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Iran

Digest

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Iran's Foreign Minister makes regional tour focussed on Hamas-Israel War

On 12 October, Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian embarked on a regional tour covering Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Qatar to discuss the Israel-Gaza war. In his meeting with Iraqi National Security Advisor Qasim al-Araji, Abdollahian rejected that Iran was directly involved in Hamas attacks on Israel: "We have always supported the inalienable rights of the Palestinians, but what happened in the Al-Aqsa storm operation was a [completely Palestinian action](#), which was a spontaneous move in response to the continuous and provocative crimes committed by the Zionists against the Palestinians and the repeated attack on the Al-Aqsa Mosque." In Lebanon, Abdollahian met with Hezbollah leader [Hassan Nasrallah](#) and top members of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. In Beirut he noted that "if the Zionists keep up their war crimes, there exists every prospect that other resistance movements open new fronts." Earlier Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kata'ib Hezbollah had threatened to target American bases in the country if the US was to intervene in Israel's favour. Abdollahian travelled to Syria by land after suspected Israeli air strikes simultaneously targeted airports in Aleppo and Damascus. In his meeting with President Bashar al-Assad, he accused Israel of "war crimes against Gaza civilians." He noted that [Iran and Syria support Palestine](#), "but the Al-Aqsa Storm Operation was a completely Palestinian decision, design, and action." In Doha, Abdollahian met Hamas leader [Ismail Haniyeh](#) and "agreed to continue their cooperation". In his meeting with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, Abdollahian noted that if the Israeli assault on Gaza continued "no one can guarantee that the situation will be under control and the scope of the fighting won't expand." On

12 October Iranian President Ebrahim [Raisi called Saudi Crown Prince](#) Mohammed bin Salman to discuss the Israel-Hamas war in what was the first call between them since the two countries restored ties in March. The two leaders stressed the "the need to end war crimes against Palestine", and emphasised Islamic unity. Subsequently, Raisi called for an emergency meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to discuss the war. Attending the OIC meeting in Jeddah, Abdollahian called on members to impose an [oil embargo and other sanctions](#) on Israel and expel all Israeli ambassadors.

Iran hosts 3+3 format South Caucasus Cooperation Meeting

On 23 October, Abdollahian hosted a Foreign Ministers level 3+3 format meeting including the three South Caucasus countries of Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan plus Russia, Turkey, and Iran. Referring to the theme of the meeting "[Peace, Cooperation, and Progress in the South Caucasus](#)," Abdollahian noted that it is held with the aim of utilizing the region's capacities to resolve regional issues and make collective efforts to establish peace and cooperation for economic development and the promotion of the welfare of the people in the region. Earlier, as ethnic Armenians fled Karabakh and Baku established full control over the territory and fears rose about Azerbaijan and Armenia clashing over the proposed Zangezur corridor, Iran hosted high officials from Armenia and Azerbaijan. On 4 October, President Raisi in a meeting with Secretary of Armenia's Security Council, Armen Grigoryan, in Tehran noted that Iran is "[strongly opposed](#) to the so-called proposed Zangezur corridor seeking to link the Azerbaijani exclave of Nakhchivan, which borders Turkey, to the main territory of the country." Chief of Staff of Iran's Armed Forces Major General Mohammad

Hossein Baqeri in his meeting with Grigoryan noted that continuation of tensions in the South Caucasus is detrimental to regional peace and security. Commenting on the recent joint military drill between Armenia and the United States, he argued that presence of new actors from outside the region will add to complication and instability that “regional security must be ensured by the regional countries.” Bagheri also offered to send observers to the border between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Soon after Grigoryan’s visit, Abdollahian hosted [Khalaf Khalafov](#), the special representative of Azerbaijan’s president for border and Caspian Sea issues for talks, where he argued that 3+3 format is a useful mechanism for resolving regional disputes without the involvement of extra-regional countries. Later, Iran’s Foreign Ministry Spokesman noted that “officials of Armenia had expressed worry over a [possible new clash](#) on the part of Azerbaijan but officials of Azerbaijan have sent messages to us that they have no intention to take any military action.” Two days later Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash visited Zangilan on the Azerbaijan’s side of border with Iran, inaugurating the construction of [a joint border bridge on the Aras River](#) as part of a passage between Iran, Nakhchivan and Azerbaijan.

Iran’s Parliament Speaker visits the UAE

On 6 October Iran’s Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf embarked on a two-day trip to the UAE. In his meeting with the UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Ghalibaf stated that his trip indicated Iran’s seriousness towards the expansion of bilateral ties with the UAE. Noting the potential for expanding economic ties, Galibaf argued that “thanks to the geographical location of the two countries, Iran and the United Arab

Emirates can become [a global economic centre](#), this opportunity can be ensured by our bilateral relations and membership in the BRICS group of emerging economies.” Al Nahyan, appreciating Iran for [appointing an ambassador](#) to the country, noted that “sometimes the international context causes the countries to take distance from each other and we have to find a solution to look towards closer proximity.” Galibaf in his meeting with the UAE deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed reasserted Iran’s stance that countries outside the region should be prevented from “[interfering](#)” in the security management of the strategic waters.

Iran Army Conducts Military Exercise in central Isfahan Province

On 27 October, the Islamic Republic of Iran Army Ground Force started two-day exercises, codenamed Eghtedar (Authority) 1402 in Nasrabad region of Isfahan Province. Army chief Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi noted that the drills were aimed at evaluating the level of training and promoting the country’s defence and combat power in the face of forthcoming threats. Infantry regiments, armoured divisions, missile and artillery units, airborne divisions, drone squads, electronic warfare units and support team participated. Mousavi noted that more than 200 helicopters successfully carried out numerous flight missions in both combat and combat support fields in day and night. During the drills, Iran Army Ground Force’s assault helicopter Bell 214 successfully test-launched the country’s indigenously built Haydar air-to-ground missile. It successfully destroyed the target from a distance of 30 kilometres. Additionally, Qaem-5 bombs were dropped by Ababil-4 multirole tactical unmanned aerial vehicles on fictitious enemy positions, striking specific locations at a distance of 7 kilometres away.