Kayhan International

Saudi GDP Shrinks 3.8% as Wars on Iran, Yemen Slash Oil Output

RIYADH (Dispatches) -- Saudi Arabia's economy shrank 3.8% in the third quarter, the kingdom's General Authority for Statistics said, as the wars on Iran and Yemen and a resulting fall in oil production weighed on growth.

Real gross domestic product was dragged down by a 20.4% year-on-year decline in oil activity in the quarter to Sept. 30, the statistics authority said. The contraction marked a modest slowdown from the 4.7% year-on-year decline recorded in the second quarter.

Thought for Today

An ignorant person who has fallen in deceit is attracted towards it but a wise and intelligent man keeps on guard from it.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

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U.S. Threatens Iraq With Sanctions, Terror Designation if Resistance Not Disarmed



Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi meeting with Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth (left) and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent.

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) -- **The United States has warned Iraq it could be designated a state sponsor of terrorism and face sanctions unless Baghdad disarms resistance groups by June 2027.**

U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Steven Fagin delivered the warning in recent meetings with Iraqi government and political figures, citing a lack of tangible progress and a reported attempted drone attack on the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, according to political sources cited by Shafaq News.

The message: if Iraq fails to bring weapons outside state control under government authority by June 30, 2027, Washington will treat Baghdad as a terrorism sponsor and impose sanctions.

The deadline was set by Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi, who has held separate talks with faction leaders resisting disarmament.

Several factions, including Kataib Hezbollah, Harakat al-Nujaba and Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhada, have publicly refused to surrender their weapons, saying they will only do so under conditions including the full withdrawal of U.S. forces and stronger Iraqi air-defense capabilities.

Critics of the U.S. pressure say it inverts the reality on the ground. The factions Washington now seeks to disarm were the most potent forces against Daesh, which has shown signs of resurgence in recent weeks.

Between late September and mid-October, six Daesh terrorist operations were recorded in Iraq, five of them in Kirkuk and Hawija, according to the Hammurabi Center for Studies.

Security committee officials in Kirkuk confirmed three attacks against security forces in a single week, saying the strikes bore the fingerprints of Daesh cells attempting to reorganize.

The financial dimension of the pressure is equally contentious. Under arrangements dating to the 2003 invasion, Iraq's oil revenues—more than 90 percent of state income—are deposited in Federal Reserve accounts in New York, and Baghdad must request cash shipments to access its own money.

Washington suspended shipments for roughly four months in 2026, including a $500 million tranche, before resuming them in early July after what observers described as signs of political compliance.

Reports indicate the United States has continued releasing funds in capped tranches, using access to Iraq's own oil wealth as leverage to extract concessions on disarmament.

The arrangement has drawn sharp criticism inside Iraq. Officials and commentators describe it as financial coercion dressed up as oversight, noting that the suspensions did not freeze "foreign aid" but Iraq's own property.

The timing of the resumption, linked to concessions on the factions file, reinforced perceptions that Washington is using the country's oil money as a weapon.

Against this backdrop, al-Zaidi's position has come under scrutiny. Political sources and Iraqi observers describe the prime minister as a product of this coercive dynamic—installed and constrained by a framework in which U.S. financial leverage and security demands shape the parameters of Iraqi decision-making.

His decision to set the June 2027 deadline, and his hesitation to sign off on a draft agreement with the factions that his own negotiating committee had reached, have been attributed by some Iraqi lawmakers to fear of American displeasure.

Bahrain Extends Detention of Shia Clerics for 15 Days as Crackdown Widens

MANAMA (Dispatches) -- **Bahraini authorities have extended the detention of several Shia religious figures for 15 days pending investigation, according to religious news outlets and human rights monitors, amid a rising crackdown ahead of a planned opposition demonstration later this month.**

The public prosecutor ordered the extension for Habib Abbas Khamis, head of a local religious center, and Habib al-Darazi, a Shia preacher.

The men were detained in connection with mourning ceremonies commemorating the martyrdom of Fatima al-Zahra (SA), the daughter of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him).

The detentions are part of a broader pattern of increased arrests documented by international human rights organizations since early 2026.

A submission to the United Nations Human Rights Committee by the Bahraini human rights group SALAM DHR, seen by Reuters, documented the mass arbitrary arrest of Shia clerics in May 2026 and noted a rapid erosion of adherence to international human rights standards following the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran.

The May 2026 arrests involved dozens of clerics detained in coordinated raids across Shia-populated areas, including villages around Manama and in the northern governorates.

Rights groups said many were held incommunicado for extended periods and faced charges under provisions of the penal code and counterterrorism law that carry lengthy sentences.

