

# BOARD of PEACE



©Middle East Institute

# JABI Consulting

## MENA Monthly Pulse

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



©Stringer/Reuters



©Giuseppe Cacace / AFP

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

**PHOTO CREDITS:** [top image](#), [bottom left](#), [bottom right](#)

Edited by Jabi Consulting: [info@jabiconsulting.com](mailto:info@jabiconsulting.com)

**Vol. 2** February 2026

## Table of Contents

Message from Our Founder and CEO	02
<a href="#"><u>Download</u></a> Our Gulf Region Blueprint	03
Trump’s Board of Peace	04
Gaza and Palestine	07
Israel’s Political Pressure	12
Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and AI	15
Middle East Regional Shifts	18
Jordan’s Uncertain Future	21
Egypt and Regional Instability	23
Lebanon: Harnessing Political Momentum	25
Syria: Rise in Conflict	27
Yemen’s Shaky Future	29
USAID and Foreign Aid Legacies	31
References - Articles	34
References - Photos	36
Contact Us	37
Capability Statement	ANX

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

## Message from Our Founder & CEO

### Dear Partners, Clients and Friends,

This month has marked the emergence of a new international political order. For better or worse, we are confronting a different reality: the United States is signaling, more directly than at any time in its modern history, that it intends to shape outcomes in protracted conflicts through leverage, pressure, and transactional diplomacy.

People may strongly agree or disagree with President Trump's approach, tone, and priorities. Yet it is difficult to deny the magnitude of what is unfolding. For nearly 80 years after World

War II, the United States helped build and lead an international system anchored in multilateral institutions, open trade, collective security, and the belief that integration and rules-based cooperation reduce the likelihood of major war. That architecture, supported by institutions such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the IMF, and major regional alliances, delivered extraordinary gains in global prosperity, reduced poverty, and enabled large-scale investment in development and humanitarian response.

That era is now under strain. A more fragmented and competitive world is emerging, with sharper geopolitical blocs, more frequent conflict, and less consensus on norms and enforcement. Gaza has become a testing ground for how this new system will function or fail.

I may not endorse every element of what has been proposed. But I cannot ignore a central fact: the U.S.-backed framework currently on the table is the only plan that has demonstrably applied meaningful pressure to move toward a ceasefire and accelerate hostage releases and the return of remains. The critical question is not whether the moment is consequential. The question is **where we go from here**, and whether this political opening can be translated into a durable end to war and a credible pathway to stabilization and recovery.

A ceasefire does not sustain itself. It requires mandates, governance arrangements, financing mechanisms, and enforcement. This raises urgent, practical questions:

- What is the mandate of the "Board of Peace," and how does it coordinate with parallel tracks in the international community space?
- How will financing be structured, safeguarded, and disbursed, and under what oversight?
- When and how does reconstruction in Gaza begin, and what are the minimum security and governance conditions?
- What is the mandate of NCAG, who grants it authority, and what are its lines of accountability?
- What is the role of the Palestinian Authority (politically, administratively, and fiscally), and how is legitimacy addressed?
- How will Gaza and the West Bank be linked institutionally and economically, rather than treated as separate?

If these questions are not answered early—and with credibility—today's opening can collapse into tomorrow's relapse.



*Hisham Jabi, Founder and CEO*



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”



© Images via Canva.com

## Trump's Board of Peace



*Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan (L), US President Donald Trump (C) and Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev attend the "Board of Peace" meeting during the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting in Davos on January 22, 2026.*

*[PHOTO CREDITS](#)*

## Trump's 'Board of Peace' and the multilateral order

### Brookings

Since taking office, U.S. President Donald Trump's administration has taken a meat cleaver to several elements of the multilateral order (which sometimes goes by the ill-conceived phrase "rules-based order"). The imposition of sweeping, disorganized, ill-structured tariffs threw the World Trade Organization-based trading regime into question. The 2025 National Security Strategy makes sweeping arguments about American intent to enforce security and resource arrangements to its benefit within the Western Hemisphere, undermining the most essential point of the U.N., namely the prohibition against the acquisition of territory by force. And as the administration promised to withdraw from multiple international institutions, governments around the world waited in nervous anticipation of another shock to the system.

### The first course: An executive nothingburger

The Trump administration chose the evening of January 7, 2026, to release the executive order it had long heralded and repeatedly delayed: a list of international institutions and organizations from which it was either withdrawing altogether or withholding its support. It came three days after the drama of the U.S. raid on Caracas to capture Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro [Read more.](#)

## Board of Peace meets as storm clouds gather for another possible Middle East war

### Middle East Institute

US President Donald Trump hosted an idiosyncratic gathering of global representatives in Washington on February 19 that included some key Middle East figures. They all came together under the banner of peace to discuss the next steps in Gaza, just as the US was sending more military forces to the region to pressure and possibly target Iran.



US President Donald Trump hosting the first Board of Peace meeting in Washington D.C., February 19, 2026. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

These two big strategic files, Iran and the Israel-Palestine question, have

loomed large in US policy for many years, and quite often they are treated as separate in a “stove-piped” manner by US administrations — Republican and Democratic alike. But in my discussions with multiple figures and analysts from the region, these issues are very much seen as interlinked in ways that are often not reflected in how US policy is crafted. Put simply, the Islamic Republic of Iran’s actions in destabilizing the region with ballistic missiles and the lack of serious progress toward a just and sustainable peace between Palestinians and Israelis are inextricably entwined. [Read more.](#)

## Five Key Takeaways From Trump’s First Gaza Board of Peace Meeting

### TIME Magazine

President Donald Trump convened the inaugural meeting of his newly formed Board of Peace at the United States Institute of Peace headquarters on Thursday, unveiling funding pledges and outlining plans for Gaza’s reconstruction.

Trump first announced the initiative at the World Economic Forum in Davos last month, presenting it as part of Phase Two of his U.N.-endorsed 20-point peace plan for Gaza. He invited dozens of countries to join the board.

But several close U.S. allies have hesitated to participate or refused to do so, amid concerns that the structure could sideline the United Nations. Reports that permanent membership would be granted to countries that contribute \$1 billion in cash within the first year have also raised questions about whether authoritarian governments could gain influence within the body.

The meeting brought together Trump, who serves as chairman of the board, [Read more.](#)

## UN Security Council holds high-level meeting on Gaza before Trump's Board of Peace convenes

PBS News

The U.N. Security Council is holding a high-level meeting Wednesday on the Gaza ceasefire deal and Israel's efforts to expand control in the West Bank before world leaders head to Washington to discuss the future of the Palestinian territories at the first gathering of President Donald Trump's Board of Peace.

The U.N. session in New York was originally scheduled for Thursday but was moved up after Trump announced the board's meeting for that same date and it became clear that it would complicate travel plans for diplomats planning to attend both. It is a sign of the potential for overlapping and conflicting agendas between the United Nations' most powerful body and Trump's new initiative, whose broader ambitions to broker global conflicts have raised concerns in some countries that it may attempt to rival the U.N. Security Council. [Read more.](#)

## Trump's Board of Peace: Rebuilding Gaza, or Remaking the World?

Arab Center Washington DC

The Trump administration's new "Board of Peace" is slated to hold its inaugural meeting in Washington on February 19, 2026. After the United Nations (UN) Security Council authorized the Board in November 2025 with a mandate that lasts until December 31, 2027, pending renewal, the first board meeting will be held at the newly renamed "Donald J. Trump United States Institute of



World leaders gather at the first Board of Peace meeting to discuss the future of Gaza and other conflicts. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

Peace" and is expected to begin securing reconstruction funds and troop commitments to staff an International Stabilization Force (ISF) in Gaza.

