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MENA Monthly Pulse

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



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Edited by Jabi Consulting: info@jabiconsulting.com

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Message from Our Founder & CEO

Dear Partners, Clients and Friends,

I attended the Spring Meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in Washington, DC in mid-April. What stood out was not only the scale of participation, but the seriousness and urgency of the dialogue. Delegations from across the Global South were not passive participants; they were assertive, data-driven, and increasingly shaping the agenda. The tone has shifted—from consultation to negotiation, from observation to positioning.



What emerged from both formal sessions and informal exchanges is that **the global economy is not fragmenting** in the way often portrayed—it is being reconfigured under pressure. Despite persistent narratives of de-globalization following the COVID-19 pandemic and more recent geopolitical tensions in the MENA region and Ukraine, the data tells a different story. Global trade continues to hover around 55–60% of global GDP, supply chains—while diversifying—remain deeply international, and cross-border capital flows continue to underpin emerging market stability. Even recent oil price volatility linked to tensions involving the Iran war underscores the same reality: shocks in one region transmit rapidly across the global system, reaffirming the depth of economic interdependence.

Within this evolving landscape, the Middle East is no longer viewed as a peripheral or episodic concern—it is a structural center of gravity. The region holds approximately 48% of proven global oil reserves and over 40% of gas reserves, while critical chokepoints such as the Strait of Hormuz and the Suez Canal handle a significant share of global trade and energy flows. At the same time, sovereign wealth funds across the Gulf now manage an estimated \$4–5 trillion in assets, increasingly deployed into global infrastructure, technology, and energy transition investments. Ongoing conflicts and tensions—from Gaza to Yemen and beyond—have reinforced not only the region's fragility, but its systemic importance. The Middle East today sits at the intersection of energy security, capital flows, and geopolitical alignment.

Parallel to this geopolitical reality is a structural shift in fiscal thinking. The era of debt-led stabilization following shocks is reaching its limits. Global public debt has surpassed \$90 trillion, and according to international financial institutions, nearly 60% of low-income countries are either in or at high risk of debt distress. The consensus emerging from the meetings is clear: debt is no longer a sustainable mechanism for absorbing repeated shocks. The focus is shifting toward productive capacity, private sector-led growth, and domestic value creation. Fiscal resilience is increasingly defined not by access to financing, but by the ability of economies to generate jobs at scale, exports, and internal economic dynamism.

This brings us to what is arguably the most pressing issue discussed: job creation at scale. As emphasized by Mr. Ajay Banga, the defining challenge for low- and middle-income economies is not growth in abstract terms, but employment in real terms. The global economy must create an estimated 600 million jobs by 2030 to keep pace with demographic expansion. In the Middle East and North Africa, youth unemployment remains among the highest globally—averaging 25–30%, and significantly higher for young women, where labor force participation remains below 20% in several economies such as Jordan. This is not only an economic constraint; it is a long-term stability risk.

Message from Our Founder & CEO

As a result, the development conversation is shifting toward sectors capable of absorbing labor at scale—agriculture, infrastructure, tourism, and light industry—combined with targeted investments in skills and productivity. Importantly, there is growing recognition that small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which represent over 90% of businesses and up to 70% of employment globally, must be at the center of this strategy.

Running beneath all of these discussions—less explicitly but with increasing weight—is the structural impact of artificial intelligence on labor markets and economic positioning. AI is not simply a technological shift; it is a reordering of comparative advantage. Today, the development of large-scale AI systems is concentrated in a handful of economies, led by the United States, which benefits from four reinforcing advantages: deep pools of advanced technical talent, access to high-performance computing infrastructure, abundant energy to power large-scale data centers, and control over vast datasets.

Companies such as NVIDIA, Google, Microsoft, Apple, Meta, and OpenAI sit at the core of this ecosystem. The result is a high concentration of capability in designing and training large language models, creating a widening technological gap.

This raises a fundamental strategic question: where does the Middle East—and more broadly, developing economies—fit within this emerging AI-driven order? Without deliberate positioning, the risk is clear: these economies become consumers of AI rather than producers of value within it.

Yet there is a pathway—what some within the World Bank have begun to frame as “applied” or “small AI.” This approach does not seek to compete at the frontier of large-scale model development, but instead focuses on localized, sector-specific applications—AI solutions tailored to agriculture, healthcare, education, supply chains, and public services. In a region with over 400–500 million Arabic speakers, a young population, and rising investment in technology—particularly in the Gulf—this represents a significant opportunity.

The strategic imperative is clear: leverage AI not as a distant frontier technology, but as a practical tool for productivity and job creation, particularly within SMEs and service sectors. This approach has the potential to unlock employment, especially for youth and women, while building locally relevant digital ecosystems.

The Spring Meetings ultimately reinforced a defining reality: the global economy is entering a new phase shaped by geopolitical tension, technological concentration, and the urgent need to generate jobs at scale. For the Middle East, the challenge is no longer reactive. It is strategic. The region must decide whether to position itself as an active participant in shaping this new economic order—or remain on its margins.

The window remains open. But it will not remain open for long.



Warm regards,
Hisham Jabi, Founder & CEO
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Includes an exclusive “Market Readiness Assessment Tool”



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World Bank IMF Spring Meeting

Risk management, renewables and a rocky road ahead: IMF-World Bank 2026 Spring Meetings takeaways

World Economic Forum

Ahead of this year's IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings in Washington, D.C., a pattern had been emerging. As the fallout from the war in the Middle East moved through energy markets and supply chains, corporate earnings reports signaled that companies were not just absorbing the shock – many were adjusting in real time, rerouting and repricing risk at a speed that would have been difficult to imagine during previous crises.

It raised a question that came up repeatedly at the event. If companies are recalibrating this quickly, what does that mean for the institutions tasked with managing risk at a systemic level, and for the countries that do not have the same room to adapt?



A major topic of conversation at this year's Spring Meetings: The relative speed at which businesses have been able to adapt to risk. [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

What emerged over the course of the week was the identification of a widening gap between how private actors are able to respond to disruption and how public institutions are being stretched to keep up. This year's meetings felt different from a year ago. In 2025, the main concern was trade fragmentation and the downstream effects of US tariff policy. [Read more.](#)

World Bank, IMF Spring Meetings Focus on Jobs

IISD

The 2026 Spring Meetings of the World Bank Group (WBG) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) focused on creating jobs for young people at scale by building a business-enabling environment, investing in physical and human infrastructure, and mobilizing private capital. Participants discussed the state of the global economy, received regional economic updates, and announced new initiatives and governance reforms.

The Spring Meetings, which convened from 13-18 April 2026 in Washington, D.C., US, included meetings of the joint Development Committee and the IMF's International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC), as well as numerous seminars, regional briefings, press conferences, [Read more.](#)

Palestine & Gaza



US President Donald Trump sits between Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev during a signing ceremony for the Board of Peace at the World Economic Forum on January 22, 2026

[PHOTO CREDITS](#)

Trump's Board of Peace holds Gaza reconstruction talks with UAE's DP World

Al Jazeera

Dubai-based logistics giant DP World has held talks with representatives linked to Donald Trump's so-called "Board of Peace" over managing supply chains and infrastructure projects in Gaza, according to the Financial Times (FT) newspaper.

