



Spotlight on Iran and the Shiite Axis

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Highlights¹

- ▶ The Iranian foreign minister accused Israel, in a speech at the Al Jazeera Forum in Qatar, of committing “war crimes” in the Gaza Strip. He called for practical action by the international community against Israel and for coordination among Islamic countries, Arab states, and Global South countries in support of the Palestinians.
- ▶ At least six senior Iranian diplomats reportedly used their passports to transfer hundreds of millions of dollars to Hezbollah. One of the diplomats also accompanied the Iranian foreign minister during his recent visit to Beirut in January 2026.
- ▶ The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson accused Israel of using “toxic and chemical substances” in southern Lebanon.
- ▶ In a letter of condolence following the death of the father of former Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah, a senior advisor to Iran’s Supreme Leader emphasized the importance of the “resistance” in Lebanon and Iran’s continued support for it.
- ▶ The Iranian foreign minister stated that Iran supports Hezbollah but does not need it to defend itself against the United States and Israel.
- ▶ The secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council met, during a visit to Oman, with the spokesman of the Houthis in Yemen.
- ▶ It was reported that the Houthis are in “strategic isolation” as a result of contacts between the United States and Iran and the weakening of Hezbollah, which had supported them over the years.
- ▶ IDF forces exposed a weapons depot belonging to al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya in southern Syria.

Iran and the Palestinian Arena

- ▶ Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said in a speech at the Al Jazeera Forum in Qatar that a just solution of the Palestinian issue is a cornerstone for stable security in the region and the world. He noted that “Palestine” is not merely a humanitarian or regional issue but a test case of the international community’s commitment to the principles of international law. Referring to

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

developments in the Gaza Strip, Araghchi said that what is taking place goes beyond a military confrontation and that the mass killing of civilians and the destruction of vital infrastructure constitute “international crimes, a blatant violation of basic humanitarian principles, and clear genocide.” He warned of the regional and global consequences of continuing to grant Israel immunity and stressed that replacing the logic of law with the logic of force poses a serious threat to global peace and stability. The Iranian minister emphasized the need for practical action by the international community against Israel and called for firm support for legal mechanisms, the imposition of targeted sanctions, including an arms embargo on Israel, and the outlining of a credible political horizon based on international law to realize the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination. According to him, ending the “occupation,” implementing the Palestinian refugees’ “right of return,” and establishing an independent and unified Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital are pillars of any just and sustainable solution to the Palestinian issue. He concluded by stressing the need for coordination among Islamic countries, Arab states, and Global South countries in order to effectively support the rights of the Palestinian people. He noted that lasting stability would be achieved only by bringing criminals to justice and curbing the hegemonic ambitions of the “Zionist regime” (Mehr, February 7, 2026).



The Iranian foreign minister at the Al Jazeera Forum (Mehr, February 7, 2026)

► Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian stated at the closing ceremony of the 43rd Islamic Republic Book of the Year Award that those who support “Palestine,” the oppressed, and those who have suffered injustice do so because they are human beings and must therefore act within human society to assist those facing hardship and remove their difficulties (Fars, February 8, 2026).

Iran and the Lebanese Arena

► Iran International, an exile-based opposition media outlet, reported that **at least six senior diplomats from Iran’s foreign ministry used their diplomatic passports to transport suitcases containing millions of dollars in cash on flights to Beirut for Hezbollah’s reconstruction.**

According to the report, one of the diplomats, Mohammad Ebrahim Taherian-Fard, former ambassador to Turkey and former Iranian government representative in Afghanistan, accompanied Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi during his visit to Beirut in early January 2026. Another senior official who reportedly transferred hundreds of millions of dollars to Hezbollah is Mohammad Reza Shirkhodaei, former consul general in Peshawar, Pakistan, who currently chairs the board of directors of a cooperative company involved in money laundering for the Iranian Foreign Ministry (Iran International, February 10, 2026).

► Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei strongly condemned Israel's continued military strikes in Lebanon. He noted that the "Zionist regime's" use of weapons and "toxic and chemical substances" against agricultural lands in Lebanon is an unprecedented "war crime." He added that, alongside environmental destruction and harm to Lebanese civilians' health, the attacks target residents' livelihoods and daily lives and require immediate action by the UN and its competent professional bodies to prosecute the "occupying regime." He further stated that both the United States, as the main supporter of the "Zionist regime," and France, due to what he described as continued inaction and tolerance in the face of "blatant violations" of the ceasefire, are considered partners in the "crimes of the occupying regime" and must bear responsibility for their consequences (Iranian Foreign Ministry Telegram account, February 9, 2026).

► Ali Akbar Velayati, the Iranian Supreme Leader's senior advisor for international affairs, sent a letter of condolence to Hezbollah Secretary-General Naim Qassem following the death of Abdel Karim Nasrallah, father of former Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah. In the letter, Velayati reviewed the historical development of ties between Lebanese Shiite clerics and Shiite Iran over centuries. He noted that the Shiites in Lebanon are the central pillar of the "resistance" and have established a firm barrier against the "Zionist regime." According to him, the Lebanese public understands that without Hezbollah, the "Zionists" would have swallowed their country more easily than Syria. He added that the leadership of Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei casts its shadow over the entire Islamic world – Shiites and Sunnis alike – and that his policy has ensured that Iran stands unequivocally alongside the oppressed peoples in Lebanon, "Palestine," and Yemen. He stressed that Iran, which he described as the pillar of the "resistance," is prepared to confront any external threat, particularly from the United States and Israel, and that victory will belong to the "resistance axis" (Tasnim, February 5, 2026).