The Board has an immense task before it. More than 72,000 Gaza Palestinians have been killed since the most recent wave of conflict began on October 7, 2023. Up to 90 percent of Gaza's 2.1 million inhabitants have been displaced. Homes, schools, universities, medical facilities and agricultural lands have been destroyed, with reconstruction estimates reaching tens of billions of dollars and likely to go much higher. Gaza is in shambles and violence continues [Read more.](#)

## Palestine



*Palestinians gather for a mass fast-breaking iftar meal, amid the rubble of destroyed buildings in Gaza City.*

*PHOTO CREDITS*

## Beyond the Board of Peace: The Urgent Reality in Gaza and the West Bank

*Hisham Jabi, Founder & CEO, Jabi Consulting*

Today, I am sitting in my office off route 66 in DC area, watching the motorcades transporting guests from around the world as they arrive at Dulles Airport to attend the “Board of Peace” meetings in Washington about Gaza reconstruction. Delegations, diplomats, and envoys move swiftly under escort — a choreography of urgency and importance. Yet the scene is striking for its contrast: while the world’s decision-makers move freely across borders to discuss peace, millions of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank remain unable to move freely within their own land, where mobility itself has become a rare privilege rather than a basic norm.

From afar, it is easy to reduce Palestine to headlines, statistics, or political talking points. On the ground, it is a living nation of over 5.5 million people — families, entrepreneurs, students, doctors, farmers, artists — spread from Rafah to Jenin, from Nablus to Hebron. A society with culture, cuisine, history, and an unbreakable connection to land and identity.

Today, nearly 2 million people in Gaza face catastrophic humanitarian conditions, while youth unemployment across Palestinian territories exceeds 50%, among the highest in the world. Across the broader Middle East, more than 60% of the population is under 30, making this a region defined by its youth — and by the consequences of failing to engage them productively. [Read more.](#)

## A Guide to the Gaza Peace Deal

### Council on Foreign Relations

The Board of Peace met for the first time in Washington on February 18 for much-anticipated deliberations about Gaza's future. Twenty-seven countries that have signed onto the board were present at the meeting.

Envoys from nearly fifty countries in total attended, some only as observers. The United States' NATO allies have broadly declined invitations to join the board, citing concerns about the scope of its charter and invitations to countries whose leaders have outstanding arrest warrants with the International Criminal Court, such as Russia.

U.S. President Donald Trump, who chairs the board, announced at its first meeting that the United States would commit \$10 billion to the body, but didn't provide details on where the funds would come from. Other countries collectively pledged \$7 billion toward Gaza's reconstruction, with Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates expected to contribute up to \$1.2 billion to the board's coffers. The World Bank estimated last year it would cost more than \$70 billion to rebuild Gaza. [Read more.](#)

## The risks of Trump's peace plan: Two Gazas and an annexed West Bank

### Chatham House

As US President Donald Trump convenes the inaugural meeting of the 'Board of Peace' (BoP) in Washington this week, Gaza will be thrust back into the international spotlight. This gives Arab and European governments a chance to review the framework he has set out to end the conflict in Gaza and adjust their engagement strategies.



*Tents provided by the UNDP amid the rubble in Gaza on February 16, 2026.*

[PHOTO CREDITS](#)

Although they are mostly keen to accommodate Trump and help maintain the ceasefire, they risk supporting a process that could close off any prospect of Palestinian statehood and deliver a serious blow to Palestinian nationalism. If Arab and European states do not act, they risk letting Palestine become transformed into the Israeli right's dream. [Read more.](#)

## Running on Empty: The Deepening Financial Crisis of the Palestinian Authority

*Arab Center Washington DC*

The Palestinian Authority (PA) is nearly insolvent. A deep financial crisis is edging it closer to the brink of fiscal collapse. The PA's main sources of revenue are drying up, pushing recurrent budget deficits to historic and dangerous levels. Traditional avenues of deficit financing (mainly, domestic bank borrowing and accumulated arrears to private sector



*A meeting chaired by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)*

suppliers) are exhausted, and public debt already surpassed the economy's total output. The PA's ability to pay full and timely salaries to its employees has been severely curtailed, while the provision of basic public services and their quality are seriously compromised. Politically, the crisis is weakening the PA's ability to govern, eroding whatever legitimacy it still has among the Palestinians, and heightening the risk of its institutional collapse. [Read more.](#)

## What the New Gaza Administrative Committee Needs to Succeed

*The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*

Last month's establishment of the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza—the name given to the “technocratic, apolitical Palestinian committee” mandated under President Trump's twenty-point peace plan—marks an important step in the transition to postwar stabilization efforts. The Trump plan envisions the NCAG as the only entity tasked with implementing governance in Gaza. And in addition to the typical challenges faced by similar transition authorities, it will face challenges specific to the Palestinian context, whether related to operational obstacles, political delegitimization efforts by Hamas and the Palestinian Authority, or the need to secure efficient, responsive cooperation from Israel.

The NCAG's credibility will hinge on its ability to surmount these challenges and promptly provide tangible deliverables to the people of Gaza. In the immediate term, the Board of Peace—the U.S.-led entity that will oversee the entire transition process, including the NCAG's activities—should focus on providing the political space the committee needs to operate, as well as the tools it needs to make an impact on the lives of Gazans and establish credibility. If the NCAG fails, it would jeopardize the entire twenty-point plan. [Read more.](#)

## Dispelling Trump's dystopia: A European blueprint for Gaza's renewal

### European Council on Foreign Relations

The imagery was sleek, the promises grand. At the World Economic Forum in Davos, Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, presented a "[Trump economic development plan](#)" for Gaza—complete with AI-generated renderings of glass towers and marinas which reimagined the devastated enclave as a futuristic tourist destination.



*Aerial photo taken on Jan. 27, 2025 shows displaced people on their way home to the north of the Gaza Strip, near al-Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza Strip.*

[PHOTO CREDITS](#)

However, these glossy images bear little relation to the reality of a population emerging from a catastrophic humanitarian crisis. Famine was recently declared, over a million people lack adequate shelter, and the health system [has collapsed](#). Trump's plan would obliterate Gaza's history and society by imposing a top-down economic and tourism model. Few Palestinians, if any, have been consulted in its development: in the absence of Palestinian agency, President Trump will "exercise all power and authorities" as chairman of the [Board of Peace \(BoP\)](#). [Read more.](#)

## Pursuing Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration in Gaza

### RAND

Hamas militants from the Gaza Strip crossed into Israel on the night of October 7, 2023, initiating an attack on civilians and Israeli forces of exceptional brutality. The attack, and the equally severe response by the Israel Defense Forces, initiated an unprecedented conflict in Gaza that continued for two years and led to more than 70,000 casualties in the Gaza Strip alone. On October 10, 2025, a ceasefire leading to hostage and prisoner exchanges went into effect, marking the first phase of President Donald Trump's 20-point plan for ending the conflict and paving the way for peace between Israelis and Palestinians. The formal transition to the second phase of the plan was announced on January 14, 2026, yet the implementation of this phase is contingent largely on Hamas's disarmament, as stipulated in point 13 of the plan. Nonetheless, how disarmament is defined and how to achieve it remain elusive.

The authors examine these questions through a comprehensive disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) lens. [Read more.](#)

## Redefining 'lifesaving': Prioritizing mental health, child protection, and education in Gaza

### Brookings

A young girl from Deir al-Balah, a displacement camp in Gaza, sat in an art therapy session. She refused all other colors, using only red. When asked by an implementing organization if she wanted other colors, she replied: "No, I saw the bombing, and there was blood everywhere." She drew the same scene repeatedly, using only red.

After more than two years of the most recent conflict in Gaza, over 68,000 people have died, including over 20,000 children. While a ceasefire was signed in October 2025, the state of affairs in the region still seesaws between violence and calm. For Gaza's 1.2 million children, physical survival alone is insufficient. The humanitarian sector must redefine its priorities to include mental health, child protection (protecting children from harm, abuse, and exploitation), and education alongside food, shelter, and health care as essentials in protracted crises. [Read more.](#)

## For Younger Palestinians, Crisis Has Become a Way of Life

### Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Palestinian youth are a foreign country; they do things differently there—not because they reject politics, but because the political institutions around them no longer function. But the implications for diplomacy and politics have not sunk in, especially regarding the structures that have upheld Palestinian political life over many decades but are now in severe decay.