The talks reportedly explored whether the state-owned company could partner with the group to oversee logistics for humanitarian aid and commercial goods entering the besieged Palestinian enclave. That would include warehousing, cargo tracking systems and security arrangements, the report said. Other proposals discussed reportedly included building a new port in Gaza or on Egypt's nearby Mediterranean coast, as well as creating a free-trade zone inside the war-ravaged territory.

The discussions form part of longstanding proposals by US officials to privatise much of the Palestinian territory's services and infrastructure as part of their plans for a "new Gaza".

But critics have accused such plans of sidelining Palestinians, bypassing international institutions, including the United Nations, and risking legitimisation of the forced displacement of Palestinians from their land. The report comes as progress towards peace in Gaza has stalled. Israel continues to occupy large swaths of the enclave, while aid access remains heavily restricted despite a US-brokered "ceasefire" announced last October. [Read more.](#)

Moving from War to Diplomacy: What's Next for Iran, Lebanon, and Gaza?

The Washington Institute for Near East Policy

On April 15, The Washington Institute held a virtual Policy Forum with Ambassador Michael Herzog, Robert Satloff, and Hanin Ghaddar. Herzog is the Institute's Tisch Distinguished Fellow, former Israeli ambassador to the United States, and a retired brigadier general in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Satloff is the Institute's Segal Executive Director and Howard P. Berkowitz Chair in U.S. Middle East Policy. Ghaddar is the Institute's Friedmann Senior Fellow and coauthor of "[A Roadmap for Israel-Lebanon Peace](#)." The following is a rapporteurs' summary of their remarks.

Michael Herzog

Israel is grappling with the transition from war to diplomacy on three different fronts, with two of these transitions—Iran and Gaza—being led by the United States. Although noteworthy battlefield gains have been made in each case, they have not yet been translated into durable political outcomes.

The shift to diplomacy is challenging for Israel. Both Jerusalem and Washington set high disarmament bars for any diplomatic outcome, but defiant actors on each front—Iran, Hezbollah, and Hamas—have refused to meet these conditions. Instead, they have sought to maximize their asymmetric advantages and present significant costs to resuming [Read more.](#)

European Union hosts Palestinian peace conference as it seeks greater role in Middle East

PBS News

Europe turned its attention to the Palestinians on Monday as the election defeat of Israel ally Victor Orban in Hungary gives new momentum to efforts addressing Gaza and the occupied West Bank.

More than 60 nations sent representatives to Brussels for talks with Palestinian representatives on stability, security and long-term peace. The European Union has largely been on the sidelines in the Middle East despite being the biggest provider of aid to the Palestinians and backing a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A majority of EU member countries now recognize an independent Palestinian state after many expressed outrage over Israeli actions in Gaza. The 27-nation bloc is also Israel's top trading partner and a major buyer of Israeli weapons.

[Read more.](#)



European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas, center, listens as Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa, right, speaks during a meeting of the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution [PHOTO CREDITS.](#)

Final Gaza Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment

United Nations

The European Union and the United Nations today released the final Gaza Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA), jointly conducted with the World Bank, assessing the damages, economic losses, and recovery and reconstruction needs in Gaza following 24 months of conflict.

According to the assessment, recovery and reconstruction needs in Gaza are estimated at \$ 71.4 billion over the next decade, including \$ 26.3 billion required in the first eighteen months to restore essential services, rebuild critical infrastructure, and support economic recovery. Physical infrastructure damages are estimated at \$ 35.2 billion, with economic and social losses amounting to \$ 22.7 billion.

The report finds that the hardest-hit sectors include housing, health, education, commerce, and agriculture. Over 371,888 housing units have been destroyed or damaged, more than 50 % of hospitals are non-functional, nearly all schools destroyed or damaged, and the economy has contracted by 84% in Gaza. The report highlights catastrophic impact on human development across Gaza, which is estimated to have been set back by 77 years. Around 1.9 million people have been displaced, often multiple times, and more than 60% of the population has lost their homes.

[Read more.](#)



Much of Gaza City has been destroyed in the conflict.

[PHOTO CREDITS.](#)

Gaza: Human development set back 77 years as recovery costs rise to \$71 billion

United Nations

That's according to the final Gaza Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA), jointly conducted with the UN-partnered World Bank. The assessment says \$26.3 billion will be needed in the first 18 months to restore essential services, rebuild critical infrastructure and support economic recovery. Since full-scale war erupted in Gaza following the Hamas-led attacks on southern Israel in October 2023, the physical damage in the Strip is estimated at \$35.2 billion, with a further \$22.7 billion in economic and social losses. Entire sectors have been devastated, including housing, health, education, commerce, and agriculture. Over 371,888 housing units have been destroyed or damaged, more than 50 per cent of hospitals are non-functional, and nearly all schools have been destroyed or damaged. [Read more.](#)

Israel at War



Pro-government demonstrators gather next to portraits of Iran's late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in downtown Tehran, Iran, on 8 April 2026. [PHOTO CREDIT](#)

US-Iran ceasefire: What it means for Trump, Tehran, Israel and US allies.

Chatham House

The US, Israel and Iran announced a ceasefire on 7 April, leading to an end to attacks by each side and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

The announcement came shortly before a deadline set by US President Donald Trump for Iran to reopen the Strait. The president had previously threatened to bomb Iran 'into the Stone Ages' and destroy its 'whole civilization' if it did not comply.

Both Washington and Tehran hailed the ceasefire, negotiated by Pakistan, as a victory. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the ceasefire did not apply to Israel's operations in Lebanon.

The ceasefire will be welcomed as a necessary step back from the brink after days of escalating strikes, mounting threats against Iranian and Gulf infrastructure, and continued disruption to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz.

All of these elements underscored that this had become a war that no side was clearly winning and in which the costs were rising faster than any achievable gains. The most difficult issues will now have to be worked through in detail by negotiators in Islamabad: Can the United States offer credible assurances against renewed strikes and be trusted to uphold them? And is Iran willing to accept limits on its ability to threaten shipping in the Strait? [Read more.](#)

Israel's perpetual mobilization: The limits of Netanyahu's 'Super-Sparta' model

Chatham House

As of April 2026, Israel's security landscape is defined by a profound paradox. While the national mood is characterized by strategic fatigue due to a lack of decisive victories, Israeli society still maintains significant support for the multi-front campaign against Iran and Hezbollah in Lebanon. However, this endurance is being tested by a government attempting to institutionalize a state of permanent low/mid-intensity warfare – a vision labelled the 'Super-Sparta' model by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Recent polling suggests that while the public supports the war's objectives, it increasingly resents the current government's inability to define or deliver a decisive end-state. That has left the governing coalition unable to use the war to grow its support. [Read more.](#)

To Win a War, Know What You're Fighting For

Middle East Institute

With a tenuous cease-fire now in place and the possibility that the fighting may resume, it is worth revisiting what the United States and Israel were actually trying to accomplish in their war with Iran. Despite a jumbled public rollout, three goals stood out: facilitating regime change in Tehran; degrading Iran's capacity to threaten its neighbors; and gaining leverage to pressure Iran to accept a deal governing its nuclear program that was acceptable to Washington. This multiplicity of goals made the war harder to win for two reasons. First, competing goals can conflict with one another, with the tactics that serve one undermining another. In particular, facilitating regime change would point toward targeted strikes aimed narrowly at the regime itself, while degrading enemy military capabilities suggests much wider ones that support its broader capacity to produce weapons. Second, the desire to maximize leverage in a deal could incline you to dial the crisis up to 11, but doing so can also narrow your own freedom of action, not just that of your adversary. [Read more.](#)

Israel-Lebanon Ceasefire Extended for Three Weeks

Council on Foreign Relations

A ceasefire in Lebanon will go on for three more weeks, U.S. President Donald Trump announced following talks yesterday with Israeli and Lebanese envoys. The extension buys more time for diplomacy toward a peace deal between the two countries. Fighting between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon has been an obstacle to U.S.-Iran negotiations, which have included no formal talks since April 11 in Pakistan. The Lebanon truce. Trump said he directly mediated between the Israeli and Lebanese ambassadors to the United States yesterday at the White House and pledged that Washington would help Beirut "protect itself" from Hezbollah. A senior official from the Iran-backed group has said that it will not respect what Israel and Lebanon decide in their latest talks. But Hezbollah and Israel have reduced their attacks against each other during the ceasefire so far.

