



Spotlight on Iran and the Shiite Axis

June 11—18, 2025

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Highlights¹

- ▶ On June 13, 2025, Israel launched a preemptive attack in Iran, which includes attacks against dozens of military and security targets, government targets, and nuclear facilities. Senior Iranian regime officials accuse Israel of committing “crimes” and continue to threaten that Israel will continue to pay a “heavy price” for its ongoing attacks.
- ▶ Before the Israeli attack, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian met with the deputy secretary-general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Jamil Mazhar, and emphasized Iran’s support for the Palestinian people.
- ▶ The commander of the IRGC’s Qods Force, Esmail Qaani, declared that despite the efforts to weaken Hezbollah and the other “resistance forces,” they continue to stand firm, the “resistance” would continue, and the final victory would belong to the believers.
- ▶ The Houthis claimed they had carried out attacks against targets in Israel in coordination with the Iranians and threatened to act against any country that attacks Iran. The IDF Spokesperson reported one missile launched from Yemen that fell in the Hebron area, injuring three people, and another missile that disintegrated on its way to Israel.
- ▶ The pro-Iranian militias in Iraq warned they would act against American interests if the United States joined the fight against Iran alongside Israel.

The military campaign between Iran and Israel

- ▶ In the early morning hours of June 13, 2025, Israel’s security and intelligence forces began a series of attacks in Iran, including dozens of military, security, and governmental targets and nuclear program sites throughout Iran. The IDF Spokesperson reported this was a preemptive attack aimed at damaging Iran’s nuclear program and in response to the Iranian regime’s ongoing aggression against Israel. According to the IDF, the strikes eliminated more than 20

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

senior military officials and commanders, as well as nuclear scientists. Among those killed are the chief of the General Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, Mohammad Bagheri; the commander of the Revolutionary Guards, Hossein Salami; the commander of the Khatam al-Anbiya Emergency Headquarters, Gholam-Ali Rashid, and his replacement, Ali Shadmani; and the commander of the Revolutionary Guards' Aerospace Force, Amir-Ali Hajizadeh (IDF Spokesperson, June 13-18, 2025).

► Iran confirmed the death of the senior officials, and Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei announced the appointment of replacements. It should be noted that what happened to Qods Force commander Esmail Qaani and whether he was harmed in the strikes has not been published. On June 13, 2025, the Iranian Revolutionary Guards announced the launch of Operation True Promise 3, which included the launch of hundreds of missiles and drones at Israel (Iranian media, June 13-18, 2025). Despite Iran's claims that the attacks were aimed only at military facilities and air force bases, there were hits in civilian residential areas in Israel and at least 23 civilians were killed (Israeli media, June 13-18, 2025).

► Senior Iranian regime officials accused Israel of committing "crimes" for violating the sovereignty of the Islamic Republic and threatened that the "Zionist regime" would pay a heavy price. The following are prominent reactions:²

◆ The Supreme Leader of Iran, Ali Khamenei, issued a poster with the inscription: "The battle begins, Imam Ali returns to the battle of Khaybar"³(Iranian Supreme Leader's X account in Persian, June 18, 2025). Another message by Khamenei reads: "The terrorist Zionist entity must be dealt with by force; We will never bargain with it" (Iranian Supreme Leader's X account in Arabic, June 18, 2025).

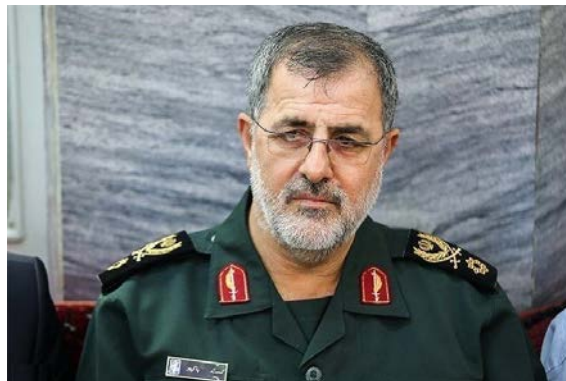
² For further information on previous statements by Iranian leaders, see the ITIC's study from June 15, 2025, "[Resistance Axis' Reactions to the Israel-Iran Military Conflict](#)"

³ Named after the massacre that according to Islamic tradition was carried out against Jews by the Muslims in Khaybar, Saudi Arabia, in the year 7 AH (628 CE), and serves as a symbol of their defeat.



