

Committee: Advisory Panel on the Question of the MENA

Agenda Item: Addressing the Security Implications of growing conflicts in the MENA region while Ensuring De-escalation

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Introduction

The growing instability in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has led to one of the most turbulent periods in the region's history. The overall instability is caused by the interconnected crisis that happens all around the region, such as the violence in the Gaza region, civil wars (like the Yemeni or the Sudanese civil wars), and other conflicts between the regional actors. These conflicts overlap through shared actors and strategic interests of both regional and global powers, which usually leads to proxy wars. Most of the conflicts in the region have historical backgrounds that go way back before the twenty-first century, such as the Israeli-Arab conflict. This conflict is one of the examples of conflicts in the region that are religiously and nationally motivated. Alongside the motivation of the states, non-state actors in the region also mostly have religious motivations, such as Islamic terrorist groups. These non-state groups usually become one of the main reasons why tensions rise either before or during armed conflicts, sometimes with the help of other states or third parties. As the tensions in the region rise, so do the security risks. This domino effect usually happens when the involvement of non-state armed groups or the direct military involvement increases as the armed conflicts escalate. This situation sometimes causes the proxy wars to become more apparent than they already were. The constant support of the United States to different actors in the region and the



ongoing Iran-Saudi Arabia proxy war could be great examples. Understanding these conflicts is essential for being able to assess the security risks that they pose at the regional and international levels. Yet understanding the issues is not enough: delegates will also need to find solutions that don't overlook the political, economic, and social complexities of the region, while keeping in mind the historical background of the region.

Definition of Key Terms

Proxy War: A proxy war is a military conflict in which one or more nonstate actors support one or more sides to the conflict to influence the conflict for their benefit. The non-state actors, or third parties, don't actually participate in the armed conflict but rather support one side with financial assistance or sometimes with military support. Proxy wars allow the major powers to compete for resources and power without actually engaging in direct armed conflict. Throughout history, there have been many instances where a war that seemed like it was between two parties was actually a proxy war between major powers at the time. Examples of proxy wars could be the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), the Israel-Hamas War (2023-2025), and the Yemen Civil War (2014-Present).

Non-state Armed Groups: This term refers to a party in an armed conflict that is not a state. Conflicts that include non-state armed groups usually escalate much rapidly than when just two states are involved, especially when the group is supported by other powers. The involvement of non-state armed groups has become a trend in the MENA region, especially in the last ten years, when the number of Islamist groups quadrupled. Examples of non-state armed groups in the MENA could be the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), al-Qaeda, Hamas, and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

De-escalation: De-escalation is the stabilization or the reduction of a violent situation with the use of communication or other non-violent or less violent techniques. In this issue, this term is used for the regression of conflicts in the MENA with diplomatic or other non-violent ways. De-escalation in this type of

issue can be done in a more healthy way when the involvement of international organizations that have the aim of ensuring world peace with diplomacy, such as the United Nations (UN), is considered.

Internationalized internal armed conflict: This term refers to conflicts that are non-international but in some ways reach international levels. This situation could happen when a state or an organization intervenes in the issue by either supporting the state or the organized armed group that is part of the conflict, or both, similar to how proxy wars are shaped. When this happens, the conflict could either remain internal or could become international if there is direct military involvement of other countries. Examples of this could be the Syrian Civil War, where other states such as the United States (U.S.), Russia, Israel, Iran, and Türkiye supported different sides of the conflict, and a conflict that was internal quickly became “internationalized”.

Two-state solution: This solution is a proposed solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It consists of establishing one state for the people of Palestine and one state for the people of Israel. This solution was proposed earlier in the early 1990s with the Oslo Accords, which initially led to the formation of the Palestinian Authority.

Immigration: Immigration is when people become permanent residents of another country. Because immigration dates back centuries, many modern states are made up of different cultures and ethnicities. Even though immigration has been shown to have positive effects on the development of the states, in many cases, immigrants have and still do face discrimination that reaches violent levels. Because of this reason, many countries implemented laws against immigration to limit the conflicts, or started giving citizenship to the immigrants in order to integrate them into the society and create a coherent understanding of being a citizen of the state. The second approach, however, is seen as a possible assimilation into the cultures of the immigrants by some people.

Intifada: Intifada is an Arabic word meaning uprising or rebellion. When used in Arabic, it can refer to different uprisings however, in English, it mainly refers to the two major Palestinian uprisings against Israeli occupation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. (You can find more information about the two intifadas in Useful Links.)