Long before October 7, 2023, Palestinian institutions were soldiering on without commanding respect or loyalty, without exercising moral authority or leadership, and without ensuring compliance—except, at times, through brute force. Regardless of how current political and diplomatic maneuvering plays out, these institutions are unlikely either to collapse outright or to regain their footing. Instead, they will survive without regaining relevance, leaving most Palestinians to fend for themselves in the growing governance gaps they leave. The Palestinian Authority (PA)—a body built on the two legs of international diplomacy and democratic legitimacy—has lost its ability to stand on either. It continues through inertia and lack of alternatives. [Read more.](#)



*Palestinian students walk past one of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) schools in East Jerusalem. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)*

## Israel's Political Pressure



An Israeli soldier takes position in the Gaza Strip, December 2023. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

## How Israel's War in Gaza (Partially) Rehabilitated Counterinsurgency Theory

### RAND

The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in late summer of 2021 brought more than just the collapse of a country and diminished American prestige. It discredited an idea that was part of U.S. military strategy for the better part of two decades—population-centric counterinsurgency. Premised on [Mao Tse-tung's famed analogy](#) likening guerrillas needing popular support to fish needing the sea, [the theory posited](#) that by winning over the population through a series of economic and political inducements, a government could starve an insurgency of its lifeblood. Advocates pointed to lessons from Cold War insurgencies like the [Malayan Emergency](#) and [Vietnam](#) to argue that this approach held the key to winning the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

America's fascination with population-centric counterinsurgency proved short-lived. For a time, the adoption of this strategy during the 2006 Iraq "surge" seemed to vindicate this theory. But a similar ["surge" in forces and shift in tactics](#) failed to yield comparable success in Afghanistan in 2009 and 2010. And while Iraq remained relatively stable for a period, eventually the Islamic State [came roaring back](#) in 2013. And so by the time the United States [ceded Afghanistan](#) back to the Taliban in 2021, [many analysts viewed](#) population-centric counterinsurgency theory as an ill-conceived recipe for costly, bloody defeat. [Read more.](#)

## Israel needs a fundamental shift in its foreign policy

### Atlantic Council

Israel will be there when US President Donald Trump’s Board of Peace convenes for the first time in Washington on Thursday, with a splashy pledge of five billion dollars to rebuild the Gaza Strip, as Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar will mingle among leaders from Gulf countries and others who are taking part in this new Trump project.

It may make for a nice visual, but there’s no mistaking the fact that Israel’s international reputation has been tarnished due to its conduct in Gaza since the launch of fighting after the October 7, 2023 Hamas attacks.

This is evident in International Criminal Court indictments and United Nations resolutions, but even in the United States, a stalwart ally. According to Pew Research, 53 percent of US adults reported a negative attitude toward Israel last year, up from 42 percent in 2022.

Nonetheless, the apparent end of the war presents a unique moment for Israel to examine its present status and trajectory. [Read more.](#)



*Gideon Sa'ar, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel, attending a United Nations Security Council meeting to discuss the situation in the Middle East. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)*

## Election Year in Israel: Portents of the Coming Political Battle

### Arab Center Washington DC

Israel has entered the year of parliamentary elections, whether they are held on time at the end of October 2026 or brought forward to an earlier date. The atmosphere has become dominated by electoral politics, party competition, and contentious disputes that were postponed during the war on Gaza.

Many analysts and politicians did not expect that Israel’s governing coalition, and particularly its leader Benjamin Netanyahu, would succeed in holding out after the events of October 7, 2023, which were described as the biggest security failure since the October 1973 war. The coalition’s partners realized that their government’s disintegration and subsequent early elections without achieving security or military successes would affect the political mood in Israeli society and destroy their chances of returning to power after the elections. [Read more.](#)

## Israel's Strategic Consensus on Iran — and Its Risks

Stimson

For decades, Iran has occupied a singular place in Israel's threat perception. Across governments of the left, center, and right, Tehran has been viewed as the most consequential long-term strategic challenge to Israeli security.

That consensus has only hardened in recent years. Yet, the strength of that agreement may now be obscuring important questions about the limits of military power and the risks of escalation.

Six months after Israel declared that its latest confrontation with Iran had significantly degraded the Iranian threat, Tehran is rebuilding its nuclear and missile programs. Deterrence, as in previous cycles, appears temporary rather than transformative. [Read more.](#)

## The Economic Case for the US-Israel Partnership

Hudson Institute

Discussions of the United States-Israel relationship tend to focus on security assistance, as though the partnership were primarily an exercise in strategic patronage. However, this framing overlooks that Israel is a significant economic and innovation power whose deep integration into the American industrial, technological, and capital ecosystems bolsters the US economy. Further,

Israel's capacity for innovation is indispensable to building and maintaining America's military and economic advantages.



*US and Israeli flags projected on the historic walls of the Old City near Hebron Gate in Jerusalem on June 22, 2025. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)*

After October 7, 2023, credit agencies, foreign investors, and geopolitical commentators assumed that Israel's economic resilience would buckle under the weight of a prolonged, multifront war. One agency, Moody's, downgraded Israel's credit rating in 2024. Capital outflows, a spike in defense expenditures, and the mobilization of hundreds of thousands of reservists from the civilian workforce gave credence to the view that the so-called start-up nation had pushed its small economy to the brink. [Read more.](#)

## Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and AI



Guests look at a model of what is intended to be the largest data center in the UAE, under construction in Abu Dhabi as the Stargate initiative, during the International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, on Nov. 3, 2025. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

## For the Gulf States, Investment in AI Is Partly About U.S. Protection

### Foreign Policy

The three most influential Gulf states—Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar—are investing hundreds of billions in artificial intelligence. The Emiratis were early movers, staking out a national strategy for AI and naming a minister of state for artificial intelligence in 2017. In Saudi Arabia, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has framed Riyadh's push into AI around his broader Vision 2030 reform project, though it was not mentioned in the original document. A Saudi Data and AI Authority was created in 2019 and announced a strategy for the technology in 2020, but the Public Investment Fund only set up an AI company called Humain in 2025. Saudi Aramco has been nimbler than the investment fund, however, leveraging the technology for its operations for longer. Qatar established an AI committee in 2021, but Doha was too busy investing in the media, universities, and lobbying in Washington to do much with the technology. Doha did not get serious about artificial intelligence until late last year, when the Qatar Investment Authority established Qatar's national AI company, Qai.

These investments make sense, given AI's rapid development and the widespread belief that artificial intelligence will radically transform economies and societies in ways that were previously only the stuff of Hollywood. Because Saudi, Emirati, and Qatari leaders are seeking to diversify their economies, which have long been dependent on hydrocarbons, it follows that they [Read more.](#)

## Data, AI and energy are reshaping the GCC region and its global alliances. Here's how.

### World Economic Forum

For decades, the post-WWII trans-Atlantic alliance shaped much of the international system. Today, as innovation, energy systems and digital infrastructure reshape global power, this alliance is transforming. Major powers are now engaging a broader set of partners, such as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, which are undergoing their own profound economic and technological transformation.

In this emerging global system, geopolitical leadership will increasingly be shaped by three core resources: data, the artificial intelligence (AI) to interpret and act on this data, and the energy required to fuel that intelligence. Together, these elements form the new currency of power, determining which nations, companies or institutions will lead in economics, security, science and governance. [Read more.](#)

## Deloitte: AI now mainstream in GCC tax, finance

### Gulf Business

A new regional survey by Deloitte's Tax & Legal practice shows that organisations across the GCC are accelerating adoption of Generative AI (GenAI) within tax, finance and legal functions — but many are still struggling to scale beyond pilot phases.