[Read more.](#)

Israel continues attacks on Lebanon despite extension of ceasefire

Al Jazeera

Israel has continued its attacks on southern Lebanon, hours after ceasefire between the two countries was extended for a further three weeks. The Israeli military on Friday said it had “eliminated” six Hezbollah fighters in an exchange of fire in the area of Bint Jbeil, southern Lebanon. The Lebanese Health Ministry also reported that two people were killed in an Israeli air strike in the southern area of Touloun. The attacks mark the latest violations of a ceasefire that began on April 16 after weeks of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah, the Lebanese armed group. Israeli forces also remain stationed in southern Lebanon, after establishing a so-called “yellow line” in the region, similar to an Israeli military measure in the besieged Gaza Strip. The casualty toll since the current round of fighting between the Israeli military and Hezbollah broke out on March 2 has risen to 2,491 people killed and 7,719 wounded, Lebanon’s Health Ministry said. Earlier on Friday, several people were wounded in an Israeli artillery attack on the town of Yater in southern Lebanon, the Lebanese state-run National News Agency reported. The Israeli military also issued a forced evacuation order for the town of Deir Aames. [Read more.](#)

For Israel, War Is the Only Answer

New York Times

In the days leading up to the two-week cease-fire between the United States and Iran, Israeli officials worried that the war might soon be over. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reportedly ordered more strikes on Iran, as if trying to get in as much damage as possible before President Trump forced Israel to stop. No matter that Israel and the U.S. had been pounding Iran relentlessly for five weeks and Israel’s air force said it had nearly exhausted its vital targets against Iranian military and nuclear industries. Israel had already begun striking steel factories and petrochemical plants.

Then, on the day the cease-fire came into shaky effect — and most civilians across the region began to breathe a sigh of relief — Israel proceeded to launch one of the deadliest strikes on Lebanon ever, including in the heart of densely populated Beirut, without any warning. The operation, which the Israel Defense Forces say attacked Hezbollah command centers, hit 100 targets in 10 minutes, killed over 350 people and wounded well over 1,000, many of them civilians. [Read more.](#)



Smoke rises in Lebanon, as seen from the Israeli side of the border with Lebanon . [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

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

The GCC has unity, it now needs joint defence and development

Al Jazeera

Amid the continuing escalation in the region, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) pursues a balanced diplomatic policy grounded in calls for negotiation and support for political processes aimed at ending the conflict between the United States, Israel and Iran. GCC members stand by the principles of good neighbourliness and enhancing regional stability and are unified in their opposition to aggression and destabilisation.

In the coming months and years, Gulf unity can be taken even further by pursuing regional security arrangements, establishing new energy routes and expanding important economic integration projects that would guarantee development and stability.

In the present moment, the GCC must continue to make clear its categorical rejection of any attempt to seize control of the Strait of Hormuz or use it as a pressure card. The Gulf states cannot and will not be held hostage under any circumstances.

Imposing restrictions or levies on freedom of navigation through the strait constitutes a flagrant violation of international law: the Strait of Hormuz is a natural waterway governed by the law of the sea, which guarantees freedom of passage [Read more.](#)

Three Scenarios for the Gulf States After the Iran War

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Amid a tenuous U.S.-Iran ceasefire, Arab Gulf monarchies are aiming to project strength. “We prevailed through an epic national defense . . . in the face of treacherous aggression,” Emirati diplomatic adviser Anwar Gargash wrote on X. Saudi-owned newspaper Asharq Al-Awsat emphasized the kingdom’s “intensive political consultations” with regional countries as leading to the present calm. Yet member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) still face immense challenges

in shoring up their security. A substantial U.S. and Israeli air campaign was unable to eliminate Iran’s will or capability to exert power in the Gulf, with Iran turning historically secure neighbor states into war zones overnight. Neither the United States nor any other actor put forward a decisive solution for the de facto Iranian closure of the Strait of Hormuz, while the Islamic Republic retains its highly enriched uranium and its nuclear program. And the GCC has no seat at the table, despite its entreaties, for negotiations that will shape the bloc’s economic and security environment for years to come. [Read more.](#)



AGCC Secretary-General Jassim al-Budaiwi speaks in Doha, Qatar, in 2025. PHOTO CREDITS

Scaling without headcount: How GCC investors are redefining value creation through AI

IBM

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) transformation from planning to delivery is well documented. Vision 2030 targets are no longer a roadmap—they are a performance benchmark. The question for private sector leaders today is not whether to act, but how fast they can build the operational infrastructure to sustain growth as external conditions tighten.

IBM’s research and client work across the region points to a consistent finding: the organizations achieving the most durable results are not simply deploying AI tools. They are redesigning how they operate with AI at the center—automating high-value workflows, eliminating structural cost inefficiencies and building systems that scale revenue without proportionally scaling headcount or fixed costs. We call this capability Operational Alpha.

It’s a new source of enterprise value—one that is increasingly visible in diligence processes and deal structures. It is also becoming a central topic in portfolio management conversations across the GCC’s sovereign wealth funds, private equity firms and family office conglomerates. [Read more.](#)

A new regional order for the Strait of Hormuz

Al Jazeera

The ongoing war of choice launched by the United States and Israel against Iran has shattered the geopolitical status quo in our region. As Washington finds itself entangled in another Middle Eastern quagmire, reports suggest that US President Donald Trump’s administration is increasingly in need of a political off-ramp.

The Hormuz littoral states possess a rare, collective opportunity to provide the American president with an exit strategy. By taking the initiative to establish a new, locally managed security architecture for the Strait of Hormuz, our nations can further elevate their strategic significance in regional geopolitics and the global economy. The alternative to this win-win scenario is prolonged conflict that would ensure that a new regional order is eventually imposed unilaterally by Tehran.

Seeking to balance their positions, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states appear trapped between two bad options. Confronting Trump, especially in the middle of a war, would undoubtedly carry significant costs and unpredictable reactions from an increasingly unpredictable leader. [Read more.](#)

War with Iran Tests Gulf-US Economic Model

The Washington Institute for Near East Policy

It may be premature to discuss the end of the US-Israel war with Iran, but it is not too early to consider how the fighting is reshaping political and commercial relationships between the Arab Gulf states and Washington. Before February 28, when the US and Israel assassinated supreme leader



A satellite view shows the Strait of Hormuz, a critical chokepoint for global energy supply, connecting the Gulf to the Gulf of Oman [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and much of Iran’s top leadership, the Gulf—along with much of the global economy—was thriving. Now, despite efforts to stay out of the mire, GCC states have become targets for Iranian aggression, and their business models are under strain.

