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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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Table of Contents

Message from Our Founder and CEO	02
<u>Download</u> Our Gulf Region Blueprint	04
Gaza and Palestine	05
Israel at War	09
Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Shifts	12
Middle East Developments	15
Jordan’s Role in Conflict	18
Lebanon: A Rise in Instability	20
Syria’s Uncertain Future	22
Yemen’s New Involvements	25
USAID and Foreign Aid Legacies	27
References - Articles	29
References - Photos	31
Contact Us	32
Capability Statement	33
	ANX

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Message from Our Founder & CEO

Dear Partners, Clients and Friends,

On February 28, while at Heathrow en route to Amman, flights were delayed as airspace across the Middle East was reassessed following renewed escalation. It was a familiar moment—another reminder that instability in the region is not episodic, but structural and recurring. For decades, the Middle East has operated under cycles of conflict, proxy tensions, and unresolved political crises, most notably the Palestinian issue, which continues to shape regional perceptions of fairness, legitimacy, and long-term stability. In the last two decades, the GCC have successfully positioned themselves as anchors of stability and global investment—



Hisham Jabi, Founder and CEO

leveraging capital, energy, and increasingly AI / technology—the broader region remains fragmented and vulnerable to war and shocks. Even current growth projections, hovering around 2–3%, reflect an economy struggling to convert potential into sustained, inclusive progress.

At the heart of this challenge lies a deep and persistent trust deficit—between governments and citizens, across regional actors, and between international partners and local populations. This trust gap is not abstract; it directly undermines investment, weakens institutions, and limits the effectiveness of even well-funded interventions. Yet the most critical—and often underestimated—dimension of this challenge is demographic. The Middle East and North Africa is one of the youngest regions in the world, with more than 60% of its population under the age of 30. At the same time, it faces the highest youth unemployment rates globally, averaging around 25%, with significantly higher levels in fragile contexts such as Gaza, where unemployment exceeds 60%. This creates a structural imbalance: a large, educated, and increasingly connected youth population on one hand, and limited job creation and weak private sector absorption on the other.

The consequences are already visible. When opportunity is absent and trust erodes, frustration grows, migration increases, and non-state actors find fertile ground for recruitment. In this sense, conflict is often not the root cause, but a symptom of deeper economic exclusion. Youth unemployment in the region is therefore not simply a development issue—it is a strategic and security imperative. The region is entering a demographic wave, with millions of young people expected to enter the labor market in the coming years. Without scalable pathways to employment, the pressure on already fragile systems will intensify.

Yet within this challenge lies a significant opportunity. The region possesses many of the ingredients needed for transformation: deep pools of human capital, substantial financial resources, particularly in the GCC, strong linguistic and cultural connectivity to global markets, and increasing digital penetration. What remains missing is the ability to connect these assets at scale. There is a growing mismatch between education systems and market demand, particularly as global labor markets shift toward digital, technology-enabled, and AI-driven models. Many young people are achieving higher levels of education than ever before, yet are unable to translate that into meaningful employment.

Message from Our Founder & CEO

This is where a shift in approach becomes essential. The focus must move from aid dependency to economic participation, from fragmented initiatives to scalable ecosystems, and from short-term stabilization to long-term job creation. The private sector must be at the center of this transition, supported by de-risked investment frameworks, stronger institutions, and targeted interventions that enable small and medium enterprises to grow and hire. Emerging technologies, particularly AI and digital platforms, offer a powerful opportunity to accelerate this process by connecting regional talent to global value chains and enabling entrepreneurship at scale.

However, technology alone is not sufficient; it must be embedded within a broader system-change that supports access to finance, market linkages, and governance clarity.

The evidence is clear: regions that create jobs create stability, while those that fail to do so export instability. If there is one lever that can begin to shift the trajectory of the Middle East, it is putting young people to work in meaningful, productive roles that give them a stake in the future. Without this, no amount of aid, investment, or security intervention will be sufficient. With it, there is a real opportunity to rebuild both economies and trust—at scale—and to move the region toward a more stable and prosperous future.



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Warm regards,
Hisham Jabi, Founder & CEO
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Palestine & Gaza



Members of the Technocratic Committee stand behind Palestinian official and civil engineer Ali Shaath. NCAG/X
PHOTO CREDITS

Who Will Govern Gaza?

Council on Foreign Relations

In late 2025, the UN Security Council passed a resolution paving the way for implementation of a twenty-point Gaza peace plan first proposed by U.S. President Donald Trump. The first phase of the plan began last October and focused on halting hostilities, restarting aid, and returning hostages. The second phase, now underway, focuses on the future governance of Gaza.

A core tenet of the plan involves Hamas giving up control of the enclave. According to the White House, three bodies will help govern Gaza directly or indirectly during its postwar transition. The first is the Board of Peace, a U.S.-led international transitional body tasked with overseeing governance and security in Gaza, which has recently begun to take shape. Trump chairs its founding Executive Board, which includes seven other members. This board oversees a larger operational body known as the Gaza Executive Board, which includes leaders and foreign ministers from Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. At the end of 2025, the proposed names of the individuals appointed to lead the territory through its upcoming transition were made public for the first time.

Day-to-day governance of Gaza will fall to the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG), more commonly called the Technocratic Committee. It will eventually be composed of fifteen Palestinian technocrats supervised by the Board of Peace. [Read more.](#)

Sidelined by War With Iran, Gaza Residents Remain in Limbo

The New York Times

The Palestinian enclave was only just emerging from a devastating Israeli campaign that killed tens of thousands of people, according to Gaza health officials, and reduced much of the coastal territory to rubble.

Now, the new strife has left residents of Gaza feeling ever more abandoned.