Khamenei's poster of the Battle of Khaybar (Iranian Supreme Leader's X account, June 18, 2025)

- ◆ The chief of the General Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, Abdolrahim Mousavi, said the actions of the Iranian armed forces so far were intended for deterrence and that there would soon be punitive actions. He called on the residents of Tel Aviv and Haifa to leave to “save their lives” (Tasnim, June 16, 2025).
- ◆ The incoming IRGC commander, Mohammad Pakpour, said that even if the Israeli attacks stop, Iran will continue to operate until the end. He claimed that the extent of the damage and casualties in Israel was greater than what had been reported and that Iran had destroyed important areas in Israel and would continue to do so (Tabnak, June 16, 2025).



Mohammad Pakpour (IRNA, June 13, 2025)

- ◆ Ahmad Vahidi, advisor to the IRGC commander, stated that Iran is ready for an all-out war, is not worried about its continuation, and that it has taken into account all possibilities. He noted that the claim that Iran's missile stockpile has declined is a joke; that Iran has not yet strategically exhausted its missile capabilities; and that at any moment it sees fit, it will introduce modern means, including a new generation of

missiles. He added that in the coming days, the “Zionist regime” will see what capabilities Iran’s armed forces possess and will be surprised at Iran’s capabilities (Tasnim, June 17, 2025).

◆ In response to the Israeli Air Force attack on the Iranian Broadcasting Authority building, IRGC spokesman Ali-Mohammad Naeini said the “Zionist regime” launches a combined and powerful attack against the Islamic Republic, and that the situation clearly reflects the Supreme Leader’s words regarding the need to respond to the enemy with destructive force. He noted that despite the harm in recent years to Iranian commanders, scientists, and ordinary citizens, the Islamic Republic is growing stronger by the day, both in the military and other fields. He added that media is the continuation of the battlefield and that the “Zionist regime” fears the media’s ability to determine how the campaign will be portrayed in the public’s eyes and to shape public opinion (Tasnim, June 16, 2025).



The IRGC spokesman (Tasnim, June 16, 2025)

◆ Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said in a conversation with reporters that Iran is not interested in expanding the war to other countries or the region unless it is forced to do so. He noted that if the “aggression” stops, its responses will also stop. He expressed regret over the silence of the UN Security Council and said it was unfortunate that several European countries blamed Iran instead of condemning Israel. He stressed that Iran expects the international community not only to condemn but also to punish the “Zionist regime” (Tasnim, June 15, 2025).

Iran’s involvement in the Palestinian arena

► On June 11, 2025, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian met with the deputy secretary-general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Jamil Mazhar, and declared

that support for the oppressed around the world, especially the Palestinian people, constitutes a principled and unchanging policy stemming from the pure principles of the Islamic Revolution. He noted that the main reason for the continuation of the “crimes of the Zionist regime” is the lack of unity and coordination among the Islamic countries and that the enemies of Islam use various means to create conflict between the Muslim countries and provide Israel with a safe space to continue its “crimes” in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, and other Islamic territories. He stressed Iran’s determination to create unity among the Islamic countries in support of the Palestinian people and to use all the diplomatic and political tools at its disposal to stop the “crimes of the Zionists” in the Gaza Strip (Iranian president’s website, June 11, 2025).



**The Iranian president meets with the PFLP deputy secretary-general
(Iranian president’s website, June 11, 2025)**

Iran’s involvement in Lebanon

► Esmail Qaani, the commander of the IRGC’s Qods Force, said at a memorial ceremony for the fallen soldiers of the IRGC’s ground forces that the resistance of the peoples in Lebanon, “Palestine,” and Yemen was a direct continuation of the line of the brave fighters of the Iran-Iraq War. He noted that Israel, which claims to be the strongest in the region, fought against Hezbollah for 66 days with the backing of the United States and NATO and managed to advance less than two kilometers into Lebanese territory. According to Qaani, Israel’s failure is visible to all, but the global media is controlled by the “Zionist regime” and therefore claims that Hezbollah has weakened. He added that despite all the efforts to weaken Hezbollah and the other “resistance forces,” they remain steadfast, the “resistance” will continue, and the final victory will belong to the believers (Tasnim, June 12, 2025).



