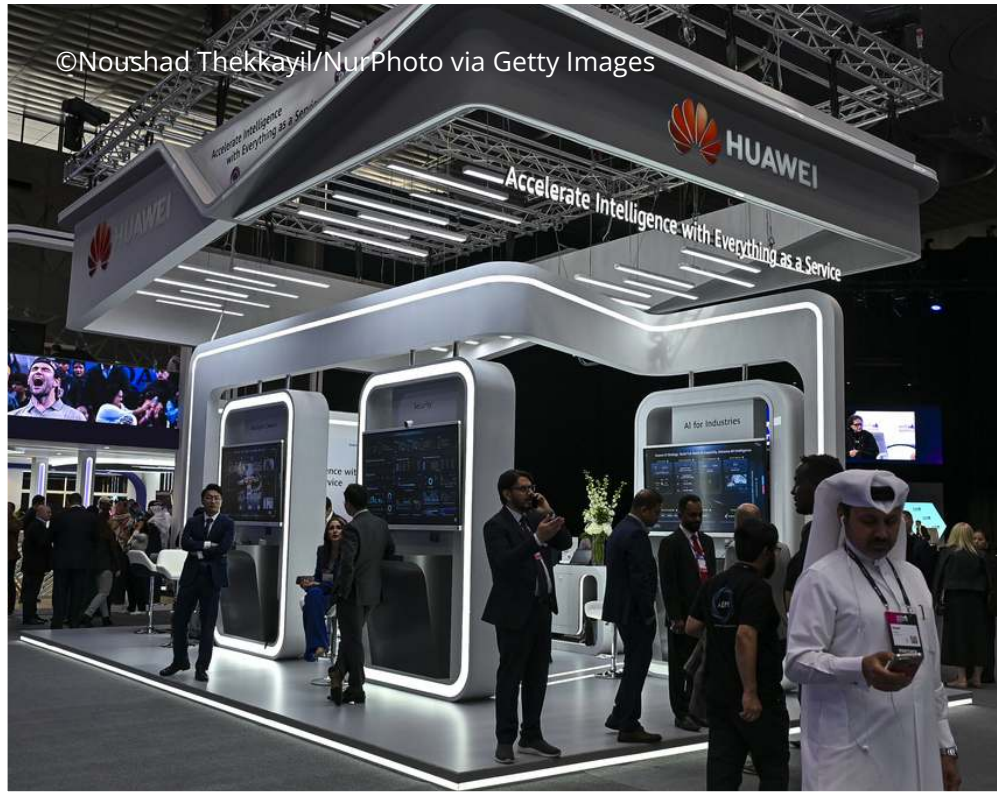


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# JABI Consulting

## MENA Monthly Pulse

*Providing policymakers, practitioners and leaders with the latest political and economic trends from the MENA region*



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## Message from Our Founder & CEO

### Dear Partners, Clients and Friends,

As we approach 2026, the Arab world stands at a decisive inflection point. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is not simply another technological wave; it is a structural shift comparable to the Industrial Revolution and unfolding at unprecedented speed and scale. Unlike past transformations, AI is not only changing how we produce goods or deliver services. It is reshaping how decisions are made, how value is created, and how societies organize themselves.



*Hisham Jabi, Founder and CEO*

Globally, investment patterns tell a clear story.

In 2024 alone, global AI investment exceeded \$200 billion, with the majority concentrated in data centers, advanced semiconductors, and large-scale models. The United States continues to dominate core AI infrastructure, hosting over 50% of the world's hyperscale data centers, while controlling key GPU supply chains. China follows closely behind, treating AI as a national security and economic priority. This concentration of power should concern the MENA region. Not because AI is inaccessible, but because access without strategy, leadership, and human capital can lead to dependency on other countries.

The GCC is responding with ambition. Sovereign wealth funds across the Gulf collectively manage nearly \$4 trillion in assets and have announced tens of billions of dollars in AI-related investments, from data centers to strategic partnerships with global technology firms. These moves are necessary, however they are not sufficient. History teaches us that economic transformation does not succeed through capital alone. Every successful leap — from East Asia's industrialization to Europe's post-war recovery — has been anchored in human capital, education, and institutional capability.

Here lies the central challenge and opportunity for the MENA region. The region is young: nearly 60% of the population is under 30. At the same time, youth unemployment in parts of the region exceeds 25 to 30%, and in fragile contexts it is far higher. This demographic reality is often framed as a risk. I see it differently. It is the region's greatest comparative advantage if, and only if, we invest in skills, systems, and pathways that connect youth to real economic opportunity. Political will is the lifeblood of this transformation.

AI will not eliminate work; it will reorganize it. The World Economic Forum estimates that while AI may displace 85 million jobs globally, it will also create 97 million new roles, many of them in data, digital services, health tech, climate solutions, and advanced manufacturing. The question for the MENA region is not whether these jobs will exist in the near future, but whether young people will be prepared to fill them.

This requires a shift in mindset and political leadership. The region cannot afford to be a passive consumer of AI technologies developed elsewhere. Nor can it rely solely on importing talent.

## Message from Our Founder & CEO

The strategic opportunity lies in specialization and linking GCC AI infrastructure and capital with the human capital of the wider MENA regions. Countries across the Levant, North Africa, and fragile contexts possess deep pools of engineers, designers, health professionals, and entrepreneurs who lack access, exposure, and global networks, but not ability.

Diaspora networks, digital platforms, and targeted skills transfer can bridge this gap. When global expertise is intentionally aligned with local demand, through remote work, AI-enabled services, and regional value chains, youth gain not only jobs, but dignity and agency. This is how resilience is built: not through aid dependency, but through participation in the global economy and investment in human capital.

AI also raises legitimate concerns around data privacy, governance, and social trust. Large models are trained on massive datasets that reflect human behavior, emotions, and preferences. Without strong governance, this power can be misused. This is why strong, holistic leadership matters. The MENA region needs a values-based AI strategy that balances innovation with ethics, growth with inclusion, and efficiency with accountability.

In order for the MENA region to have a significant place on the global AI map, it must act deliberately. This means investing in education and re-skilling at scale, reforming institutions to support innovation, and placing youth in the driver's seat of economic transformation. It also means moving beyond fragmentation and thinking regionally by leveraging financial capital in the Gulf, talent across the greater MENA regions, and markets globally.



*PHOTO CREDITS*

I am realistic: progress will not be linear, and risks are real. But I am also optimistic. **We are entering a period where technology can either widen inequality or unlock shared prosperity.** The difference will be shaped by leadership, vision, and execution.

Time will tell whether the MENA region will choose to simply observe the AI revolution or take a central role in shaping it. I believe the window of opportunity to lead is now.



Warm regards,  
Hisham Jabi, *Founder & CEO*  
[jabiconsulting.com](http://jabiconsulting.com)

# Download our Blueprint for doing Business in the Gulf Region

Includes an exclusive “Market Readiness Assessment Tool”



## Gaza Ceasefire: Dream or Reality?



*Palestinians struggle against harsh weather conditions in makeshift tents, Gaza City, December 10, 2025. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)*

## Taming Trump's Gaza plan: A European-Arab initiative for lasting peace

### *European Council on Foreign Relations*

UN Security Council [Resolution 2803](#) was a major diplomatic achievement for Donald Trump. Or, as he put it, it was “a moment of true Historic proportion!” The resolution created the legal framework to enact the US president’s [20-point peace plan for Gaza](#), including the establishment of an “international stabilisation force” (ISF) and a “board of peace” (BoP) to oversee the strip’s transition from Hamas’s rule. The plan deserves credit for ending full-scale hostilities and securing a hostage and prisoner exchange. But the resolution enshrined problematic elements, in particular the sidelining of Palestinian sovereignty and international law, and disregard for Israel’s responsibilities, including in the [West Bank](#). These problems are now stalling the second phase of the ceasefire.