Arab Spring: Arab Spring is the term used to describe the wave of pro-democracy protests and uprisings in the MENA region that began in 2010 and 2011. Though some of the protests were successful, like the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia, most of these protests were the start of the wars that are currently happening in the region, such as the Syrian, Yemeni, and Libyan Civil Wars.

Weapons of mass destruction: The United Nations General Assembly described weapons of mass destruction in 1977 as “atomic explosive weapons, radioactive material weapons, lethal chemical and biological weapons, and any weapons developed in the future which might have characteristics comparable in destructive effect to those of the atomic bomb or other weapons mentioned above” (“Weapons of”). Any weapon that causes mass death or injury, widespread environmental destruction, and long-term societal harm by using nuclear explosives, toxic chemicals, or a delivery system designed to employ them for hostile purposes or in armed conflict.

Major Actors Involved

Axis of Resistance

The Axis of Resistance is an Iranian-backed network of non-state militant groups and some state allies that oppose Israel, the U.S., and their regional allies. The main members include Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) in Gaza, Houthis in Yemen, and several Iraqi militias. Until 2024, Syria under the Assad regime was also a key partner and provided strategic territory between Lebanon and Iran. Though each group that is part of the axis acts independently, they

share strategic goals and coordinate on training and weapons supply. The network grew out of Iran's support for Hezbollah in the 1980s, expanded with the fall of Saddam Hussein, and later connected the Houthis with Hamas. During the Israel-Hamas War, members of the axis attacked the U.S. and Israel, showing a higher level of cooperation than other previous conflicts.

Bahrain

This archipelago state gained its independence in 1971 and has an economy that relies on processing crude oil and is one of the banking centers of the Middle East. Bahrain is one of the countries that was strongly affected by the Arab Spring. Protests and uprisings still cause clashes between the insurgent groups and security forces. Being ruled by a Sunni royal family and having a Shia-majority population, there have been many conflicts between the Shia and the Sunni Muslims. These conflicts especially worsened after the Islamic Revolution in Iran, with an increase in Shia uprisings. Bahrain partners with Saudi Arabia and the U.S. in its military forces.

Hamas

Hamas is a Palestinian Islamist and nationalist movement founded in 1987 during the first intifada. Originating from the Muslim Brotherhood's network in Gaza, Hamas rejected the Palestine Liberation Organization's (PLO) secular ideology and refused to recognize Israel and adopted an armed strategy that included attacks against civilians and other acts of terrorism. Its 1988 charter states that the historical Palestine is the holy land and cannot be surrounded to non-Muslim people. Through the 1990s and 2000s, Hamas carried out suicide bombings and rocket attacks, leading to many of its leaders being arrested by Israeli forces. In 2006, Hamas won the legislative elections, and after violent clashes with Fatah (a nationalist and social democratic political party) in 2007, Hamas took control over the Gaza Strip while the Palestinian Authority retained control over the West Bank. Since then, Hamas has been governing Gaza while facing international and financial pressure, internal divisions, and being in constant conflict with Israel.

Houthis

Houthis, formally known as Ansar Allah, are an armed political and religious group that emerged from the Zaidis, a Shia Muslim minority in Yemen, that opposes foreign influence on the Yemeni government and the spread of Saudi-backed Wahabi ideology in Yemen. It was named after its founder, Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi, and initially was focused on cultural and religious activism; however later became armed after constant clashes with the Yemeni government in the early 2000s. The Houthis receive political and military support from Iran and identify themselves as a part of the “axis of resistance” alongside Iran, Hezbollah, and Hamas, opposing Israel, the U.S., and Western influence. Houthis expanded their territory during the Arab Spring in 2011 and by the early 2020s became the strongest armed group in Yemen. Since the beginning of the Hamas-Israel War, Houthis have expanded their actions to outside of Yemen by launching missiles at Israel and attacking commercial ships in the Red Sea. Despite international pressure, especially from the U.S. and the United Kingdom (UK), Houthis continue to act as a dominant force in both Yemen and the entire region’s security dynamics.

Iran

After going through the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran entered a war with Iraq in 1980 that lasted for eight years. This war led to the arms race between Iraq and Iran for weapons of mass destruction, and Iran started a nuclear program, claiming it was for “peaceful purposes”. With international backlash against nuclear weapons, Iran agreed to sign an agreement in 2015 to discard them; however, in 2018 U.S. scrapped the agreement. From that point on, Iran continued to advance the program and started collecting uranium. During the Israel-Hamas War, Israel and Iran also exchanged fire, and during this time, Israel struck Iran’s critical nuclear and military infrastructure. The war also led to the growth of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which later had effect on the Houthi movement in Yemen. Iran has strong ties with Russia and China, which have grown even stronger in recent years with the ongoing wars.

Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)

ISIS is an extremist armed group (a terrorist organization) that has been active mostly in Iraq, Libya, and Syria, and also has caused deadly attacks in many other countries, such as Afghanistan, Egypt, France, and the United Kingdom, most famously the Paris attacks of 2015 and the Brussels bombing in 2016. It grew out of the chaos during the 2003 Iraqi War, when Sunni militants who lost political power formed insurgent groups. It was formerly associated with al-Qaeda (who are notorious for the September 11 attacks); however, in 2014 became completely independent and declared a caliphate, claiming authority over all Muslims worldwide, which was rejected by almost all Muslim communities. At its height, ISIS controlled millions of people and enforced a harsh rule of Islamic law using executions, torture, and intimidation. It funded itself through oil sales, extortion, and taxation in the areas it occupied.

Israel

Since it was founded in 1948, the State of Israel has been a key actor that has been in constant conflict with the Arab states in the region. It is the only Jewish nation in the world and therefore in the region. The history of the region dates back to prebiblical times; however, the main conflicts started during the 20th century when many Jewish people immigrated to Palestine, and this caused tensions between the two groups. The UN signed on, giving a part of the Palestine soil to the Jewish people in order for them to establish a state in 1947; however, this furthered the already existing conflict, and in the next 35 years, Israel fought many wars with its neighboring Arab states and, at the end, signed peace treaties with some, such as Egypt and Jordan. However still there are still many conflicts that have continued to this day. Israel has a large defense industry and a developed tech sector. The ground forces of the military, Israel Defence Forces (IDF), are highly important and responsible for protecting the country from external threats such as terrorist groups or Arab states like Iran and Palestine. Last year, 8% of GDP was used on military expenditures, mainly because of the war. Men and women are both obliged to serve in the military, which creates a high number of reserves of people in case of a war. Israel's main

security partner is the U.S., even though Israel is not a NATO member. Under their current Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, the country is at one of its most right-wing and religious times.

Lebanon

Lebanon gained its independence in 1943 from the French; however, its modern history is full of instability, most notably the 1975-1990 civil war that killed around 120,000 people, causing divisions in the government. Armed groups and international powers have long existed in Lebanon. From 1976 to 2005, Syria's military occupied the country, and Israel maintained its position in the south until the withdrawal in 2000. Today, Lebanon's most powerful and largest political party, Hezbollah, regularly clashes with Israel, especially after the Hamas attack on Israel in 2023. Lebanon also holds more than 1.5 million Syrian refugees, which deters its already fragile environment. In 2019, the country faced an economic collapse, causing many people to emigrate.

Russia

Russia has been one of the significant powers in the Middle East for centuries, using the region as a competition zone with other powerful states of the time. During the Cold War, Russia, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) at the time, established relations with Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, and Syria. With these alliances, Russia became a permanent force in the Mediterranean. However, there was a period when Russia had domestic problems in the 1990s and had to withdraw from the Middle East, yet its relationships with Syria and Iran remained. During the Syrian Civil War, Russia supported the Assad regime and regained its position in the Middle Eastern region. Russia also has strong ties with other states in the region, such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Israel, as it follows a balancing act where all the interests are managed. Right now, Russia is trying to regain its power over the Middle East from the U.S.

Sudan

For most of the 20th century, Sudan was governed by the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium. Sudan has experienced many internal conflicts since it gained its independence in 1956. The civil war that started in 1955 between the northern and southern parts of the country continued with a few breaks in between until 2011, when South Sudan became independent. Until that point, the country faced one of the worst times, with over 2 million dying in the conflicts. However, the country once again fell into a civil war in 2023 when the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and Sudan's army, Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF). For the last two years, the country has been going through one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. There has been famine and claims of a genocide happening in parts of the country that are occupied by RSF forces. More than 150,000 people died, and about 12 million fled their homes in hopes of security.