“The bitter truth is that Gaza has been forgotten,” said Fuad Shahin, 40, who runs a small cafe in Deir al Balah, in the southern half of the territory.

Adham al-Mabhouh, 46, a soccer coach who trains amputees injured and displaced by the Gaza war and during previous fighting, echoed the sentiment. “The eyes of the world are on Iran and the Gulf,” he said. “Whatever happens, Gaza seems to lose,” he added.

The price of food and other basic goods has surged as people have returned to panic buying, afraid that crossings into Gaza would not reopen, or would close again. Unscrupulous merchants have hoarded stock, apparently hoping to profit from high demand should there be shortages.

[Read more.](#)

Hamas at a crossroads in the post-Ali Khamenei era

Middle East Institute

Recent developments have revealed the extent of external pressure on Hamas to distance itself from Iranian actions against the Gulf states. Hamas’ call for Iran to refrain from targeting neighboring countries raises several important issues that illuminate the movement’s precarious position.

The four dimensions of Hamas’ request

First: Qatari pressure and threats

The request that Iran refrain from targeting neighboring countries likely came under Qatari pressure and threats to Hamas’ political leadership in Doha. Most reports suggest this was the case, indicating that it was not a voluntary gesture but rather a response to external pressure. Qatar, which hosts Hamas’ political leadership and provides crucial financial and diplomatic support, has significant leverage over the movement’s decision-making. [Read more.](#)



Palestinians celebrating Eid al-Fitr on Friday amid the ruins of Gaza City [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

Reconstructing Gaza starts with giving Palestinians financial agency

Atlantic Council

Today, the Palestinian economy stands on the brink of systemic financial collapse. For over a year, Palestinian banks and the Palestine Monetary Authority (PMA) have raised the alarm. Palestinians in both occupied territories (Gaza and the West Bank) have access to banking services that depend on Israeli banks providing correspondent banking relationships, and that relationship is at a breaking point.

All Palestinian shekel settlements, shekel cash repatriation, and a large share of trade-related payments rely on two Israeli banks, Bank Hapoalim and Israel Discount Bank. These correspondent banks operate under an indemnity waiver issued by Israel's Ministry of Finance. The indemnity waivers shield the banks from legal or regulatory exposure when processing Palestinian-linked transactions (including transactions for the Palestinian Authority). These relationships allow Palestinian banks to clear shekel transactions, repatriate excess cash, process trade-related payments, and maintain access to international transfers and cross-border payments through SWIFT messaging and international bank account number codes—the core financial tools for international transfers between banks. [Read more.](#)

Friends-and-family diplomacy: Lessons for Europe from Gaza and Ukraine

European Council on Foreign Relations

The Trump envoys typically plug into a network of rich and royal friends whose interests rarely align with Europe's. Most operate outside European institutions and leverage, and are largely insulated from public scrutiny, with their wealth rooted in the (usually American) private sector or monarchical states.



Jared Kushner and US Mideast envoy Steve Witkoff after the signing of the founding charter at the "Board of Peace" meeting during the 56th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum on January 22.

[PHOTO CREDITS](#)

This private-actor style of diplomacy has now revealed its more dangerous and illuminating consequences in Iran. Reports suggest that White House envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner—meeting with Iranian negotiators in Geneva on the same day they conducted Ukraine-related diplomacy—did not fully grasp the mechanics of the Iran nuclear issue. They also reportedly conducted the now-failed negotiations without nuclear experts at their side. [Read more.](#)

UNDP and Italy sign EUR 3M agreement to rehabilitate partially damaged homes and support neighbourhood-based recovery In Gaza

United Nations Development Programme

The United Nations Development Programme / Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (UNDP/PAPP), and the Government of Italy, has signed a EUR 3 million agreement to support the Inclusive Transitional Community Neighbourhoods (ITCN) programme in the Gaza Strip.

This contribution will enable the emergency rehabilitation of partially damaged housing units, supporting internally displaced families to return to safer and more dignified living conditions, while anchoring recovery efforts within a broader, neighbourhood-based approach. Under this initiative, 663 housing units will be rehabilitated, directly benefiting an estimated 3,978 internally displaced persons (IDPs). Beyond addressing immediate shelter needs, the intervention is designed to strengthen protection, restore basic services, and support community-level resilience and recovery.

[Read more.](#)

The Board of Peace and Funding for Gaza Reconstruction: On Whose Account?

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

The board has received pledges of \$17 billion at its first convening: \$10 billion from the United States and another \$7 billion from member states and others. Yet the UN and World Bank estimate that \$70 billion will be needed for Gaza's relief, recovery, and reconstruction. A central task of the Board of Peace then must be how to continue to raise sufficient funds to finance reconstruction. With the skepticism in Europe and elsewhere about the Board of Peace's mandate and the chairman's unchecked power, particularly over donor funds, fundraising will be challenging.

Among the prospective donors, regional stakeholders have shown more willingness to overlook concerns about the board and its charter. Thus far, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia have each pledged a billion dollars or more. [Read more.](#)

With the Iran War, Hamas Tilts Toward the Brotherhood

The Washington Institute for Near East Policy

Since the beginning of the Iran war, Hamas's few statements have been overwhelmingly supportive of Tehran. But a divergent example occurred on March 14, when the group called on Iran to refrain from targeting "neighboring countries," even as it expressed support for its "right of self-defense." This message represented a rare public break—at least in recent years—between the Islamist group and the Islamic Republic.