The US exerted pressure on European and Islamic UN Security Council members to support the resolution, despite their misgivings. While they were unable to fundamentally change the text, their engagement secured references to international law and a requirement for the BoP to report to the UN every six months. Ultimately, their overriding desire to keep Trump involved and stop him circumventing the UN led them to support the “only show in town”.

Now, Europeans find themselves at an impasse: neither willing to fully implement the plan in line with US demands nor risk confrontation with Trump. [Read more.](#)

## Palestinian economy faces critical downturn amid escalating fiscal crisis

*Al Jazeera*

The Palestinian economy is undergoing a severe downturn, driven by Israel's continued assault on Gaza, intensified restrictions on movement and trade in the occupied West Bank, and a sharp decline in both domestic and external financial resources. As the Palestinian government struggles to manage an escalating fiscal crisis, official data and expert assessments warn that the economy is approaching a critical threshold – one that threatens the continuity of state institutions and their ability to meet even basic obligations.

A joint report by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) and the Palestine Monetary Authority (PMA), published in the Palestinian Economic Monitor for 2025, found that the economy remained mired in deep recession throughout the year. According to the report, gross domestic product (GDP) in Gaza contracted by 84 percent in 2025 compared with 2023, while GDP in the occupied West Bank declined by 13 percent over the period. Overall GDP levels remain far below their pre-war baseline, underscoring the fragility of any potential recovery and the economy's inability to regain productive capacity under current conditions. [Read more.](#)

## For the International Stabilization Force, key questions abound

*Middle East Institute*

On October 9, the White House persuaded Israel and Hamas to agree to a cease-fire based on a 20-point peace plan initially unveiled on September 29. The plan specifically called for the formation of two multinational entities. A “Board of

Peace,” chaired by President Donald Trump, would be composed of senior officials charged with setting an initial framework for the redevelopment of Gaza. Whereas an International Stabilization Force (ISF) would train and support newly formed Palestinian police forces, secure border areas, and enable the free flow of aid and other goods into the devastated coastal strip. While not specified in the plan, the United States established the Civil-Military Coordination

Center (CMCC) in Kiryat Gat, Israel, on October 17, to support stabilization efforts. Vice President JD Vance attended the opening and explained the objectives of the new entity: “US military personnel will not deploy into Gaza but will instead help facilitate the flow of humanitarian, logistical, and security assistance from international counterparts into Gaza.” [Read more.](#)



*U.S. Vice President JD Vance, standing with U.S. Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)*

## Employment needs to take center stage in Gaza security plans

### Atlantic Council

Employment and economic opportunity are two of the most overlooked areas for strategic development in Gaza. The benefits of focusing on these are rather straightforward: populations stripped of economic opportunity are vulnerable to becoming dependent on armed groups or nonstate actors, especially those that have a monopoly on access to social services and economic opportunity. This means every family in Gaza without an income is an opening for Hamas, militias, or the black-market war economy. Gaza's economy has long been shaped by coercion, taxation, and armed patronage networks because no legal economic alternative has been built. [Read more.](#)



*Palestinians fish during a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, at the seaport of Gaza City, November 19, 2025. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)*

## Turkey's Emerging Role in Trump's Gaza Plan

### Arab Center Washington DC

President Donald Trump envisions a central role for Turkey in Gaza. At the October 2025 Sharm el-Sheikh peace summit, Trump named Turkey as one of four guarantors of the ceasefire, along with Egypt, Qatar, and the United States. In addition, the Trump administration sees Turkey as an important player in Gaza's reconstruction and stabilization, including by participating in the proposed International Stabilization Force (ISF) there. This envisioned role for Ankara is the result of a strategic convergence between Washington's desire to delegate the burden of overseeing the Gaza ceasefire to capable regional actors and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's willingness to assume that burden in exchange for US support for Turkey's plans for Syria, other tangible gains in US-Turkey relations, and enhanced domestic support by presenting himself as a champion of Palestinian rights. Ankara's success in persuading Hamas to accept Trump's ceasefire deal paved the way for this development.

Two broader trends have contributed to this convergence. One is Ankara's recent pivot from failed Gaza mediator to Hamas's primary political patron, which elevated Turkey's regional influence. The second is the improvement in US-Turkey relations during Trump's second term. But the convergence rests on fragile foundations, including the strong personal rapport between the two leaders, untested assumptions that Trump can overcome Israel's staunch opposition to a Turkish role in the ISF, and the risk that either failed reconstruction or entrenched Israeli control in Gaza could turn into domestic political liabilities for Erdoğan. [Read more.](#)

## How to Keep Gaza's Recovery from Becoming an 80-Year Project

### RAND Corporation

When wars end, attention must turn to what comes next: the daunting work of rebuilding. In Gaza, that effort will be at the scale of European cities ruined during World War II or Iraqi and Syrian cities laid waste in the war against the Islamic State.

A precarious cease-fire and the 20-point peace framework have stirred hope, but this is also a moment for sober realism. The destruction in Gaza is staggering:

Approximately 70 percent of all buildings are damaged or destroyed, 90 percent of residents have been displaced, and essential infrastructure is devastated. With entire neighborhoods flattened, hospitals and schools unusable, and utilities barely functioning, Gaza will need to be rebuilt almost from its foundations at an estimated cost of more than \$70 billion. [Read more.](#)



*A Palestinian worker reshapes and straightens steel bars recovered from destroyed homes using basic tools inside a small workshop in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, December 10, 2025. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)*

## Why Some Relief for Gaza, but None for the West Bank?

### International Crisis Group

When a ceasefire took hold in Gaza on 10 October, hopes rose that pressure could ease in the West Bank, too. Israel had imposed harsh and sweeping new measures there during the two-year war in Gaza, arguing that Hamas or other militants could launch attacks from the territory and that civil unrest might ensue. Though the West Bank's 3.3 million Palestinian residents suffered nothing near the scale of trauma, devastation and death inflicted upon their compatriots in Gaza, Israel's tighter restrictions on movement kept many of them trapped in their hometowns, crippling an already hobbled economy. Violence by Israeli soldiers and settlers surged to new heights, as did the pace of land confiscations, house demolitions and settlement growth. The Gaza truce should have removed the rationale, dubious as it was, for this conduct – particularly since the West Bank is under tight overall Israeli occupation and since Hamas and other armed groups wield far less influence there than in the coastal strip.

Yet Israel's policy and practice in the West Bank remain unchanged, and there is little sign of the heightened repression easing. Many Israeli Jews believe that security risks would increase if it were relaxed, and there is little appetite for that. A loosened grip on the West Bank would also jeopardise the parallel national agenda, pursued consistently by successive Israeli governments – [Read more.](#)

## Israel's Political Pressure



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

## Bribes and the Ballot Box: How Israel's 2026 Budget Serves the Governing Coalition

*Arab Center Washington DC*

As always at the end of the year, the Israeli government will soon present its economic and financial agenda for 2026 in the form of a draft budget and an Economic Arrangements Law that will serve as the economic action plan for the new fiscal year. However, 2026 will be different from every year since the formation of the current governing coalition in 2022. It is an election year and this will be the last budget before Israelis go to the polls.

This paper examines what we know so far about the 2026 Economic Arrangements Law and the budget proposal. It argues that Israel's governing coalition is seeking to exploit the "political business cycle" for its own electoral advantage. In essence, the government wants to increase spending and cut taxes—without any attempt to balance the budget—in a crude attempt to buy voters' support in the 2026 elections.