The State of Palestine

Palestine was one of the regions that was placed under the British mandate in 1922 by the League of Nations; however, unlike the other states, it never gained its independence. This was because the British wanted to form a Jewish state there. After the Jewish people settled in Palestine and conflicts between the Arabs and the Jewish people got violent, the UN proposed to divide the region into two separate states, with Jerusalem being an international city. The Gaza Strip and the West Bank were left to the Palestinian Authority (PA). After Hamas came into power in Gaza in the early 2000s, the tensions with Israel rose. Until 2023, Israel struck many times on all the soil that wasn't part of Israel's territory and occupied all at some point. The State of Palestine is currently a non-Member Observer State in the UN. Many of the Member States recognized the State of Palestine as the government of Palestinian soil as of 2025; however, none are in support of Hamas having a governing role.

United States of America (USA)

The United States (U.S.) has a broad military presence across the Middle East, which expanded in 2024 to the growing threats from Iran and its proxies, including Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis, and militias in Iraq and Syria. Since the Israel-Hamas war began in 2023, U.S. forces have faced repeated attacks and struck back while also protecting commercial shipping from Houthi missiles and drones. The U.S. has also supported Israel as the clashes with Iran and Hezbollah intensified. Tensions rose even more in June 2025 when President Donald Trump authorized the first direct strike on Iranian soil, which led to an Iranian missile attack on a U.S. base in Qatar and warnings from Iran that more U.S. involvement could trigger a wider regional war.

Yemen

Yemen is currently going through one of the worst humanitarian crises, with 18.2 million people needing humanitarian assistance. The Houthis have reached a new level of violence, including detaining and forcibly disappearing UN and civil society organization staff since May 31. In November 2023, the Houthis also started attacking Israel and assaulting ships in the Red Sea, which might be considered war crimes. In response to the Houthis' strikes on Israel, Israel launched two significant attacks on the port of Hodeidah, which serves as a key entry point for humanitarian aid. These attacks may also qualify as war crimes.

General Overview of the Issue

The MENA is currently shaped by various conflicts that create a highly volatile security environment. The conflicts in the region impose military, humanitarian, economic, and political hardships that mostly extend beyond the region, causing the process of de-escalation to be far more complex and urgent. Many of the conflicts arise from religious or economic reasons and have a long historical background.

Arab-Israeli Conflict

Following years of conflict between Arabs and Jews during the British mandate of Palestine, where both groups aimed for self-determination post-Ottoman Empire in 1922, the United Kingdom declared in 1947 its plan to withdraw its military from Palestine and supported United Nations Resolution 181, which divided the British mandate into a Jewish state and an Arab state. The proposal, while endorsed by the international community, was dismissed by the Arabs, and in May 1948, as British troops pulled out, Israel emerged in an area with ongoing disagreements regarding borders, security, land rights, and additional issues. Since then, Israel has been in constant conflict with its neighboring Arab states. After the Axis of Resistance was founded in 1990s, the anti-Israeli movement took another turn, and this cooperation is one of the main reasons why Israel entered armed conflict with most of the Arab states, such as Lebanon and Iran, once the Gaza War started.

Gaza War (2023-2025)

The Gaza War, also known as the Israel-Hamas War, began on October 7, 2023, when Hamas launched an attack on Israel from land, sea, and air, killing about 1200 people and taking 240 hostages. Israel declared war the next day and started a military campaign to dismantle Hamas. The conflict caused massive destruction across the Gaza Strip and resulted in tens of thousands of Palestinian deaths, widespread displacement, and a severe humanitarian crisis. By mid-2025 UN confirmed famine conditions caused by the Israeli air strikes and ground invasion that caused shortages of food, water, fuel, and medical services. The war's roots lie in the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which started with the 1948 Palestinian displacement, the 1967 Israeli occupation of Gaza, and the failed 1990s peace process, and continued with Hamas's rise to power and the recurring clashes in the following years. Israel was unprepared for the October 7 attack despite the rising tensions in the West Bank and the region's dynamics in general.

Throughout 2023 and 2024, the war quickly escalated. Many states, like the U.S., Iran, Iraq, Syria, and non-state armed groups such as the Houthis, entered the war as well, with either direct military intervention or financial support to different sides. Negotiations made by Qatar, Egypt, and the United States led to short ceasefires and hostage-prisoner exchanges, but they didn't last. Tensions started to rise as the famine worsened, humanitarian aid remained insufficient, and political pressure rose about the situation of the hostages. In early 2025, Israel intensified its operations in Gaza and Rafah, accusing Hamas of delaying hostage exchanges, while the U.S. held talks with Hamas and ensured a ceasefire with the Houthis. However, by mid-2025, the conflict expanded dramatically. Until September 2025, clashes continued between all the states that got involved in the issue, causing the war to reach one of the most destructive fighting since 2006, and the humanitarian conditions to deteriorate.