The statement specifically demonstrates the movement's concern about its future in Doha. Like other Gulf Cooperation Council states, Qatar has been targeted by Iranian projectiles and has adopted a firm stance against public expressions of support for the Islamic Republic. [Read more.](#)

Israel at War



Smoke rises from Israeli artillery shelling on the village of Qlaileh, as seen from the city of Tyre, south Lebanon, Saturday, March 28, 2026 [PHOTO CREDIT](#)

If the regime survives: Iran war raises the ante for US, Israel

Middle East Institute

Israelis believe what followed October 7 was one overarching conflict between Iran and its axis and Israel. Rather than a series of discrete conflicts in different theaters, it was one war fought on many fronts, from Gaza, to Lebanon, to Yemen, to Iran. They now felt they could no longer live with an Iranian “ring of fire” around their country, unwilling to accept quiet so long as the threat remained.

Thus, unlike the valid debate in the US — where public disapproval of the war with Iran has been consistent — there is almost no parallel discussion in Israel as to the wisdom or legality of the conflict. To the contrary, polling has shown overwhelming public support. There is a consensus that the ideal outcome — regime change led by the Iranians themselves — would be truly transformative. It would be the culmination, and perhaps the end, of Israel’s long war against this axis.

If regime change does not materialize, however, it may prove harder to return to forceful containment after the war. Instead, it could spell a countdown to the next major conflagration, the next disruption of lives in the region, including in Israel itself, and the next upheaval in the global economy. [Read more.](#)

The Diverging U.S. and Israeli Goals in Iran Are Making the Endgame Even Murkier

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Throughout the war and particularly on the part of U.S. President Donald Trump, the military objectives—not to mention the overall timeline—have continually shifted and remain unclear. They have ranged from regime change and unconditional surrender to military incapacitation and nuclear nonproliferation. For this reason, among others, U.S. allies and partners in Europe and elsewhere have been reluctant to intervene in the conflict, isolating the United States and Israel.

But in recent days, cracks have started to appear between Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu—particularly over energy and leadership targets. On one side, Trump appears to be interested in the Venezuela model in Iran, which is predicated on aligning with a pragmatic regime insider and accessing vast oil reserves and other resources. On the other side, Netanyahu seems to prefer a mowing-the-grass method that weakens Iran and continues the conflict.

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. [Read more.](#)

Damage to Israeli economy from Iran war seen at about \$3 billion a week

Reuters

Damage to Israel's economy from the air war with Iran could reach more than 9 billion shekels (\$2.93 billion) a week, the Finance Ministry said on Wednesday.

Under current "red" restrictions by Israel's Home Front Command that limit traveling to work, order school closings, and mobilization of reserve forces, economic loss is estimated at 9.4 billion shekels a week, largely starting from next week, it said.

The ministry has asked the Home Front to move to "orange" - or limited activity that is less restrictive to workplaces than "red". In this scenario, the loss to the economy would be 4.3 billion shekels a week.

Israel and the U.S. began bombing Iran on Saturday, triggering a wave of retaliatory strikes across Israel and the Middle East and disrupting energy exports from the Gulf. U.S. and Israeli officials said the campaign could last weeks. [Read more.](#)



Trump and Netanyahu at Mar-a-Lago on December 29, 2025.

PHOTO CREDITS

The Wars After the War: Why Israel and Iran May Keep Fighting

CSIS

The end may be in sight for the current war in the Middle East, with its massive U.S. and Israeli air strikes on Iran and Iranian attacks on U.S. regional allies and Gulf shipping. Even then, however, hostilities may not stop. One plausible future scenario is that the Iranian regime and Israel remain in a state of low-level conflict that involves cyberattacks, sabotage, terrorism, and the occasional overt military strike, with the United States perhaps joining in from time to time. For Israel, this will be a way to keep Iran weak and off balance, while Tehran will be striking back out of vengeance, to legitimize its tottering regime, and to restore deterrence.



President Donald Trump talks with Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the Knesset [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

The future of the Iranian regime is unclear, but one plausible scenario—perhaps the most plausible—is that it will emerge from the war weak but unbowed, and perhaps even more radical. Regime change is possible but unlikely, and the decision to choose Mojtaba Khamenei, the son of assassinated Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, as his successor signals defiance and a strong role for the hardline Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC).

[Read more.](#)

Netanyahu risks American support for Israel with war against Iran

PBS

Although he boasts about his tight relationships with multiple American presidents and members of Congress, Netanyahu over the past two years has seen support for Israel among the American public drop. According to Gallup polling, American sympathies in the Middle East have shifted dramatically toward the Palestinians.

That shift in sentiment has been driven in large part by Democrats. But some Republicans, and even Trump's own backers, have been more outspoken against the diplomatic and financial support the U.S. has continued to grant Israel throughout the past two and a half years, when it has been embroiled in a war on multiple fronts sparked by Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attacks. The devastating images from the war in Gaza deepened Israel's international isolation.

With a new war against Iran — the second in less than a year — Netanyahu is tackling an enemy that he and many Israelis view as an existential threat, citing its support for anti-Israeli militias across the region, its ballistic missile arsenal, and its nuclear program. He has led the crusade against Iran on the world stage for much of his career. [Read more.](#)

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Shifts



Smoke rises following a strike on the Bapco Oil Refinery, amid the US-Israeli war on Iran, on Sitra Island Bahrain on 9 March, 2026

[PHOTO CREDITS](#)

Could a GCC energy embargo halt the US-Israel war on Iran?

Middle East Eye

The US-Israel war on Iran has rapidly deteriorated into a regional crisis, dragging the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states into a war they did not seek.

As the fighting intensifies, the GCC countries - Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Oman - find themselves caught in the crossfire. With Israel pushing the United States into the conflict and Iran adopting a strategy of attrition, the Gulf states are bearing the brunt of the economic and security fallout.