SALAM DHR said the arrests followed a period of heightened regional tension and were accompanied by restrictions on religious commemorations, including limitations on the scale and location of Ashura processions.

CIVICUS, a global civil society alliance, placed Bahrain on its Watchlist in July 2026, citing a systematic campaign of arrests targeting religious figures and activists. The alliance noted that Bahrain's civic space is rated as "closed" and that authorities have increasingly used judicial and security mechanisms to target peaceful dissent.

It also cited restrictions on independent media, the dissolution of opposition political societies and the prosecution of activists for online expression as indicators of the deteriorating environment.

The alliance further flagged the use of denationalization as a punitive measure, referencing the April 2026 revocation of citizenship for 69 individuals, including children, a move that rights groups said left those affected stateless and without recourse to appeal.

The crackdown has extended beyond the two named clerics, with rights monitors recording a wave of summonses, interrogations and travel bans targeting religious scholars and community organizers across several governorates in recent weeks.

According to documentation compiled by SALAM DHR and reviewed by Reuters, prosecutors have summoned at least 17 clerics for questioning since late September. Several were subsequently released on bail pending further investigation, while others remain in custody.

The group said the summonses were frequently issued in connection with sermons, religious gatherings or social media activity, and that defendants were often held without access to legal counsel during initial questioning.

The timing of the extended detentions coincides with preparations for a planned "Day of Public Anger" on November 8, called for by the February 14 Revolutionary Youth Coalition and supported by several opposition groups.

The groups are protesting scheduled court proceedings against a number of senior Shia clerics, which they characterize as politically motivated.

The February 14 Revolutionary Youth Coalition, which has organized repeated protests in recent years, called for peaceful demonstrations in multiple locations and urged participants to avoid confrontations with security forces.

Deadlock Holds as Netanyahu Clings and Arab Votes Are Discarded

OCCUPIED AL-QUDS (Dispatches) -- **Israel's political crisis deepened on Tuesday as opposition leaders met in Herzliya to coordinate a path to power, while prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, facing corruption charges and the prospect of prison, refused to yield, calling instead for a "broad" regime that excludes the Arab parties.**

The numbers expose a system in paralysis. Netanyahu's right-wing bloc holds 53 seats; the opposition bloc led by former military chief Gadi Eisenkot holds 48; the Arab-led Ra'am and Joint List together hold 19 — a record showing that has made them kingmakers in the 120-seat Knesset. Neither Jewish bloc can reach the 61-seat threshold without them. Neither will say yes.

Netanyahu, posting on X, claimed a "clear majority of the Jewish public" had chosen him and insisted he would not lead a cabinet "dependent on Ra'am and the Joint List," accusing the Arab parties of supporting terrorism.

His desperation is transparent: he is on trial for fraud, breach of trust, and bribery, and his legal peril has only intensified, with judges this week limiting the prosecution's ability to cross-examine a key witness in a ruling that nonetheless keeps the trial grinding forward. Power is his shield. Without it, the courtroom awaits.

The opposition's response has been scarcely more inspiring. Eisenkot has set conditions for Arab support — recognizing Israel as a Jewish entity, accepting compulsory draft, branding Hamas a terrorist organization — terms Arab leaders have already rejected.

Avigdor Lieberman, whose terrorist Yisrael Beytenu is part of the anti-Netanyahu bloc, has flatly refused to sit in any cabinet that includes Arab parties or relies on their support from outside. The message from both sides is unmistakable: Arab votes count at the ballot box and nowhere else.

Yousef Jabareen, head of the Joint List, pleaded with the opposition to "deal with the political reality and the numbers," warning that Netanyahu cannot be replaced without Arab coordination.

His appeal has fallen on ears deafened by decades of exclusion. The Arab parties are expected to recommend Eisenkot to president Isaac Herzog, whose consultations begin Wednesday, potentially giving him 67 endorsements. But recommendations are not coalition agreements, and Lieberman's veto renders the arithmetic meaningless.

This is not a malfunction of Israeli apartheid. It is its operating logic. Palestinian citizens can vote in record numbers — and they did, driven by fury at years of neglect and violence — only to be told by both camps that their representatives are unfit to govern.

Netanyahu exploits the racism to cling to office; the opposition tolerates it to avoid the political cost of confronting it. The illegal Zionist entity remains hostage to a man who will burn every norm to stay out of a cell, and to a political class that would rather preserve the exclusion than end the nightmare.