In September 2025, the U.S. announced a comprehensive regional peace plan supported by several Arab states. The plan included demilitarizing Gaza, deploying an international stabilization force, releasing all hostages, allowing and ensuring humanitarian access, and outlining a pathway for Palestinian statehood. After negotiations, a ceasefire began on October 10, followed by the release of all surviving hostages on October 13 in exchange for approximately 2000 Palestinian prisoners. Although the agreement marked one of the most significant de-escalation efforts since the start of the war, its implementation is still fragile. Restrictions on aid still continue in parts of Gaza as well as localized clashes in which both sides accuse each other of violating the ceasefire terms. Globally, the war also fueled polarization, which triggered mass protests, diplomatic tensions, and increases in antisemitism, Islamophobia, and anti-Arab sentiment in some countries.

Red Sea Crisis

The Red Sea is a strategic waterway linking the Indian and Pacific Oceans to the Mediterranean Sea and thus connecting Asia and Africa to Europe, making secure and open navigation essential for global trade. At the Red Sea's

northern end lies the Suez Canal, which is a key route for ships carrying oil, gas, and goods into the Mediterranean, handling about 12% of global maritime trade and 40% of the world's container traffic. After the October 7 attack and Israel's response to Gaza Houthis began missile attacks on Israeli targets. The Houthis were acting to support Hamas alongside Hezbollah and other members of the Axis of Resistance, who show Israel's war in Gaza, saying that they will stop when the war ends. At first, they aimed at Israel, but when those attempts failed, they changed their strategy and instead started attacking Israel-linked cargo ships. Since then, these attacks have been disturbing one of the most vital commercial waterways and have caused exchanges of fire between Houthis at sea and the U.S., bombing different Houthi-linked sites in Yemen. Since the start of the war, Houthis have launched around 500 attacks on the Red Sea and Israel. Their attacks have hit more than a hundred ships in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and the Arabian Sea, which they claim are connected with the U.S., UK, or Israel.

This conflict in the Red Sea has increased shipping costs as companies pay higher insurance and have to re-route vessels around Africa, adding an extra 10 to 14 days to Asia-Europe journeys and disrupting global supply chains. The traffic in the Suez Canal has dropped by about 50%, cutting deeply into Egypt's revenue, while commercial activity at Israeli ports has fallen by 85%. Against the Houthi attacks, the U.S. and its allies launched Operation Prosperity Guardian, and the European Union (EU) launched Operation Aspides; however, despite the 931 U.S. and UK airstrikes, the Houthis continued their assault. During the truce in Gaza, Houthis stopped their attacks but started them again once Israel restricted aid to Gaza. Alongside military action U.S. has also tried sanctions and designated Houthis as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, but these measures have not eased the situation.

Lebanon-Israel War

Following the October 7 attack on Israel, Hezbollah began an almost daily fire exchange with the IDF. For almost a year, the fighting continued at a steady pace; however, in September 2024, Israel escalated the conflict by detonating thousands of Hezbollah members' pagers and radios, and then assassinating

their leader, Hassan Nasrallah, and several other senior officials. This attack severely weakened Hezbollah's command structure and allowed for Israel's ground invasion of southern Lebanon on September 30. Israel has since expanded operations into northern Lebanon as part of new war aims that include returning Israelis to the north and potentially getting rid of Hezbollah. According to the UN, roughly a quarter of Lebanon's soil is under Israeli evacuation orders, and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has condemned Israel's strikes on peacekeepers. By early 2024, 90000 people had been displaced from southern Lebanon, more than 1700 rockets had been launched into Israel, and casualties increased on both sides, including children, journalists, and civilians.

Lebanon's internal weakness worsens the conflict. Its sectarian power-sharing system has made stable governance hard, leading to the past civil wars. External influence from Iran (support for Hezbollah) and Saudi Arabia (support for Sunni parties) has worsened the divisions. The country has also faced major fallout because of the Syrian Civil War, including over a million refugees and economic strain, while Hezbollah's involvement in Syria has heightened tensions. Since 2019, Lebanon has faced mass protests, the 2020 Beirut port explosion, and repeated government breakdowns, which all contributed to the economic collapse. Despite an IMF deal, reforms have stalled, and Lebanon has been without a president since October 2022.