In 2025, the government made a series of fiscal cuts and raised taxes to cover an increase in the military budget amid declining revenues. It raised value-added tax (VAT) by 1 percent, froze the annual income tax brackets, and increased the national insurance tax. After imposing higher taxes on all citizens for the last two years, the government now wants to cut taxes for specific segments of the population while imposing new taxes on other groups in the middle and upper classes.

[Read more.](#)

## Takeaways from Trump and Netanyahu's meeting in Florida

CNN

President Donald Trump's Monday meeting in Florida with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu generated plenty of warm words — but no clear progress in their peace plan for Gaza.

The leaders held a private lunch at Mar-a-Lago aimed at working out a series of issues in the Middle East, as the two sides try to cement a lasting end to Israel's war with Hamas and ensure broader peace throughout the region.

Trump at the outset of the session told reporters that he planned to speak with Netanyahu about “five major subjects,” later suggesting that they'd come close to settling three of them within the first five minutes of their session. [Read more.](#)



*Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US President Donald Trump speak to reporters after meeting at Trump's Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach, Florida, on December 29, 2025. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)*

## By Endorsing the U.S. Gaza Plan, the UN Security Council Elevates “Rule by Law” Over Rule of Law

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Last month, the UN Security Council voted to endorse U.S. President Donald Trump's plan for a permanent ceasefire between Israel and Hamas and, purportedly, to advance a longer-term political settlement between Israel and the Palestinians. The vote was preceded by an endorsement from eight Arab and Muslim-majority states, as well as the State of Palestine (which used the term “welcome” rather than “endorse” and did not attend the vote in the council). While the Trump administration has hailed the resolution and its plan for Gaza as a victory for world peace, human rights organizations and legal experts see it as an affront to international law, legitimizing Israeli control over the entirety of the occupied Palestinian territory in partnership with the United States, thus further enabling Israeli colonization plans.

The first phase of Trump's plan preceded the council's endorsement and largely involved allowing humanitarian relief efforts and the exchange of captives. But if the first phase's implementation is any indicator, Palestinians throughout the occupied territories—in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem—are at higher risk of forcible displacement. Already, diplomats based in the region acknowledge that the long-term division of Gaza is likely, and human rights organizations are documenting a military and civilian campaign to drive Palestinians off their land. [Read more.](#)

## Israeli tech firms deepen European presence

*The Jerusalem Post*

Israeli technology companies have significantly expanded their operations across Europe over the past three years, according to a new study by EIT Hub Israel, Planven, and KPMG. The report finds that Israeli firms now employ more than 30,000 workers across the continent, with employment growing at an average annual rate of 4.8%.

The data shows that most Israeli companies operating in Europe have chosen to establish activities within EU member states. Germany, Spain, and France serve as the primary innovation hubs, while Central and Eastern European countries-particularly Poland, Romania, and the Czech Republic-have become important locations for engineering centers and shared services. In Lithuania, Bulgaria, and Romania, Israeli companies have created large service centers employing hundreds of workers.

[Read more.](#)

## Israel ranked No. 3 among world's strongest economies

*JNS*

Israel placed third in The Economist's ranking of the world's strongest economies in 2025. The London-based magazine has conducted its search for the "economy of the year" for five years now.

"Israel has continued its strong recovery from the chaos of 2023, and Ireland only just misses out on top spot," The Economist reported.

"Although Czech and South Korean firms have done well this year, nowhere has done better (in local-currency terms) than Israel. In the past year the share price of the country's most valuable listed company, Bank Leumi, has risen by around 70%," the magazine added.

Taking the No. 1 spot in this year's ranking is Portugal. At No. 2 is Ireland. [Read more.](#)

## Israeli tech sector annual deals and listings jump to \$59 billion, PwC says

*Reuters*

Appetite for Israeli technology innovation has remained undiminished this year, with a surge in acquisitions and IPOs led by Alphabet's ([GOOGL.O](#)), \$32 billion purchase of Israeli cybersecurity company Wiz, PwC Israel said on Monday.

The consultancy said in a report that such deals jumped by 340% to nearly \$59 billion, from \$13.4 billion in 2024. Excluding the Wiz deal, the value of transactions doubled to \$32 billion. [Read more.](#)

## The potential of the Abraham Accords won't be realized without Turkey

### Atlantic Council

In the days following the [Gaza cease-fire](#) reached on October 13 in Sharm el-Sheikh, the Middle East saw a rare opportunity to reshape the region. The fighting had subsided, but regional arrangements remained fragile. For the West and its allies, the central challenge is getting Israel and Hamas to abide by the cease-fire and US President Donald Trump's administration's Twenty Point Plan as a foundation for establishing long-term stability.



*Turkish President Tayyip Erdoğan poses with the signed agreement at a world leaders' summit on ending the Gaza war, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, Oct. 13, 2025. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)*

In this context, bringing Turkey into the economic and diplomatic process can be seen as a natural extension of the Abraham Accords, which created a framework for regional cooperation. [Read more.](#)

## The Hamas-Israel War: An Early Assessment

### The Washington Institute for Near East Policy

Three months after Israel and Hamas agreed to a U.S.-brokered ceasefire, the strategic outcome of the war remains uncertain. Both sides can point to meaningful achievements, but neither can claim decisive victory. Whereas Israel gained the release of its remaining hostages and a Gaza buffer zone to prevent future attacks, Hamas still controls nearly half the territory while its longtime patrons, Qatar and Turkey, have attained unprecedented standing in Washington. Uncertainty now looms as President Trump prepares to announce the transition to “phase two” of the ceasefire, which will see a raft of hopeful initiatives crash into the reality of a Gaza divided between Israeli and Hamas zones of control, without any agreed path toward disarming the terrorist group—the necessary precondition for any real progress toward full implementation of the ceasefire.

In this timely and provocative Policy Note, Washington Institute Executive Director Robert Satloff explains that several factors could shake up the status quo in Gaza. These include President Trump's impatience for results, discontent from the Qatari and Turkish ceasefire guarantors, and Israeli unease at its enemy's stubborn survival. While outlining the potential for a total breakdown of the ceasefire and return to full-scale hostilities, Satloff also argues that Jerusalem has a powerful interest in preventing a situation in which the White House is forced to choose between Israel and the ceasefire's guarantors—and offers ways to avoid that deeply problematic scenario. [Read more.](#)

## Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)



*Saudi students walk at the exhibition to guide job seekers at Glowork Women's Career Fair in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia October 2, 2018.*

[PHOTO CREDITS](#)

## The Gulf's AI Moment and the Untapped Power of Arab Youth

*Hisham Jabi, CEO & Founder of Jabi Consulting*

The Gulf's push into artificial intelligence is no longer aspirational—it is capitalized. Global AI investment is projected to exceed \$4 trillion by 2030, and GCC countries are positioning themselves aggressively within this market. Saudi Arabia and the UAE alone have committed tens of billions of dollars to AI infrastructure, sovereign models, cloud computing, and smart government platforms. Yet despite this scale of investment, one constraint remains persistent: talent. AI is labor-intensive. Studies estimate that 60–70% of AI value creation depends on human capital, not compute. However, GCC labor markets are small and demographically limited. At the same time, the broader Arab region is facing the opposite challenge. Youth unemployment exceeds 30% in Jordan, 40% in Palestine, and remains above 25–35% across North Africa, even among university graduates. Palestine alone produces roughly 5,000 STEM graduates each year, while Tunisia and Egypt graduate tens of thousands annually. The issue is not supply—it is alignment.

