

CLAWS Newsletter



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by Suyash Dwivedi

Domestic Developments

27 September ([Al Jazeera](#)): Five Israeli opposition leaders agree to coordinate ahead of the 27 October election.

The leaders of five opposition parties, Yair Lapid of Yesh Atid, Naftali Bennett, Avigdor Lieberman of Yisrael Beiteinu, Gadi Eisenkot of Yashar and Yair Golan of the Democrats, agreed to cooperate until election day and afterwards, publishing a document that sets out principles for coordination. The first priority is boosting turnout for the anti-Netanyahu bloc and what the leaders described as safeguarding the integrity of the vote. Bennett said he was confident the bloc could win 63 seats in the 120-seat Knesset and form a government. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu criticised the arrangement, claiming that Eisenkot would assemble a coalition with Lapid, Golan, Bennett, Lieberman and Arab parties. Polls over recent months have shown neither the pro- nor the anti-Netanyahu bloc securing a majority, though the opposition has come closer, leaving the role of Arab parties and the question of who may join a future coalition central to the campaign's final weeks.

1 October ([Yeni Safak](#)): Iraqi prime minister sets June 2027 deadline to bring weapons under state control as coalition mission ends.

Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi announced a roadmap to eliminate weapons outside state control by 30 June 2027, in a statement carried by the Iraqi News Agency. He framed the plan as an assertion of constitutional authority over military decisions and pledged to disarm all non-Iraqi armed groups operating inside the country. The announcement coincided with what Zaidi declared the formal end of the international coalition's mission in Iraq on 1 October. Zaidi, who took office in May without a party base or parliamentary seats, faces resistance from Iran-aligned factions. In the days that followed, authorities arrested individuals over a video showing the desecration of a US flag in Baghdad, and Zaidi met tribal leaders and the ruling Shiite Coordination Framework, warning of consequences if agreed deadlines on arms are missed, even as Washington reaffirmed that its economic partnership with Baghdad was moving forward. The coming months will test Baghdad's leverage over the armed factions.

2 October ([The National](#), [The Times of Israel](#)): Israel's Supreme Court overturns ban on Arab parties contesting the election.

Israel's Supreme Court unanimously reversed the Central Elections Committee's disqualification of the Joint List and Ra'am, the country's two main Arab-majority lists, ruling that the legal requirements for excluding them had not been met. The committee, whose voting members are largely lawmakers from rival parties, had voted on 23 September to bar both lists on accusations including rejecting Israel's Jewish and democratic character and supporting armed struggle, claims the parties reject. The court also allowed Hadash MK Ofer Cassif to run by a 7-2 vote, but Balad leader Sami Abu Shehadeh withdrew his candidacy after the court's president indicated that a majority favoured barring him over an article he wrote on 8 October 2023. The legal centre Adalah said the outcome for Abu Shehadeh effectively removed a Palestinian leader from the Knesset race. Arab parties are projected to win roughly ten to twelve seats, making their role in coalition arithmetic a point of contention.

7 October ([Khaleej Times](#)): Israeli strikes hit Gaza as Israel marks third anniversary of the 7 October attacks.

Israel carried out fresh strikes in Gaza on 7 October as it commemorated the third anniversary of the Hamas-led attacks, with Palestinian officials reporting two people killed. Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City said two people died in an overnight strike, and Gaza's civil defence, which operates as a rescue service under Hamas, identified one of the dead as Mohamed Tamous, a volunteer for the agency. The sound of explosions carried across the border to the site of the Nova music festival, where families gathered at dawn to mourn more than 300 people killed there three years earlier, and a tribute ceremony was held at Kibbutz Kfar Aza. The strikes came despite the ceasefire that took effect on 10 October 2025. With Israel's election set for 27 October, the anniversary underscored how the legacy of the attacks and the unresolved future of Gaza continue to shape Israeli politics and security debates.