Those models—built on providing an attractive commercial environment for foreign capital, with first-class infrastructure and a relatively liberal social climate—were underpinned by Gulf governments recycling petrodollars into global markets as well as by domestic investment. This dynamic was not lost on US President Donald Trump. [Read more.](#)

Saudi Arabia cuts \$200m in Met Opera House funding due to Iran war: Report

Middle East Eye

Saudi Arabia has pulled out of a \$200m deal to support New York City's Metropolitan Opera House due to economic hits it has suffered from the US-Israeli war on Iran, The New York Times reported on Friday.

While \$200m is a relatively small sum compared to Saudi Arabia's vast \$1 trillion sovereign wealth fund, the decision is notable as the first sign that the war on Iran is denting Gulf financial commitments in the West.

Peter Gelb, the Met Opera's general manager, told the NYT that the kingdom said its decision was based on damage to the country's economy caused by the Iran war and the blockade of oil passing through the Strait of Hormuz.

"They are only doing the projects that are essential," Gelb told the NYT, recalling his conversation with Saudi officials. The Met financing deal "falls outside what is essential", he added.

The storied Met Opera turned to Saudi Arabia in September 2025 for a financial lifeline. [Read more.](#)



In Southern Yemen on February 5, 2026, the Saudi-backed Yemeni Army deploys security checkpoints in the streets of Hadramawt [PHOTO CREDITS](#)

Saudi Arabia Bungles Yemen—Again

Middle East Forum

A year ago, southern Yemen was the most stable and secure part of the country. Aidarous al-Zubaidi, the president of the Southern Transitional Council and the vice president of Yemen, had not only restored security, but also had created a climate conducive to investment. Yemeni diaspora, Saudis, Indians, and especially Emiratis were investing in the region. The Emiratis were building civilian airports in every province. In Ataq, capital of the southern Shabwa province, a huge solar farm was about to come online.

Both the portion of Southern Yemen that Zubaidi controlled and nearby Mocha, a part of the former North Yemen controlled by Tareq Saleh, nephew of the late Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, were the only truly secure and prosperous regions of Yemen. Zubaidi and Saleh coordinated closely, though Zubaidi declined to hold territory across the former border, a diplomatic signal that Yemenis welcomed but spurred Saudi paranoia. [Read more.](#)

Trump administration discussing currency swap line with United Arab Emirates

CNBC

The White House has discussed offering a financial lifeline to the United Arab Emirates as the U.S. war with Iran wreaks havoc on the Gulf state's economy, a White House official told CNBC.

The UAE has not formally requested a currency swap line, and plans are not currently being drawn up, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity to talk about nonpublic plans. Still, it is being discussed within the administration, the person said. Such a move would provide liquidity in dollars to the oil-rich UAE, but could be politically tenuous for the administration as U.S. consumers grapple with higher prices at home.

The UAE and other Persian Gulf nations have been hit hard by the U.S. war with Iran. Tehran has fired troves of missiles at the U.S.' regional allies, damaging economic infrastructure. Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz has also largely choked off oil exports that the UAE depends on for cash flow.

[Read more.](#)

In Qatar, Trapped Between the U.S. and Iran, War Forced a Reckoning

New York Times

To grasp the global collateral damage from the U.S.-Israeli war with Iran, consider the Persian Gulf nation of Qatar. A close U.S. ally and longtime mediator between Washington and Tehran, Qatar's government sought to avert the war. When that failed, Qatari officials warned of the dangers of a prolonged conflict. Resource-rich Qatar nonetheless faced more than 700 Iranian missile and drone attacks, which have targeted Gulf countries that host American military bases. These attacks forced Qatar to suspend natural gas production, which generates its vast wealth and normally accounts for a fifth of the global supply. It was one of a number of disruptions caused by the war that sent economic shock waves around the world. A fragile cease-fire announced on April 7 suspended U.S. and Israeli attacks on Iran and Iran's retaliation against Israel and the Gulf Arab states. [Read more.](#)

Bahrain summons Iraqi envoy as pro-Iranian attacks persist in Gulf

Middle East Forum

Bahrain has summoned an Iraqi envoy over drone attacks launched at the kingdom and other states in the region, which persist despite the US-Iran ceasefire.

The summoning of the diplomat on Monday followed similar action by Saudi Arabia the previous day, signaling growing regional concern over the activities of pro-Iranian groups based in Iraq and complicating Baghdad's efforts to rebuild ties with its Arab neighbours.

Bahrain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly condemned the "continued malicious drone attacks" launched from Iraq towards Bahrain and several Gulf Cooperation Council countries, the state news agency BNA reported. [Read more.](#)

Middle East Developments



Numerous crude oil extraction byproducts made in the Gulf are unable to be shipped abroad because of the Strait of Hormuz crisis. [PHOTO CREDIT](#)

Escalation in the Middle East reverses more than a year of economic growth in the Arab States region

UN Development Programme

New estimates by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) suggest the military escalation in the Middle East, now into its fifth week, may cost economies in the region from 3.7 to 6.0 percent of their collective Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This represents a staggering loss of US\$120-194 billion and exceeds the cumulative regional GDP growth achieved in 2025. Coupled with an estimated rise in unemployment of up to 4 percentage points or 3.6 million jobs lost—more than the total jobs created in the region in 2025, these reversals will push up to 4 million people into poverty. The assessment — “Military Escalation in the Middle East: Economic and Social Implications for the Arab States region” — exposes the concerning reality of structural vulnerabilities characteristic to the region, which enable a short-lived military escalation to generate profound and widespread socio-economic impacts that may persist over a long-term.

“This crisis rings alarm bells for countries of the region to fundamentally reevaluate their strategic choices of fiscal, sectoral, and social policies, representing an important turning point in the development trajectory of the region,” said Abdallah Al Dardari, UN Assistant Secretary General and Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab State in UNDP. “Our findings underline the pressing need to strengthen regional collaboration to diversify economies—beyond reliance on growth driven by hydrocarbons, and to expand production bases, secure trade [Read more.](#)”

AWS teams working around the clock to keep Middle East services up after drone strikes, CEO says

CNBC

The Iran war poses ongoing challenges for cloud provider Amazon Web Services, its chief, Matt Garman, said Tuesday. The Amazon division said in early March that drone strikes had damaged its data centers in Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. "It's a really difficult situation, and we're working incredibly hard," Garman told CNBC's Kate Rooney at the HumanX conference in San Francisco on Tuesday. "In fact, we have teams, 24/7, working to make sure that we can keep our infrastructure up for our customers in that region." Dozens of AWS services in Bahrain and United Arab Emirates continue to be unavailable, according to the company's status page. Last week, Iran's Revolutionary Guard navy announced it had targeted Amazon data center infrastructure in Bahrain. AWS declined to comment on the latest incident. A spokesperson pointed to a previous statement in which it said: "AWS Bahrain Region has been disrupted as a result of the ongoing conflict." [Read more.](#)

US has three aircraft carriers in the Middle East for first time since 2003

Al Jazeera

The United States has three aircraft carriers in the Middle East for the first time in 23 years with the arrival of the USS George HW Bush, the US military has said, amid a fragile ceasefire with Iran.