AI work is increasingly distributed. Tasks such as data annotation, Arabic-language model training, quality assurance, red-teaming, and applied analytics can be performed remotely. Globally, the AI services and data-operations market is growing at over 20% annually, with countries like India generating multi-billion-dollar digital labor industries. [Read more.](#)

## From Crude to Compute: Building the GCC AI Stack

*Middle East Institute*

The artificial intelligence (AI) era demands a fundamental rethinking of strategic infrastructure and international partnerships. Just as oil shaped the geopolitical landscape of the 20th century, compute infrastructure will define power relationships in the 21st. The six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates — are all, to various degrees, at an inflection point, positioned to leverage historical advantages in energy while building new capabilities in the technologies that will shape the future.



People walk past a Huawei stand during the third day of the Web Summit in Doha, Qatar, on February 25, 2025. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

This report explores the digital ecosystem and the issues involved in creating an AI stack in the Gulf and makes recommendations for the United States and the GCC members. [Read more.](#)

## Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)— Enhancing Resilience to Global Shocks: Economic Prospects and Policy Challenges for the GCC Countries

*International Monetary Fund*

Despite the challenging external environment, the GCC economies have been resilient. Non-hydrocarbon activity has remained robust amid strong domestic demand supported by the reform momentum, limited spillovers from regional, as well as the modest direct impact of higher U.S. tariffs given the exemption of energy products and limited trade ties with the U.S. While external balances narrowed amid oil production cuts and robust imports, the external positions remain overall strong.

The economic outlook remains favorable but risks are tilted to the downside amidst elevated global uncertainty. Economic activity will be supported by the unwinding of oil production cuts, the expansion of natural gas production, and strong reform and project implementation facilitated by ample policy buffers. External buffers would remain comfortable despite narrower current account balances driven by higher imports. The near-term risks to the outlook are tilted to the downside, as oil prices could decline and financial conditions tighten amid high uncertainty. Over the medium term, ongoing global structural shifts pose two-sided risks for the GCC economies. [Read more.](#)

## ServiceNow tips the UAE to win AI talent race with 1M new jobs by 2030

Tahawul Tech

A recently released [Workforce Skills Forecast 2025](#) report from [ServiceNow](#), the AI control tower for business reinvention, projects that the UAE will need to add 1.03 million workers by 2030, largely due to economic growth and tech roles needed to support digital transformation.

This 12.1% increase in the human workforce represents one of the highest percentage increases among the markets studied, compared to projected growth in major economies such as the United States (2.1%), the United Kingdom (2.8%), and India (10.6%).

Conducted in collaboration with Pearson, the report found that the UAE’s manufacturing, education, and retail sectors will be among the main drivers of this expansion, adding approximately 133,000, 78,000, and 60,000 new jobs respectively. [Read more.](#)

## UAE 2026: What Powers Microsoft's \$15 Billion Abu Dhabi Data Centers

Forbes

Microsoft [committed](#) \$15.2 billion to UAE [data centers](#) in 2025. The November announcement emphasized renewable energy partnerships and sustainability targets. What the engineering contracts specified: natural gas turbines delivering 99.999% uptime—5.26 minutes of acceptable downtime annually—that solar panels and battery storage cannot yet match. Abu Dhabi positions itself as both AI capital and climate leader. The tension between these ambitions defines its 2026 energy strategy.



*Gas turbines provide the instant backup power that data centers require for 99.999% uptime guarantees—a technical constraint that extends UAE's fossil fuel dependency through 2035.*

[PHOTO CREDITS](#)

Solar and nuclear supply substantial

baseload, but data centers require instant failover capacity. Barakah nuclear power plant [reached](#) full 5.6 gigawatt capacity in 2024, supplying according to my calculations, roughly 25% of UAE electricity. Yet it cannot ramp quickly enough when server farms spike demand. The Mohammed bin Rashid Solar Park hit [3,860 megawatts](#) yet contributes nothing after sunset. Current battery storage: 3 megawatts operational, 300 megawatts under construction, timelines extending through 2030. Only gas turbines combine instant startup, load-following capability, and weather-independent fuel supply. [Read more.](#)

## UAE-EU free trade talks advancing rapidly, UAE state minister says

Reuters

Free trade talks between the United Arab Emirates and the European Union are advancing rapidly, UAE state minister Lana Nusseibeh said on Thursday at a briefing with an EU commissioner.

The EU and the UAE launched the talks earlier this year, focusing on trade in goods, services, investment and deepening cooperation in strategic sectors, including renewable energy, green hydrogen and critical raw materials, the EU said in April.



*UAE Ambassador to the UN Lana Nusseibeh, speaks during a session titled "Navigating Challenges to International Peace and Security," at the World Governments Summit. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)*

The fourth round of talks is scheduled to take place in the UAE this week and a fifth round is scheduled for early next year, according to Nusseibeh. [Read more.](#)

## Brookfield, Qatar form \$20B AI joint venture

PitchBook

Brookfield Asset Management has partnered with a unit of the Qatar Investment Authority to invest \$20 billion in AI infrastructure development as the Middle East emerges as a rapidly growing market for artificial intelligence.

The partnership will develop AI facilities using capital from Brookfield's Artificial Intelligence Infrastructure Fund and will receive support from the government of Qatar to invest in skills and supply-chain needs to advance AI infrastructure and adoption.

The deal also marks Brookfield's first AI infrastructure investment in the Middle East. [Read more.](#)

## The United Arab Emirates: From Footnote to Sophisticated Global Partner

Center for Strategic & International Studies

Vladimir Putin bounded down two dozen steps from his presidential plane on the morning of December 6, 2023. It must have felt good to be on the road again. An International Criminal Court indictment following his invasion of Ukraine had limited his international travel to former Soviet states, China, and Iran—but now, he seemed free. [Read more.](#)

## Middle East Regional Shifts



*A solar energy system set up by a farmer in Madinat al-Sadat district of Monufia, in the north of Egypt, 4 March 2023.*

[\*PHOTO CREDITS\*](#)

## How the Middle East and North Africa can benefit from adaptive climate governance

*Chatham House*

Climate governance in the Middle East and North Africa will play a significant role in shaping the region's political stability and economic resilience as climate impacts intensify and the global energy transition accelerates. MENA governments are under growing pressure to act, but the way climate policies are designed and implemented will determine their effectiveness and durability.

Two main climate governance frameworks dominate the region. The first is a rights-based, participatory approach that emphasizes the role of public and institutional consultation in policymaking and project design. The second is a technocratic, hierarchical system that prioritizes swift implementation and investment.

This paper argues that an adaptive approach that uses elements of both frameworks may offer the best chance of achieving sustainable climate action in the Middle East and North Africa. By combining input legitimacy with capacity, an adaptive approach can mobilize finance, scale renewable energy, manage social impacts and maintain public trust. [\*Read more.\*](#)

## Closing the Regulatory Gap in Trump's Middle East Strategy

*The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*

The Trump administration's new policy approach to the Middle East, outlined in the just-released National Security Strategy, effectively shifts the U.S. focus from military presence, counterterrorism, and security integration to "partnership, friendship, and investment." Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's November visit to Washington vividly demonstrated this shift, shaped as it was by high-level meetings, an investment forum, and a long list of agreements on expanding cooperation in these areas.

Yet implementing these agreements will require something the U.S. government currently lacks: a regulatory architecture to govern the initiatives that have now been placed at the center of cooperation with regional partners. For the new strategy to succeed, the Trump administration's statecraft must catch up to its aspirations, with a focus on modernizing U.S. export control systems, upgrading investment screening tools, and developing a transparent framework for critical minerals.