Iran-Israel Conflict and the Twelve-Day War

Israel and Iran were close partners until the Islamic revolution in 1979 in Iran, when the new regime adopted a strict anti-U.S. and anti-Israel ideology. Tensions started to rise in the early 2000s when Iran's previously undisclosed nuclear program came to light. Attempts to limit Iran's nuclear capabilities led to the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which imposed strict limitations in exchange for sanctions relief; however, the U.S. withdrawal in 2018 and renewed sanctions pushed Iran to expand its nuclear power and regional influence over proxies through the Axis of Resistance. By the early 2020s, Israel started to view Iran's nuclear power and its support of the militant

groups in the region as a direct security threat. After the October 7 attack of Hamas on Israel, Israel struck back harder at Iran's regional allies, degrading Hezbollah in Lebanon and somewhat contributing to the collapse of the Assad regime in Syria. Two direct Israel-Iran fire exchanges in 2024 showed the weaknesses in Iran's military and how the nuclear infrastructure was vulnerable. With Iran's regional network weakened and its nuclear program accelerating, Israel saw this as a window to attack Iran to undermine the regime and its nuclear progress. These conditions set the scene for the 12-day Israel-Iran War in 2025.

The war took place between June 13-24, 2025, and is described as unprecedented in scale and intensity. Israel launched hundreds of precision strikes deep inside Iran, aiming nuclear sites, air-defense radars, and reportedly killed dozens of IRGC military commanders and nuclear scientists. Although Israel claimed it acted to prevent an Iranian nuclear threat, many experts believe that Israel's main purpose was to weaken Iran's regional influence and preserve its own freedom to use military forces in the future. Iran responded with a mass missile and drone attack against the Israeli population centers and bases. It is estimated that around 1100 people were killed, 21 million Iranians experienced strikes, and thousands of Israelis were injured. On June 22, the U.S. joined the fighting with an attack on Iran's deepest and most protected nuclear sites. As a response, Iran fired missiles at U.S. bases in the region.

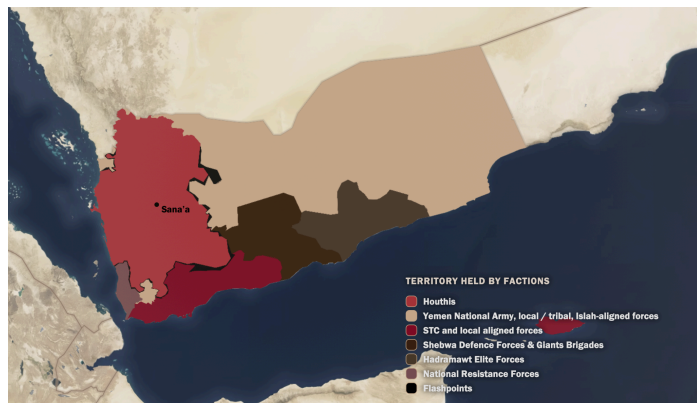
On June 24, a ceasefire was announced, and despite its violations in the early period, it was held under international pressure. The ceasefire created temporary de-escalation; however, it left the main issues (Iran's nuclear intentions, the ongoing struggle for influence through proxies, etc.) unresolved, leaving the long-term outcome unclear and a risk for a renewed conflict.

Yemeni Civil War (2014-Present)

The Yemeni Civil War began in 2014 when the Houthis movement took over the capital, Sanaa, after years of political unrest due to the Arab Spring that ousted the former President Ali Abdullah Saleh in 2012. After him, Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi came to power, and under his weak governance, economic

collapse and fragmentation of the state led to the expansion of Houthis, eventually seizing the presidential palace in 2015. Hadi fled to Saudi Arabia, and this prompted a Saudi-led air campaign and naval blockade to stop the Houthi forces.

The war quickly became a regional proxy war: Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) supported Hadi while Iran aided the Houthis. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and southern separatist groups such as the



Southern Transitional Council (STC) further complicated the battlefield. Saudi-led airstrikes and blockade led to one of the worst humanitarian crises, with famine risk, economic collapse, and the largest cholera outbreak ever recorded. Despite many UN ceasefire attempts and by 2018 the war had reached a deadlock, especially around key places like Marib and Hodeidah. Political alliances also shifted. Former president Saleh briefly formed an alliance with the Houthis before turning against them and being killed in 2017. The UAE withdrew most of its forces in 2020, and Hadi resigned in 2022, handing power to a new Presidential Leadership Council meant to represent multiple factions.

