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Iran

Digest

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Iran's Foreign Minister visits Lebanon, Syria and Qatar

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian visited Beirut, Damascus and Doha to discuss the Gaza conflict, the Palestine issue, and regional developments. Notably, his visit came a week after the United States launched military strikes on more than 85 targets related to Iranian-backed militants in both Syria and Iraq. The US strikes failed to deter Iran-aligned armed groups, as several fighters from Kurdish-led forces were killed in a drone strike on a US base in eastern Syria on 5 February. It was followed by attacks on the US bases in western and northern Iraq. In Beirut, Abdollahian met with Hezbollah leader [Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah](#) and leaders of Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hamas, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Nasrallah pointed to the high combat readiness as well as utmost unison and cooperation among all forces of the Axis of Resistance, stressing that, "the Zionist enemy is faced with a strategic impasse and has failed to achieve any of its declared objectives goals" for the war on Gaza. Abdollahian briefed on Iran's diplomatic efforts at the international arena in support of Palestine, especially the importance of a political solution based on Palestinian rights. While meeting with President Bashar al-Assad in Damascus, Abdollahian said that Gaza is the "main issue" at the regional and international level; and that Syria is on the front line of supporting the Palestinian cause. Assad noted that Israeli regime and the West are currently at an impasse over the war in Gaza and that the "Israeli escalation in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon is nothing but a Western-led attempt to get the illegal entity out of the impasse and save the regime." Abdollahian had a [joint press conference](#) with his Syrian counterpart Faisal al-Mekdad, who noted that ending the Israeli occupation of the Arab Golan territory is at the top of our priorities as he

went on to say that "American, Israeli and Turkish occupations are all illegitimate and Syria must resist all of them". In his meeting with [Qatar's Amir](#) Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, Abdollahian expressed appreciation for Qatar's mediation in certain matters involving Iran, including a prisoner swap with the US in September 2023. He urged the acceleration of joint efforts with Qatar on the necessary groundwork for establishing a permanent ceasefire, and the urgent need to provide assistance to the people of Gaza.

Sudan's Acting Foreign Minister Visits Iran

Sudan's acting Foreign Minister [Ali Sadeq](#) visited Iran, marking the first high-level diplomatic engagement between the two nations since their diplomatic relations were restored in September 2023 after a seven-year hiatus. During his meeting with Sadeq, Abdollahian underscored the importance of reopening embassies and revitalizing ties. He also pointed to Iran's potential in industry, technology, engineering, medicine, and pharmaceuticals, offering to share expertise with Sudan. Sadeq underlined his country's desire to build stronger [economic and trade ties](#). President Ebrahim Raisi, in his meeting with Sadeq noted that normalising relations with Israel cannot benefit Islamic nations or their people. Notably, General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, the leader of the civilian-military transitional Sovereign Council had signed a nominal agreement joining the Abraham Accords normalising ties with Israel in 2020 after Washington signalled that it was ready to consider removing Sudan from its list of State Sponsors of Terrorism in return. In February 2023, Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen visited Khartoum urging Burhan to move forward with giving power back to a civilian government, while making it clear that it will be difficult to reach a peace treaty without it. Israel also [offered to mediate](#) when the civil war between two rival

factions of the military government, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) under Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) under Hemedti in April 2023. In recent months, the RSF has gained control of Darfur, Burhan government has blamed South Sudan, Chad and the UAE for providing the rebels with weapons. On 26 February, in a media interview, Sadeq denied claims that the Sudanese Army has received [Iranian UAVs](#).

Iran launches Pars-1 satellite into orbit from Russia

On 29 February, Issa Zarepour, Iran's minister of communications and information technology announced the launch of [Pars-1](#), a remote sensing satellite, into space by a Soyuz-2 rocket from the Vostochny Spaceport in Russia's Far East. Pars-1 is cubic in shape, has a mass of 134 kg and will orbit the Earth at an altitude of 500 km for at least three years, sending recorded material to stations in Charmshahr near Tehran and Mahdasht near the city of Karaj with a rate of 10 Mbps. The Pars-1 satellite is a long-running project of Iranian scientific organizations, first announced in the early 2010s. But, due to changes in governments, personnel and space program priorities, as well as initial difficulties with the Simorgh carrier rocket, the launch of Pars-1 was repeatedly announced and delayed. Though Simorgh successfully launched three satellites in January 2024, given the long development time and high cost of the Pars-1, the launch was done using the more seasoned Russian Soyuz-2 carrier rocket. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, reacted to the remarks by US State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller describing Russia's lunch of Iranian satellite as "another indication of the deepening military partnership" between the two countries, by saying that the cooperation would continue within its framework and was not against any third party. Earlier on 21 February, *Reuters* report citing Iranian-

based unnamed sources claimed that Iran had [provided Russia with about 400 missiles](#), most of which belong to the Fateh-110 group of short-range Iranian ballistic missiles. Some of them have a range of 300 to 700 kilometres. The report claimed that missiles began to be supplied to Russia in early January as part of the agreements concluded in late 2023 during meetings at the level of military and intelligence services in Tehran and Moscow. In September 2023, on a visit to Tehran, Russian Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu was taken to an exhibition displaying an array of Iranian arms, including a selection of ballistic missiles, missile defence systems, and drones. At that time, the chief of staff of the Iranian armed forces, Mohammad Bagheri had noted that military cooperation is at the vanguard of expanding relations between Tehran and Moscow, who are negotiating [long-term cooperation document](#), which has "serious military and defence dimensions." Both Russian and Iranian officials have [denied any transfer](#) of Iranian missiles to Russia.

Iran unveils anti-ballistic missile, air defence systems

On 17 February, a new [anti-ballistic missile system](#) called Arman and a low-altitude air defence system named Azarakhsh were unveiled in the presence of Iranian Defence Minister Mohammad Reza Ashtiani. Arman, also known as 'Tactical Sayyad', can detect 24 targets at a distance of 180 kilometres and simultaneously engage 12 targets. It has a short-range self-protection system in one of its silos that makes the weapon immune to low-altitude threats. Iran for the first time showcased a replica of the Tactical Sayyad air defence system at the International Military Forum ARMY-2023 in Russia in August 2023. The new home-grown missile systems will be integrated into the nationwide air defence network to enhance the country's aerial defence capabilities.