7 October ([The National](#)): Iranian lawmakers pressure Foreign Minister Araghchi over New York meeting with US officials.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi faced parliamentary pressure, including an impeachment motion, after allegations that he overstepped his authority by meeting US officials in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly without the permission of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei. According to state media, MPs also conveyed

'public concern' about Iran's unity and cohesion during a session with the minister. Araghchi defended the delegation he led, saying it had explained Iran's positions in an authoritative manner and had shown that Tehran is tough in defending itself while serious about using diplomacy to secure national security. He is also promoting a 'seven-day plan' that would count down to reopening the Strait of Hormuz within a week if the United States accepts Iran's conditions, an offer President Donald Trump has rejected. The episode points to friction between Iran's diplomatic and political-security establishments at a moment when negotiations with Washington remain stalled.

9 October ([Al Jazeera](#)): Settler attacks mark opening of the Palestinian olive harvest in the West Bank.

Israeli settlers attacked Palestinian farmers and property across the occupied West Bank as the annual olive harvest got under way, while Israeli forces separately detained several Palestinians. According to a Palestinian monitoring commission, more than 50 olive trees were uprooted in Qusra, farmers were assaulted and a Palestinian-owned vehicle was set on fire in Tal, and harvesters were attacked in Jorish, Beita, Naqoura, Birzeit, Deir Bzeih and Farata. Al Jazeera's correspondent in Ramallah said settlers, backed by Israeli forces, have grown more brazen despite the presence of foreign activists and observers, and reported that a Palestinian family near Ramallah was under attack from settlers who recently began building an outpost nearby and are using it as a base. For Palestinian families the harvest is a source of income and a cultural tradition, but it has increasingly become a period of fear and intimidation, with farmers unable to reach groves safely.

13 October ([Ynetnews](#)): Bennett says Netanyahu could serve as a minister in his government under strict conditions.

Speaking at an election conference organised by the Hador newspaper, former prime minister Naftali Bennett said he would have 'no problem' with Benjamin Netanyahu serving as a minister in a government he leads, provided the incumbent accepts a state commission of inquiry into the 7 October 2023 attacks, universal military conscription and a constitution. The remarks, made just over two weeks before the 27 October vote, drew immediate rejection from other opposition leaders. Gadi Eisenkot, Avigdor Lieberman and Yair Golan insisted that Netanyahu must be excluded from the next government altogether. The exchange illustrates the strains inside the anti-Netanyahu bloc, which agreed in late September to coordinate on turnout

but remains divided over the composition of a post-election coalition, the future of military-service exemptions and wider political reform. With the campaign dominated by accountability for 7 October and conscription, the question of who can sit with whom may prove as decisive as seat counts.

14 October (State Information Service (Egypt), Next Century Foundation): Israel halts commercial goods into Gaza over truck-fee dispute as Egyptian aid convoy departs.

Israel's military body COGAT announced on 14 October that commercial goods would no longer be allowed into Gaza, blaming a fee of 10,000 shekels per truck imposed by authorities in the Strip, a charge Hamas disputes. A gradual resumption was announced on 19 October. Between 1 and 19 October, 2,377 trucks entered Gaza, with commercial trucks averaging about 66 a day, roughly half the September level, while the Rafah crossing was open to passengers on only two days in the week of 16 to 22 October. On 14 October the Egyptian Red Crescent said its 295th 'Zad Al-Ezza' convoy was carrying more than 2,850 tonnes of assistance, stressing preparations for winter, and accused Israeli forces of preventing the entry of aid trucks, fuel, shelter supplies and heavy machinery needed to clear rubble. The disruption highlights how humanitarian access remains hostage to wider disputes over disarmament, governance and reconstruction.

16 October (Khaleej Times, The Times of Israel): Masked settlers burn olive trees and injure journalist in Abu Falah attack.

Dozens of masked Israeli settlers burned olive trees and threw rocks at Palestinians in a coordinated assault on the village of Abu Falah, near Ramallah, on 16 October, injuring at least two people, including a journalist. The Palestinian Red Crescent treated a 63-year-old woman and a 40-year-old man for injuries from beatings, and footage reportedly showed gunshots. Earlier that morning, settlers set fire to three vehicles after attacking harvesters near Turmus Ayya, according to the Palestinian news agency WAFA. The Israeli monitoring group Yesh Din has recorded at least 170 settler attacks since 27 September, when the harvest began. Settler violence has surged under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government, which has overseen rapid expansion of settlements and outposts across the West Bank, home to about 500,000 settlers and at least three million Palestinians. The Israeli military did not immediately comment on the incidents.