In this precarious situation, traditional diplomacy and defensive measures are proving insufficient. However, the GCC possesses a radical, unconventional, and highly effective tool to force an end to the hostilities: a collective and complete halt of all oil and gas exports under force majeure situation.

The current dynamics of the war offer no incentives for the primary belligerents to cease fighting. For Israel, the costs remain minimal, as the United States shoulders the heavy lifting of military operations. Meanwhile, Iran is committed to a prolonged war of attrition, aiming to weaken its adversaries through sustained pressure rather than decisive military victories. [Read more.](#)

Iranian strikes test the Gulf’s trillion-dollar AI dream

Rest of World

For years, Gulf leaders made a simple promise to Silicon Valley: Bring your data, your models, and your chips, and we will give you stability.

On Sunday, that promise ended in flames, after Iran’s retaliatory strikes in response to U.S.-Israeli assault set an Amazon data center in the United Arab Emirates on fire. In a statement released following the incident, Amazon said “objects” struck the building, creating sparks and flames, declining to link the incident to Iran’s missile and drone attacks. Fire crews cut power to the entire site, and more than 24 hours later the facility remains offline, with the disruption spreading to other parts of Amazon’s UAE operation.

Less than a year ago, the Gulf was being celebrated as the next great frontier for artificial intelligence. U.S. President Donald Trump’s four-day tour of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE last May produced more than \$2 trillion in investment pledges, promising the region would become the third global center for AI alongside the U.S. and China. [Read more.](#)



A worker operates valves at the Rumaila oil field in Basra, Iraq, on March 4, 2026 [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

The Iran War’s Hidden Front: Food, Water, and Fertilizer

Council on Foreign Relations

The consequences of the Iran conflict, which are already being felt in the region, will reverberate globally as an exacerbated food crisis swells. The normally bustling Gulf is not only a regular channel for crude oil but for food and crucial agriculture fertilizers as well. But with the war at risk of expanding and the Strait of Hormuz shuttered, the effect on these states and the role they are unable to play in global food markets will prove significant.

The countries in the region—which boast over 60 million people—are particularly exposed to food shocks. They are almost entirely import-dependent when it comes to rice (77 percent), corn (89 percent), soybeans (95 percent) and vegetable oils (91 percent), according to Institute for Public Policy Research. Any disruption of supply chains will quickly have significant consequences. In Iran, food price inflation has risen 40 percent in the past year, prices for rice have increased sevenfold, green lentils and vegetable oil threefold. It is likely that new overland transport corridors will open, putting Russia, Turkey, and Syria in a position of strategic control over vital supplies. Saudi Arabia traditionally imports through its Red Sea ports which have been massively affected because of attacks by Iran-aligned Houthi rebels. [Read more.](#)

How Does Saudi Arabia See the War with Iran?

CSIS

The question of how Saudi Arabia views this war [in Iran] has drawn considerable speculation, misunderstanding, and wishful thinking. The Saudi government communicates principally through official statements, and to the frustration of international journalists, unauthorized leaks are rare. Media reports citing unnamed and ambiguously defined sources with claims about Saudi intentions or their communications with President Donald Trump should be read cautiously. And so, to understand actual Saudi thinking, the best place to start is with what their government is saying publicly.

The Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued its most comprehensive statement on the war on March 9. That statement, angry but measured, condemned Iranian attacks against the kingdom and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members, and affirmed Saudi Arabia's "full right to take all necessary measures to safeguard its security, sovereignty, and the safety of its citizens and residents, and to deter aggression." It complained that Iranian attacks continued despite the Iranian president's assurances that they would stop unless Iran is attacked from Saudi territory. And the statement warned that further Iranian attacks would have "significant implications for bilateral relations both now and in the future." [Read more.](#)

QatarEnergy declares force majeure on some LNG contracts due to Iran war

Al Jazeera

QatarEnergy has declared force majeure on some of its long-term liquefied natural gas (LNG) supply contracts, including for customers in Italy, Belgium, South Korea and China. The move on Tuesday comes amid production and supply disruptions caused by the United States-Israeli war on Iran.



The headquarters of QatarEnergy in Doha, Qatar [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

Force majeure is a clause in contracts that allows a party to be excused from its obligations due to unforeseeable events. Petroleum companies in Kuwait and Bahrain have also recently invoked force majeure. Global energy markets have been reeling since the US and Israel began attacking Iran on February 28. Iranian missile and drone strikes across the Middle East, including most notably in the Gulf region, have targeted oil and gas facilities, prompting international condemnation.

[Read more.](#)

Middle East Developments



A young Iranian boy looks at the sky while standing on the ruins of a diplomatic police station that is completely destroyed in US-Israeli attacks in Tehran, Iran [PHOTO CREDIT](#)

Stress Testing the Digital Economy: War in the Middle East and the Global IT Outlook

IDC

The escalation of conflict in the Middle East introduces new variables into an already fragile global technology economy. While IDC does not comment on political developments, the economic transmission mechanisms into the IT sector are clear and measurable. The central question for technology leaders is not whether there will be impacts, but their depth, duration and derivative consequences.

At this stage, our baseline assumption remains that the conflict is contained within weeks, with growth and recovery in the second half of the year. Under that view, global IT spending growth in 2026 remains near 10%, with only modest disruption to enterprise investment plans for the year overall. In the Middle East and Africa (MEA), where devices account for a larger share of spending, growth would track closer to 5%.