The Middle East-based Central Command (CENTCOM) of the US military said on Friday that the carriers include 12 accompanying ships, more than 200 aircraft, and 15,000 soldiers.

For the first time in decades, three aircraft carriers are operating in the Middle East at the same time," CENTCOM said. The last time the US amassed that amount of military assets in the region's waters was in the lead up to the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. The other two US aircraft carriers in the region are USS Abraham Lincoln and USS Gerald R Ford, which is the largest in the world. The show of force signals that the US is preparing to return to fighting should the fragile ceasefire between the US, Israel and Iran unravel. Diplomacy between the two countries has been in limbo, with Iran setting the lifting of the US naval blockade against its ports as a condition for resuming the talks. [Read more.](#)



US aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln in an undisclosed location during the war on Iran, March 3, 2026 [PHOTO CREDIT.](#)

Economic Research: Europe's Middle East Dependencies: Price Surges Precede Supply Chain Vulnerabilities

S&P Global

Europe is no stranger to energy supply shocks. Most recently, in 2022, the region was roiled by the sudden loss of Russian oil and gas imports following international sanctions responding to the Russia-Ukraine war. S&P Global Ratings considers that tensions in the Middle East, which are again disrupting Europe's energy markets, are giving rise to risks to the broader economic landscape.

How Energy Shocks Ripple Through the Economy
Energy shocks are rarely a single blow; instead, they tend to unfold in stages. The first phase is the direct hit, with higher oil and gas prices squeezing households and businesses and increasing costs across the economy--though oil prices and gas prices feed into European end markets at different speeds. These price increases then typically extend rapidly beyond energy markets, affecting Europe's domestic supply chain within a few quarters.

[Read more.](#)



A United Airlines plane takes off from the Los Angeles international airport on 21 April 2026. [PHOTO CREDIT](#)

Replit's Jordanian Immigrant Billionaire Founder Shakes Up Vibe Coding

Forbes

Two years ago, Replit CEO Amjad Masad invited Paul Graham, the legendary cofounder of the startup incubator Y Combinator, to his home office near Palo Alto, California, to give Graham a sneak peek of Replit's new and novel product: an AI agent that could write its own code. It was the first time Graham had seen what would become known as vibe coding. "The name hadn't even been invented," Graham recalls.

As the agent got to work building apps, Graham, a lifelong computer programmer, instinctively looked at the code. Masad scolded him, saying there was no need, arguing that the source code would only be an unimportant byproduct, and programming would now be done in English — a radical change for software engineers. "It was mind-bending," Graham, one of Replit's earliest investors, tells *Forbes*. "He's bald with that beard, and I think he was actually wearing a black turtleneck. I felt like he was a Bond villain: 'Hahaha! Don't look at that code!'"

Now vibe coding, of course, is everywhere, and Replit is looking to take it a step further. On Wednesday, the startup announced its new agent, simply called Agent 4, which aims to deliver a new type of interface for vibe coding. Like last time, Masad demoed the new agent to Graham at his home office in early March. [Read more.](#)

Jordan's Current Ground



King Abdullah II meets US President Donald Trump at the White House in February, 2025 [PHOTO CREDIT](#)

Jordan's Wartime Balancing Act

Washington Institute for Near East Policy

Jordan has proven to be an invaluable U.S. strategic partner during the war, opening itself up to extensive Iranian attacks in the process. Even more challenging for the kingdom, however, has been the political and economic fallout of the conflagration. While Amman has taken some steps to mitigate this spillover, the crisis is accelerating the deterioration of its ties with Israel. Once the war is over, ongoing and intensive U.S. diplomacy will be required to shore up ties between these two key peace partners and insulate Jordan from residual Iranian threats.

Support for the United States in Wartime

During the reign of King Abdullah II, Jordan has dramatically enhanced its strategic relationship with Washington. At critical moments, he has taken a different path from his father, always choosing to prioritize ties with the United States. In 1991, for example, King Hussein opposed Operation Desert Storm and refused to join Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and other members of the large multinational coalition in the campaign to liberate Kuwait. In contrast, King Abdullah provided basing for U.S. aircraft involved in a much more controversial military effort, the 2003 invasion of Iraq. More recently, the kingdom played a pivotal role in intercepting Iranian projectiles overflying its airspace en route to Israel during major confrontations in 2024 and 2025. [Read more.](#)

Jordan: ICRC president concludes official visit to discuss humanitarian situation in the Middle East and joint efforts to revive respect for the rules of war

ICRC

His Majesty King Abdullah II and President Spoljaric discussed planning for the High-Level Conference on Humanity in War that will take place in Jordan later this year. The event, which will be co-hosted by Brazil, China, France, Kazakhstan and South Africa, is part of the Global Initiative to galvanize political commitment to international humanitarian law (IHL). In an age of rising armed conflict and diminishing restraint, Jordan is playing a critical and indispensable role in defending international humanitarian law," said President Spoljaric.



King Abdullah of Jordan warned of Israeli violations in the occupied Palestinian territories. [PHOTO CREDIT](#)

"I hope that world leaders will respond to His Majesty's invitation and stand united behind the fundamental rules that preserve humanity in war."

Launched in September 2024, the Global IHL Initiative is an exceptional effort driven by states to restore respect for the rules of war. To date, over 100 states have formally joined the Global IHL Initiative with 27 states co-leading seven thematic workstreams to develop practical recommendations to address challenges posed by contemporary warfare. [Read more.](#)

Jordan's regional connectivity begins in Riyadh

Atlantic Council

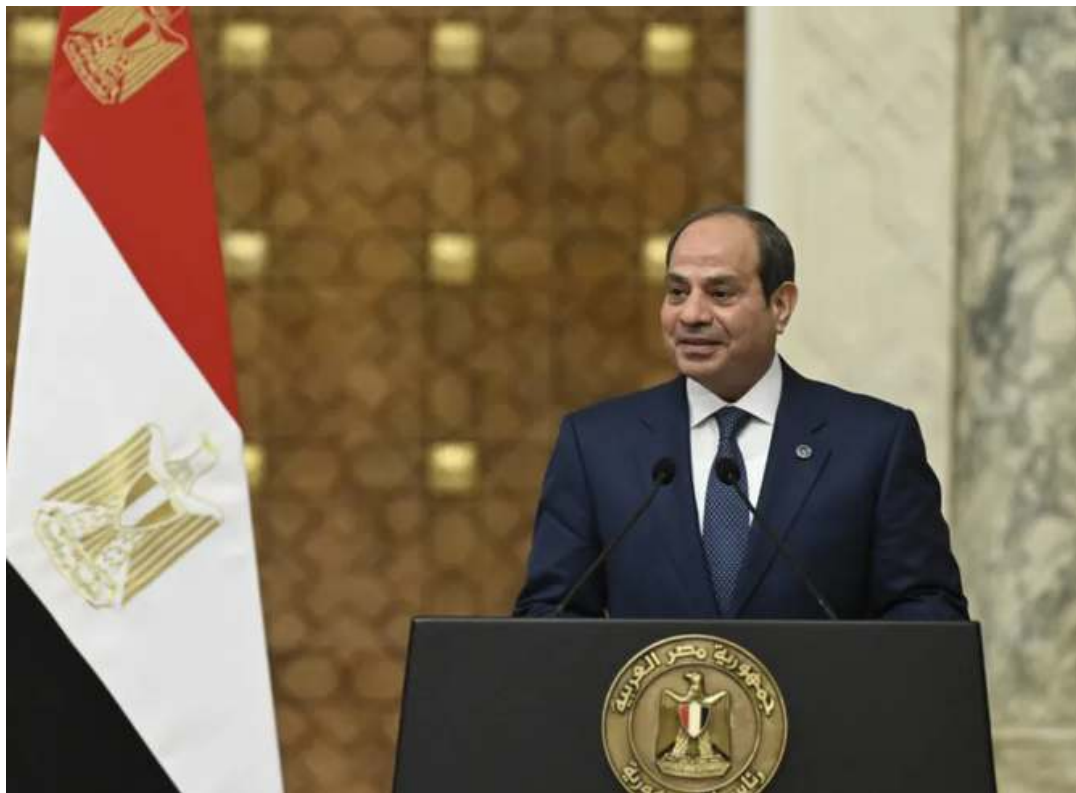
As the economic consequences of the Iran war spread across the Middle East, Jordan will be both a casualty and a potential source of resilience.