[Read more.](#)

## Visions to Reality: Achieving the Middle East and North Africa's Economic Ambitions

*RAND Corporation*

In this report, the authors analyze the economic aspirations of Middle Eastern and North African countries by examining the long-term vision documents that many of the region's governments have issued. Despite sustained periods of both high revenues from hydrocarbon production and deepening global integration, much of the region has experienced economic stagnation over the past decade. Within this context, the authors assess how countries might realistically pursue and attain their stated goals of achieving high economic growth and diversification, as well as generating broader economic opportunity. [Read more.](#)

## Unlocking MENA and CCA Trade in a Fragmented World

*International Monetary Fund*

This paper investigates the impact of geoeconomic fragmentation on trade flows in the Caucasus and Central Asia (CCA) and Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regions. Amidst ongoing conflicts, security threats, the spike in global economic uncertainty, and evolving consumer sentiments, these regions face intricate challenges that necessitate agile policy responses. The analysis presents three illustrative scenarios, examining the effects of targeted trade restrictions, trade diversion, and neutral stances on exports and economic output. The findings of these illustrative scenarios highlight the critical importance of reducing trade barriers, enhancing infrastructure, and improving regulatory environments to navigate the risks and opportunities posed by geoeconomic fragmentation. These measures are essential for fostering resilience and promoting sustainable growth in the affected regions. [Read more.](#)

## City tourism: unlocking jobs, opportunities, and regional growth

*World Bank Group*

From ancient Byblos and Carthage to the sacred monuments of Madinah, bustling souks of Marrakesh, and futuristic skyscrapers of Dubai, cities in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have long enticed travelers worldwide.

These city centers are not only repositories of history and culture, but also vibrant hubs of commerce, spirituality, hospitality, adventure, and innovation that attract tourists from all around the world. In 2023, tourism contributed an estimated 6.7 percent to the Middle East's GDP and 8.1 percent to North Africa's, with the region outpacing global recovery trends from COVID. Yet, despite this appeal, city tourism in MENA operates far below its potential. [Read more.](#)



*A World Bank study showed that a 10% increase in tourism demand to underserved regions in Egypt, Lebanon, and Morocco could generate between 5 and 19% more jobs in hospitality sectors. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)*

## Morocco's Two-Speed Reality

*Stimson Center*

In July 2025, King Mohammed VI warned that "It is not acceptable for Morocco – today or at any time in the future – to be a two-speed country." The remark crystallized what had long been visible: a country advancing rapidly in infrastructure and global engagement, yet unevenly in opportunity and basic services. Behind Morocco's modernization lies a geography of inequality, between coast and interior, metropolis and small town, and the formal corridors of growth versus the informal margins.

By mid-2025, that imbalance had become unavoidable. [Read more.](#)

## Tunisia's Growing Protests Open a Door for Low-Cost U.S. Initiatives

*The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*

Tunisia has been witnessing a gradual but notable uptick in protest movements, whether stemming from economic troubles, political issues, local grievances, or other concerns. In an environment of deteriorating civil liberties and institutions, such events command attention. Given President Kais Saied's apparent scorn for the country's traditionally strong partnerships with the West, the increasing public discontent may offer opportunities to restore a more promising trajectory.

[Read more.](#)

Jordan's Uncertain Future



Participants engaged in a Peace Circle at the regional Workshop on Youth Participation in Peace and Security in the Middle East and North Africa, Amman, Jordan, December 9, 2025. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

## Youth voices shaping a new era of peace in the Middle East and North Africa

### United Nations

On 9 December 2025, six simultaneous Peace Circles took place in Amman, Jordan, capturing the essence of what peace means to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

Peace Circles are the heart of the UN's Hear Us. Act Now for a Peaceful World campaign, amplifying the voices of youth in peace-related decision-making processes around the world. They are inclusive dialogues that connect young people to global leadership and civil society, forging inter-generational coalitions of peace-builders.

### Unity and mobilization

The Peace Circles in Amman wrapped up the Regional Workshop on Youth Participation in Peace and Security in the MENA region. The two-day workshop was co-hosted by the UN Youth Office and the UN Resident Coordinator's Office of Jordan, along with the UN Development Coordination Offices for Africa and Arab States, and funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. [Read more.](#)

## Jordan says its air force joined U.S. strikes against Islamic State group in Syria

*PBS News*

Jordan confirmed Saturday that its air force took part in strikes launched by the United States on Islamic State group targets in Syria in retaliation for the killing of three U.S. citizens earlier this month.

The U.S. launched military strikes Friday on multiple sites in in Syria to "eliminate" Islamic State group fighters and weapons in retaliation for an attack by a Syrian gunman that killed two U.S. troops and an American civilian interpreter almost a week earlier.



*A U.S. Airman attaches a GBU-31 munitions system to an F-15E Strike Eagle. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)*

The Jordanian military said in a statement that its air force "participated in precise airstrikes ... targeting several ISIS positions in southern Syria," using a different abbreviation for the Islamic State group. Jordan is one of 90 countries making up the global coalition against IS, which Syria recently joined. [Read more.](#)

## Citi Foundation Selects International Rescue Committee in Jordan for the 2025 Global Innovation Challenge to Accelerate Youth Employability

*International Rescue Committee*

The Citi Foundation (the "Foundation") recently announced the 50 community organizations around the world that will each receive \$500,000 in grant support as part of its 2025 Global Innovation Challenge. With this support, the selected organizations will help advance innovative employment solutions for low-income youth, building on Citi and the Citi Foundation's longstanding commitment to young people and their economic futures.

In Jordan, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) has been selected as a grantee. We will be working locally to implement the "Innovation for Economic Inclusion Program," which aims to enhance financial inclusion and economic opportunities for urban youth, refugees, and women entrepreneurs aged 18-30, particularly in East Amman. This new program draws on 8 years of Citi Foundation support for the IRC and youth in Jordan, and will see the IRC pilot innovative alternative lending models, in collaboration with a Jordanian fintech startup. This includes a loan authenticator tool to facilitate credit access for those without bank accounts and offer small nano-loans. The program will also deliver targeted financial literacy training, develop critical 21st-century skills like AI literacy and entrepreneurship, and provide mentorship, business support, and grants to youth-led enterprises, fostering sustainable livelihoods and economic empowerment. [Read more.](#)

Egypt and Regional Instability



A billboard shows US President Donald Trump and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi ahead of the Sharm El-Sheikh Peace Summit in the Egyptian Red Sea resort town of Sharm el-Sheikh on October 13, 2025. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

**Egypt’s foreign policy will remain too little, too late in 2026**

Chatham House

In the past two years, Egypt has played an active role on several fronts. It has mediated talks over Gaza and Iran’s nuclear programme, as well as working to de-escalate Israel’s military campaign in southern Lebanon. It has also backed the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) against the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in the war in Sudan.

On the surface, this new activism could be seen as restoring Egypt’s relevance and boosting its status as a regional stabilizer. But in reality, the Gaza war and the subsequent regional turmoil have fostered a regional order in which Egypt has been somewhat sidelined as Washington prioritizes its relations with Israel and the Gulf states.

This partly reflects Egypt’s reactive and risk-averse approach to foreign policy, as well as its economic constraints that mean it is dependent on foreign investment.

Egypt’s foreign policy has for a long time been narrowly focused on three objectives: fending off threats near its borders, maintaining regime survival and reviving its struggling economy. In 2025, Egypt adopted several measures to achieve these goals. [Read more.](#)

## Egypt-Israel Summit: A Springboard to Progress on Gaza?

*The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*

U.S. officials are working quietly to broker the first public meeting in years between Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Egyptian President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi. The summit, if it takes place, will be more than a symbolic reset: it will test whether Cairo, Jerusalem, and Washington can move from wartime crisis management to a more structured approach on Gaza stabilization and broader regional diplomacy.

