



Spotlight on Iran and the Shiite Axis

August 13—20, 2025

Editor: Dr. Raz Zimmt



Highlights¹

- ▶ The Iranian General Staff and the IRGC have once again warned Israel and the United States against resuming attacks on Iran. At the same time, the senior military advisor to the Supreme Leader of Iran estimated that fighting between Iran and Israel could resume at any moment.
- ▶ Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, Ali Larijani, visited Beirut and met with senior Lebanese government officials and the secretary-general of Hezbollah. The visit took place amid growing Iranian criticism of the Lebanese government's decision to disarm Hezbollah.
- ▶ Larijani expressed concern over the situation in Syria, noting that the normalization of relations between Damascus and Tehran depends on the steps that will be taken by the Syrian government.
- ▶ The Houthis' military spokesman claimed responsibility for two attacks on Ben Gurion Airport using ballistic missiles. The IDF Spokesperson said the missiles were intercepted. The IDF attacked a power plant in the Sana'a area, and the Houthis threatened to retaliate against IDF Navy vessels in Eilat.
- ▶ Amid the interception of another arms shipment to the Houthis, the senior advisor to the Iranian Supreme Leader for international affairs, meeting with the Houthi ambassador in Tehran, stressed Iran's support for the Houthi movement's activities against Israel and its opposition to disarming Shiite militias in the region.
- ▶ The secretary-general of Kata'ib Hezbollah expressed opposition to disarming the militias in the country and called for supporting them with advanced weapons.

Iran in the wake of the war with Israel

- ▶ The General Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) issued statements on the anniversary of the return of Iranian prisoners of war from the Iran-Iraq War, in which they warned Israel and the United States against renewing hostilities with Iran. The Iranian Armed Forces said in a statement that the result of the recent attack on Iran was a "humiliating defeat and disgrace" for Israel and the United States. The Iranian General Staff warned the two countries

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

that in the event of another mistake on their part, they would face new surprises and measures that would be even harsher and more painful than in the past (IRNA, August 16, 2025). The IRGC said in a statement that the Iranian people are ready to crush any invader and any evil plot against the security of their country, and that the peoples of the region would expel the “Zionist and American occupiers” from their lands thanks to the “resistance” and the Islamic awakening and expand the geography of the “resistance” until the final victory of the Islamic nation (ISNA, August 17, 2025).

► Yahya Rahim Safavi, a senior advisor to the Iranian Supreme Leader, claimed that Iran is still in the stage of war and that it could be renewed at any moment. He estimated that another war might break out, after which another war might not occur. He stressed that Iran should turn its strategy into an offensive one in the fields of diplomacy, communications, missiles, drones, and cyber. He added that Iran is preparing itself for the worst-case scenarios and formulating response plans for them (Khabar Online, August 17, 2025).



Yahya Rahim Safavi (Khabar Online, August 17, 2025)

Iran and the militias amid developments in Lebanon

Iran

► On August 13, 2025, Ali Larijani, the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, arrived in Lebanon for a visit. Upon landing in Beirut, he said that Iran stands by the Lebanese people in any situation. He noted that the two countries have an ancient civilization and have maintained close ties between them for centuries, and that if the Lebanese people suffer, Iran will also feel this pain (Tasnim, August 13, 2025). The following are the main points of the visit:

- ◆ In his meeting with Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, Larijani said that Iran is interested in friendly relations with all Lebanese and not just with a particular community and stressed that it supports the Lebanese government and the decisions made by the legitimate Lebanese

institutions. He added that Tehran is ready to provide assistance to Lebanon if the Lebanese government is interested. President Aoun noted that Lebanon is interested in cooperation with Iran within the framework of its sovereignty and in friendship based on mutual respect. He stressed that the Lebanese government and army are responsible for the security of all Lebanese citizens. He added that Lebanon opposes any interference in its internal affairs by any party (Tasnim; Al-Nashra, August 13, 2025).



Larijani meets with the Lebanese president (Tasnim, August 13, 2025).

◆ Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam told Larijani that the Lebanese government would continue to use all political, diplomatic, and legal means to force Israel to withdraw from its territory and stop its attacks. However, he stressed that any contact with Lebanon must go through its legal institutions and not through any political party or parallel channel. He noted that the recent statements by several senior Iranian figures criticizing the Lebanese government's decision to disarm Hezbollah violated the principle of mutual respect for sovereignty and that Lebanon does not accept interference in its internal affairs in any way and does not accept dictates or orders from anyone (Al-Nashra, August 13, 2025).