A UN-brokered ceasefire in 2022 reduced hostilities and raised hope for a political settlement; however, progress stalled with the AQAP attacks, and STC calls for southern independence. The war expanded regionally in late 2023 when the Israel-Hamas War began. The Houthis launched missiles and drones toward Israel and the Red Sea, which caused the Red Sea Crisis. Today, Yemen's political landscape is fragmented. Humanitarian conditions are deteriorating, with 21 million people in need of humanitarian aid, 4.5 million being displaced, and a high famine risk. While large-scale fighting has decreased, the conflict is unresolved, and Yemen's future is uncertain.

Sudanese Civil War (2023-Present)

In 1989, the three-decade ruler of Sudan, President Omar al-Bashir, came into power after a coup. During his time as president, he oversaw the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983-2005) and the Darfur war, which the International Criminal Court (ICC) later described as a genocide against non-Arab ethnic groups. Until 2019, he enforced a strict Sharia regime and persecuted Christians, Shiites, and other minorities. He employed or supported private military groups to enforce his laws and fight rebel groups. One of those groups was the Janjaweed militia, who are known for its mass killings, displacement, and sexual violence. In 2013, this militia was formed into a new and more political structure, Rapid Support Forces (RSF), led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (also known as Hemedti). The RSF grew rapidly in the next years in wealth and power by controlling gold mines, being employed as a border guard force, and a mercenary in the Yemeni war, and Hemedti became one of the wealthiest men in Sudan.

While RSF was getting stronger, the people of Sudan were going through an economic crisis and were facing extreme political oppression. There were widespread protests all over the country, and in 2019, RSF and Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) joined forces for the coup and ousted President Bashir. A civilian-military transitional government was created, and the SAF leader, General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, led it alongside his deputy, Hemedti. As prime minister, they chose Abdalla Hamdok, an economist, and he tried to mitigate the economic turmoil. However, tensions between civilian leaders and military leaders grew. In October 2021, Burhan and Hemedti orchestrated a coup against Hamdok, dissolving the transitional government. Until this point, the transitional government was being funded by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF); however, after this event, they stopped their extremely needed funding. Protests intensified, and political institutions collapsed. Hamdok briefly returned to power in 2022 but resigned shortly and left the military functions in sole control.

In 2022, negotiations to restore the civilian transitions were done, but the key disagreement was the future of the RSF. They wanted to integrate it into the army; however, Buhran and Hemedti both wanted control over the unified force, and this caused the tensions and the competition for power between them to increase. On 15 April 2023, clashes broke out in Khartoum after days of RSF redeployments that the SAF viewed as provocative. Both sides blamed the other for firing the first shots. The fighting escalated quickly, and RSF captured larger areas of the capital and gained ground across Darfur and Kordofan. Both sides were being supported by outside forces: RSF was supported by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Libyan commander Khalifa Haftar, while SAF was being supported by Iran.

By late 2024-2025, Sudan had fractured into competing zones of control. SAF dominated the north and east, operating from Sudan, where the UN-recognized government is based. The RSF held most of Darfur and parts of Kordofan and significant areas around Khartoum until early 2025. The SAF recaptured much of the capital region in early 2025, including Omdurman and Bahri, while the RSF continued its dominance over Darfur. In October 2025, the RSF seized El Fasher, the last major urban center in Darfur under government control.



The war has been marked by several human rights violations. Mass killings, ethnic targeting, sexual violence, and many village burnings took place in Darfur. The UN, Human Rights Watch, and multiple NGOs have filed the atrocities against the Masalit and other non-Arab groups. In early 2024, the United States formally recognized that the RSF and its allied militias committed genocide in Darfur. Satellite imagery from humanitarian research groups has also shown evidence of mass graves and widespread destruction.

The conflict has also generated one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. Over 24 million people are currently facing limited access to food, with a famine happening in the country, especially in Darfur and Kordofan. There were more than 600 deaths in the first month of fighting, and tens of thousands have occurred since. Hospitals, water systems, and critical infrastructure have been destroyed. Many people also fled their homes to other fragile neighboring states. International agencies warn that Sudan is experiencing one of the most severe humanitarian emergencies in recent decades. Despite numerous rounds of negotiations hosted by international or regional powers, no ceasefire was held. International responses have been widely criticized as insufficient or unfocused, leaving the war as a forgotten one, despite its scale and brutality.