Based on insights from senior tax and finance leaders in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar and Kuwait, the survey highlights a sharp drop in non-adoption rates, falling from 52 per cent in 2024 to 29 per cent in 2025. Participation in the study rose 47 per cent year-on-year, signalling growing executive engagement with AI strategy. Deloitte said the findings indicate GenAI has now become a mainstream priority for regional leadership teams. [Read more.](#)

## UAE Data Centers: Powering the Middle East's AI and Cloud Revolution

### Data Center Knowledge

As the Middle East's digital transformation accelerates, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is emerging as a key player in the global data center market. With development concentrated in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, the country is leveraging its strategic location, AI ambitions, and sovereign cloud initiatives to attract hyperscale investments.

Serving as a gateway for digital services across the Middle East and Africa, the UAE is experiencing sustained demand for local data processing capabilities. This growth is driven by the region's rapid adoption of advanced AI infrastructure and cloud technologies. [Read more.](#)

## Saudi Arabia reshapes Vision 2030 around new priorities

DW

Saudi Arabia has begun reviewing its Vision 2030, a sweeping diversification agenda launched in Saudi Arabia in 2016. The country's de facto ruler, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman — at the time Deputy Crown Prince as well as Minister of Defense — introduced the \$2 trillion (€1.7 trillion) reform agenda a decade ago to reduce the kingdom's reliance on oil, and to transform the economy and society.

Since then, Riyadh has been shifting its economy as the world's biggest oil exporter toward technology, tourism and renewable energy. Other key areas are the construction of various giga projects — large-scale developments like entire new cities that are considered transformative for perception of Saudi Arabia — the increase of private-sector growth, as well as steps to modernize Saudi society, such as expanding women's rights and boosting their participation in the workforce. This week, however, Finance Minister Mohammed al-Jadaan announced that Saudi Arabia was adjusting the reform's strategy. [Read more.](#)



*A large banner shows Saudi Vision for 2030 at the inauguration of several energy projects in Ras Al Khair, Saudi Arabia, November 2016.*

[PHOTO CREDITS](#)

## Qatar offers AI compute to lure startups

Semafor

Qatar Investment Authority expanded its Fund of Funds program to \$3 billion, tripling its size a year after launch, and has added a coveted perk: access to subsidized AI computing power, a move that executives expect will help Doha become a leading venture hub.

The program has deployed capital to 12 firms so far, with individual commitments ranging from \$50 million to more than \$150 million per fund, Mohsin Pirzada, QIA's head of funds investment, said in an interview at Web Summit Qatar.

"It's a reflection of the demand we are seeing," Pirzada said, adding that the size of the venture capital industry now puts Qatar on par with larger Gulf economies.

As part of the push, QIA and Qatar Development Bank will offer startups and portfolio companies access to compute from Qai, the state-backed AI infrastructure platform. "We felt this would be a big differentiator," Pirzada said. [Read more.](#)

Middle East Regional Shifts



*U.S. President Donald Trump speaks at the inaugural Board of Peace meeting at the U.S. Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C., February 19, 2026.*

*PHOTO CREDITS*

## What Trump’s 2026 Mideast approach could look like

*Middle East Institute*

Donald Trump’s first year of his second presidential term has been a roller coaster of twists and turns both at home and abroad—particularly in the Middle East. His regional focus was driven by two main factors: first, Trump’s own ego and sense of possible place in history; and second, the volatile, dynamic events driven by actors in the region.

Trump heralds the 2020 Abraham Accords and his “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran, including the 2020 strike that killed Iranian general Qasem Soleimani, as two of the top foreign policy achievements of his first term. In the whirlwind of Trump’s grand ambitions for the world—including ending the Ukraine war, reshaping America’s economic links to nearly every country, and implementing the harshest immigration policies in decades—the Middle East continues to figure prominently. Trump’s Abraham Accords left a mark on Middle East history during his first presidency, and he wants to cement that legacy in his second term.

But apart from his personal ambitions, regional dynamics have also compelled him to act. This is not uncommon for US presidents, who often find themselves getting involved in the region more than they originally wanted or planned. Every US president has had his “Michael Corleone” moment—the character in the third Godfather movie who fatalistically says, “Just when I thought I was out, I get pulled back in.” [Read more.](#)

## Selling peace to Trump: How Europe can prevent the next Middle East war

### *European Council on Foreign Relations*

On Friday, February 6th, American and Iranian diplomats will gather in Oman in a last-ditch attempt to prevent a return to war, following intensive regional diplomacy. After Tehran's brutal crackdown on protesters, President Donald Trump has threatened strikes and deployed his "beautiful" armada to the region. Iran's supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, for his part, has responded with increasingly bellicose rhetoric.



*Black smoke rises from an Israeli airstrike that hit a building in Qennarite village, south Lebanon, Wednesday, Jan. 21, 2026. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)*

In these tensions, Israeli prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu sees a historic opportunity. Following the shock of the October 7th attacks, Israel harnessed its military power to force a new order on the Middle East, weakening Iran, Hamas in Gaza and Hizbullah in Lebanon. [Read more.](#)

## The Uncertainties of the New World Order Affect the Middle East

### *Arab Center Washington DC*

The rules-based world order is facing its most serious, indeed existential, challenge since it was created after World War II. What makes this moment in world affairs unprecedented is not that the international system is being contested by those who suffered from its inequalities—many have done so for decades. Instead, it is that the system is now openly questioned by those who built it, benefited from it, and claimed its moral leadership.

The scale of the challenge became apparent at a gathering of the system's most elite champions and sponsors at the January 2026 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. It could not have come at a more critical moment: a time when rules are dismissed as inconveniences by the powerful, laws reduced to opinions, and guardrails treated as optional. As the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, warned, the rule of law increasingly is being replaced by "the law of the jungle." These words capture the depth of the rupture—especially when measured against the promise and idealism that animated the creation of the post-World War II order 80 years ago.

The world order that emerged from the ashes of that war claimed to represent not just the interests of the victors, but the principles of universalism. "We the peoples of the United Nations," declared the opening words of the UN Charter, signaling a new moral and political foundation for international relations. [Read more.](#)

## Experts react: The US and Israel just unleashed a major attack on Iran. What's next?

*Atlantic Council*

He went big. On Saturday morning, US and Israeli forces unleashed Operation Epic Fury, what US President Donald Trump called “a massive and ongoing” campaign against Iran. He called on the Iranian people to overthrow the regime once the fighting is done. Iran responded quickly by attacking Israel and US bases in the region. Below, our experts assess the unfolding war and where it goes from here.

### We know the objective—and little else

By launching a massive joint attack with Israel on Iran, Trump is gambling that that he can inflict enough damage on the Islamic Republic’s core security and political institutions that the regime will fall. By choosing to initiate this war, Trump has diverged from his past pattern of decisive actions with immediate and pain-free off-ramps. [Read more.](#)

## US and Israel attack Iran, which launches counterstrikes: Early analysis from Chatham House experts

*Chatham House*

The United States and Israel have attacked targets across Iran. The strikes follow a massive US military build-up in the region over the last few weeks and a series of negotiations between Washington and Tehran.



*Smoke rises over Tehran on 28 February 2026. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)*

In a [statement](#) posted on social media, US President Donald Trump said: ‘A short time ago the United States military began major combat operations in Iran.’

He added: ‘Our objective is to defend the American people by eliminating imminent threats from the Iranian regime’. He said Iran was pursuing a nuclear weapons programme – a claim denied by Tehran. ‘They can never have a nuclear weapon,’ he said.