◆ At a press conference in Beirut, Larijani said that Iran supports regional countries being independent and strong, in contrast to some countries that wish for their submission. He noted that Iran would respect any decision made by the Lebanese government in cooperation and consultation with the "resistance," and that it does not interfere in Lebanon's internal affairs. Larijani stressed that the "resistance" constitutes a national asset of Lebanon and all Islamic countries, and that Lebanon's enemy is Israel, which attacked it. According to him, Iran has no intention of interfering in the affairs of other countries, including Lebanon. He added that the "resistance" was not created by the direction of foreigners and will not disappear by such

direction, and that countries outside Lebanon should not instruct Lebanon what to do (Tasnim, August 13, 2025).

◆ Larijani also visited the grave of former Hezbollah secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah. He declared that Hezbollah's young fighters are a source of pride for all Muslims and stressed Iran's support for the "resistance." He said Iran does not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries but will always support the "resistance" movements (Tasnim, August 13, 2025).

◆ Towards the end of his visit, Larijani also met with Hezbollah secretary-general Naim Qassem, who thanked Iran for its continued support for Lebanon and the "resistance" against the "Zionist regime" and for its support for Lebanon's unity, sovereignty, and independence. He also stressed the brotherly relations between the peoples of Iran and Lebanon, noting that they are an axis of steadfastness and "resistance" in the region (Tasnim, August 14, 2025).

► Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said that the mere fact that Iran expresses a position on the situation in Lebanon or on the "resistance" does not mean interference in Lebanon's affairs. He stressed that Hezbollah is a completely independent organization that makes its own decisions and that Lebanese affairs should be resolved through dialogue between the various groups and communities in the country. Araghchi claimed that peace in the region would be less stable without the weapons of the "resistance," and that if it does not have weapons, no other force will be able to block Israel's "aspiration for hegemony" in the region, as is evident in Syria. He added that Israel does not want to see any strong country in the region, whether friend or foe, and that it wants a weak and small region. He said that the experience of recent years had proven that the "resistance" is the only thing that could stand up to the "Zionist regime" and create deterrence against it (Iranian TV, August 14, 2025).

The Houthis

► Abd al-Malik al-Houthi, the leader of the Houthi movement, said in his weekly speech that the Lebanese government's decision to adopt the American document on the disarmament of Hezbollah, which he claimed included Israeli dictates, was "a betrayal of Lebanon, abandonment of its sovereignty, and an injustice to the Lebanese people." He claimed that it is clear to everyone that the Lebanese army will not defend Lebanon from the "Israeli enemy" (Telegram channel of the Houthi movement, August 14, 2025).

Iran amid developments in Syria

► According to Ali Larijani, the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, there is a possibility of normalizing relations between Iran and Syria, but it depends on the steps the Syrian government will take. He noted that the current situation in Syria is unstable and that no clear arrangements can be seen. Israel, he said, has intervened extensively, and it remains to be seen how the situation will develop in the future (Al-Mayadeen, August 14, 2025).

Iran's involvement in Iraq

► Larijani said that the security agreement signed between Iran and Iraq during his visit to Baghdad last week was intended to create a joint security space between the two countries. He noted that the agreement includes a mutual commitment to prevent any country or third party from misusing the territory of one country against the other or undermining security. He added that during the 12-day war against Israel, the airspace of some of the countries was used for military operations against Iran, and therefore, it is necessary to update the joint commitment of the two countries (Iranian TV, August 16, 2025).

The Houthis in Yemen

The direct confrontation between the Houthis and Israel

► On August 17, 2025, Israeli Navy ships attacked energy infrastructure in Yemen used by the Houthi regime, in response to the Houthis' ongoing attacks against the State of Israel and its citizens (IDF Spokesperson and Israeli media, August 17, 2025).

► A "Houthi source in the civil defense" said that the "aggression" was directed against the Haziz power plant in Sanhan province in southern Sana'a and that teams were working to extinguish the fire caused by the hit to the plant. According to him, "the aggression was directed at generators at the Haziz plant and caused their operation to stop." Later, Houthi Deputy Prime Minister Mohammed Muftah confirmed that the Haziz power plant had been attacked, noting that "the civil defense teams managed to bring the fire under control." He added that "maintenance and repair operations have begun at the plant, and it will return to its previous state." The Houthi Ministry of Energy condemned the attack, saying that "the attack led to the cessation of its activity and the cessation of the flow of electricity to the area" (Al-Masirah, August 17, 2025).