However, the risk of a downside scenario is growing. The recent oil price spike could be the first stage of a broad-based economic slowdown. A conflict lasting up to three months would reduce global IT market growth by roughly one percentage point and push MEA expansion into the 3–4% range. A more sustained escalation beyond that 3-month timeframe would introduce materially greater downside risk, particularly through energy markets and inflation. If escalation continues in the coming weeks, the likelihood of that more severe slowdown will increase. [Read more.](#)

More than 3,500 U.S. Troops arrive in Middle East as Iran war strikes intensify

CBS

More than 3,500 U.S. troops, including the USS Tripoli with about 2,500 Marines, arrived in the Middle East, officials announced Saturday, as strikes in the Iran war intensified.

The U.S. Central Command said in a social media post that the USS Tripoli, which serves as the flagship for the Tripoli Amphibious Ready Group / 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, arrived in its area of responsibility. It's the most updated of the amphibious warships, known as a "big deck," which allows more room for F-35 Stealth Fighter Jets, Ospreys and other aircraft. The ship had previously been based in Japan when the order to deploy to the Middle East came [Read more.](#)

Tech recruiters share what's happening to hiring in the Middle East: 'I've honestly never seen it this quiet'

Business Insider

As the war [in the Middle East](#) reaches into its fourth week, companies in the region are scrambling to [switch supply chains](#), change logistics routes, and prioritize employee safety.

The corporate-level changes have filtered down to hiring: Local tech recruiters told Business Insider that some clients have suspended hiring, while others said expats are seeking jobs that would let them move to Europe and Asia.

The UAE has become an [increasingly important hub](#) in the Middle East for tech companies to connect with big funding sources, customers, and talent. For about a decade, foreigners have made up about 90% of the country's population. About half are white-collar workers, some of whom are now reassessing their plans as the conflict continues. [Read more.](#)

Iran says major U.S. tech firms are targets in the Middle East, with drone and cyberattacks already underway

CBS

Iran has listed a number of major U.S. tech companies as potential targets as it expands its attacks across the Middle East in retaliation for the ongoing U.S. and Israeli attacks on its military and security forces and leadership.

Iran's semi-official Tasnim News Agency, which is linked to the country's powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, published a list of major U.S. tech companies in a social media post on Tuesday, which included Amazon, Microsoft, Palantir, and Oracle, with the caption: "Enemy's technological infrastructure: Iran's new goals in the region." [Read more.](#)

Key Questions on the Role of Technology in the Expanding Middle East War

Tech Policy Press

In the days since the first US and Israeli strikes on Iran, the war has expanded across the Middle East, drawing more countries into conflict and threatening to further destabilize the region and the geopolitical order. It has also brought to the fore questions about the role of technology in armed conflict, including the controversial use of new artificial intelligence technologies.

Three fault lines have emerged with particular urgency: the battlefield integration of AI targeting systems and the accountability gaps they expose; the collapse of information guardrails at precisely the moment they are most needed; and the deepening privatization of warfare, as Silicon Valley companies become essential infrastructure for military operations. A fourth, quieter thread runs beneath all of them — the way surveillance infrastructure built to control citizens can be turned against the states that built it. [Read more.](#)

Trump Needs a Humanitarian Plan for Iran and the Middle East—Before It’s Too Late

Council on Foreign Relations

More than three weeks into Operation Epic Fury, with U.S. President Donald Trump unleashing the full might of military dominance, a critical feature of the country’s power is conspicuously absent—humanitarian aid. Since 1945, the United States’ global authority has rested on being a complete power: an unmatched



The World Food Program offloads 12,500 metric tons of food aid at the Beirut port on September 3, 2020 [PHOTO CREDIT](#)

military paired with the diplomatic and economic tools needed to advance peace. Together, this has secured a period of safety and prosperity that has defined U.S. leadership for decades.

Despite having spent an estimated \$11 billion on military operations in the first week of the Iran conflict alone—and an additional \$200 billion war supplemental under debate on Capitol Hill—the State Department’s new Bureau of Disaster and Humanitarian Response has yet to articulate, never mind deploy, a coherent humanitarian strategy for the conflict. [Read more.](#)

Jordan's Role in Conflict



Members of the Royal Jordanian Air Force and the Pakistani Air Force watch American F-16 drop munitions during a live fire competition at Falcon Air Meet 2010 in Azraq, Jordan [PHOTO CREDIT](#)

Jordanian Security and the US-Israel War on Iran

Arab Center Washington DC

Eid al-Fitr should be a time of joy, but for Jordanians, and for so many others across the region, this year it was accompanied by air raid sirens, missiles, and drone strikes. For the Hashemite Kingdom, the Iran war is the latest in a long string of security threats and challenges. Jordan's reaction to the conflict therefore needs to be seen within a broader temporal and geographic context, as the kingdom confronts challenges from adversaries and allies alike.

Since the 2011 Arab uprisings, the Jordanian state's security concerns escalated with the civil war in Syria, the insurgency in Iraq, and the rise of the so-called Islamic State (IS). Israel's 2023-25 war in Gaza only made matters worse. Now, in 2026, yet another war is underway, as missiles crisscross Jordanian airspace in salvos between Israel and Iran, while Iran sends drones to hit targets in Jordan.

Once again, Jordan has found itself wedged between belligerents in a war not of its own making. And once again, the kingdom has attempted to defend itself while avoiding getting dragged into war and trying not to alienate key allies or trigger domestic opposition.

[Read more.](#)

UNESCO and the Ministry of Education launch Jordan’s Education Strategic Plan 2026–2030

UNESCO

The UNESCO Amman Office, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, officially launched Jordan’s Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2026–2030, marking a major milestone in the country’s nationally led education reform journey.

As the previous Education Sector Plan (2018–2025) concludes, the new Strategic Plan is grounded in Jordan’s Education Sector Analysis (ESA), following the internationally recognized and widely used UNESCO/IIEP methodology, finalized in March 2025, which examined the education system from early childhood through higher education. Developed through

an inclusive and evidence-based process, the ESP sets out a clear roadmap for strengthening quality, equity, inclusion, system resilience, and climate-responsive education across the Kingdom.