In a message to ‘the great, proud people of Iran,’ President Trump said: ‘The hour of your freedom is at hand...when we are finished, take over your government, it will be yours to take. [Read more.](#)

Jordan's Uncertain Future



*The Duke and Duchess of Sussex lend support to WHO's humanitarian and mental health activities.*

[\*PHOTO CREDITS\*](#)

**WHO Director-General visits Jordan to recognize strong collaboration on health system delivery, emergency relief and advancing mental health**

*World Health Organization*

The Director-General of the World Health Organization, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, today concluded the first day of his two-day State visit to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, underscoring the strong partnership between WHO and Jordan across the areas of universal health coverage (UHC), mental health and humanitarian health action.

A central moment of the visit was today's meeting with His Majesty King Abdullah II, reflecting the importance of this State visit and Jordan's leadership in advancing health as a national and global priority. Discussions focused on strengthening health systems, expanding access to care, and sustaining support for emergency responses in the region, particularly for the Palestinian people, patients evacuated from Gaza to Jordan for treatment, and refugees hosted in Jordan.

"I wish to express my appreciation to His Majesty King Abdullah II for his commitment to advancing universal health coverage," said Dr Tedros. "I also extend my thanks to His Majesty and the people of Jordan for their solidarity and generosity in providing health services to more than three million refugees, primarily from Gaza and Syria, who are living in the country. [Read more.](#)

## Why the Muslim Brotherhood is staying calm amid crackdowns in Jordan

### Atlantic Council

In April 2025, the Jordanian government banned the Muslim Brotherhood, raided its offices, and seized its assets. Jordan’s General Intelligence Department (GID) arrested several members of the Islamist faction, accusing them of manufacturing rockets and drones. Jordanian authorities further charged that the Muslim Brotherhood planned terrorist attacks inside the Hashemite Kingdom after receiving training and funding from the Lebanese wing of Hamas. Although King Abdullah’s tensions with the Muslim Brotherhood go back decades—he called them a “masonic cult” in 2013—last year’s crackdown against the Islamist faction represented a significant government escalation to weaken its power across the kingdom. In September 2024, the Islamic Action Front (IAF), the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, won the most seats for any party in the parliamentary election. [Read more.](#)



Jordanian police stand outside the Islamic Action Front office in Amman. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

## Why West Bank annexation is a direct threat to Jordan

### Arab News

When Israel’s security Cabinet voted last week to extend Israeli control over areas under Palestinian administration, Amman heard more than a policy announcement — it heard an existential threat. For Jordan’s King Abdullah, the move crossed what he has called his “red lines”: no displacement of Palestinians, no alternative homeland, no liquidation of the Palestinian cause. All three are now in jeopardy, and with them, Jordan’s stability.

Jordan was quick to condemn the decision, describing the measures as “illegal” and “aimed at entrenching settlements and imposing Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank.” The Palestinian Authority, Arab and Muslim countries, as well as the EU and UN, joined in the condemnation.

In a lukewarm reaction, US President Donald Trump reiterated his objection to Israel’s annexation of the West Bank, but stopped short of denouncing the measures or calling on Israel to rescind them. To underscore the unambiguous meaning of the measures, Israel’s Energy Minister Eli Cohen told Israeli radio that the steps amounted to implementing “de facto sovereignty,” adding that they “actually establish a fact on the ground that there will not be a Palestinian state.” [Read more.](#)

Egypt and Regional Instability



*A truck carrying humanitarian aid at the Rafah border on the Egyptian side, in Rafah, Egypt, January 29, 2026.*

*PHOTO CREDITS*

**Gaza's Rafah border crossing with Egypt to reopen for limited travel Monday**

PBS News

Palestinians in Gaza watched with hope and impatience Sunday as workers laid the groundwork to reopen the territory's Rafah border crossing with Egypt, its lifeline to the world. Israel says the crossing is scheduled to resume Monday as its ceasefire with Hamas moves ahead.

"Opening the crossing is a good step, but they set a limit on the number of people allowed to cross, and this is a problem," said Ghalia Abu Mustafa, a woman from Khan Younis.

Israel said the crossing had opened in a test, and the Israeli military agency that controls aid to Gaza said residents could begin crossing Monday. But only a small number of people can cross at first.

"We want a large number of people to leave, for it to be open so that sick people can go and return," said Suhaila Al-Astal, a woman displaced from the city of Rafah who said her sick daughter needed help abroad. "We want the crossing to be open permanently."

Israel's announcement came a day after Israeli strikes killed at least 30 Palestinians including several children, according to hospital officials — one of the highest death tolls since the ceasefire began on Oct. 10. Israel had accused Hamas of new truce violations. [Read more.](#)

## How Egypt is reimagining education for the future of work

### World Economic Forum

Education is the story a nation writes about its future. For many years, Egypt's story was shaped by difficult realities. Classrooms struggled with declining attendance, teachers were stretched beyond their capacity, and curricula no longer reflected the skills young people needed to thrive.

These challenges limited opportunity for students and held back national competitiveness. They also weakened public trust in the promise that education should offer every child.



A classroom in Egypt. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

In 2025, Egypt decided that this story had to change. The shift began with a simple but profound commitment: every child must have a reason to come to school, every teacher must be supported and present, and every lesson must prepare students for a world that is moving faster than ever before. [Read more.](#)

## Egypt Joins SFF Initiative to Jumpstart Capital Markets

### World Bank Group

Egypt is joining a major World Bank initiative – the Sustainable Finance Facility (SFF) – to improve domestic capital markets. Together with recent policy initiatives by the government, this comprehensive program can draw more private investment into sectors needed for building a resilient economy while helping the government improve the efficiency and cost of its own domestic financing needs.

SFF, as part of the World Bank Group's Joint Capital Market Program (J-CAP), supports efforts in a select group of developing economies to realize the benefits of strong local capital markets. Funded by Switzerland's State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), the SFF helps sectors that require long-term financial investments in local currency to tackle pressing global challenges and to create jobs. The work reflects the importance of creating the right domestic conditions, including policy and regulatory certainty, as well as appropriate financial instruments to attract private capital.

### Positive Developments and Challenges

Egypt's efforts to deepen domestic capital markets comes at a time of recent positive [Read more.](#)

## Lebanon: Harnessing Political Momentum



*South Lebanon has experienced widespread civilian, economic, and environmental destruction that continues beyond the ceasefire.*

*[PHOTO CREDITS](#)*

## Security Claims, Civilian Ruins: Understanding Destruction and Reconstruction in South Lebanon

*The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy*

Fourteen months after the ceasefire, large parts of South Lebanon remain in ruins, with entire towns and villages across the border devastated by Israeli aggression. Hassan\*, a retired officer of Lebanon's Internal Security Forces returned to Khiam after the war, about two miles from the southern border, only to see his life's work reduced to rubble. The house that took him decades to build and his farm were gone. He wasn't alone. Israel made the town uninhabitable by destroying healthcare facilities, businesses, tourist establishments, churches, roads, water stations, telecom towers, and the municipal building.

The destruction in Khiam reflects the broader devastation across South Lebanon. Between October 2023 and January 2026, Israel damaged or destroyed tens of thousands of structures in the south, with most of the destruction incurred after the ceasefire was announced on November 27, 2024, according to Amnesty International. Residential areas, public spaces, and the economic, social, and environmental systems that sustained civilian life were among the structures systematically destroyed.

These destroyed structures are often overlooked in a narrow depiction of the region as a "Hezbollah military outpost," due to the group's deep social and political roots and military [Read more.](#)

## A First-Year Assessment of Lebanon's Governing Coalition

*Arab Center Washington DC*

In January 2025, President Joseph Aoun took the oath of office and in his inaugural [address](#) declared the start of a “new era.” The government then began to reconstitute itself as a functioning center of authority after prolonged executive paralysis. This transition unfolded in a moment of political fluidity shaped by two facts: the severe debilitation of Hezbollah following the 2023-2024 war with Israel, and the general consensus that Lebanon must end its endemic patronage, corruption, and institutional dysfunction. The extensive damage and disruption caused by Israel's military campaign has turned reconstruction into the defining test of whether the state can restore national trust by reasserting its authority and delivering recovery.