17 October ([Al Jazeera](#)): Settlers attack European diplomats near Taybeh amid continuing West Bank violence.

Israeli settlers attacked European diplomats, including a French mayor, near the Palestinian village of Taybeh in the occupied West Bank on 17 October, a day after settlers assaulted an American journalist north of Ramallah. Earlier on Saturday, several Palestinians were injured by settlers as Israeli forces arrested farmers during attacks across the territory. Al Jazeera's correspondent reported that settlers destroyed olive trees across the Beit Furik plain, east of Nablus, while landowners and olive pickers were detained. Photographs showed an Israeli soldier firing a tear gas grenade towards pickers in Abu Falah and ordering them to leave. The incidents extend a pattern that the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project has said has reached record levels. Last month, Amnesty International said Israel had signed at least 15 land confiscation orders covering about 200 dunams of Palestinian land in Jenin. The targeting of foreign officials and journalists may raise the diplomatic cost of settler violence for Israel.

23 October ([The National](#), [Arab News](#)): UAE closes beaches after tanker oil spill off Umm Al Quwain.

The UAE's Ministry of Climate Change and Environment said its monitoring system had detected a tanker oil spill affecting Umm Al Quwain's beaches, and all beaches and coastal areas in the emirate were temporarily closed on 23 October while technical teams assess the damage. Sharjah closed Al Hamriyah Beach as a precaution, and Ras Al Khaimah announced the following day that all of its beaches would be shut until further notice after oil washed ashore. Authorities said odours reported in Sharjah, Ajman and Umm Al Quwain posed no health risk. Analysts cited by Reuters identified the source as the tanker Gem No. 2, with satellite imagery from 19 and 21 October showing a large slick roughly 25 km offshore, although Emirati authorities had not named the vessel or the cause. The spill follows an August incident in which oil from a tanker that ran aground off Oman reached the coast, and heightens concern over environmental risks from attacks on Gulf shipping.

25 October ([The New Arab](#), [Gulf News](#)): Iran's President, Parliament Speaker admits many struggle for food as winter gas shortages loom.

President Masoud Pezeshkian said on 24 October that many Iranians were struggling to put food on the table because of wartime conditions, and called for an end to what he described as a 'state of neither war nor peace' without specifying how. The next day, parliament speaker

Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf urged a national campaign to cut natural gas consumption by at least 10 per cent ahead of winter, promising bank credits to households that save, as war damage to gas infrastructure compounds long-standing shortages. In interviews with the Associated Press, Tehran residents described stockpiling medicine and food, citing rice prices up more than 60 per cent and beef up over 150 per cent since the war began; one said a supermarket trip consumes half of a mid-range monthly salary of 400 million rials, roughly USD 150. The US naval blockade has curtailed oil exports, pushing Iran's trade towards overland routes.

25 October ([Palestinian Information Center](#), [Next Century Foundation](#)): Israeli strikes hit Islamic University campus in Gaza City as Hamas urges mediators to act.

Palestinian reports said three people were killed on 25 October in two separate Israeli airstrikes on the campus of the Islamic University of Gaza, southwest of Gaza City, with others wounded. Hamas called the strikes a war crime and urged ceasefire mediators and guarantors to step in immediately to stop attacks, lift the blockade and provide relief to more than two million people it said faced starvation. The movement also accused Israel of moving the 'Yellow Line' westward to seize more land and of blocking the entry of essential food supplies. The Next Century Foundation's weekly index recorded eight Palestinians killed on 25 October alone and noted that Israeli forces now control or restrict access to nearly two-thirds of the territory. The incident illustrates how daily violence continues to erode the ceasefire framework, with the Palestinian Information Center, which is affiliated with Hamas, serving as the primary source for the strike on the campus.

25 October ([The Times of Israel](#)): Netanyahu warns Iran and proxies may try to disrupt Israel's election.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on 25 October that Israel had intelligence signs that Iran and its proxies might attempt attacks to disrupt Tuesday's election, adding that the military was ready for defensive and offensive operations and warning that enemies would suffer 'disproportionate blows'. The vote, the first since 7 October 2023, is being contested against the backdrop of the war with Iran, the future of Gaza and disputes over military conscription, and Netanyahu has in recent days vowed to topple Iran's clerical state. Recent polls have shown him lagging behind former military chief Gadi Eisenkot in head-to-head matchups and narrowly ahead of Naftali Bennett, with neither the pro- nor the anti-Netanyahu bloc clearly

reaching a majority in the 120-seat Knesset, while Arab parties poll at around ten seats. The outcome will shape not only Israeli politics but also decisions on Iran, Lebanon and Gaza in the coming months.