The new plan is strategically anchored in Jordan’s Economic Modernization Vision, which positions education at the center of human capital development and sustainable growth. It also advances Sustainable Development Goal 4, reaffirming Jordan’s commitment to inclusive, equitable, and quality education with lifelong learning opportunities for all. [Read more.](#)



A Jordanian flag flies over the capital city, Amman, Jordan August 17, 2025 [PHOTO CREDIT](#)

Jordan introduces Public Sector Modernization Index for improved oversight

Kazinform International

Jordan has launched the National Public Sector Modernization Index, a comprehensive, evidence-based benchmark designed to strengthen governance, oversight, and performance evaluation across government institutions, Petra reports. The index was established under a memorandum of understanding signed on Thursday at the Prime Ministry by Minister of State for Public Sector Development, Badriya Balbisi, and Executive Director of the Jordan Strategy Forum, Nisreen Barakat.

The agreement formalizes cooperation between the Public Sector Modernization Program Management and Implementation Unit at the Prime Ministry and the Jordan Strategy Forum to develop a scientifically grounded methodology for the index. This includes defining key and sub-indicators aligned with international best practices, enabling standardized monitoring of program outcomes and policy impact. [Read more.](#)

Lebanon: A Rise in Instability



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

PHOTO CREDITS

Middle East crisis: UN health agency releases emergency funds for Lebanon, Iraq, Syria

UN News

The funds based on donor contributions will help strengthen emergency coordination, trauma care and disease surveillance, the UN agency said on Sunday, while also ensuring access to essential medicines and medical supplies.

“As casualties rise, so do attacks on healthcare, which are increasing the burden on health systems at a time when they are most needed,” said WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus in a social media post.

“I urge all parties to choose the brave and life-saving path to peace,” he added.

WHO regional director Dr. Hanan Balkhy said at a time when there were already significant cuts to aid, a boost for frontline health workers was essential.

Cash injection

In Lebanon, an increasing number of injuries sustained by the resumption of strikes by Hezbollah militants in support of Iran and devastating counterstrikes from Israel targeting many areas of the south and the capital Beirut, are placing severe strain on healthcare services.

[Read more.](#)

Crisis and Solidarity in Lebanon

Arab Center Washington DC

The widening of hostilities following the March 2026 US-Israeli attacks on Iran has placed Lebanon on a dangerous trajectory. Hezbollah’s decision to enter the fray in support of Iran has provoked large-scale Israeli strikes across Lebanon, including in densely populated civilian areas. Israeli ground incursions in the south, the rapid displacement of some 700,000 people from communities near the border and explicit Israeli warnings that entire districts, including Beirut’s southern suburbs, could face destruction have intensified fears that Lebanon may once again become the battlefield for broader regional struggles.

At the same time, the Lebanese state is facing a moment of profound internal tension. The government’s ban on Hezbollah’s military activities reflects a longstanding national debate about sovereignty and the state’s monopoly of force. Implementing this ban is fraught, particularly as the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF).

[Read more.](#)



Mattresses are distributed to families in Lebanon by the UN migration agency, IOM. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

What Is Israel’s Plan in Lebanon?

Carnegie Middle East Center

Israel is repeating parts of the military playbook it used against Hezbollah in 2024, but its strategy is different this time. It was evident, even before Hezbollah fired a handful of rockets toward Haifa in northern Israel in the early hours of March 1, that the Israeli political leadership and military command had been looking for a reason to resume the war ever since the lopsided ceasefire agreement of November 2024. This begs the question: What does Israel now seek to achieve—and how?

One thing is certain: Israel’s goals in Lebanon cannot be measured today against what it sought in 2024. At the time, it remained constrained by Iranian strategic deterrence—not so much due to the effectiveness of the latter, but because the opposition of the Biden administration to all-out war between Israel and Iran acted as a crucial restraining factor. The context is drastically different this time around, thanks to the full-throated engagement of the administration of President Donald Trump in a war to destroy Iran’s principal strategic capabilities—its ballistic missile and drone production capability, and its nuclear program. Trump might diverge from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in preferring to see a more compliant regime emerge in Iran than a completely new one, but Netanyahu is going all-out for regime collapse. [Read more.](#)

Syria's Uncertain Future



Israeli tanks are seen in al-Hamidiyah in Quneitra, Syria, on January 16, 2025

[PHOTO CREDIT](#)

After Assad, a New Uncertainty in Syria's South

The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy

The morning after the Assad regime fell, many Syrians spoke of a long-deferred relief. In Quneitra and the western reaches of Daraa, both with borders with the demilitarized area that separates Syria from the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, the mood was different.

"We didn't feel victory," a resident told TIMEP. "Assad was gone, but we woke to the rumble of armor near our villages."

Checkpoints were set up and Israeli army patrols began to criss-cross fields that, until then, had been places of work and memory. In homes overlooking orchards and grazing land, parents weighed the school run against the sound of drones. The shift also unfolded in the shadow of a wider regional war, which sharpened Israeli security calculations and deepened the vulnerability of Syria's southern border communities.