In February 2025, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam [formed](#) a new government, a step that further restored a degree of executive coherence. It created an opportunity to revive the basic functions of a state long undermined by corruption, inefficiency, and public distrust. Together, the presidency and the cabinet articulated a promising agenda centered on sovereignty, reform, and institutional revival. [Read more.](#)

## Weakening Hezbollah Requires Faster International Support to Lebanon

*Institute for the Study of War*

**Key Takeaway:** Hezbollah is attempting to prevent its complete disarmament through a combination of military and political measures. The Lebanese state has taken unprecedented steps to disarm Hezbollah since December 2024 and has made moderate progress in disarming the group south of the Litani River. Hezbollah, however, has employed a cognitive warfare campaign to delay or ultimately reverse the government's disarmament plan, which appears to have affected Lebanese leaders' willingness and complicated the Lebanese Armed Forces' (LAF) ability to disarm Hezbollah north of the Litani River. Delaying the disarmament of Hezbollah will make disarmament harder because Hezbollah is reconstituting.



*Hezbollah flag being placed on a military vehicle. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)*

Hezbollah is attempting to prevent its complete disarmament through a combination of military and political measures. Israeli military action in Fall 2024 significantly degraded Hezbollah capabilities and infrastructure and led to a ceasefire under which Hezbollah would be forced to disarm. The ceasefire, backed by the United States, enabled Israel to conduct airstrikes and take other action if Hezbollah did not comply with disarmament. [Read more.](#)

## Syria: Rise in Conflict



Protesters wave Kurdistan flags during a demonstration in the northern Iraqi Kurdish city of Sulaimaniyah, January 22, 2026. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

## What recent developments in Syria mean for the Kurds

### Chatham House

Dramatic changes in Syria in recent weeks have resulted in a major setback for Kurdish aspirations for self-rule. A rapid military offensive by the Damascus government seized northeast Syria from the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), ending the autonomy Kurds had forged there during the civil war.

Having previously supported the SDF, the US did not intervene, reflecting its embrace of President Ahmed al-Sharaa's Syrian Transitional Government (STG) in Damascus as its main partner in Syria.

From the Kurdish perspective, these developments mark a consequential defeat that will be hard to bear. However, there are several silver linings that could shape the future, although much depends on whether agreements between the two sides are implemented.

### A rapid offensive

Months of talks between Damascus and the SDF failed to resolve key issues, including how to integrate SDF and Kurdish internal security units into government institutions and protect the civil rights of Kurds. [Read more.](#)

## Syria is stabilizing, but US help remains vital

*Middle East Institute*

The second year of Syria's transition faced a rocky start this January, with large-scale conflict erupting in the northeast between the government and the Kurdish-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). Despite nine months of negotiations mediated by the United States, the lack of any implemented agreement to successfully integrate the SDF into the state made hostilities all but inevitable. As it happened, government forces advanced rapidly, securing control of all of Aleppo City between January 6 and 10 and then 80% of SDF territory in northeastern Syria between January 17 and 19. In two dramatic phases of hostility, the SDF's viability as a long-term political and military force effectively ended.

Since then, a US-mediated cease-fire on January 20 gave way to a comprehensive deal on January 30 to fully integrate the SDF and its armed and civilian entities into the state. That put an end to the fighting and paved a path toward a months-long process of integration. [Read more.](#)

## Shaping the new Syria: House Foreign Affairs Committee Testimony

*Brookings*

Chairman Mast, Ranking Member Meeks, and distinguished Members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

Just over a year has passed since transformative events occurred in the Levant. In Syria, President Bashar al-Assad was deposed after overseeing a horrific 14-year war that killed at least 400,000 people and displaced 13 million more. Notably, none of Assad's backers were able—or willing—to rescue him. Russia was preoccupied with its grinding war against Ukraine; relations between Tehran and Damascus had been fracturing, particularly as Iranian operatives in Syria were targeted by Israel; and Hezbollah had just suffered a historic set of attacks by Israel against its entire [Read more.](#)

## Cutting Through the Fog of War (and Peace) in Syria

*The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*

Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify on the challenges facing Syria fourteen months following the dramatic collapse of the Assad regime. Since assuming office in January 2025, the Trump administration has sought to transform Syria's government from a longtime foe into an ally capable of stabilizing a country that has seen considerable instability for over a century and, in doing so, cut off Iran's power projection to the Mediterranean and across the Middle East.

U.S. policy has centered on considerable top-down engagement, including three meetings between President Trump and Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa and record-breaking [Read more.](#)

Yemen's Shaky Future



*In 2025, Yemen remained one of the world's most acute humanitarian crises and the fourth largest operation globally for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). [PHOTO CREDITS](#)*

## Yemen: ICRC's humanitarian impact in 2025, a year of deepening crisis

*International Committee of the Red Cross*

### Saving lives, protecting dignity

Across Yemen, the ICRC intensified support to health facilities, ensuring that tens of thousands could access medical care despite health systems being under significant strain. Teams provided critical supplies and training to local hospitals and primary care centres, which are struggling to keep services running amid shortages of staff and equipment. Throughout the year, the institution has been also deploying mobile surgical teams to strengthen surgical capacity and support surgical interventions at several hospitals across the country.

When a deadly attack struck Sa'ada Prison in April, killing and injuring dozens of detained migrants, ICRC and YRCS were among the first to respond, helping evacuate the wounded, managing the dignified care of the dead and calling for stronger protection for civilians trapped in conflict zones and for all parties to respect international humanitarian Law (IHL). In the same facility, the ICRC fully renovated and equipped a new medical clinic in mid-2025, enabling it to provide vital medical care to all the detainees. [Read more.](#)

## Riyadh takes the helm in Yemen

*Middle East Institute*

Saudi Arabia has stepped up its efforts to unify and restructure Yemen's anti-Houthi forces after the rapid expansion and sudden implosion of the United Arab Emirates-backed secessionist Southern Transitional Council (STC) following Abu Dhabi's military withdrawal from the country. Although Saudi Arabia's leading role in Yemen is now uncontested, Riyadh faces several pressing military and political challenges there at a time of great uncertainty in the wider region.

For now, Yemen's anti-Houthi forces remain fragmented, but with Riyadh's assistance the Saudi-backed internationally recognized government is working to coopt and potentially integrate formerly UAE-supported groups under its unified national command. In January, Riyadh announced the formation of the Southern Dialogue Conference, which would, in its words, bring together "all southern factions to discuss just solutions to the southern cause," given long-standing regional aspirations for self-determination and self-governance. But this Saudi-sponsored forum has yet to be organized. [Read more.](#)



*Saudi-backed forces operating a military vehicle in Yemen during ongoing conflict. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)*

## From Smugglers to Supply Chains: How Yemen's Houthi Movement Became a Global Threat

*Century International*

Over the course of a decade, Yemen's Houthi movement has transformed from local insurgent group to disruptive global force. Time and again, efforts to beat back the Houthis' military capabilities by killing their leadership and intercepting supplies from their Iranian patrons seem to produce only temporary dips in their ability to inflict harm on neighboring states, the global economy, and their fellow Yemenis.

How can this stateless armed group, dug into the hinterlands of one of the poorest countries in the world, be so resilient?<sup>1</sup> From their perch above the Red Sea, the Houthis were able to menace neighboring Gulf States with missile and drone strikes even before they started a two-year campaign against shipping at one of the world's most important trade chokepoints, at great expense to the world economy. In 2024 and 2025, Israel and the United States struck devastating blows against Iran and its so-called Axis of Resistance (a coalition of Iranian-backed nonstate armed groups), and launched military campaigns against the Houthis, while the United States designated the group a "foreign terrorist organization" (FTO). But the Houthis bounced back and show no serious [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](#)*

## One Year In, What Do We Know About Humanitarian and Development Spending Under Trump?

*Center for Global Development*

Since the Trump administration took office a year ago, we've been trying to understand what's happened to US spending on international assistance—particularly resources focused on traditional development priorities and humanitarian needs. This is no small task. We quickly ran into a familiar problem: the data are either timely or readily usable, but rarely both.