External Affairs

25 September ([Okaz](#)): Saudi defence minister and Pakistan's army chief reaffirm joint response to attacks on the Kingdom.

Saudi Defence Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman received Pakistan's Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff, Field Marshal Asim Munir, in Riyadh, where the two sides welcomed the outcomes of a chiefs-of-staff meeting held under the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement. The talks centred on recent attacks targeting the holy city of Makkah as well as civilian and economic facilities across the Kingdom, with both sides pledging to continue joint efforts to confront such attacks in line with the pact. The agreement, signed in August by Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan, is intended as a framework for mutual defence and regional security. Saudi National Security Adviser Musaad bin Mohammed Al-Aiban and Chief of General Staff Gen Fayyadh bin Hamed Al-Ruwaili also attended, underlining the seniority of the consultations. The meeting reflected the first practical use of the new trilateral framework as Houthi missile and drone attacks on Saudi territory intensified through September.

1 October ([SANA](#), [Arab News](#)): US removes Syria from arms-export denial list, opening case-by-case defence licensing.

A US State Department rule removing Syria from the list of countries subject to a policy of denial under the International Traffic in Arms Regulations took effect on 1 October. Licence applications for defence articles and services can now be assessed individually rather than rejected by default. The change formalises a policy approved by Secretary of State Marco Rubio on 19 August and follows the rescission of Syria's state sponsor of terrorism designation on 24 August. Legal experts stressed that the step is not an automatic authorisation: companies must still obtain export licences, transactions remain subject to review, and other Syria-specific controls stay in place. Commentators cited by Arab News said the move could open legal avenues for US defence firms and may strengthen counterterrorism and intelligence cooperation against Daesh. For Damascus, the decision adds a military dimension to a months-long easing of Western restrictions that began after the fall of Bashar al-Assad's government.

8 October ([Khaleej Times](#), [The National](#)): Houthi strikes on Saudi airports force mass flight cancellations.

Houthi attacks on Saudi airports escalated during the week of 6 October, with strikes reported on Jazan, Najran and Abha and repeatedly on King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh. Saudi aviation authorities said attacks on the capital's airport on 8 October killed Saudi nationals, while earlier strikes that week killed and wounded civilians, including foreign nationals, and damaged aircraft on the tarmac. Cirium data showed that 169 of 378 scheduled departures from Riyadh, about 45 per cent, were cancelled or listed as 'no fly' on 9 October, and carriers including Etihad suspended services to the capital. The Houthis said they targeted the airport with cruise missiles. The attacks came days before Riyadh was due to host major energy and investment conferences, and form part of a campaign launched against the Kingdom over the summer after a long truce broke down. Saudi officials describe them as an assault on civilian infrastructure, while the Houthis present them as retaliation for Saudi strikes in Yemen.

8 October ([The Express Tribune](#)): Turkish intelligence chief consults Pakistani leadership in Islamabad on Gulf security.

Turkish intelligence chief Ibrahim Kalin held talks with Pakistan's top military and intelligence leadership in Islamabad, meeting Field Marshal Asim Munir, the Inter-Services Intelligence chief Lt Gen Asim Malik and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, according to Anadolu Agency citing Turkish security sources. The discussions covered bilateral relations and the security situation following the US-Israeli war with Iran, with particular attention to continuing Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia and an attempted drone strike targeting the holy city of Makkah. The Turkish side highlighted the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement between Pakistan, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia as common ground for restoring regional stability. The pact was signed in Makkah on 7 August and is described as a framework for mutual defence and regional security. Kalin travelled to Islamabad after visiting Kabul, where he met senior Taliban officials on security and intelligence cooperation, giving the trip a separate Afghan dimension and illustrating Ankara's expanding diplomatic footprint.