Israel Escalates Gaza Strikes, West Bank Kidnaps, Lebanon Shelling, Syria Incursions

GAZA (Dispatches) -- **Israeli forces carried out strikes and raids across Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon and Syria on Tuesday, leaving casualties and detainees despite a ceasefire in the coastal territory, according to Palestinian and Syrian sources.**

In Gaza, one Palestinian was killed and 11 wounded in an Israeli strike west of Khan Younis, according to a medical source at Kuwait Hospital. Witnesses said the strike targeted a gathering outside the University College in al-Mawasi.

Gaza's Interior Ministry said Israeli aircraft targeted Internal Security Service personnel, marking the second attack on police in three days.

Earlier Tuesday, a 39-year-old man died of wounds sustained in a Monday bombardment of Khan Younis, and Israeli gunboats shelled waters off Gaza City and Khan Younis.

The Gaza Government Media Office said Israeli violations of the October 2025 ceasefire have reached 5,989, with 1,593 killed and 5,748 wounded since the agreement took effect.

In the occupied West Bank, Israeli forces launched a wave of incursions, raids and arrests. In Hebron (Al-Khalil), 21 Palestinians including a journalist were abducted from the town of Dura, and a family of 15 was forced out of their home in Al-Burj village, which was converted into a military barracks.

The head of the Ein Yabrud village council east of Ramallah was abducted after his home was stormed. In Bethlehem, an 18-year-old was kidnapped, and forces raided several neighborhoods and the Dheisheh refugee camp.

In Qalqilya, five Palestinians including one woman were kidnapped. Israeli forces also fired tear gas at Palestinians attempting to reach olive groves in Beit 'Anan, northwest of Al-Quds.

In Lebanon, Israeli artillery and aircraft struck multiple towns in the south. Five shells hit the Wadi al-Hajir, Wadi al-Saluqi and Marjayoun plain areas, while raids targeted Aita al-Jabal and the outskirts of Kounine.

Israeli warplanes dropped illumination bombs over Nabatieh al-Fawqa and Kafr Rumman, and a drone circled over Sidon. Israeli forces detonated a building in Beit Yahoun and continued demolitions in Zawtar al-Sharqiya.

Lebanon's Health Ministry reported seven killed and 11 wounded in a strike on Shahabiya village.

In Syria, Israeli forces infiltrated Wadi al-Raqad in the western Daraa countryside with three military vehicles and opened fire toward agricultural lands, according to the Syrian Record Center.

Israeli troops also set up a temporary checkpoint on the Jabbata al-Khashab–Ufania road in northern Quneitra with four vehicles and abducted a civilian from al-Asbah village after raiding his home overnight.

Attacks Against Taliban More Than Doubled in October, Report Finds

KABUL (Dispatches) -- **Armed attacks against Taliban forces more than doubled in October compared with September, with so-called resistance factions carrying out 82 attacks that killed 122 Taliban personnel and wounded 68 others across 22 provinces, according to a report published Tuesday by the U.S.-based Long War Journal.**

The Afghanistan United Front, led by former corps commander General Sami Sadat, claimed the highest number of attacks with 36 incidents, most of them in the southern provinces of Kandahar and Helmand, according to the report.

The National Resistance Front, led by Ahmad Massoud, claimed 11 attacks across Badakhshan, Baghlan, Panjshir, Herat, Kandahar and Wardak.

The Afghanistan Freedom Front, led by former army chief of staff Yasin Zia, claimed 10 attacks across Badakhshan, Parwan, Kabul, Kapisa, Kunar, Logar, Nuristan and Takhar, while the Green Unit, associated with former Vice President Amrullah Saleh, claimed eight across Badakhshan, Panjshir, Bamiyan, Helmand and Herat.

The report said the attacks were spread across nearly a third of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, indicating that resistance activity is not confined to a single region.

Kandahar is the Taliban's spiritual heartland and the seat of its supreme leader, while Helmand has long been a centre of insurgent and counter-insurgent activity.

The figures mark a significant escalation in insurgent activity against the Taliban administration, which has faced a growing campaign of armed opposition since seizing power in 2021.

Most of the factions are composed of former Afghan republic military and security personnel but remain fragmented and do not control territory, according to the EU Agency for Asylum.

The Taliban government has not publicly responded to the Long War Journal's findings. Taliban officials have previously dismissed reports of resistance activity as exaggerated and have said security forces are capable of maintaining order across the country.

The reported surge in attacks comes amid a broader deterioration in security conditions in parts of Afghanistan, with the terrorist Daesh's regional affiliate also claiming several high-profile attacks in recent months.

The Taliban have repeatedly said they are committed to combating all armed groups and have pointed to their own operations against Daesh-K cells.

Casualty figures from conflict zones in Afghanistan are difficult to verify independently, and both sides in the conflict have incentives to inflate or understate losses. Access to many provinces is restricted, and the Taliban government does not publish regular security statistics.