This article explores the changes in southern Syria after December 8, 2024, the day that many locals now cite as a turning point, as the Assad regime fell and Israel expanded its military activities into Syria. It explains how Israeli incursions intensified, documents what this has meant for movement, livelihoods, and basic dignity in Daraa and Quneitra, and sets out what Syrian authorities and international actors should do now. [Read more.](#)

US federal jury convicts Assad-era Syrian official of torture

Reuters

A federal jury in Los Angeles convicted a former Syrian government official, who headed the Damascus Central Prison under the government of ousted Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, of torture, the U.S. Justice Department said on Monday. Samir Ousman Alsheikh, 73, was convicted on one count of conspiracy to commit torture and three counts of torture for his involvement in the torture of prisoners at Adra Prison as it is colloquially known, in Damascus, the Justice Department said in a statement. Alsheikh, who headed the prison from 2005 to 2008, had pleaded not guilty, according to a court filing. On Monday, his legal team said they were "disappointed" with the verdict and that Alsheikh "will pursue all appellate and post-trial relief." The jury also convicted Alsheikh of lying to U.S. immigration authorities about his commission of these crimes, fraudulently obtaining a green card and attempting to naturalize as a U.S. citizen, the department added. [Read more.](#)



Officers keep watch outside the Department of Justice building in Washington, D.C., U.S., September 23, 2025

[PHOTO CREDIT](#)

New \$20 Million Grant to Enhance Public Financial Management for Syria's Recovery and Development

World Bank Group

The World Bank Board of Executive Directors approved on March 5 a US\$20 million grant financing to Syria from the International Development Association (IDA) to strengthen efficiency, transparency and accountability in the use of public funds. The Syria Public Financial Management Capacity Strengthening Project will help improve core public financial management (PFM) and procurement functions, laying the groundwork for their digitalization, strengthen budget controls, and establish robust institutional arrangements for effective coordination and oversight of PFM reforms.

After fourteen years of conflict and economic challenges, Syria's PFM systems, institutions, and processes continue to face significant challenges. Fiscal space is severely constrained, undermining the government's ability to meet people's needs. Revenue collection has shrunk from close to 20% of GDP before the conflict to less than 5% of GDP due to lower oil and tax revenues. Custom duty collection is marginal despite a heavy reliance on imports of commodities since 2011. The Syria Public Financial Management Capacity Strengthening Project marks a strategic response to these needs, by strengthening government systems [Read more.](#)

Syria Is Feeling the Fallout from the Iran Crisis

Washington Institute for Near East Policy

From the start of Syria's civil war, the Assad regime welcomed Iranian forces and their Shia militia proxies from Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Pakistan to fight on its behalf. The lack of such proxies in Syria today means that no rockets are being launched from its territory during the current war, giving Israeli and U.S. forces one less front to worry about.

The Assad regime also gave Russia free rein to flex its airpower across Syria beginning in 2015. After Assad's fall, however, Moscow's military presence was confined to western coastal bases with little freedom of movement. This gave Israeli forces even greater airspace access, enabling them to destroy most of the regime's major military capabilities in the days after Assad's fall and establish air dominance—much to the chagrin of Syria's revolutionaries and their supporters, who felt they had nothing to do with Assad or his policies and therefore should have been permitted to keep that weaponry. [Read more.](#)

UNDP and Central Bank of Syria join forces to bolster financial stability and drive institutional reform

UNDP

In a pivotal step towards addressing the severe economic challenges facing the nation, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Central Bank of Syria (CBS) have formalized a strategic partnership through a new Letter of Agreement. Signed under the umbrella of the STAF project, this collaboration aims to fortify the Bank's institutional capacity and lay the groundwork for a resilient and transparent financial sector.

After over a decade of conflict, Syria's economic landscape is marked by profound fragility. The nation contends with deep structural damage, a severe contraction of GDP, and a dramatic decline in household incomes. Hyperinflation and currency depreciation have decimated purchasing power, while the degradation of public financial infrastructure has rendered over 40% of public bank branches non-operational. Compounding these challenges are acute liquidity shortages, weakened payment and supervisory systems, and record-low public confidence.

The evolving political context since December 2024, however, presents a renewed opportunity for transformative change. The Central Bank of Syria is poised to play a central role in steering this transition. In response, this new agreement with UNDP is designed to provide targeted technical expertise, enhance supervisory and regulatory frameworks, and upgrade operational and digital infrastructures. [Read more.](#)

Yemen's New Involvements



Houthi supporters demonstrate in solidarity with Iran in Sanaa, Yemen [PHOTO CREDIT](#)

The Houthis Must Decide: Join Iran's War Against the US and Israel or Abandon Iran

Stimson Center

In past rounds of Israel-Iran and US-Israel-Iran confrontations in 2024-2025, the Houthis showed up militarily for Iran through “solidarity strikes” amid the war in Gaza.

Although they have thus far limited their broader engagement to protest mobilization and political solidarity with the Iranian regime without formally joining the current war, the Houthis will almost certainly do so soon — unless they make a strategic choice to abandon their backer altogether.

The Islamic Republic of Iran created its now declining regional “Axis of Resistance” in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, both as an expansionist forward defense and advanced deterrence architecture. In the current conflict, it has become vital for Iran's inward defense.

On day two of the U.S. and Israeli onslaught on Iran, Hezbollah in Lebanon and several militias within Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) joined the war by striking Israel, U.S. bases in the region, and Cyprus. Iran's most audacious ally, the Houthi rebels in northwest Yemen, will likely follow suit. [Read more.](#)

As war on Iran enters second month, Yemen's Houthis open new front

Al Jazeera

Yemen's Houthis have attacked Israel for the first time, a month after US and Israeli forces began striking Iran, opening up a new front in a rapidly escalating conflict that has killed thousands of people, displaced millions and rattled the global economy.