[Foreignassistance.gov](#) remains an excellent resource for tracking most US aid flows, but inevitably, there are reporting lags. To date, agencies have only reported through quarter 3 of FY25—and Q4 is especially important for capturing year-end spending. So we've turned to other sources (such as [OMB budget execution reporting](#) and [USAspending.gov](#)) that are more up-to-date, but more challenging to work with. But we're also mindful that relying on the US government's fiscal year can be misleading, since the Biden administration was still at the helm for the entire first quarter of fiscal year 2025. So, we've been eagerly awaiting data from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for the end of calendar year 2025. While relying on calendar-year data is also an imperfect approach (since the formal transfer of power took place on January 20, 2025), comparing data for key aid accounts in 2025 with prior calendar years provides a more complete picture of the near-term funding implications of the recent upheaval. [Read more.](#)

## The Logical End Point of 'America First' Foreign Aid

### The Atlantic

Last summer, the Dalai Lama was having a party in Dharamshala for his 90th birthday, and Bethany Morrison, a newly appointed State Department official, was eager to meet with him there. Inconveniently, the United States had recently canceled about \$12 million worth of annual foreign aid benefiting Tibetan-exile communities as part of the implosion of USAID. This, Morrison and other State officials thought, would not make a particularly good impression on His Holiness, according to a former State and a former USAID official.



A USAID wheat sack lies outside a shelter in Mekele, Ethiopia, on March 20, 2025. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

Prior to the Dalai Lama's birthday, the two former federal employees told me, they had spent months lobbying for Donald Trump's administration to restore at least some Asia-based aid projects. They had argued that these projects passed Secretary of State Marco Rubio's new litmus test for overseas spending: They would make America "safer, stronger, and more prosperous." Nothing changed. (Like other aid workers I spoke with for this story, the former employees requested anonymity because of fear of professional reprisal.) [Read more.](#)

## Congress passes \$50 billion foreign aid bill, despite Trump's cuts in 2025

### NPR

Foreign aid spending is back in the U.S. government's budget, after a year in which the Trump administration cut billions of dollars to global health and humanitarian assistance.

On Tuesday evening, President Trump signed the spending bill that would fund much of the government through September 30.

In that legislation, Congress has allocated \$50 billion for foreign aid in 2026 — a 16% cut from 2025. Still, it's a lot more money than the administration had signaled it wants to spend on foreign aid in its proposed budget.

The foreign aid package includes funding for a variety of issues, such as military aid to Egypt, Israel and Taiwan. However, it also includes money for initiatives aimed at supporting democracy, scholarship programs, U.S. embassy operations and health and humanitarian programs around the world. [Read more.](#)

## When the United States lost USAID, it also lost its vision for locally led, people-centered foreign assistance

Oxfam

One year after the elimination of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the global aid system is struggling to reinvent itself in the absence of billions of U.S. dollars. Food assistance stalled, health clinics closed, and disease outbreaks increased with the lack of clean water and sanitation services. A recent Oxfam analysis found that mortality in children under the age of 5 could increase for the first time in a century. In addition to the immediate effects on the daily lives of people living through humanitarian crisis, the loss of USAID has also shrunk the U.S. government’s focus on localization.

### Why does localization matter?

The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) launched the Grand Bargain, a series of commitments by humanitarian donors and aid agencies to make the humanitarian system more effective, efficient, and accountable. The U.S. government is a signatory to the Grand Bargain, formally [Read more.](#)

## As Global Aid Declines, the G7 Faces a Defining Test Ahead of Its 2026 Summit

Global Citizen

In June 2026, G7 leaders will meet in Évian, France, for a summit that will put to the test whether the phrase “global solidarity” still means anything in an era marked by shrinking aid budgets and multilateralism under attack.

France will assume the G7 presidency this year, a role that gives it significant influence over the group’s agenda. As chair, France can’t dictate other governments’ budgets, but it does have the power to influence the G7’s agenda and guide what topics are brought to the table, shaping the global agenda long after the photo ops end.

France is taking on this role at a pivotal moment. Across vulnerable countries, aid-funded programs are already being scaled back or shut down. [Read more.](#)



World Leaders participate in G7 Summit session on June 16, 2025, in Kananaskis, Canada. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

## References

## Articles

- <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/trumps-board-of-peace-and-the-multilateral-order/>
- <https://mei.edu/publication/board-of-peace-meets-as-storm-clouds-gather-for-another-possible-middle-east-war/>
- <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/trumps-board-of-peace-rebuilding-gaza-or-remaking-the-world/>
- <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/un-security-council-holds-high-level-meeting-on-gaza-before-trumps-board-of-peace-convenes>
- <https://time.com/7379788/trump-gaza-board-of-peace-first-meeting-takeaways/>
- <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2026/02/risks-trumps-peace-plan-two-gazas-and-annexed-west-bank>
- <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/running-on-empty-the-deepening-fiscal-crisis-of-the-palestinian-authority/>
- <https://ecfr.eu/article/dispelling-trumps-dystopia-a-european-blueprint-for-gazas-renewal/>
- <https://jabiconsulting.com/beyond-the-board-of-peace-the-urgent-reality-in-gaza-and-the-west-bank/>
- <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PEA3486-1.html>
- <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/what-new-gaza-administrative-committee-needs-succeed>
- <https://6kbgo.carnegieendowment.org/research/2026/02/youth-palestine-west-bank-crisis>
- <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/redefining-lifesaving-prioritizing-mental-health-child-protection-and-education-in-gaza/>
- <https://www.cfr.org/articles/guide-trumps-twenty-point-gaza-peace-deal>
- <https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2026/02/how-israels-war-in-gaza-partially-rehabilitated-counterinsurgency.html>
- <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/israel-needs-a-fundamental-shift-in-its-foreign-policy/>
- <https://www.hudson.org/economics/economic-case-us-israel-partnership-zineb-riboua>
- <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/election-year-in-israel-portends-of-the-coming-political-battle/>
- <https://www.stimson.org/2026/israels-strategic-consensus-on-iran-and-its-risks/>
- <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2026/02/data-ai-energy-the-gcc-global-alliances/>
- <https://gulfbusiness.com/deloitte-ai-now-mainstream-in-gcc-tax-finance/>
- <https://foreignpolicy.com/2026/02/23/gulf-states-investment-ai-american-protection-qatar-uae-saudi/>
- <https://www.dw.com/en/saudi-arabia-reshapes-vision-2030-around-new-priorities/a-75900119>
- <https://www.datacenterknowledge.com/build-design/uae-data-centers-powering-the-middle-east-s-ai-and-cloud-revolution>
- [https://finance.yahoo.com/news/qatar-offers-ai-compute-lure-121304144.html?guccounter=1&guce\\_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce\\_referrer\\_sig=AQAAAG7HUBx2ZQertAkB\\_wXcwxaqFmx4tGVaA9MWhA3tjx2CgQfuZpjcE9Zx2wWKorKwKlo4dDXPQgsC4Mr-IVEWdz9N5YxwnUV72pFOIV0nsXcDm7JsdUPp9\\_7le\\_oWR0Xgn7dUNADDV00Vsr20ledq3q\\_BDzBlzD7pF5QBBlzjvflz0](https://finance.yahoo.com/news/qatar-offers-ai-compute-lure-121304144.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAG7HUBx2ZQertAkB_wXcwxaqFmx4tGVaA9MWhA3tjx2CgQfuZpjcE9Zx2wWKorKwKlo4dDXPQgsC4Mr-IVEWdz9N5YxwnUV72pFOIV0nsXcDm7JsdUPp9_7le_oWR0Xgn7dUNADDV00Vsr20ledq3q_BDzBlzD7pF5QBBlzjvflz0)
- <https://ecfr.eu/article/selling-peace-to-trump-how-europe-can-prevent-the-next-middle-east-war/>
- <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/the-uncertainties-of-the-new-world-order-affect-the-middle-east/>
- <https://mei.edu/publication/what-trumps-2026-mideast-approach-could-look-like/>
- [https://www.arabnews.jp/en/uncategorized/article\\_164180/](https://www.arabnews.jp/en/uncategorized/article_164180/)

