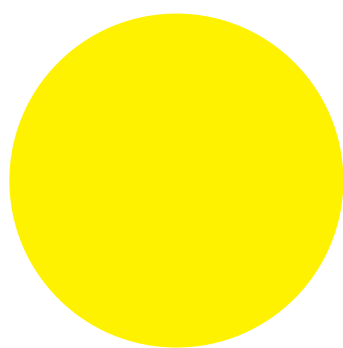


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Qalibaf: Any new aggression will trigger response 'beyond imagination'

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Iraq will struggle to keep borders with Iran closed under public pressure

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

Iraq announced on October 21 that it had closed the Shalamcheh border crossing (al-Shaib) to both passenger and commercial traffic until further notice. Reports have attributed the move to a review of security measures, technical issues and the installation of inspection equipment. However, the timing of the closure, along with a similar move previously made by Pakistani authorities, has fueled speculation that the measures may be linked to US efforts to shut down all trade routes with Iran.



Hassan Hanizadeh

In an interview with Iran Daily, Hassan Hanizadeh, a Middle East affairs expert, said that although the Iraqi government was under US pressure to close its borders with Iran, the deep human and emotional ties between the peoples of the two countries would ultimately force Baghdad to back down.

IRAN DAILY: Do you think the official explanation presented by Iraq is sufficient to justify the complete shutdown of the crossing? Given US pressure on Iran, is it possible that political considerations or pressure from Washington also played a role in the decision?

HANIZADEH: The Iraqi government has announced that the Shalamcheh border crossing in Khuzestan Province has been closed due to technical problems. As a result, many passengers from both Iraq and Iran are now stranded at the Iran-Iraq border. The Iraqi government, particularly local authorities in the country's southern provinces, is currently negotiating with officials in Khuzestan Province to reopen the Shalamcheh crossing.

It is hoped that the technical problems will be resolved in the coming days. However, it appears that Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi's government is seeking to close the country's borders with Iran under US pressure. In the past, it also closed its airspace to Iranian flights. But following widespread public protests and the presence of demonstrators at Iraqi airports, al-Zaidi's government was forced to reopen its airspace to Iranian flights.

The situation in Iraq is such that the government cannot define its relations with Iran without taking into account the country's civil institutions and governmental and state interests. US President Donald Trump is now exerting considerable pressure on al-Zaidi's government to drastically scale back its relations with Iran. However, given the deeply emotional ties that the Iraqi people have with Iran, the Iraqi government cannot simply carry out Washington's directives. Therefore, the closure of the Shalamcheh crossing is temporary, and the Iraqi government will be compelled to reopen its borders to Iranians under domestic public pressure.

What impact will the closure of this crossing, particularly given the lack of prior coordination with Iran, have on economic relations and trade between the two countries?

Most trucks carrying Iranian goods to Iraq travel through the Shalamcheh border crossing to reach the country's southern provinces. Dozens of trucks carrying Iranian goods are now stranded at the crossing, a situation that will make Iraq's economic conditions more difficult.

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Nothing will be same as before aggression against Iran: Araghchi

'US military bases failed to bring security to their host countries'

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Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (C) participates in a panel discussion held in Tehran on October 25, 2026, on the role of martyred Iranian diplomat Kamal Kharrazi in building consensus on foreign policy.

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