10 October ([Khaleej Times](#), [Ahram Online](#)): Houthi strike on Riyadh airport kills at least 12 in deadliest attack on Saudi soil in a decade.

A Houthi missile strike on King Khalid International Airport on 10 October killed at least 12 people and wounded more than 300, Saudi authorities said, in the third attack on the facility

that week. Operations were suspended and flights diverted or cancelled, and the strike was described as the deadliest on Saudi soil since a 2015 suicide bombing. The Saudi-led coalition called it a 'full-fledged war crime' and vowed to respond decisively. A further projectile struck the airport the next day, killing a Pakistani resident and wounding 11, while another attack was reported on Dammam's airport, which the Houthis also claimed. The US, Canadian, German and Spanish embassies warned their citizens to avoid Riyadh airport, and Houthi media reported two Saudi strikes in Sanaa governorate. The attacks mark a sharp escalation of the Yemen war and a serious challenge to Riyadh's standing as a regional aviation and conference hub.

18 October ([Ynetnews](#), [US News \(Reuters\)](#)): Sisi seeks authorisation to help defend Saudi Arabia against Houthi attacks.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi asked parliament to authorise the armed forces to help defend Saudi Arabia after intensified Houthi attacks on the Kingdom's airports and oil infrastructure, stressing that any mission would be defensive and conducted only if Riyadh requests it. The National Defence Council, meeting on 18 October, pledged support for the Kingdom, though its public statement did not specify a troop deployment. Lawmakers postponed the vote to 26 October to allow further deliberation, while Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty and intelligence chief Hassan Rashad travelled to Riyadh to deliver a letter from Sisi, who said Egypt's support would be limited to defending Saudi territory and borders rather than attacking Yemen. The Houthis invoked Cairo's costly campaign in Yemen in the 1960s and warned against involvement. Egypt's stakes are considerable: Gulf financial support underpins its economy, and Red Sea instability threatens revenue from the Suez Canal, giving Cairo reason to pair military signalling with diplomacy.

19 October ([JNS](#)): Araghchi warns of 'unfinished jobs' after Trump vows to 'finish the job' against Iran.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi responded to renewed US threats with a post on X on 18 October, saying that Iran had emerged stronger from the last round of fighting and that Tehran had 'unfinished jobs' of its own if Washington wished to try again. He accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of pushing the United States towards another war in order to stay out of jail. The exchange came as Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov visited Tehran, and Araghchi later said Russia and Iran were closer than ever even as President Donald

Trump suggested Moscow was doing little to help. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian was due to travel to Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin the following week, having met him in Turkmenistan on 8 October and in Kyrgyzstan in September. Tehran is therefore pairing defiance towards Washington with deeper engagement with Russia, even as indirect contacts with the United States continue.

20 October ([The Times of Israel](#), [JFeed](#)): Israel-Lebanon military talks in Tampa end without agreement.

Military representatives from Israel, Lebanon and the United States met in Tampa, Florida, from 20 October for 'working level' talks aimed at advancing the Trilateral Framework Agreement, which links Hezbollah's disarmament to a gradual Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon. Lebanon's presidency said its delegation would press for an end to Israeli attacks, while Israel accused the Lebanese army of failing to dismantle Hezbollah infrastructure in two designated pilot zones, an assertion Beirut disputes. The talks concluded without agreement and with no follow-up meeting scheduled; a US source told Al Hadath that Lebanon rejected an Israeli proposal on participating in a mechanism to monitor Hezbollah's disarmament. The Lebanese army has said Israel violated the ceasefire at least 7,700 times in September. Beirut also faces domestic sensitivities over contacts with Israel, after a legal complaint was filed against its ambassador in Washington for allegedly contacting her Israeli counterpart.

20 October ([News of Bahrain](#), [Gulf News \(citing KUNA\)](#)): Qatar rules out military solution to Hormuz crisis as Kuwait backs Saudi Arabia.