Jordan's strategic geography positions it as a natural node in emerging trade corridor initiatives designed to revitalize regional economic cooperation and develop new, more effective routes for the movement of goods and commodities. If Jordan and its partners can leverage this opportunity, they could also provide a critical lifeline for Jordan as it seeks to reduce its dependence on US and other foreign aid. But so far, the country and its partners have struggled to achieve any meaningful connectivity, despite committing to doing so in rhetoric.

Jordan cannot anchor its economic ambitions on international promises that may not come to fruition. It must take the lead in making economic interconnectivity a reality with its closest regional partners first—and then scale outward as the broader international community catches up.

[Read more.](#)

Egypt's Role in Conflict



Egypt President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi gives a speech in Cairo, Egypt on February 4, 2026
[*PHOTO CREDITS*](#)

'Deliberate attempts' being made to redraw Middle East map, Egyptian president warns

Middle East Monitor

“Deliberate efforts” are being made to redraw the map of the Middle East, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi warned on Saturday, Anadolu reports.

“The Middle East is going through critical circumstances amid deliberate efforts to redraw its map,” Sisi said in a televised speech to mark the 44th anniversary of Sinai’s liberation from Israeli occupation.

He called for full implementation of the second phase of the Gaza ceasefire deal, which was reached last October, including unhindered entry of humanitarian aid and the immediate launch of the enclave’s reconstruction.

Gaza was destroyed in Israel’s two-year-long genocide. The first phase of the truce involved exchange of Israeli hostages in exchange of Palestinian prisoners. The president also expressed Egypt’s categorical rejection of any attempt to displace Palestinians.

[Read more.](#)

Egypt and the Gulf: A Relationship under Pressure

ICRC

The US-Israeli war on Iran has put Egypt in a predicament. Since the 2013 coup that brought him to power, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi has enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship with Gulf leaders who deeply appreciated his crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood after the 2011 Arab Spring protests. Sisi has been a cornerstone of the new regional political order that connects Egypt to the United States and the Gulf states. Cairo is also heavily indebted to many of the Gulf states that Iran has targeted in its response to the 2026 war: Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members have poured tens of billions of dollars in grants, Central Bank deposits, and investments to help Egypt weather serious economic troubles over the years. [Read more.](#)

Counterrevolution in Egypt: How Sisi broke the dream of a new republic

Middle East Eye

When Egyptians rose up in against the rule of Hosni Mubarak in 2011, many of us believed we were living through the end of a dictatorship.

Fifteen years later, it is clearer than ever that what followed was not simply the return of the old regime. Egypt's counterrevolution did not restore Mubarakism. It produced something harsher, more centralised, and more ambitious in its violence. It built a new order. That is the argument at the heart of my new book, Counterrevolution in Egypt: Sisi's New Republic, which is out on 5 May.

The book grew out of years of research, but also out of lived experience. I write not only as a scholar of Egypt's security sector but as someone who was arrested, tortured, surveilled, and blacklisted by the very institutions I am trying to understand. For me, this is not an abstract question of authoritarian resilience. It is an attempt to explain how a revolution that shook the regime to its core was defeated, and why the state that emerged from that defeat looks so different from what came before. [Read more.](#)

From night life in Egypt to rice farming in Vietnam, the war in Iran is a drain

NPR

In Cairo, streets come alive in the evening as many people go out to shake off the stress of the day, or shop after a long day of work.

These days, however, the megalopolis is quiet and dark. The government has ordered all businesses, including cafes, shops and restaurants, to close at 9 p.m. in an effort to conserve energy. Streetlights are also turned off. "Maybe for the states or for Europe 9 p.m. is not bad, but in Egypt usually we stay out until midnight or even after midnight. So this was a big shock for lots of people," says Ahmed Kamaly, professor of economics at the American University in Cairo. [Read more.](#)

Lebanon: A Rise in Instability



Displaced people make their way back to their home crossing the bridge linking southern Lebanon to the rest of the country, which was hit earlier in an Israeli strike, after a ten-day ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel went into effect, in Qasmiyeh, Lebanon
[PHOTO CREDITS](#)

Ten-Day Ceasefire Takes Effect in Lebanon

Council on Foreign Relations

A ten-day ceasefire in Lebanon largely held overnight, raising hopes that regional tensions could cool. The truce, [announced](#) by U.S. President Donald Trump yesterday, removes a critical obstacle to U.S.-Iran peace talks, as Tehran said any truce must also halt fighting between Israel and Hezbollah. After weeks of war in Lebanon triggered mass displacement, some displaced people [began to return](#) to their homes today. The ceasefire coincides with another diplomatic push: a [meeting](#) today cohosted by France and the United Kingdom (UK) on their strategies for securing passage through the Strait of Hormuz, where Iran has restricted shipping and the United States has enacted a blockade on Iran's coastline recently.

The Lebanon truce. The ceasefire's success hinges in part on the actions of a group not officially party to the formal agreement: Hezbollah, the Iran-backed proxy that has been Israel's primary combatant in the country. A **document** outlining the truce published by the U.S. State Department said both countries had agreed Lebanon would work to prevent Hezbollah from attacking Israel, while Israel would cease "offensive military operations" against Lebanese targets in Lebanon. Israeli and Lebanese officials [agreed](#) to the truce, while Hezbollah acknowledged it in public statements but [said](#) its actions would be based "on how developments unfold." The document underscores Israel's right to self-defense. [Read more.](#)

Lebanon Needs a New Negotiating Strategy with Israel

Carnegie Middle East Center

As the Lebanese government and the United States work to extend and consolidate the current ten-day ceasefire in Lebanon, with a second round of Lebanese-Israeli negotiations planned for April 23 in Washington at the ambassadorial level, both Hezbollah and Israel are operating as though the war between them is far from over.

Hezbollah is urging displaced inhabitants of the south to hold off on returning home until the region is more secure, while Israel continues to raze entire villages in the south. The paradox is that the two sides have opposing strategic readings of the situation and are pursuing contrary objectives, yet

their actions are converging in undermining the Lebanese state and its agenda of ending the conflict, disarming Hezbollah, and preserving Lebanon's territorial integrity.