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

## References

**Articles (continued)**

- <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/why-the-muslim-brotherhood-is-staying-calm-amid-crackdowns-in-jordan/>
- <https://www.who.int/news/item/25-02-2026-who-director-general-visits-jordan-to-recognize-strong-collaboration-on-health-system-delivery--emergency-relief-and-advancing-mental-health>
- <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2026/02/egypt-reimagining-education-future-of-work/>
- <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/gazas-rafah-border-crossing-with-egypt-to-reopen-for-limited-travel-monday>
- <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2026/02/24/egypt-joins-sff-initiative-to-jumpstart-capital-markets>
- <https://timep.org/2026/02/12/security-claims-civilian-ruins-understanding-destruction-and-reconstruction-in-south-lebanon/>
- <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/a-first-year-assessment-of-lebanons-governing-coalition/>
- <https://understandingwar.org/research/middle-east/weakening-hezbollah-requires-faster-international-support-to-lebanon/>
- <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2026/02/what-recent-developments-syria-mean-kurds>
- <https://mei.edu/publication/syria-is-stabilizing-but-us-help-remains-vital/>
- <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/shaping-the-new-syria/>
- <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/cutting-through-fog-war-and-peace-syria>
- <https://tcf.org/content/report/from-smugglers-to-supply-chains-how-yemens-houthi-movement-became-a-global-threat/>
- <https://www.icrc.org/en/article/yemen-icrc-humanitarian-impact-2025>
- <https://mei.edu/ar/publication/riyadh-takes-the-helm-in-yemen/>
- <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/as-global-aid-declines-the-g7-faces-a-defining-test/>
- <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/one-year-what-do-we-know-about-humanitarian-and-development-spending-under-trump>
- <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/2026/02/foreign-aid-usaid-strategy-charity/685866/>
- <https://www.npr.org/2026/02/06/nx-s1-5702252/foreign-aid-trump-cuts>
- <https://politicsofpoverty.oxfamamerica.org/when-the-united-states-lost-usaid/>
- <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2026/02/us-and-israel-attack-iran-early-analysis-chatham-house-experts>
- <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/dispatches/experts-react-the-us-and-israel-just-unleashed-a-major-attack-on-iran-whats-next/>

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

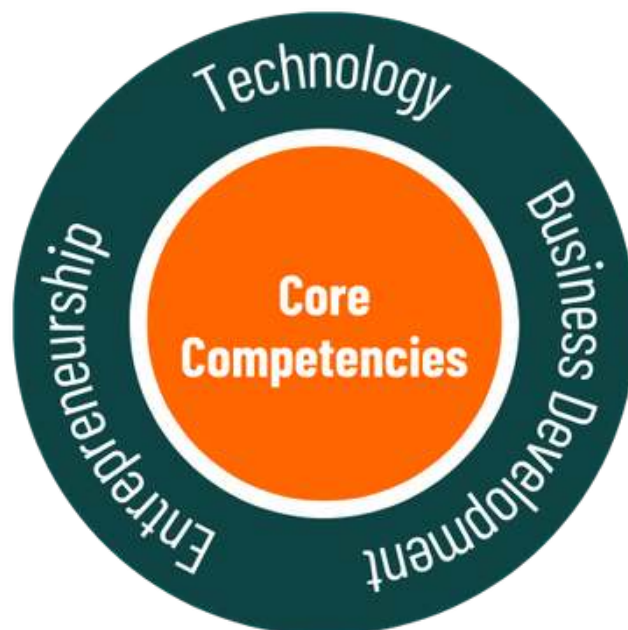
## References

### Photos

- <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/trumps-board-of-peace-and-the-multilateral-order/>
- <https://mei.edu/publication/board-of-peace-meets-as-storm-clouds-gather-for-another-possible-middle-east-war/>
- <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/trumps-board-of-peace-rebuilding-gaza-or-remaking-the-world/>
- <https://www.nbcnews.com/world/gaza/board-of-peace-gaza-trump-reconstruction-israel-rcna259860>
- <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/washingtons-unrwa-report-shows-how-public-discourse-is-divorced-from-reality/>
- <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2026/02/risks-trumps-peace-plan-two-gazas-and-annexed-west-bank>
- <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/running-on-empty-the-deepening-fiscal-crisis-of-the-palestinian-authority/>
- <https://ecfr.eu/article/dispelling-trumps-dystopia-a-european-blueprint-for-gazas-renewal/>
- <https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2026/02/how-israels-war-in-gaza-partially-rehabilitated-counterinsurgency.html>
- <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/israel-needs-a-fundamental-shift-in-its-foreign-policy/>
- <https://www.hudson.org/economics/economic-case-us-israel-partnership-zineb-riboua>
- <https://foreignpolicy.com/2026/02/23/gulf-states-investment-ai-american-protection-qatar-uae-saudi/>
- <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/why-us-markets-are-betting-on-saudi-arabia/>
- <https://www.cfr.org/articles/gaza-board-of-peace-meets-today>
- <https://ecfr.eu/article/selling-peace-to-trump-how-europe-can-prevent-the-next-middle-east-war/>
- <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/why-the-muslim-brotherhood-is-staying-calm-amid-crackdowns-in-jordan/>
- <https://www.who.int/news/item/25-02-2026-who-director-general-visits-jordan-to-recognize-strong-collaboration-on-health-system-delivery--emergency-relief-and-advancing-mental-health>
- <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2026/02/egypt-reimagining-education-future-of-work/>
- <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/gazas-rafah-border-crossing-with-egypt-to-reopen-for-limited-travel-monday>
- <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/hezbollah-nervously-watches-iran-washington-should-double-down-disarmament>
- <https://timep.org/2026/02/12/security-claims-civilian-ruins-understanding-destruction-and-reconstruction-in-south-lebanon/>
- <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2026/02/what-recent-developments-syria-mean-kurds>
- <https://www.icrc.org/en/article/yemen-icrc-humanitarian-impact-2025>
- <https://mei.edu/ar/publication/riyadh-takes-the-helm-in-yemen/>
- <https://www.npr.org/sections/goats-and-soda/2025/07/16/g-s1-77847/rescission-clawback-foreign-aid-bill-fraud-waste-abuse>
- <https://www.cnn.com/2026/02/04/world/lancet-usaid-global-aid-cuts-intl>
- <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/as-global-aid-declines-the-g7-faces-a-defining-tes/>
- <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2026/02/us-and-israel-attack-iran-early-analysis-chatham-house-experts>

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

## Contact Us



### Get In Touch:

Interested in what you read here? If you would like to receive future publications directly to your inbox, please email us at [info@jabiconsulting.com](mailto:info@jabiconsulting.com). You can also learn more about our services by visiting our website at [www.jabiconsulting.com](http://www.jabiconsulting.com).

### Contact Information:

#### United States

11708 Indian Ridge Rd  
 Reston, Virginia 20191  
 (202) 340-261  
[info@jabiconsulting.com](mailto:info@jabiconsulting.com)



#### Palestine

Al Kena Building  
 Haifa Street  
 Nablus, Palestine  
 + 972 56-644-4644  
[info@jabiconsulting.com](mailto:info@jabiconsulting.com)



## 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

---

- **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.