The push comes as the Trump administration tries to reconstitute regional partnerships frayed by the Gaza war, restore visible Arab-Israel engagement, and give form to still-vague ideas for postwar governance and security arrangements in Gaza. A Netanyahu-Sisi meeting would be an early indicator of whether key actors are prepared to reengage at the leadership level on these issues.

[Read more.](#)

## Israeli PM Netanyahu announces \$35 billion gas deal with Egypt as US pushes for summit

*CNN*

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced a \$35 billion gas deal with Egypt on Wednesday evening as the US pushes for a summit between the leaders of the two countries.

In a televised statement, Netanyahu hailed the agreement as “the largest gas deal in Israel’s history.” He said the deal was valued at 112 billion shekels (about \$34.6 billion).

The deal involves American energy company Chevron and will supply gas to Egypt.

“This deal greatly strengthens Israel’s status as a regional energy power and contributes to stability in our region. It encourages other companies to invest in gas exploration in Israel’s economic waters,” said Netanyahu.



*Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu meets with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in New York, Sept. 26, 2018.*

[PHOTO CREDITS](#)

According to an Israeli source familiar with the matter, Israel had delayed the official approval of the deal for months, ultimately folding under pressure from the Trump administration. [Read more.](#)

## Lebanon: Harnessing Political Momentum



Hezbollah members hold a funeral on 24 November 2025 in Beirut, Lebanon, commemorating assassinated military chief, Haytham Ali Tabatabai. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

### Only Iran can disarm Hezbollah

Chatham House

In a recent interview with the Saudi news outlet [Al Arabiya](#), Lebanon's Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji said that 'Hezbollah won't hand over its weapons without an Iranian decision'. For a diplomat, it was an unusually blunt statement, but that didn't make it any less true. Many in Lebanon share that conviction. Otherwise, why would Hezbollah chief Naim Qassem insist on preserving his party's arms despite the obvious consequences?

Hezbollah is well aware that most Lebanese want to see it disarmed, as [a recent Gallup poll](#) showed. And disarmament was a key part of the US-brokered ceasefire agreement with Israel reached in November 2024. But Hezbollah insists that disarmament only applies to a part of Lebanon's south, the area south of the Litani River.

Because of its obstinance, Hezbollah has lost much of its political standing in Beirut and most of [its domestic political alliances](#). That has facilitated the formation of a new government whose president and prime minister are committed to the goal of the Lebanese state regaining its monopoly over the use of force, exercised via the country's army. The Lebanese army is carrying out disarmament operations in the southern Litani sector, but is being far more cautious about disarmament in the northern part of that sector, in addition to the Bekaa and elsewhere. [Read more.](#)

## Financial Regulation as the Foundation of Sovereignty? A Path to Disarmament for Lebanon

*Arab Center Washington DC*

Since 2019, Lebanon has experienced cumulative economic and institutional breakdown, leaving the state hollowed out, public trust shattered, and large segments of society pushed toward despair and emigration. This breakdown has been accompanied by an erosion of state sovereignty, as Hezbollah’s military dominance and influence within state institutions have shaped national decision-making, constrained government authority, and enabled the consolidation of parallel security, financial, and social structures operating beyond state control. The country now stands at one of its most consequential crossroads since the end of the civil war in 1990. Multiple dynamics are converging to create a narrow but genuine opportunity for Lebanon to reclaim its sovereignty and begin the long journey toward stabilization.

Much depends on the will of Lebanese actors to lead a stabilization trajectory. A central concern is the disarmament and demobilization of Hezbollah, now significantly weakened by Israeli attacks. [Read more.](#)

## Lebanon’s Independent Media at the Forefront of the Accountability Battle

*The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy*

Six years after the October 2019 uprising, Lebanon’s independent media scene stands as one of the few surviving remnants of the country’s anti-establishment movement. While the uprising yielded the election of 12 anti-establishment MPs in 2022, most grassroots groups seeking justice and accountability struggled to build lasting institutions due to the emigration of many activists, the inaccessibility of funds, and the difficulty of sustaining momentum. The independent media ecosystem, comprising a dozen digital platforms and many independent journalists, are among the few emerging counterpowers that survived Lebanon’s multilayered crises and continued to hold its political and financial elite accountable.



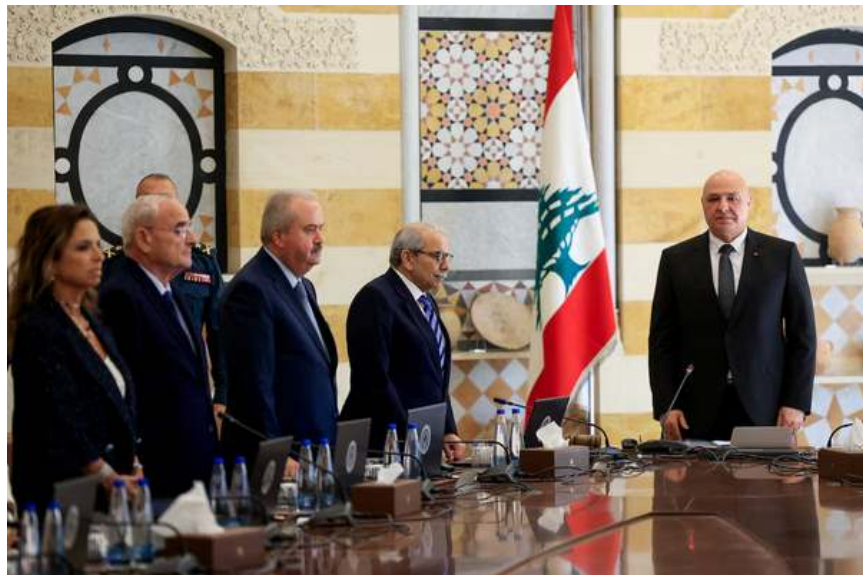
Newsstand in Lebanon. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

Independent media platforms have become central to accountability efforts in Lebanon, especially following the economic collapse and the Beirut Port explosion, after which many citizens sought outlets beyond pre-existing politically-affiliated media platforms. [Read more.](#)

## The U.S.-French Mechanism 2.0: Preventing Escalation Between Lebanon and Israel

*The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*

For the first time since its inception in November 2024, the U.S.-French mechanism tasked with monitoring the Israel-Lebanon ceasefire agreement has undergone a significant transformation. Its latest meeting included civilian representatives from both sides: Simon Karam, the former Lebanese ambassador to the United States who publicly opposed Syrian control of his country in the 1990s, and Uri Resnick, the senior foreign policy director on Israel’s National Security Council.



*Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam and members of the cabinet stand as they attend a cabinet session to discuss the army's plan to disarm Hezbollah, at the Presidential Palace in Baabda, Lebanon, September 5, 2025.*

[\*PHOTO CREDITS\*](#)

Although their inclusion was a welcome response to Washington’s longstanding goal of expanding dialogue between Lebanon and Israel, the pace of Hezbollah’s disarmament remains the most crucial question, so broader discussions alone may not prevent a collapse. The U.S.-French mechanism helped stop the war last year and could save the ceasefire in year two, but only if Washington, Paris, and their partners are robustly involved in facilitating the disarmament process and establishing a framework for ongoing dialogue between Israel and Lebanon. Without third-party intervention, escalation and even a potential return to war are the most likely scenarios in the coming months. [Read more.](#)

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## Lebanon: Implementing a Digital Transformation Roadmap for Tax Administration

*International Monetary Fund*

This summary provides an overview of guidance provided to Lebanon’s Ministry of Finance regarding the digital transformation of tax administration. It opens by describing the need to take a holistic approach to digital transformation. In Lebanon, holistic thinking is critically essential and, to be effective, major investments in the further digitalization of tax administration will require addressing long-standing structural challenges. To advance progress, a digital transformation roadmap has been prepared that describes a path forward. The authorities should finalize and implement the roadmap, stabilizing current core IT systems while taking steps to acquire a new Integrated Tax Administration System (ITAS). [Read more.](#)

Syria's Reconstruction



Syrians commemorate the 12th anniversary of the sarin gas chemical attacks carried out by the ousted Bashar al-Assad regime on Ghouta, which killed hundreds of civilians. Damascus, Syria, August 21, 2025.