► The Houthi Foreign Ministry said that because of the Israeli escalation, the Yemeni response would be open "to all possibilities that may also include repercussions for the international community" (Saba News Agency Telegram channel, August 17, 2025). Houthi military sources in Sana'a said that

they expect intensive air and naval attacks against the source of the latest Israeli attack on the power plant. In addition, they noted that there is also the possibility of attacking “enemy warships” in the Eilat area (Al-Akhbar, August 18, 2025).



Firefighting efforts and damage to the Haziz power plant after the attack (Al-Masirah, August 18, 2025)

► Last week, the Houthis’ military spokesman, Yahya Saria, claimed responsibility for two attacks on Ben Gurion Airport using two Palestine-2 hypersonic ballistic missiles, the second after the Israeli attack on the power plant. According to Saria, both attacks “achieved their objectives.” He said they “believe in the brave fighters of all the factions who will thwart the enemy’s actions and thwart its plan to take over the Gaza Strip, just as it failed in Operation Gideon’s Chariots and the previous operations” (Yahya Saria’s Telegram channel, August 13-20, 2025). The IDF Spokesperson reported two incidents of intercepting a ballistic missile launched from Yemen. There were no casualties (IDF Spokesperson, August 13-20, 2025).

► Abd al-Malik al-Houthi, the leader of the Houthi movement, said in his weekly speech that “support operations” for the Gaza Strip continue, claiming that “they have an impact.” According to him, those who suffer the most in the Gaza Strip are the unarmed civilians, while “our brothers,” the jihad fighters, “resist with courage and the impact of their effective activities is clear.” He accused the Palestinian Authority of cooperating concretely and clearly with the “Israeli enemy” against the free Palestinian people. Al-Houthi claimed that Saudi Arabia uses a ship called *Bahri Yanbu* to transfer weapons to Israel, and criticized Egypt and Turkey, which he claimed continue to cooperate with Israel in economic ventures such as the gas deal between Israel and Egypt and the continued arrival of Egyptian and Turkish ships in Israeli ports (Houthi movement Telegram channel, August 14, 2025). The Saudi shipping company Bahri, the owner of the vessel *Bahri Yanbu*, denied the allegations that it was transferring weapons to Israel (CNN Arabic, August 11, 2025).

Houthi-Hamas ties

► It was reported that the Hamas representative in Sana'a, Muadh Abu Shamala, delivered to Houthi Foreign Minister Jamal Amer a letter from the head of Hamas' political bureau in the Gaza Strip, Khalil al-Haya, in which he congratulated the Houthis "for their position towards the Palestinians." Al-Haya reportedly stressed that Hamas and the Palestinian people would not forget the historic positions of the Houthis, who did not settle for words but did a lot for the Palestinians (Al-Masirah, August 13, 2025).

Houthi-Iranian relations²

► The US Central Command (CENTCOM) congratulated the National Resistance Forces of Yemen (NRF), which operate in southern Yemen and enjoy Western support, for seizing a shipment of weapons bound for the Houthis on August 6, 2025. According to the announcement, the shipment, which was destined for Hodeidah port and was diverted to Aden port under the control of the government opposing the Houthis, included drones, jet propulsion systems, wireless devices, and advanced control components intended for the "Iran-backed" Houthis. According to legitimate Yemeni authorities, the shipment was part of a broader smuggling network using Hodeidah port to transfer advanced military equipment to "regional terrorist organizations." The US Central Command chief, Adm. Brad Cooper, noted that this was the second time in three weeks that they had commended the legitimate government forces of Yemen for stopping the flow of Iranian ammunition and equipment intended for the Houthis. He noted that the seizure highlights Iran's ongoing role as a malicious actor in the region and added that limiting the free flow of Iranian support to the Houthis is critical to regional security, stability, and freedom of navigation (CENTCOM X account, August 14, 2025).

