10, 2024, a rocket attack was reported against the American base near the Omar oil field in Deir ez-Zor in eastern Syria (al-Mayadeen, November 10, 2024).

► The US Central Command (CENTCOM) announced that in response to attacks by pro-Iranian militias against US forces in eastern Syria, US aircraft attacked nine targets at two militia sites in the al-Mayadeen area in eastern Syria (CENTCOM website, November 11, 2024). Four militiamen and nine others were reportedly wounded in the US airstrikes, three of them in an attack on a communications post between al-Shabli and al-Mayadeen (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, November 11, 2024).

► On November 12, 2024, air defense systems at the US base in the Conoco gas field in northeastern Syria shot down a militia drone that penetrated the base’s airspace. In addition, artillery shells were fired from the base at areas controlled by the Syrian regime and pro-Iranian militias in Deir ez-Zor. Another militia drone was shot down by the defense systems at the al-Shadadi American base in the al-Hasakah region in northeastern Syria (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, November 12, 2024). A short time later, CENTCOM announced that its forces had attacked an arms depot and logistics headquarters of one of the pro-Iranian

militias in response to the attack on the al-Shadadi base. There were reportedly no casualties or damage in the attack on the base (CENTCOM X account, November 13, 2024).

► In this context, a “senior militia official” reported that the militias do not comply with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia’ al-Sudani’s request to stop their operations against the United States in the region (1News.com, November 8, 2024).

## Yemen

### The direct confrontation between Israel and the Houthis

► This past week, Houthi forces spokesman Yahya Saria announced two attacks against Israel:

- ◆ November 8, 2024 - An attack on the Nevatim base using a “Filastin 2” (“Palestine 2”) hypersonic ballistic missile. No damage to the target was reported, but according to Saria, the missile “reached its target” (Yahya Saria’s X account, November 8, 2024). According to the IDF Spokesperson, a missile launched from Yemen at the Dead Sea and the Arava region was intercepted by IDF forces (IDF Spokesperson, November 8, 2024).
- ◆ November 11, 2024 – An attack on the Nahal Sorek IDF base, southeast of the city of Jaffa (Tel Aviv), with a hypersonic “Filastin 2” ballistic missile. According to Saria, the missile hit its target and caused a fire near the base (Yahya Saria’s X account, November 11, 2024). According to the IDF Spokesperson, the Air Force intercepted one launch from Yemen before it entered Israeli territory (IDF Spokesperson, November 11, 2024).

### Additional Houthi military activity

► On November 8, 2024, Yahya Saria said Houthi forces intercepted a US MQ-9 drone while it was in the airspace of Yemen’s Houthi-controlled al-Jawf Governorate. According to Saria, this is the 12th MQ-9 drone intercepted by the Houthis since the beginning of the war in the Gaza Strip in October 2023 (Yahya Saria’s X account, November 8, 2024).



**The scene of the American drone crash (Yahya Saria’s Telegram channel, November 8, 2024)**

► On November 12, 2024, Yahya Saria announced two attacks against US Navy vessels (Yahya Saria's X account, November 12, 2024): an attack on the US aircraft carrier Abraham (i.e., Abraham Lincoln) in the Arabian Sea using several cruise missiles and drones as US forces were preparing to attack Yemeni territory. According to Saria, the attack achieved its objectives and thwarted the American plan; an attack against two US Navy destroyers in the Red Sea using several ballistic missiles and drones. It was claimed that the attack achieved its objectives. US Department of Defense spokesperson Pat Ryder confirmed that the Houthis had launched at least eight drones, five anti-vessel ballistic missiles, and three cruise missiles at two US destroyers in the Bab al-Mandeb Strait area, but all launches were successfully intercepted and there were no casualties. Ryder also denied Houthi claims that they also attacked the aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln (US Department of Defense website, November 12, 2024).

### **US airstrikes against the Houthis**

► In the early morning hours of November 10, 2024, three American-British attacks were reported against "Sana'a lands" in Yemen (al-Mayadeen, November 10, 2024). US Department of Defense spokesperson Pat Ryder confirmed that CENTCOM forces had carried out precision strikes against several weapons depots in Houthi-controlled areas on November 9-10, 2024. He noted that the facilities contained advanced conventional weapons used by the Houthis to attack military and civilian vessels in international waters in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden (US Department of Defense website, November 12, 2024).

► Muhammad al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthi political bureau, stressed that the ongoing attacks by the United States and Britain on Sana'a would not deter them from continuing their military activity and support for the Gaza Strip (Mohammad al-Bukhaiti's X account, November 10, 2024).

► The Houthi House of Representatives said in a statement that the continuation of the American, British, and "Zionist" attacks was a "blatant violation of Yemeni sovereignty, a violation of international humanitarian law, and a systematic attack on the capabilities and infrastructure of the Yemeni people." It also noted that the attacks constituted a "war crime" and were a pathetic attempt to dissuade Yemen from continuing to support the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples (al-Masirah, November 11, 2024).

### **Statements by senior Houthi officials**

► In his weekly speech, Houthi leader Abd al-Malik al-Houthi made clear that the results of the US presidential elections would not affect the Houthi position and that "our enemies have no

choice but to stop the aggression and siege on the Gaza Strip, as well as the aggression against Lebanon.” He added, “Neither Trump nor Biden nor any criminal in this world can dissuade us from our steadfast fundamental and religious position in support of the Palestinian people. No matter the degree of escalation or aggression against Yemen, it will not affect this position” (al-Masirah, November 8, 2024).

►Mahdi al-Mashat, head of the Houthi supreme political council, expressed hope that the Arab-Islamic summit held in Saudi Arabia would begin to take action and not deal only with speeches and declarations. He urged the leaders to declare at least an economic blockade of the “Zionist entity” and all its sectors, and support for the right of the Palestinian people to resist it. He added that any neglect of the Palestinian cause would prolong Israel’s survival. He claimed Israel poses a “strategic threat” to all the countries of the region, especially due to the “Zionist aspiration” to expand its geographical area and influence and become “the policeman and ruler of the region” (al-Masirah, November 11, 2024).

►Houthi political council member Mohammad Ali al-Houthi said following the dismissal of Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Galant that “the failure and the clear division among the Israeli enemy are the result of Netanyahu’s confrontational authoritarian mentality.” According to al-Houthi, the Israeli prime minister “may act to obtain special powers for his government in the near future, such as freezing elections, as an additional step after the appointment of Israel Katz as the entity’s interim defense minister” (Mohammad Ali al-Houthi’s X account, November 6, 2024).

►Houthi political council member Mohammad al-Bukhaiti made it clear that the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States would not change the Houthis’ positions. According to al-Bukhaiti, the Houthis’ military operations in the Red Sea and deep inside the “Zionist entity” will continue and will not stop until the “genocide” in the Gaza Strip is stopped and the “siege” of its residents lifted. He stressed that any escalation would be met with escalation (Mohammed al-Bukhaiti’s X account, November 6, 2024).