[PHOTO CREDITS](#)

## Syria's Promise and Challenges One Year After Assad's Fall

*Center for Strategic & International Studies*

In mid-November, we spent a few days in Damascus and its environs, meeting with a broad range of stakeholders, including Syrian transition government officials and representatives from Syrian civil society groups, stabilization and humanitarian organizations, the United Nations and the Gulf, and Syrian journalists and investors. The Syrians we met included some who stayed in Damascus throughout the conflict, some who moved to the capital from Idlib after Assad's ouster, and others who returned from neighboring countries and the wider diaspora.

Many Syrians are optimistic about their future. The new government has quickly forged ties with major world powers to end its international isolation. At the pinnacle of this campaign, Ahmed al-Sharaa became the first Syrian president to visit the Oval Office in November 2025. Violence is also declining, reaching a record low in November 2025. And after President Trump announced the lifting of sanctions on Syria, economic conditions are improving. The government has boosted electricity provision in key urban centers, and the International Monetary Fund said the economy is showing signs of recovery after a staff team visited Damascus. To set Syria on a stable trajectory, a window of opportunity exists to capitalize on these positive trends. [Read more.](#)

## Institutions and Governance in the New Syria: Continuity and Change from the Idlib Model

*The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*

A year after the collapse of the Assad regime, Syria's transitional leadership can claim tangible successes in seeking to rebuild a state hollowed out by civil war, corruption, and decades of authoritarian rule. The government in Damascus is restoring basic services like electricity and schooling, reopening diplomatic channels, and pursuing investment opportunities with regional partners like Saudi Arabia. But a pervasive shadow government, opaque economic practices, and uneven accountability for former regime crimes threaten to undermine this progress and the public's trust. Syria's ultimate trajectory remains an open question, and the leadership will need discipline to avoid a return to the conflict so common in post-civil war states. [Read more.](#)

## The United States and the Emerging Security Order in Eastern Syria

*Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*

The fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime on December 8, 2024, led to a new phase in Syria's security order. The Iranian presence, which had greatly shaped the Syrian conflict after 2011, receded and a new central authority, albeit one limited in reach, emerged in Damascus under Ahmad al-Sharaa, the leader of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham and now Syria's president after his appointment by the Military Operations Administration that ousted Assad.<sup>1</sup> This coincided with the United States' intent to reduce its military presence in eastern Syria. The nature of the security arrangements previously overseen by the Americans changed, as what had been a static form of deterrence gave way to an ad hoc approach focused on day-to-day risk management of developments on the ground.

There are three major poles of power in northern and eastern Syria today. There is the new central authority in Damascus, Türkiye-backed structures in the north, and the Kurd-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in the east. [Read more.](#)

## Bring US Troops Home from Syria Now

*CATO Institute*

This past weekend, the Islamic State (ISIS) killed three Americans in Syria—two US soldiers and one civilian contractor—marking the first US casualties in the country since the fall of Bashar al-Assad in December 2024. President Donald Trump has vowed to respond with “very serious retaliation.” His best course of action is removing the needless and counterproductive US military presence in Syria. Absent such a move, disasters like this will only continue.

The United States currently maintains roughly 1,000 troops in Syria, down from the approximately 2,000 stationed in the country when Trump assumed office in January 2025. [Read more.](#)

## Syria's civil society must take center stage in reconstruction

### Atlantic Council

Khaled is a forty-year-old businessman from Eastern Ghouta in Syria. He says he lost fifteen family members—including his parents, siblings, pregnant wife, and two-year-old son—in the 2013 chemical attacks that Bashar al-Assad's regime is accused of having been responsible for.

He recalls holding his wife as she recited the *Tashahhud* before the gas and the airstrikes that followed “erased all life,” and he later lost a second wife to another strike during the siege.



Syrian men take part in reconstruction work in the City Aleppo, ahead of the first anniversary of Aleppo City liberation. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

This September, sitting in his workshop that he rebuilt from the rubble, Khaled told one of the authors that he is working hard to restart the furniture business that once sustained his family. After years in Idlib and Turkey, he has returned to Eastern Ghouta—strictly driven by what he calls a “simple hope for peace and stability,” and a vow to “do whatever it takes to rebuild” his devastated town. [Read more.](#)

## Kurdish Peace Process Makes Slow Gains, With Regional Ramifications

### Stimson Center

Attempting to end the 40-year war between Turkey and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), Devlet Bahçeli, the leader of the Turkish Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), issued a surprise recommendation in October 2024 to parole long-jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan — if the PKK dissolved itself and renounced violence. In response, on February 27, Ocalan called on the guerrilla movement he established in 1978 to end armed struggle and disband.

In May, the PKK held an extraordinary congress at its headquarters in Qandil in Iraqi Kurdistan and on May 12, announced its dissolution. The congress stated that the party had “achieved its historic mission” as it brought recognition of the Kurds and promoted “a democratic solution of the Kurdish issue [in Turkey].” On July 11, some 30 PKK commanders and cadres symbolically burned their weapons at a ceremony in Iraqi Kurdistan attended by Turkish and Iraqi officials and international experts.

The success of the peace process is far from guaranteed. [Read more.](#)

Yemen's Potential and Shaky Future



Supporters of the Southern Transitional Council (STC), a coalition of separatist groups seeking to restore the state of South Yemen, hold South Yemen flags during a rally, December 25, 2025.

PHOTO CREDITS

## Saudi Arabia urges Yemen's separatists to leave 2 governorates as the anti-rebel coalition strains

Associated Press News

Saudi Arabia on Thursday called on Emirati-backed separatists in southern Yemen to withdraw from two governorates they now control, a move that has threatened to spark a confrontation within a fragile coalition that has been battling the Iran-backed Houthi rebels in the country's north.

The statement from Saudi Arabia's Foreign Ministry appeared aimed at putting public pressure on the Southern Transitional Council, a separatist Yemeni force long supported by the United Arab Emirates. Saudi Arabia backs the National Shield Forces of Yemen's internationally backed government in the war against the Houthis.

The separatists' actions have "resulted in an unjustified escalation that harmed the interests of all segments of Yemeni people, as well as the southern cause and the coalition's efforts," the ministry said. "The kingdom stresses the importance of cooperation among all Yemeni factions and components to exercise restraint and avoid any measures that could destabilize security and stability." [Read more.](#)



## USAID and Foreign Aid Legacies



*A flag outside the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) headquarters in Washington, D.C. on Feb. 3. The agency was shut down on July 1; remaining programs have been transferred to the State Department. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)*

## The Painful, Seismic Shift in Humanitarian Aid—and What’s Next

### *Carnegie Endowment for Sustainable Development*

The chasm between global humanitarian needs and available funding was already yawning in January 2025 when the United States, the world’s largest donor, suddenly paused its foreign assistance. In the previous year, the world met half (50.6 percent) of the requirements the United Nations identified in its coordinated humanitarian appeals, leaving a shortfall of \$24.4 billion—one of the largest on record. U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration’s subsequent decision to slash U.S. contributions to life-saving assistance have turned this humanitarian budget crisis into a full-blown emergency, the costs of which will be borne by the world’s most vulnerable.