Qatar's Foreign Ministry said on 20 October that dialogue is the only path out of the regional crisis and that there can be no military solution, as Doha continues its mediation between the United States and Iran. Ministry spokesperson Ibrahim bin Sultan Al Hashmi called for the Strait of Hormuz to remain open and warned that attacks on internet cables and other infrastructure in the strait, along with naval mine explosions and oil spills, would primarily harm countries of the region, including Iran, rather than the geographically distant United States. He said Qatar remained optimistic about reaching an agreement while acknowledging complicating factors. Separately, Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah reaffirmed his country's full support for Saudi Arabia and the measures it takes to protect its sovereignty, security and stability, the Kuwait News Agency reported. The statements reflect a Gulf posture that combines solidarity with Riyadh and continued diplomacy with Tehran.

21 October ([Gulf News](#), [Israel Hayom](#)): Araghchi says Hormuz stays shut until US accepts seven-day deal as Washington orders embassy departures.

Iran's foreign minister said on 21 October that the Strait of Hormuz would remain closed until the United States accepts a seven-day plan under which Tehran would reopen the waterway within a week if its conditions are met. Araghchi had said earlier in the month that Iran would answer a US proposal within days through mediators, according to Tasnim, but President Donald Trump has rejected the plan. The day before, Iranian state media reported that a supertanker had exploded near the strait. Meanwhile, a source quoted by Gulf News said that all US embassy staff and their families in Saudi Arabia had been ordered to depart, and that families of embassy staff in the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Qatar and Bahrain were also directed to leave, reflecting concern over Houthi and Iranian threats. The measures suggest Washington expects regional escalation to continue even as diplomacy remains formally open.

22 October ([Al Jazeera](#)): Qatar and France call for free navigation in Hormuz and implementation of Gaza ceasefire.

The Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, met French President Emmanuel Macron in Doha, after which the two countries called for freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz and for implementation of the ceasefire in Gaza. Macron commended Qatar's mediation efforts, while Doha restated its commitment to global energy security and stable energy supplies. The two sides also warned against a security vacuum in southern Lebanon once the mandate of the UN peacekeeping mission ends, urging continued international support for Lebanese authorities and armed forces, and said they were ready to jointly support stabilisation and economic recovery projects in Syria. Beyond regional diplomacy, Qatar and France agreed to expand defence, security and economic cooperation. The visit underlines Qatar's role as a channel between Western capitals and Tehran, and France's effort to position itself alongside Gulf mediators as the standoff over Hormuz persists.

23 October ([Asharq Al-Awsat](#), [Daily Sabah](#)): Türkiye hosts first R4-E3 foreign ministers' meeting on Hormuz, Yemen and Gaza.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan hosted counterparts from Britain, France, Germany and Italy and from Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Pakistan in Istanbul on 23 October for the first meeting between the E3 group and the newly created R4 group, which brings Egypt together with the signatories of the Makkah Defence Agreement. The agenda covered the Strait of Hormuz and

Bab el-Mandeb, Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia, the Palestinian issue and ways to end the Russia-Ukraine war. French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot said further escalation between Iran and the United States would leave no winners and would hit hydrocarbon prices, while Italy's Antonio Tajani argued that the regional problem cannot be solved from a purely military standpoint. Britain had announced a day earlier that it would deploy fighter jets to help Saudi Arabia defend against Houthi attacks. The format signals Ankara's ambition for a larger convening role, though Egypt has yet to decide whether to join the Makkah alliance.

23 October ([UN News](#)): UN warns of dwindling supplies in Houthi-besieged Taiz.

The United Nations humanitarian office OCHA warned on 23 October that time was running out to bring aid into Taiz, Yemen's third-largest city, which Houthi fighters have encircled since early October. Spokesperson Jens Laerke said the city had been cut off for 20 days, with the road linking it to Aden blocked and fighting making it impossible for aid to enter or for civilians to leave. Water production has fallen by about half because roads are closed and the diesel needed to run delivery trucks is scarce, and most residents depend on trucked water. Houthi media meanwhile reported that Saudi air strikes in the following days killed civilians in Sanaa, in the coastal city of Mokha, which the group captured in early September, and in the town of Hiba near Taiz, claims that could not be independently verified. The Taiz crisis shows how the regional confrontation is deepening Yemen's already severe humanitarian emergency.

