



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES
मनोहर परिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

Iran

Digest

September 2023

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Iran and Iraq continue cooperation after deadline for disarming Kurdish separatists ends

On 19 September deadline Iran set for the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) for disarming Iranian Kurdish separatist groups on its territory ended amid uncertainties about the full disarmament. Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson noted that the Iraqi government has seriously followed up on the [implementation of the agreement](#) and “some headquarters of terrorist and armed groups have been evacuated and terrorists have been moved to other places far from Iran's borders and deep into Iraqi soil.” Iraq’s [Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein](#), who visited Tehran on 12 September, reaffirmed his country’s commitment to the security pact with Iran, adding that the Kurdistan Regional Government has taken the required steps. He noted that Kurdish militant groups near the border with Iran have handed over their heavy equipment, and armed groups and their families will be transferred to five camps in Iraq’s Kurdistan region. In March 2023, National Security Advisors of Iran and Iraq had signed a border security agreement, under which Iraq pledged it would not allow armed groups to use its territory in the Iraqi Kurdish region to launch any border-crossing attacks on neighbour Iran. In July, Iraqi Ministry of Interior allotted funds to [build border posts](#) on the Iraq-Iran border along the Kurdistan region to prevent infiltration and smuggling, and deployed more border guards and surveillance equipment.

IRGC Aerospace Force successfully launches imaging satellite Noor 3

On 27 September, Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force successfully launched the [imaging satellite Nour-3](#) into orbit by rocket Qased

(Messenger). Conforming the successful launch, [the US Space Force](#) catalogued two objects – likely the satellite and the rocket’s upper stage – in a roughly 280-mile-high (450 kilometres) orbit. The IRGC Aerospace Force sent Nour-2 into orbit using the Qased satellite carrier in March 2022, two years after it launched Nour-1. General Hossein Salami, the Commander-in-Chief of the IRGC, said the Nour-3 satellite would be used for [intelligence gathering](#). He noted that “it has imaging equipment with better accuracy and quality and naturally completes one of the cycles in our satellite chain,” the IRGC chief commander said of the Nour-3. Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani declared last month that at least two domestically produced satellites would be launched into space in the current Iranian calendar year, which will end on 19 March, 2024.

Iranian Air Force receives Yak-130 advanced jet trainers from Russia

On 2 September, the Iranian Air Force released images confirming that it has taken delivery of Russian-made [Yak-130 advanced jet trainers](#). The advanced aircraft would allow Iranian military pilots to undergo training in operating the 4+ and fifth-generation fighter jets, like Sukhoi Su-57. Following the expiry of a decade-long United Nations (UN) arms embargo in October 2022, there have been reports of Iran’s planned purchase of Russian Sukhoi Su-35 advanced fighter jets. In March, Iran’s permanent delegation to the UN acknowledged that the government had sealed a contract to acquire the [SU-35 aircraft](#) from Russia. According to Iranian media sources at the time, 24 units of the fighter jets will be delivered to Iran. However, in July 2023 Defense Minister Mohammad Reza Ashtiani’s remarks about the state of the agreement led to speculations

if the deal had collapsed. The minister had argued that “sometimes, we make a deal for a purchase, but reach the conclusion that we have the [capability to produce at home](#).”

Iran and Pakistan explore border trade expansion

On 28 September, at a meeting of the Pakistan-Iran Joint Border Trade Committee in the Iranian border town of Mirjaveh, the two sides reached an agreement to facilitate road transportation and border operations to ensure timely clearance of goods in order to increase the daily traffic movements through the shared Mirjaveh-Taftan border crossing at least four-fold. Javad Hedayati, the Director General of Transit and International Transportation Affairs Bureau of Iran Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization (RMTO), said the two sides decided to [scrap visa requirements](#) and reduce the costs and administrative procedures for transit trucks, and increase working hours at the border check in order to meet the daily traffic of 800 to 1000 trucks from the current 200. Additionally, officials reached a consensus on implementing stringent measures at the border to [curb illegal crossings](#) and smuggling activities. Last month, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian during a visit to Islamabad signed a [five-year strategic plan for commercial cooperation](#) with the objective of enhancing their bilateral trade to US\$5 billion per annum in the coming years.

Iran protests US-Armenia military exercise, warns against geopolitical change in the Caucasus

After Armenia and the U.S. launched military exercises codenamed “Eagle Partner” on September 11, involving 85 U.S. and 175 Armenian troops, Abdollahian expressed Tehran’s discontent over war games, saying it will complicate the tensions

in the south Caucasus region. He maintained that the most effective means to achieve comprehensive peace in the Caucasus region lies in prioritizing negotiation within the 3+3 format that includes Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia plus Russia, Turkey, and Iran. Later amid exodus of ethnic Armenians from Karabakh, Ali Akbar Ahmadian, Secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council held a meeting with his Armenian counterpart Armen Grigoryan. Warning Azerbaijan against any changes in the Iran-Armenia border, he noted that any changes in the geopolitics of the region would trigger “insecurity and instability” and “exacerbate” the challenges that lie ahead.

President Raisi delivers speech at the UN General Assembly

In his [address to the UN General Assembly](#), President Ebrahim Raisi spoke of Islamophobia and cultural apartheid witnessed in Western countries, he underlined the need for respect for world religions to hold a prominent place on the UN agenda. Noting that history is at a critical juncture, he said that Western hegemony “no longer resonates with the realities of today’s world”, that the former liberal order has been “relegated to obsolescence”, instead, there exists a collective hope for the creation of a novel, equitable world order — central to which is abandoning global arrogance (Western hegemony) in favour of regional cooperation. Further, he stated that Iran’s good-neighbour policy seeks to increase regional cooperation and forbid external meddling “from the Caucasus to the Persian Gulf.” Any foreign presence is not part of the solution — rather, it is the problem itself. In a meeting with American media, Raisi expressed appreciation to Oman and Qatar for cooperation in carrying out the recent [prisoner swap](#) with the US.