² For further information, see the ITIC's study from August 18, 2025: "[Iranian Backing for the Houthis during the Gaza Strip War: The Seizure of the Al-Sharwa as a Test Case](#)"



Military equipment discovered on board the ship (CENTCOM X account, August 14, 2025)

► Ali Akbar Velayati, the Supreme Leader’s advisor on international affairs, met in Tehran with the Houthi ambassador, Ibrahim Mohammed al-Dailami, to discuss the latest regional developments. Al-Dailami congratulated Iran on its “decisive victory” in the 12-day war and emphasized the need for more coordinated steps to deal with the "Zionist regime" and the United States. He noted that what is happening in “Palestine,” Lebanon, and Syria may create a false impression that the “resistance front” has weakened, but this is a completely wrong thought. Al-Dailami added that after the “enemies” failed on the battlefield against Iran, they turned to political and economic pressures and seek to disarm Hezbollah and weaken the Popular Mobilization Forces in Iraq. He emphasized that the Yemeni people under the leadership of Abd al-Malik al-Houthi will continue on the path of “resistance” until final victory and are ready to continue and even increase assistance to the “resistance front” in Lebanon, “Palestine,” and Iraq. Velayati praised the “resistance” of the Yemeni people and said that Yemen today constitutes a “divine opportunity” for the Islamic nation. He emphasized the importance of continuing strategic cooperation in the “resistance front” and the need to strengthen coordination within the front to deal with “enemies' plots” and maintain its unity (Tasnim, August 14, 2025).



Velayati's meeting with the Houthi representative (Tasnim, August 14, 2025)

The pro-Iranian militias in Iraq

The issue of disarming the militias

► In a statement issued by Akram al-Kaabi, secretary-general of the Nujaba movement, marking the day of Arbaeen,³ he said they were surprised by the delay in approving the Popular Mobilization Forces Law, which is supposed to institutionalize the existence of the umbrella organization of the militias in Iraq. According to him, standing against the interests of the Popular Mobilization Forces is standing against the Iraqi people. Al-Kaabi stressed his opposition to foreign intervention in Iraq by the “trio of evils – the United States, Israel, and Britain” and accused the international community of not taking a stand against “the Zionist crimes in the Gaza Strip” (Akram al-Kaabi’s X account, August 14, 2025).

► Hajj Abu Hussein al-Hamidawi, secretary-general of Kata’ib Hezbollah, stressed that “resistance to the occupiers and deterrence of attackers” is a legitimate right guaranteed by [civil] laws as well as religious laws. Therefore, he said, the people’s weapons will remain “their safety net and impenetrable shield in defending their dignity, their holy sites, and their land.” According to him, for this reason, it is necessary to support the “resistance’s” weapons arsenal with advanced arms, improve its technical capabilities, and enhance its defensive and offensive capacities to reach the highest levels of preparedness and readiness to confront any threat to the state and its people. He added that supporting the “oppressed” and defending the goals of the Islamic nation, first and foremost the Palestinian cause, have always been and will remain their central concern. He declared

³ Arbaeen: A day of mourning for the Shiites marking the forty days since the death of Imam Hussein bin Ali and many other members of the family of Ali bin Abi Talib in the Battle of Karbala in 61 AH (680 CE). On this day, it is customary to make a pilgrimage to the tomb of Imam Hussein in Karbala, Iraq.

that they are “always ready to make further sacrifices to cleanse our sanctities of the filth of the filthy Zionists” (Kata'ib Hezbollah Telegram channel, August 15, 2025).

► Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein referred to the Popular Mobilization Forces Law, claiming that the timing of bringing up the law is wrong in light of the regional and international situation and the conflict between the United States and Iran. He noted that there is a need for dialogue with the factions to disarm them and that this cannot be done through violence, as this could lead to internal fighting. He added that there is also a need for dialogue within the Shiite community with the factions and leaders. He claimed that the neighboring countries have significant influence on the Iraqi political arena, noting that Iran has the greatest influence (SHAMS TV, August 16, 2025).

The militias in Syria

► The Islamic Resistance Front in Syria – Possessors of Might (Uli al-Baas, or UAB) referred to the vision of a “Greater Israel” which, according to the organization, was declared by the “war criminal” Netanyahu. According to the statement, the project “swallows land and dignity and targets the heart of the nation from Palestine to Syria, from Egypt to Lebanon and Jordan, in an attempt to draw a colonial map with the blood of our people.” It was also reported that these statements are not a slip of the tongue, but rather a declaration of war on “our entire nation and a brazen message that the Zionist entity will not stop expanding unless it collides with the wall of steadfastness and resistance,” and that “any silence about [Israel’s] crimes is a stab in the back of Palestine, Syria, and the region, paving the way for our capital cities.” The Front stressed that “the ‘Greater Israel’ project will only pass over the remnants of the resistance fighters” and called on all the forces living in the Islamic nation to move “from the circle of verbal condemnation to the field of resistance activities” (Telegram channel of the Islamic Resistance Front in Syria – Possessors of Might, August 14, 2025).