This convergence is not accidental. It reflects the trap in which the Lebanese state finds itself today. It is caught between an adversary, Israel, that denies Lebanon's sovereignty and an armed domestic actor, Hezbollah, that can only continue to operate effectively in a context in which such sovereignty remains incomplete. On Israel's side, there are two major goals in its campaign. [Read more.](#)



Displaced residents travel through the Qasmieh area while traveling on the way back to their homes in southern Lebanon on April 17.

[PHOTO CREDITS](#)

Lebanon's Moment of Reckoning

Foreign Policy

The Lebanese government faces a moment of reckoning, with Israel, with Hezbollah, and with the Lebanese people. The 10-day cease-fire with Israel that began on April 16 has created a defining crucial moment where the Lebanese state's survival or collapse could hang in the balance.

To avoid the worst-case outcome, Lebanon should demonstrate its resolve in disarming Hezbollah and engaging with Israel. Israel, for its part, must resist the temptation to double down on its military offensive and ultimately should withdraw from Lebanon. And most significantly, the United States must maintain the diplomatic pressure for progress and provide the necessary aid to Lebanon.

[Read more.](#)

Syria's Uncertain Future



Qasrak Air Base comes under the control of the Syrian army following the withdrawal of US forces from the area, in Hasakah, Syria, on April 16, 2026 [PHOTO CREDIT](#)

Syria takes control of all bases where US forces were deployed

Al Jazeera

Syria has taken full control of all military sites where US forces had previously been deployed, completing a handover that Damascus says reflects the successful absorption of Kurdish-led fighters into national structures.

The announcement on Thursday comes after the final convoy of US soldiers and equipment departed Qasrak air base, located in the northeastern governorate of Hasakah, ending a military presence that began in 2014 when US forces entered the fight against ISIL (ISIS) alongside Kurdish fighters who went on to lead what became known as the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa received the two most senior figures in the SDF, its military commander, Mazloum Abdi, and the head of its political wing, Ilham Ahmad, in Damascus on Thursday.

Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan al-Shaibani and the presidential envoy overseeing the integration process were also present. Syria's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates welcomed the completed handover of the bases, saying it reflected the government's efforts to bring the country under a single state authority, including border areas and the northeast, which had long operated outside Damascus's control. [Read more.](#)

Syria thwarts Hezbollah plot, vows at UN to fight terrorist groups

Foundation for Defense Democracies

The Syrian Interior Ministry and General Intelligence Service thwarted a plot by a Hezbollah cell, Syrian state media reported on April 19. Four days later, Syria’s permanent representative to the United Nations, Ibrahim Olabi, told the UN that Damascus was continuing its counterterrorism operations against the Islamic State, Hezbollah, and other groups. Syria has continued to crack down on smuggling in the country and says it has busted a number of terrorist cells recently. These developments come as Syrian President Ahmed al Sharaa traveled to the Gulf states to deepen regional ties and diplomatic support.

The Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) reported on April 19 that Syria had “foiled a sabotage plot by a cell linked to the Hezbollah terrorist militia, a source at the Interior Ministry said Sunday.” The cell had reportedly planned to carry out rocket attacks, apparently targeting Israel from the area of Quneitra near the Golan, although the report did not mention Israel. [Read more.](#)



Syrian women stage a protest in demand of the release of detainees prisoned by Assad Regime in Idlib, Syria On November 12, 2021. PHOTO CREDIT

TIMEP Joins Partners in Welcoming the Renewal of the Mandate of the International Commission of Inquiry on Syria

The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy

The undersigned Syrian civil society organisations and international and regional organisations welcome the renewal of the mandate of the International Commission of Inquiry on Syria at the 61st Session of the Human Rights Council. We underscore the continued importance of the Commission’s investigations, public reporting, and efforts to support accountability, which remain critical, and call for sustained support to ensure the effective implementation of the mandate.

We welcome that the Human Rights Council has extended the mandate of the Commission as originally established in 2011, thereby reaffirming that the mandate remains unchanged in its core investigative duties and fully independent in its implementation, and that its consideration under Item 2 does not change or constrain its original mandate. We reiterate our full support of the Commission’s mandate “to investigate all alleged violations of international human rights law since March 2011 in the Syrian Arab Republic, to establish the facts and circumstances that may amount to such violations and of the crimes perpetrated and, where possible, to identify those responsible with a view to ensuring that perpetrators of violations, including those that may constitute crimes against humanity, are held accountable”. [Read more.](#)

Iran war sparks push to transform Syria into global energy corridor

EuroNews

Amid major geopolitical shifts following the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a document attributed to Tom Barrack, the US envoy to Syria, outlines an ambitious proposal to reposition Syria as a key transit hub for global energy flows. The plan focuses not on road transport but on reviving and expanding a huge network of existing and proposed pipelines linking Gulf and Iraqi energy fields to Mediterranean ports and, ultimately, European markets.

At the Antalya diplomacy forum in Turkey this week, Syria’s President Ahmed al-Sharaa, a former rebel commander until recently, told the forum that due to its strategic location the country wants to become an alternative route for energy and goods transportation.

The Syrian leader said his country plans to serve as a safe corridor for major routes between the East and the West with access to the Mediterranean Sea, linking the Gulf and Turkey through Jordan as well.

[Read more.](#)

After the US Withdrawal from Syria, What Is the Future of Russian Bases?

MediaLine

The withdrawal of the United States from its military bases in Syria marks a pivotal moment in a conflict that has lasted more than a decade. It is not only a military development; it also raises broader questions about the future of foreign military presence in the country and how long it can continue amid rapidly shifting regional and international dynamics.

With Washington leaving the battlefield, debate has intensified over whether Syria is moving toward

a broader reconfiguration of external influence or whether this is an American exception that will not extend to other powers, most notably Russia.

The US withdrawal, ending a presence that began in 2014 as part of the war against the Islamic State (ISIS), is seen in strategic circles as part of a broader shift in Washington’s approach—reducing direct military involvement in international conflicts and relying instead on less costly political and military tools. [Read more.](#)



Syrian women stage a protest in demand of the release of detainees prisoned by Assad Regime in Idlib, Syria On November 12, 2021. [PHOTO CREDIT](#)

Yemen's New Involvements



Houthi followers and Houthi-affiliated military police take part in a pro-Iran demonstration, as the U.S.-Israel conflict with Iran continues, in Sanaa, Yemen, on Monday [PHOTO CREDIT](#)

Weakened and Reluctant, Yemen's Houthis Belatedly Enter War

New York Times

The Iran-backed Houthi militia in Yemen always vowed to defend its Iranian patrons in the event of a regional war. So, when Israel and the United States attacked the Islamic Republic in February, many expected the group to join the fight immediately. Instead, the Houthis waited.

For nearly a month after the war began, they stayed largely on the sidelines. And when they did finally launch a missile at Israel on March 28, it was not the opening of a new front, as many expected, but appeared to signal that while yes, they may be joining the war, they were doing so cautiously.

The hesitation, experts say, suggested that the movement has been weakened by last year's sustained 55-day bombardment of U.S. and Israeli strikes — and forced into a careful calculation about how much of its dwindling arsenal it could afford to spend.

