Brief Notes

Subway Outage Sparks Pro-Pahlavi, Anti-Khamenei Chants: A malfunction on the Tehran Metro yesterday sparked public chants against Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and in support of the Pahlavi dynasty. Passengers were filmed shouting "Reza Shah, bless your soul," "Death to Khamenei," and "Long live the King," drawing wide attention online.

Quds Force Commander Visits Shia Proxies in Baghdad: Commander of the IRGC Quds Force Esmail Qaani made an unannounced visit to Baghdad, landing last night, to meet with "several armed Shia factions and political groups" amid growing rifts within Iraq's Shia Coordination Framework. Sources said the visit likely aimed to preserve Shia unity and Tehran's sway in Baghdad ahead of the coming November 11 parliamentary elections. Qaani reportedly urged factions to avoid internal divisions, particularly as intra-Shia disputes over the use of state resources to support certain parliamentary candidates have recently arisen. Full details of the meetings and the identities of those Qaani met remain unreported.

Growing Numbers of University Students Summoned Over Hijab 'Violations': Several students at Tehran's Sharif University of Technology have been summoned for disciplinary action over alleged hijab "violations." According to reports, agents are stationed at university building entrances to harass students over potential dress code violations, creating an environment that is driving professors to leave their roles at the university, or the country as a whole. Nearly 70 professors have left Sharif in the past three years, reportedly with no replacements found. A Sharif University faculty member said that these same "moral" guidelines are exacerbating the personnel issue, telling of a job applicant holding a PhD from Princeton who was barred from Sharif University because they had posted a photo of themselves at a café. This comes after last week's announcement of the regime's intent to mobilize 80,000 "clothing and chastity" enforcers in Tehran and the closing of at least 50 businesses, including cafes, restaurants, and wedding halls, since late June due to their serving unveiled patrons.

Yemen Seizes Houthi-Bound Weapon Shipment: Yemen's UAE-backed Southern Giants Brigades seized an Iranian vessel carrying weapons and goods bound for Houthi-controlled areas. The group said eight crew members linked to a Houthi smuggling network were arrested during the operation off Lahj city as part of a "joint security campaign." The ship, reportedly departing from Iran's Bandar Abbas port, was said to be carrying a Kornet anti-tank missile, drone parts, and other equipment. The group posted a video to YouTube purporting to show the ship and its cargo. Also today, a Yemeni court sentenced six Iranian nationals to death after convicting them of smuggling nearly three tons of hashish and about 300 pounds of methamphetamine into Yemen by sea.

Regime Welcomes Conditional Release of Iranian National in France: The Islamic Republic welcomed a French court's decision to grant conditional release to Mahdiyeh Esfandiari, an Iranian citizen imprisoned in France for praising terrorist acts on social media. Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei said she would be released on probation, adding that Tehran would continue efforts to secure her "full freedom." Esfandiari, 35, who studied and lived in Lyon for eight years, was arrested earlier this year for posts supporting Hamas on her social media account. Meanwhile, at least two French nationals remain imprisoned in Iran, a topic French President Emmanuel Macron reportedly discussed with President Masoud Pezeshkian at the UN General Assembly.

FM: Witkoff Communicating With Tehran via Intermediaries

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi today said that U.S. Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff maintains contact with and sends messages to Tehran via intermediaries, whom he did not identify.

Araghchi did not elaborate on the content of the messages from Witkoff, but made the claim in the context of potential negotiations with the U.S.

He also said, "We have always shown that we are committed to diplomacy, but that does not mean giving up the rights of the Iranian people… In New York, there was…an opportunity for an agreement, but once more the American side's excessive demands prevented the talks from succeeding."

On the Radar

- During a meeting today in Tehran with National Security Adviser Qasim al-Araji, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Abdolrahim Mousavi said the Tehran–Baghdad security agreement "must be fully implemented." Mousavi said the U.S. is "concerned about the sense of brotherhood and empathy between the Iranian and Iraqi nations," adding that U.S. and Israeli attacks in the 12-Day War revealed Washington's intent to control Iraq's airspace. Al-Araji said "no one can harm the two nations" and that "no country is allowed to use Iraq's territorial integrity to act against the security of neighboring countries, especially the Islamic Republic of Iran."
- President Masoud Pezeshkian has ordered the enforcement of the FATF's convention against terror financing. Meanwhile, a delegation from Tehran attended FATF meetings for the first time in six years, seeking removal from the organization's blacklist.
- Law enforcement in Tehran claim to have dismantled a large firearm distribution network. Law Enforcement Command spokesperson Saeed Montazerolmahdi said three coordinated raids across the capital city led to multiple arrests and the seizure of firearms. Tehran's police chief Abbasali Mohammadian later said that authorities confiscated numerous firearms, including 86 "real military weapons," 30 hunting rifles, and several non-lethal weapons.

- Khalaf Khalafov, the Representative of the President of Azerbaijan on Special Assignments, met with Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi today. During the meeting, Araghchi emphasized that Tehran is determined to expand comprehensive ties with Azerbaijan and remove any obstacles in this process. Khalafov described the meeting with Araghchi as positive and constructive, highlighting President Pezeshkian's April visit to Baku during their conversation. He reaffirmed Azerbaijan's strong will to deepen ties with the Islamic Republic in various fields and noted that holding Joint Economic Commission and Political Consultative Committee meetings, along with advancing joint projects in transportation, electricity, and transit routes, are key priorities.
- The Islamic Republic's embassy to Armenia announced that seven Iranian prisoners in Yerevan were transferred to Iran to serve the remainder of their sentence in a prison within the country.
- Singapore-based cybersecurity firm Group-IB reported that Islamic Republic-backed hackers, known as MuddyWater, have been engaged in a global phishing campaign using fake emails and malicious Microsoft Word attachments to steal data from international organizations. The report says, "MuddyWater remains highly active and is demonstrating increased operational sophistication." Group-IB believes that MuddyWater operates under the Islamic Republic's Ministry of Intelligence and has targeted governments and companies worldwide since 2017.

→ *For inquiries or more information, please contact* ***k.isfahani@nufdiran.org***