

# Iran *Digest*

December 2025

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### Third meeting of the China-Iran-Saudi Arabia Trilateral Joint Committee held in Tehran

The third meeting of the [China-Iran-Saudi Arabia Trilateral Joint Committee](#), at the deputy foreign minister level, was held in Tehran on 9 December 2025. The statement lauded China's "continuous positive role" in facilitating dialogue and monitoring the implementation of the March 2023 Beijing Agreement, which restored diplomatic ties between Riyadh and Tehran. The three countries welcomed the continued progress in Iran-Saudi Arabia relations, which creates opportunities for direct exchanges between the two countries at all levels and across all sectors. They noted that the current escalation of regional tensions threatens both regional and global security. Against this backdrop, it is very important for senior officials from Iran and Saudi Arabia to engage in contacts and mutual visits. The three countries called for an immediate end to Israel's actions that infringe upon Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria, and condemned the infringement on Iran's national sovereignty and territorial integrity. They also reaffirmed their support for a comprehensive political solution to the Yemeni issue in accordance with internationally recognised principles under the auspices of the United Nations.

### Iranian Foreign Minister visits Azerbaijan

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi visited Azerbaijan on December 7 and met with President Ilham Aliyev and other senior officials. In an op-ed published by Azerbaijan's APA News Agency, Araghchi outlined [Iran's vision for expanded cooperation](#) in transit, energy, security, and regional stability, arguing that Tehran and Baku's partnership has evolved far beyond ordinary neighborhood relations. In his meeting with Aliyev, Araghchi stressed the importance of a long-term perspective in neighbourly relations and the role of

continuous diplomatic talks in resolving misunderstandings and managing issues between the two sides. In a joint press conference with Azeri counterpart Jeyhun Bayramov, [Araghchi said](#) that Iran "supports and welcomes" the peace process between Azerbaijan and Armenia and welcomed Baku's proposal to host the next meeting of the 3+3 regional cooperation format, while the following meeting will be held in Yerevan. [Bayramov](#) noted that regional connectivity in terms of "our joint work within the International North-South Transport Corridor & new projects linking the East Zangazur Economic Region with Nakhchivan" was discussed.

### Iranian Foreign Minister visits Moscow

On December 17, the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Abbas Araghchi, paid a working visit to Moscow, where he held talks with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. They signed a [three-year cooperation "roadmap"](#) to expand collaboration between the two foreign ministries. The roadmap builds on the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty, which the two nations' presidents signed in January 2025, was ratified by the Russian parliament and president over the summer, and formally entered into force in Iran in early October. The ministers focused on efforts to further [expand trade, economic](#) and investment cooperation, including the implementation of joint flagship projects in energy and transport. Speaking at a joint press conference, Araghchi said the strategic partnership between Iran and Russia has entered "a new, accelerated phase" with the new agreement.

### Ahmad Vahidi appointed the Deputy Commander of the IRGC

On 31 December, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei appointed Brigadier General [Ahmad Vahidi](#), who was serving as the deputy chief of staff of the

Iranian Armed Forces, as the new Deputy Commander of the IRGC. Vahidi has been appointed to the post at the suggestion of IRGC Commander Major General Mohammad Pakpour. Vahidi has previously held key roles in the IRGC, including in intelligence; as commander of the Najaf Headquarters; in the formation of the Quds Force; as defence and interior minister in the administrations of Ahmadinejad and Raisi, respectively; and as a member of the Expediency Discernment Council.

### **Jaish al-Adl announces the formation of a “Popular Fighters’ Front”**

On 10 December, the spokesperson for Jaish al-Adl, a Salafist militant group responsible for the murder of dozens of Iranian security personnel and citizens in Sistan-Baluchestan Province in recent years, announced the formation of the so-called [“Popular Fighters’ Front.”](#) The new entity claims to bring together several mostly dormant Baluch groups and presents itself as part of a broader Iranian opposition rather than a purely Baluch separatist force. The coalition also announced a strategic shift towards “civil disobedience”—though it simultaneously claimed responsibility for a deadly Dec. 10 attack on an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) border patrol in Sistan-Baluchestan that left three people dead. On 16 December, the IRGC Ground Force Quds Base announced that three law enforcement personnel and one civilian were killed in an [armed clash](#) near a checkpoint at the entrance to Fahraj County on the Zahedan–Fahraj road. Another terrorist attack was reported in the Iranshahr district near the border with Pakistan.

### **The IRGC Naval exercises in the Persian Gulf**

On 7-8 December, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Navy conducted a [military exercise across the Persian Gulf](#),

including the trio of islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Bu Musa, the Strait of Hormuz, and the Gulf of Oman. During the exercise, codenamed “Eghtedar” (Power), Iran activated its latest shipborne air-defence systems—Navab, Majid, and Misagh—under electronic-warfare conditions. According to official information, these systems, enhanced with AI-supported target recognition, detected and engaged aerial and maritime threats. The final phase featured coordinated launches of cruise and ballistic missiles aimed at projecting a clear strategic message about Iran’s deterrent capabilities. On 27 December, the IRGC held a [large-scale military exercise](#) dubbed “Towards holy Quds” across various regions in Tehran Province. The exercise involved ground, air, and intelligence units and focused on rapid troop deployment, swift positioning in designated operational zones, and the execution of defensive scenarios. On 4 December, the IRGC Ground Forces hosted the [“Sahand-2025 Joint Counterterrorism Exercise,”](#) a multinational drill involving member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in the north-western city of Tabriz.

### **Iran launches three satellites into space from Russia**

On 29 December, [three Iranian satellites](#), Zafar-2, Paya and Kowsar 1.5, were launched into space by a Soyuz rocket from the Vostochny Cosmodrome in Russia. According to the official IRNA news agency, the satellites were intended for “observation” and were designed by “the private sector.” Paya is Iran’s most advanced domestically produced imaging satellite, using artificial intelligence to enhance image resolution. It said the satellite would focus on water resource management, environmental monitoring and mapping. The Russian Soyuz launcher was chosen because it is one of the most reliable in the world for transporting sensitive satellites