The Houthis, who control much of northern Yemen, entered the fray on Saturday with two missile and drone attacks on Israel in the space of fewer than 24 hours. The Israeli army said the attacks were intercepted, but the Iran-aligned group pledged to continue fighting in support of "resistance fronts in Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran". The Houthis had sat out of the hostilities until now, in

contrast with their stance during Israel's genocidal war on Gaza, when their attacks on shipping vessels in the Red Sea upended commercial traffic worth about \$1 trillion a year. Their widely anticipated involvement in the latest conflict comes just as Iran has throttled traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, a vital chokepoint for about a fifth of the world's oil, raising fears that the Yemeni group will again disrupt [Read more.](#)



Houthi soldiers patrol a security checkpoint on a street in Sana'a, Yemen, March 26, 2026 [PHOTO CREDIT](#)

UN urges Yemen's Houthis to refrain from further involvement in Middle East conflict

CGTN

The United Nations on Saturday urged Yemen's Houthis to refrain from any further involvement in the conflict in the Middle East, including through missile or drone attacks, noting that the group's actions risk further expanding the military conflict.

"We are concerned about the Houthi missile strikes against Israel earlier today. These attacks risk further expanding the military conflict in the region," Stephane Dujarric, spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, said in a note to correspondents.

"We emphasize that international law, including international humanitarian law as applicable, must be respected by all parties at all times," he said. "UN Security Council resolution 2768 (2025) and subsequent resolutions related to Houthi attacks against merchant and commercial vessels must be fully respected." [Read more.](#)

USAID and Foreign Aid Legacies



The US Agency of International Development flag flies outside the agency's headquarters building on January 30, 2024, in Washington, DC. [PHOTO CREDIT](#)

Strategic Not Transactional: Using Development Cooperation to Advance Economic and National Security

Center for Global Development

Foreign assistance has always served the interests of the donor country alongside those of the recipient. The Marshall Plan, aid to Cold War allies, and support for trade-linked partnerships in more recent decades all delivered tangible benefits for the United States. The Trump administration is right to ask what return American taxpayers are getting from their foreign assistance dollars, but it is wrong in how it is answering that question. A purely transactional approach, extracting short-term wins without building the durable partnerships that sustain long-term US interests, is not a reform of foreign assistance; it is an abdication of it. This note argues for a third way: an economic statecraft agenda that is both strategically purposeful and genuinely beneficial to partner countries, because these two goals are not in conflict.

The Trump administration is radically reshaping US foreign assistance through the dismantling of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), more directly aligning remaining foreign assistance with its stated foreign policy, and moving remaining foreign assistance into the State Department. These shifts have also come with a significant decrease in foreign assistance funding levels, as the administration cancels existing grants and contracts, pursues rescission packages, and simply refuses to spend lawfully appropriated money. [Read more.](#)

Big day on Capitol Hill for US foreign assistance

DEVEX

March 25: Today, the House Foreign Affairs Committee is meeting to mark up a multitude of measures related to U.S. foreign aid — from authorizing the recruitment of disaster assistance responders to abolishing the U.S. African Development Foundation, or USADF, a small agency that won its legal battle against the Trump administration earlier this month.

A markup is a legislative session that gives lawmakers the chance to debate, amend, and rewrite proposed bills. Representatives will “mark up” legislation by voting on those changes, with the



Sudanese dockers unload bags of cereal from U.S. ships carrying humanitarian aid supplies provided by USAID, at Port Sudan on the Red Sea. [PHOTO CREDIT](#)

ultimate goal of finalizing the text and advancing it on the House floor, my colleague Elissa Miolene tells me.

At 9 a.m. ET, the committee is set to mark up at least 20 pieces of legislation related to foreign policy, aid, and diplomatic affairs. Here are the ones we’ve got our eyes on:

The Generating Utility through International Disaster Expertise Act: This bill — which was introduced by California’s Republican Rep. Young Kim — would authorize the State Department’s foreign aid bureau to establish a program to “recruit, train, and retain” specialized disaster assistance professionals at State’s new Bureau of Disaster and Humanitarian Response. [Read more.](#)

Trump Reorganizes Foreign Aid at Fraction of USAID’s Size

Bloomberg

The Trump administration is reorganizing foreign aid at a fraction of its former size after dismantling USAID, a move critics say has cost millions of lives.

The State Department announced on Friday that crisis relief aid is being consolidated under a new Disaster and Humanitarian Response bureau with a direct-hire staff of more than 200 people, according to senior officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity to brief reporters.

That’s about a third of the equivalent number of people who worked on humanitarian assistance for the now defunct agency, known as the US Agency for International Development, which President [Read more.](#)

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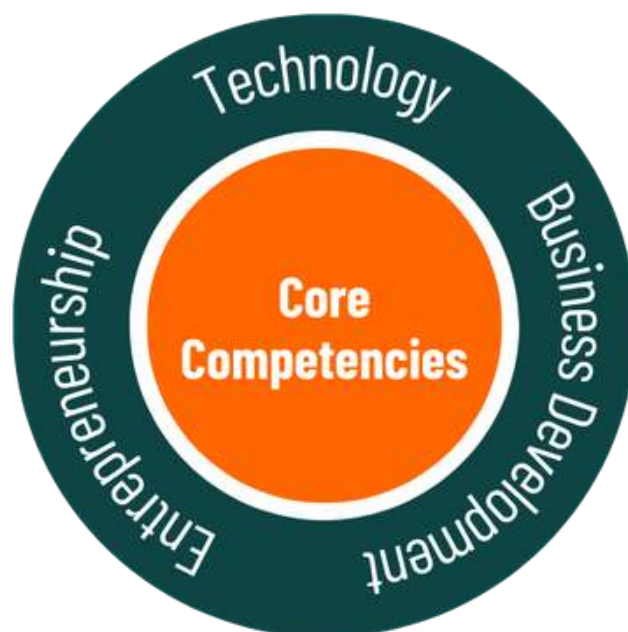
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Core Competencies

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.

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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



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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.