The Qods Force commander (Tasnim, June 12, 2025)

Iran's involvement in Iraq

► On June 13, 2025, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi spoke with his Iraqi counterpart, Fuad Hussein, who condemned Israel's attacks on Iran. Araghchi expressed appreciation for the position of the Iraqi government, the Iraqi people, political leaders, and clerics, who condemned Israel's attacks. He stressed that Iran is determined to defend its sovereignty, national security, and citizens and to respond resolutely to "Zionist aggression" (Iranian Foreign Ministry website, June 13, 2025).

► On June 15, 2025, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian spoke with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia' al-Sudani and thanked him for his expressions of solidarity in the face of the Israeli attacks. He noted that the Israeli attack on Iranian soil clearly illustrates the "criminal and aggressive nature of the Zionist regime," and that if Israel's continued attack on Muslim countries is not stopped in a determined and united manner by the Islamic nation, there is no doubt that other countries in the region will sooner or later be exposed to Israeli aggression. He stressed that if the Israeli attacks continue, Iran's response will be more painful. Pezeshkian added that the Iraqi government must be vigilant and tighten security around its borders and airspace to prevent the use of its territory against the Islamic Republic. He also stressed that the Muslim countries bear joint responsibility for the "aggressive actions of the Zionist regime" and must be alert and determined to stand up against these threats and unite against Israel (Iranian president's website, June 15, 2025).

The Houthis in Yemen

The direct confrontation between the Houthis and Israel

► In the past week, the Houthis' military spokesman, Yahya Saria, issued one statement of responsibility, claiming that attacks had been carried out against "sensitive sites" in the "occupied area of Jaffa" by several Palestine-2 hypersonic ballistic missiles on several

occasions over the course of 24 hours. He claimed that the launches were “coordinated” with the Iranian response and that “the goals were successfully achieved.” He also saluted Iran, its leadership, and its people for the confrontation with the “brutal Zionist aggression” and declared that they were sending “blow after blow” at the “Zionist” facilities, headquarters, and bases. Saria reiterated the Houthis’ position regarding “support” for the Gaza Strip and the “mujahideen” and called on the other Arab and Islamic countries to join (Yahya Saria’s Telegram channel, June 15, 2025). On June 13, 2025, shortly before the start of the Iranian missile attack, a ballistic missile was launched from Yemen towards Israeli territory. The missile landed in the Hebron region, injuring three people. On June 16, 2025, it was reported that a missile launched from Yemen fell before reaching Israeli territory after causing alerts (IDF Spokesperson and the Israeli media, June 13 and 16, 2025).

► On the night of June 14, 2025, a targeted Israeli strike was reported against the Houthis’ chief of staff, Mohammed Abd al-Karim al-Ghamari, during a security meeting in Sana’a. The next day, Israeli sources reported that al-Ghamari had been wounded, but it is not known if he was killed. It was also reported by sources in Yemen that al-Ghamari, who had trained in Iran in the past, was responsible, among other things, for coordinating the activity between the Houthis and Iran (Al-Arabiya and Israeli media, June 14-15, 2025). The Houthis did not comment on the reports, but a “source in the movement” said they will continue the fighting against Israel and are preparing to escalate it, and that they are not afraid to be the target of an attack because “every leader is replaced by a thousand leaders” (Newsweek, June 14, 2025).