Ali-Akbar Velayati alongside Naim Qassem (IRNA, January 4, 2023)

► Foreign Minister Araghchi stated that Hezbollah would decide whether to intervene in the event of a US attack on Iran. He emphasized that Iran supports the organization and that it, in turn, supports Iran, but Iran does not need anyone and can defend itself against the United States and the “Zionist regime” with the means at its disposal, as it demonstrated in the 12-day war in June 2025 (Al Jazeera, February 7, 2026).

Iran and the Iraqi Arena

► Iran’s consul general in Basra, Ali Abedi, said the Iran-Iraq railway link will be completed on schedule. He noted that the Iraqi side, in cooperation with and under the supervision of the governor of Basra province, has shown special attention to removing local obstacles, many of which have already been removed. He added that approximately 35 kilometers remain from the Shalamchek area in western Iran to the Basra railway station. According to him, mine-clearing operations along the route will be completed soon, and the project will be finalized within the designated timeframe (ISNA, February 10, 2026).

The Houthis in Yemen

► “Yemeni military sources” reported that the Houthis have entered a stage of “strategic isolation” due to US–Iran contacts and the weakening of Hezbollah, which had long been an important factor in building Houthi capabilities and providing logistical and financial assistance. The sources also noted that regional developments have forced many Iranian and Lebanese experts and commanders to leave Yemen, deepening the Houthis’ isolation and reducing the support network on which they had relied in recent years. As a result, the Houthis have tightened their control over areas under their authority and adopted a more conservative economic policy. The sources warned that the situation may push the Houthis to seek ways to change the status quo, either by escalating in the Yemeni or regional arena to re-establish their presence. In addition, security arrangements around the movement’s leader, Abd al-Malik al-Houthi, have been tightened in a manner that isolates him from

face-to-face meetings with the movement's senior leadership and impairs its internal decision-making process. This development, in turn, is leading to a loss of confidence among both senior and lower-ranking figures in the movement's ability to emerge from the crisis and to growing suspicions of collaboration with its enemies (Aram News, February 10, 2026).

► “Sources within the Houthi security apparatus” reported that “American and Israeli intelligence activities” had been uncovered and that several “spy cells” had been foiled. According to them, this indicates American-Israeli intentions to launch “new aggression.” The report noted that in the past, American and Israeli attempts had been exposed to recruit Yemeni groups opposed to the Houthis in order to obtain intelligence information regarding Houthi activity and military preparedness (Al-Akhbar, February 7, 2026).

► On February 5, 2026, the leader of the Houthi movement, Abd al-Malik al-Houthi, called on his supporters to hold a mass demonstration the following day in support of the Palestinian people, who are “suffering daily” from the actions of Israel, which “does not respect and violates every hour” the agreements it has signed. Al-Houthi stressed that through the mass turnout, the Yemeni people emphasize their support for the Palestinian people and their readiness for the next round of confrontation with Israel and its helpers and partners. In addition, al-Houthi said that the Yemeni people also emphasize their solidarity with Iran, Lebanon, and other countries in the face of “American and Zionist tyranny and arrogance” directed against the entire region and seeking to “enslave” the Islamic nation (Al-Masirah, February 5, 2026).



Demonstration in support of the Palestinians in Sana'a (Al-Masirah, February 6, 2026)

► The Houthi Foreign Ministry warned against “schemes by the Israeli enemy entity in the West Bank” following decisions taken by the Israeli cabinet aimed at accelerating settlement activity in the West Bank. The ministry stated that it views these decisions as “a blatant violation of international law and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.” It further noted that such decisions are intended to bring about Israeli control over the West Bank, expose Israel’s “aggressive intentions,” and threaten to undermine efforts to end the “aggression,” lift the “siege” imposed on

the Gaza Strip, and “eliminate” the Palestinian cause. The ministry called on the Palestinian people to unite and adhere to the “resistance” in order to thwart “Israeli schemes” and restore their legitimate rights (Houthi Foreign Ministry Telegram channel, February 9, 2026).

Iran-Houthi relations

► The secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council, Ali Larijani, met in Oman with Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abd al-Salam. Iranian media did not provide details regarding the content of the meeting (ISNA, February 10, 2026).



Larijani's meeting with the Houthi spokesman (ISNA, February 10, 2026)

► The head of the Houthis’ Supreme Political Council (SPC), Mahdi al-Mashat, sent a congratulatory message to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on the anniversary of the establishment of the Islamic Republic. Al-Mashat stated that Iran’s progress in all fields, particularly in the security and scientific spheres, arouses anger and concern among its enemies, and that this progress has been achieved thanks to decades of resilience in the face of US “sanctions and aggression.” Al-Mashat further stated that the Iranian people have made their voice heard over the years and continue to emphasize to Iran’s enemies their “unwavering support” for the Islamic Revolution. He stressed the Houthis’ support for the Iranian people in confronting the “conspiracies” directed against Iran and the region and expressed their expectation of strengthening relations between the sides in a manner that would serve both peoples (Mahdi al-Mashat’s X account, February 10, 2026).

The Militias in Syria

► IDF forces located and destroyed a weapons depot belonging to the al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya organization, the Lebanese branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, in the village of Beit Jinn in southern Syria. Weapons, mines, and communications equipment were found at the site. In addition, a senior operative of the organization was detained by IDF forces in southern Lebanon in order to gather intelligence on al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya’s activities in Lebanon and Syria (IDF Spokesperson, February

9-10, 2026). In November 2025, six IDF soldiers were wounded in an exchange of fire in the village of Beit Jinn during an arrest operation against the organization's operatives.²

² For further details, see the ITIC's study from December 2, 2025, "[IDF Operation in Beit Jinn amid Efforts to Promote Terrorism Against Israel in Southern Syria](#)"