24 October ([The Hindu](#)): US officials signal prolonged pressure on Iran as threats of renewed strikes mount.

US Ambassador to the UN Mike Waltz told the Financial Times that the war with Iran could last another year and that Washington could maintain its naval blockade of Iranian ports for the foreseeable future, adding that US goals include disposal of Iran's highly enriched uranium and a meaningful agreement on domestic enrichment. President Donald Trump said the United States could end the war quickly but was weighing whether to 'finish it off' or let Iran 'wither' under sanctions, and asserted that the Strait of Hormuz is 'ours'. US Ambassador to Türkiye Tom Barrack said a strike that weekend was possible, despite earlier suggestions that action would wait until after the 3 November midterms. Iran's armed forces chief of staff said US warships would never be allowed into the Gulf, while an IRGC spokesman dismissed US threats as 'largely for media consumption' and warned that any response would be several times greater. The rhetoric leaves little room for compromise.

25 October ([Arab News](#)): Araghchi says resumed war would not change Iran's policies as Trump weighs deal or strikes.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on 25 October that a possible resumption of war with Israel and the United States would not alter Iran's positions, telling a televised event in Tehran that policies would remain the same whether or not fighting resumes. He added that shipping routes and management of the Strait of Hormuz 'will no longer be the same' and that regional peace required the complete absence of foreign forces. His remarks followed President Donald Trump's suggestion on 23 October that Washington 'may do another little Epic Fury', the name given to the US-Israeli campaign launched on 28 February, and his statement on 25 October that he must decide whether to make a deal or 'finish them off'. Foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said messages were still being exchanged through intermediaries and that no Iranian accepts the US demand for 'complete surrender', leaving a narrow diplomatic window.

25 October ([Asharq al-Awsat](#)): Iran strikes Kurdish opposition headquarters in Iraq's Kurdistan Region.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards ground forces carried out a drone attack on the headquarters of the Komala group in the Balisan area of Iraq's Kurdistan Region overnight, the semi-official Mehr news agency reported on 25 October, describing the target as a terrorist and separatist organisation. The Revolutionary Guards had not immediately claimed responsibility. The semi-autonomous region hosts camps and bases of several Iranian Kurdish opposition groups, which Tehran accuses of being supported by Israel and has repeatedly targeted since the war began in February. The deadliest recent attack killed nine Komala members near Sulaymaniyah on 17 July. The strike adds pressure on Baghdad, where the government is seeking to assert state control over weapons and has pledged to disarm non-Iraqi armed groups, and highlights the sovereignty dilemmas posed by cross-border attacks launched from Iranian territory against groups sheltering inside Iraq.

25 October ([The Washington Times](#)): Riyadh airport reopens to flights, only to face fresh Houthi missile attack.

King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh reopened terminals 1 and 2 for domestic and international flights on 25 October, more than two weeks after deadly Houthi strikes forced its closure. Hours later, Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree said the group had conducted

three operations using dozens of ballistic missiles, claiming a hit on the airport as well as strikes on King Khalid air base in Khamis Mushait and a naval base in Jazan, and warned airlines that the airport remained an unsafe military target. The Saudi-led coalition said air defences intercepted a ballistic missile and a drone fired at Riyadh and ten missiles aimed at the south, and on 26 October reported destroying another missile and two launchers in Sanaa. The 10 October attack alone killed 13 people, including one American, and the strikes have already led Saudi Arabia to postpone its flagship investment conference to 2027. The reopening was thus as much a political signal of resilience as an operational decision.

26 October ([Arab News](#), [TRT World](#)): Saudi, Pakistani and Turkish officials meet Iranian leaders in Tehran on regional security.

Saudi Defence Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman led a delegation to Tehran on 26 October alongside Pakistan's army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir and Türkiye's intelligence chief Ibrahim Kalin for talks between Makkah Joint Defence Agreement states and Iranian officials. They were due to meet President Masoud Pezeshkian and Supreme National Security Council Secretary Mohsen Rezaei. Saudi Deputy Minister for Public Diplomacy Rayed Krimly said the visit was part of the pact members' efforts to de-escalate and encourage dialogue, in support of mediation by Qatar and Pakistan, while Iran's Ali Bagheri Kani described it as part of efforts to promote a regional security framework in West Asia. The mission pairs alliance solidarity with Riyadh with an attempt to open a channel to Tehran at a moment when Washington and Jerusalem are threatening renewed strikes and Houthi attacks on the Kingdom continue to test the pact's deterrent credibility.

About the Author

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