Statements by senior Houthi officials regarding the conflict between Israel and Iran

► Senior Houthi regime officials condemned the Israeli attacks on Iran and expressed support for Tehran and its response against Israel, claiming that the Israeli action was due to Iranian support of the Gaza Strip. They also threatened to join the fight against anyone who attacks Iran. The following are prominent statements:⁴

- ◆ Mahdi al-Mashat, the chairman of the Houthis’ Supreme Political Council, said that Yemen supports Iran’s right to defend its sovereignty and deter attackers. According to him, violating the UN Charter turns the world into a jungle in which only the strong survive, and some countries must maintain international peace and security and not

⁴ For further information on previous statements by Houthi leaders, see the ITIC’s study from June 15, 2025, “[Resistance Axis’ Reactions to the Israel-Iran Military Conflict](#)”

interfere with the sovereignty of other countries. He called on all the “peace-loving” countries to condemn the “Zionist aggression” and stop it and warned that if the alliance between the countries of the world fell apart because of the “slaves of Zionism,” the alternative would be the language of force (Saba News Agency, June 16, 2025).

◆ Mohammed al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthis’ political bureau, said: “We will intervene to support Iran against the Zionist attacks, just as we supported our brothers in the Gaza Strip.” He added that any “aggression” against an Arab or Islamic country would be met with a “decisive Yemeni response.” Al-Bukhaiti accused the “Zionist entity” of crossing all the red lines by attacking the Iranian nuclear facilities and stressed that the “occupation” had failed to achieve its goals in the Gaza Strip and Yemen but would never be able to win the campaign with Iran (Al-Jazeera, June 17, 2025).

The Shiite militias in Iraq

► The pro-Iranian militias in Iraq expressed their support for Iran and accused Israel of violating Iraq’s airspace. They also called for the expulsion of American forces from Iraq and warned that they would act against American interests if the United States joined the fight against Iran. The following are prominent statements:⁵

◆ Abu Alaa al-Wala’i, the secretary-general of the Iraqi militia Kata’ib Sayyid al-Shuhada, claimed that the United States had turned off the radars of the Iraqi security forces to allow “an air corridor for Zionist planes” through Iraqi airspace. According to him, this step requires the expulsion of the American mission from the joint Iraqi operations room (Abu Alaa al-Wala’i’s Telegram channel, June 17, 2025).

◆ Mohammad al-Baldawi, a member of the Iraqi parliament from the Al-Sadiqoun bloc representing the Asa’ib Ahl al-Haqq militia, claimed that there was information indicating that drones had been launched from Iraqi soil towards targets in Iran, but he noted that the details came from Iranian sources and that the Iraqi authorities had not provided official confirmation. Al-Baldawi called for a reassessment of Iraq’s security strategies and internal security issues, claiming that Israel had succeeded in toppling governments in the region in the past and had established spy systems and spy networks in different countries. He called on the Iraqi government to implement its agreements

⁵ For further information on previous statements by the militias, see the ITIC’s study from June 15, 2025, “[Resistance Axis’ Reactions to the Israel-Iran Military Conflict](#)”

with the United States to end its military presence in the country (Shafaq News, June 17, 2025).

◆ Jawad al-Talibawi, the military spokesman for Asa'ib Ahl al-Haqq, warned that they would respond against any American intervention in the Israeli campaign against Iran. He added that “the facts are becoming clear” and that they are preparing to confront the Americans “until victory or martyrdom” (Shafaq News, June 15, 2025).



Militia supporters demonstrate in Baghdad in favor of Iran and against Israel and the United States (right: Saber News Telegram channel, June 16, 2025; left: Shafaq News, June 17, 2025)

► According to an “American military source” and an “official source,” on the night of June 14-15, 2025, three drones launched at the American base in Ain al-Assad in western Iraq were shot down (Associated Press, June 15, 2025). However, a “senior Iraqi security source” estimated that the drones were not aimed at the Ain al-Assad base but rather were on their way to targets deep inside Israel and crashed due to a loss of range or a technical malfunction as a result of the long distance. He added that the security forces are monitoring the drone flights and are handling any developments on the ground (Shafaq News, June 15, 2025). “Sources” later confirmed that the American forces in Iraq shot down a drone launched at the Ain al-Assad base (Al-Arabiya, June 16, 2025). In addition, in the early morning of June 16, 2025, “security sources” reported that the defense systems at the American consulate in Erbil, in the autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq, had intercepted a drone that approached the area (Baghdad Today, June 16, 2025).