“The supply chain has degraded, smuggling routes have been choked off, and some of their missile variants require imported propellants that are no longer flowing reliably,” said Fatima Abo Alasrar, a Yemeni analyst. [Read more.](#)

The Houthi Threat: Is Trump Underestimating One of Iran's Key Remaining Cards?

CSIS

On April 1, President Trump announced that the United States' strategic objectives in the war with Iran were "nearing completion." He threatened to send Iran "back to the stone ages" if it did not make a deal within three weeks, and said "we have all the cards, they have none."

Yet, Iran does have other cards to play. A few days before President Trump's address, the Houthis entered the fray in the Middle East. After months of signaling their readiness to escalate, they launched missiles toward Israel. Iranian officials had warned that their Yemeni proxies would be activated if the United States and Israel escalated further or if Arab Gulf states entered the war. But despite these threats and the Houthis' past willingness to target international shipping, they have not attacked maritime traffic through Bab al-Mandab so far this year. [Read more.](#)

World News in Brief: Civilians at risk in Gaza and West Bank, Duterte to go on trial in ICC, Yemen detainees update

UN

The United Nations continues to work to secure the release of 73 of its staff members in Yemen who have been arbitrarily detained by the Houthi de facto authorities who control much of the country following years of civil conflict, also known as Ansar Allah.

Some of these personnel have been held for years, UN Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric recalled during a briefing on Thursday to journalists in New York.

He said the senior official leading regional engagement on arbitrary detention was in Oman on Tuesday as part of the UN's ongoing efforts on the issue. [Read more.](#)

Cash shortages grip Yemen despite currency stabilisation

Al Jazeera

The Yemeni government's measures to curb the devaluation of the Yemeni riyal have finally borne fruit, but they have created another problem: A severe liquidity crunch.

The government's central bank, based in the southern city of Aden, has shut down unauthorised exchange firms it says were involved in currency speculation, centralised internal remittances under a controlled system, and formed a committee to oversee imports and provide traders with hard currency.

These measures have helped curb the riyal's freefall, from about 2,900 to the United States dollar months ago to about 1,500 today, a move that was initially welcomed. But the gains have been short-lived, as public frustration has grown over a worsening shortage of cash in riyals. [Read more.](#)

USAID and Foreign Aid Legacies



Workers in Sudan unload bags of cereal from USAID in 2018 [PHOTO CREDIT](#)

USAID Spending at the Country and Sector Level: What Happened in Fiscal Year 2025?

Center for Global Development

We now have full fiscal year 2025 (FY2025) data for sectoral- and country-level spending administered by USAID (from October 1, 2024, to September 3, 2025). The data cover the last three months of the Biden administration and the first nine months of the Trump administration. Compared to FY2024, the aggregate picture is of a 23 percent decline in spending (outlays) and a 43 percent decline in commitments to future spending (obligations). The largest absolute sectoral decline is in humanitarian support, where spending fell from \$8.0 billion in 2024 to \$5.8 billion in 2025 and obligations fell from \$9.2 billion to \$3.5 billion. That is reflected in spending collapses in several countries facing humanitarian crises.

Note that the USAID data exclude some significant foreign assistance spending through the State Department for migration and refugees, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for HIV/AIDS, and the Department of Agriculture for food aid. The data for the full fiscal year from [ForeignAssistance.gov](#) are not yet available in these cases.

Looking at the USAID data, “Protection, Assistance and Solutions”—aka, humanitarian support—is historically the largest sectoral category, and it saw sharply reduced spending: a 27 percent decline in outlays and a 62 percent decline in obligations. [Read more.](#)

Trump's Foreign Aid Overhaul Sent Millions More Dollars to Big U.S.-Based Contractors

New York Times

When the Trump administration began its overhaul of foreign aid in January 2025, officials made no secret of their disdain for giant aid organizations and private businesses who received multimillion dollar contracts to deliver health services to poor nations. They characterized them as “beltway bandits” who charged bloated amounts of overhead. They vowed to shut down the big U.S. players and instead channel aid through smaller organizations based in the countries receiving assistance. But a new analysis shows that the opposite happened: In 2025, a handful of the largest, U.S.-based organizations were given huge new infusions of cash, while smaller groups in developing countries were all but shut out. . [Read more.](#)

Interfaith Advocates Urge Congress to Make FY26 a Floor, not a Ceiling

FCNL

In March, faith leaders and advocates returned to Capitol Hill for an Interfaith Working Group on Foreign Assistance Congressional Fly-In. This time, their advocacy focused on the appropriations process to allocate funding for U.S. foreign assistance for fiscal year 2027 (FY27). The group emphasized the need to build on what was achieved in the last year's bill, the H.R.4779 - National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2026. The FY26 funding cycle was an important step forward. After the FY26 Presidential Budget Request proposed dangerous cuts to foreign assistance, Congress stepped up and passed a bipartisan NSRP Appropriations bill, preserving key programs. The IWGFA acknowledged and welcomed that progress. But participants were equally clear that it was not enough. Over the past year, the administration's termination of global health programs — including tuberculosis treatment and President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) — has had devastating consequences. [Read more.](#)

Trump's Cuts Have Eviscerated Once-Bipartisan Foreign Aid Programs

New York Times

A U.S. government initiative to help island nations in the Pacific counter China lost \$92 million, more than half of its budget. Funding aimed at preventing and responding to atrocities committed by Myanmar's military junta was cut entirely. When President Trump moved to claw back vast sums of foreign aid funding last year — first by winning party-line approval from the G.O.P.-controlled Congress to cancel the spending, then by unilaterally doing so without giving lawmakers time to object — his administration did not say which programs it planned to defund. New data reviewed by The New York Times presents the clearest picture yet of where the administration chose to make the spending cuts. It was mostly by taking a meat ax to programs that once enjoyed bipartisan backing on Capitol Hill, as well as slashing almost 90 percent of U.S. economic aid to Africa, by far the hardest hit by Mr. Trump of any region across the globe. [Read more.](#)

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

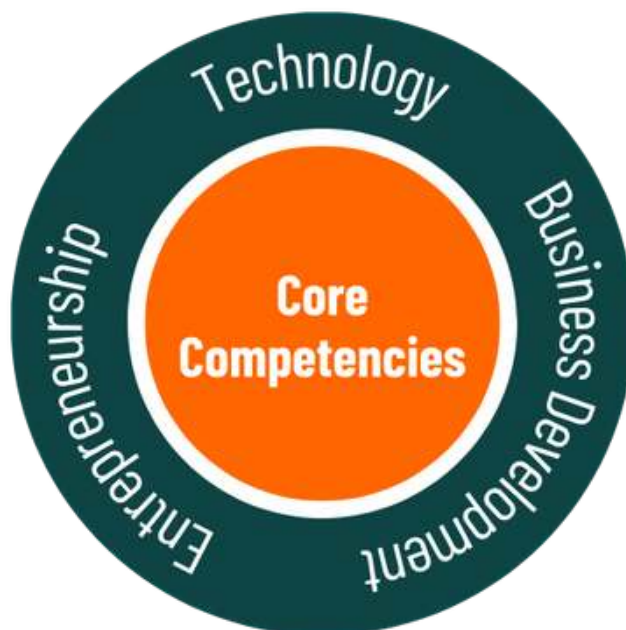
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Contact Information:

United States

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



Palestine

Al Kena Building
 Haifa Street
 Nablus, Palestine
 + 972 56-644-4644
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.