This is a moment of truth for the nations of the world, one that will indicate whether the vaunted “international community” is anything but an empty phrase. Beyond rediscovering their common humanity, UN member states must seize this opportunity to reimagine and renovate an outmoded global humanitarian system whose shortcomings have long been apparent. Priorities for its reform and reconstruction include empowering local actors, exploring innovative financial mechanisms, leveraging the entrepreneurial energies of displaced populations, and reaffirming foundational principles of humanitarianism.

The scale of global humanitarian need is staggering. In 2024, nearly 300 million people required aid and protection for their survival. [Read more.](#)

## City tourism: unlocking jobs, opportunities, and regional growth

*Carnegie Endowment for Sustainable Development*

Where in the world is the EU?

This question is crucial for anyone interested in charting the European Union’s level of global engagement and influence. It is also a question that deserves renewed attention today, when the international order—and Europe’s place in it—is undergoing a series of seismic shifts.



*European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen arriving at the G20 Leaders' Summit in Rome, Italy, October 30-31, 2021.*

*PHOTO CREDITS*

This study tries to provide an answer by analyzing the first mandate of the European Commission of President

Ursula von der Leyen, which spanned from December 2019 to November 2024. By looking at a series of foreign policy indicators and comparing them with the two previous commission terms, it reveals how the EU has adapted to the challenges and crises that have emerged over the years.

[Read more.](#)

## Effectiveness In Practice: What It Means and How It Is Implemented by Four Development Agencies

*Center for Global Development*

In this paper, we explore how development agencies understand their own effectiveness. Drawing on interviews with 48 individuals across Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), and New Zealand’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), we probe the relevance of five key dimensions of effective agency practice, which align effectiveness with: (1) how and where budgets are allocated; (2) implementation of effectiveness norms;(3) cost-effectiveness of development programmes; (4) how agencies are structured; and (5) flexible and adaptive management practices. [Read more.](#)

## Update on Lives Lost from USAID Cuts

*Center for Global Development*

The US was (and remains) the world’s largest funder of global health aid and humanitarian relief. At the start of the year, the Trump administration announced a funding pause followed by widespread cancellation of foreign assistance awards, fueling widespread concern... [Read more.](#)

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*The views expressed in the following articles do not reflect the views of Jabi Consulting.*

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## References

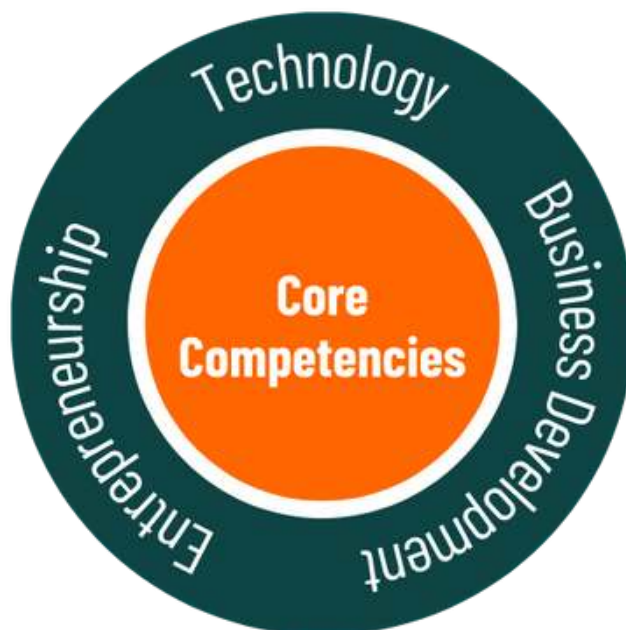
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## Contact Us



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## Core Competencies

Jabi Consulting, based in Washington, DC, specializes in helping private and government contractors compete, expand and succeed in emerging markets. We provide strategic advisory, market intelligence, and partnership facilitation to drive growth and impact in defense, infrastructure, and public and private sectors. We collaborate with USG contractors across various industries, with a strong focus on public administration and business consulting. We bring strategic insights, technical expertise, and hands-on experience to drive impactful and sustainable solutions in complex operating environments.

### Core Competencies:

- Capture & Proposal Development
- Market Research & Analysis
- Public Sector Advisory & Implementation
- Digital Transformation & Innovation
- Capacity Building & Management Training
- Project Management & Implementation
- Technology Integration Strategy

## Key Differentiators

**Client-Oriented & Results-Driven** – Focused on delivering solutions that maximize efficiency, time, and resources.

**Agile & Flexible** – Quickly adapts to shifting priorities and delivers results under tight timelines.

**Expert in Client Management** – Skilled in navigating and managing client relationships for smooth operations and strategic alignment.

**Strategic Cost Efficiency** – Provides innovative, cost-effective consulting solutions to optimize budgets and achieve client goals.

**USG & MENA Expertise** – Deep understanding of USG contracting and the political, economic, and cultural dynamics of the Middle East, bridging global expectations with local implementation.

**Turnkey Proposal Support** – Manages the full proposal development process, allowing clients to focus on project execution.

**Efficient Project Costing** – Delivers accurate cost estimates and streamlined proposal preparation for competitive and successful bids.

**Rapid On-the-Ground Support** – Conducts quick reconnaissance trips, providing real-time insights for operational readiness.

## Company Information

Registered in 2022 in Virginia  
UEI: GLVNQ7783YC8  
CAGE Code: 9NJF9

PCS Codes: R406, R410, R429,  
R431, R499, R607, R699, R707,  
R799, D399, D302, D303, D305,  
D306, D307, D308, D310, D318,  
D322, D324

Business Size: Small and  
Minority-owned

NAICS Codes: 928120,  
541611, 541612, 541512,  
541519, 541618, 561110,  
561311, 561312, 561320,  
561499, 611430

SAM Registration: Active

Commonwealth of Virginia  
Designation: Micro Business



**We Grew our  
Client Portfolios  
by \$130 Million  
in 2024.**

## Past Performance

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- **2025, IDG** – Worked with IDG leadership to draft a concept note on a Palestinian economic governance plan for the Gaza Day After.
- **2024, Palladium** – Led the development of a global youth workforce strategy and a growth strategy in the Middle East. Spearheaded a corporate strategy, positioning the firm for the Gaza Day After, including a monthly bulletin analyzing political and economic consequences and donor responses.
- **2024, IBI/URC** – Drafted a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) growth strategy for the MENA region, including a \$43M Trade, Investment, and Blended Finance proposal.
- **2023, Panagora** – Led the capture and proposal development of a \$26M USAID MEL activity in the Middle East.
- **2022, USAID Middle East** – Contributed to USAID-funded regional research, leading two research questions to examine transitions in secondary education across 10 Middle Eastern countries.
- **2022, Creative Associates** – Led the design and proposal development for a \$25M TVET program in the Middle East.
- **2022, The World Bank** – Designed a model to engage 173 municipalities in the Middle East, focusing on livelihoods for local communities in partnership with MS.
- **2022, UNOPS** – Jabi Consulting played a pivotal role in launching a green economy initiative and establishing a Regional Green Community of Practice (GCoP). Facilitated stakeholder engagement, consultations, and strategic meetings to build consensus on a green finance framework.
- **2022, ILO** – Worked closely with the ILO team to design comprehensive TVET strategies for Lebanon, Yemen, and Syria, with a focus on integrating technology.
- **2022, Chemonics** – Led the design of an \$87M USAID economic growth proposal in the Middle East, which was successfully awarded to Chemonics.
- **2022, IBTCI** – Led the design and drafting of the management strategy for a third-party monitoring (TPM) proposal in the Middle East.
- **2021, The World Bank** – Designed a framework and drafted nine case studies on the impact of technology on youth entrepreneurship in the Middle East.