Libyan Crisis

Since Muammar al-Qaddafi was ousted in 2011 by U.S.-backed forces, the country has been facing political fragmentation, armed conflict, and competing foreign interests. After the ceasefire in 2020 that ended a six-year civil war, a UN-backed government, the Government of National Unity (GNU), was formed. However, disputes over the rules of election led to the postponement of the national elections, causing the political tensions to increase between rival governments, each controlling separate institutions and oil resources. Libya's instability has also been affected by armed groups, including Islamist militias and remnants of ISIS, which occupied key cities like Sirte at the height of its power. Meanwhile, regional powers have intervened, with the Libyan National Army (LNA) being supported by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, France, and Russia, and the UN-backed government being supported by Turkey, Qatar, and Italy. Often supplying military aid, troops, and mercenaries, these interventions have fueled ongoing violence and complicated the mediation efforts.

Despite some temporary ceasefires and low-level stability, clashes over resources, especially oil, exist. Political deadlock has allowed for the proliferation of weapons, with Libya becoming a hub for arms trafficking, affecting regional conflicts. The country has also suffered catastrophic natural disasters, most notably Storm Daniel in September 2023, which caused severe

flooding, thousands of deaths, mass displacement, and worsened the humanitarian crisis. Migration in the region also causes serious problems. Libya's porous borders and limited security environment have made it a transit hub for migrants seeking Europe, exposing them to human rights abuses, trafficking, and deadly sea crossings. Meanwhile, the ongoing political and economic instability, mixed with disputes over maritime oil deals, arms proliferation, and militia rivalries, continues to threaten Libya's security and economic and humanitarian situation.

Timeline of Important Events

Date:	Event:
22 September 1980	Start of the Iraq-Iran War
20 August 1988	End of the Iraq-Iran War
20 March 2003	The U.S. invasion of Iraq
12 July 2006	Start of the Lebanon War
14 August 2006	End of the Lebanon War
4 January 2011	Start of the Arab Spring
29 July 2011	Start of the Syrian Civil War
18 December 2011	U.S. withdrawal from Iraq
16 May 2014	Start of the Second Libyan Civil War
16 September 2014	Start of the Yemeni Civil War
23 October 2020	End of the Second Libyan Civil War
15 April 2023	Start of the Sudanese Civil War
7 October 2023	Start of the Gaza War
8 December 2024	End of the Syrian Civil War
10 October 2025	Declaration of ceasefire for the Gaza War

Related Documents

[UN Security Council Resolution 598](#)

- A resolution aimed at a ceasefire in the Iran-Iraq war. Despite being rejected by both parties, this resolution served as the foundation for the 1990 cease-fire.

[UN Security Council Resolution 1441 \(2002\)](#)

- The resolution offers Saddam Hussein a final offer to comply with its previous disarmament obligations. The resolution also declared that Iraq was in “Material Breach” of previous disarmament obligations and warned of serious consequences for non-compliance.

[UN Security Council Resolution 1483](#)

- The resolution recognizes the United Kingdom and the United States as occupying powers and establishes the development fund for Iraq. Additionally, the resolution also set a framework plan for reconstruction and post-invasion administration.

[UN Security Council Resolution 1071](#)

- The resolution was aimed at solving the 2006 Lebanon War and the cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah. Urged Israel to withdraw its forces from Lebanon in parallel with UNIFIL soldiers. The resolution still remains the core legal framework for de-escalation along the Israel–Lebanon border.

[UNDP – Arab Human Development Report 2016: Youth and the Prospects for Human Development in a Changing Reality](#)

- The report assesses the difficulties and prospects confronting young people in the area, particularly following the significant changes that occurred in Arab nations in 2011. The report offers a summary of young people in the area. It aims to encourage an extensive discussion among

major stakeholders and the youth regarding the future of development in the Arab States and the most effective ways to engage youth in crafting that future

[UN Security Council Resolution 2118 \(2013\)](#)

- The resolution was adopted during the Syrian Civil War in relation to the Framework for Elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons. It also required the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons, condemning their usage as a way to global peace. The resolution also outlines plans for the transition.

[UN Security Council 1593](#)

- The resolution refers the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court and requires all parties to fully cooperate with the prosecutor. It establishes an international accountability mechanism for actions taken in Darfur, aiming to support the rule of law.

Past Solution Attempts

Past attempts to address the security implications and de-escalate conflicts in the region include diplomacy, military action, and humanitarian efforts, all of which provided limited long-term success. UN-led peacekeeping missions, such as UNIFIL in Lebanon, and mediation efforts in Yemen, Syria, and Libya, tried to enforce ceasefires and negotiations. Other countries have also tried to manage peace talks, such as China, which oversaw the peace talks between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis, which, as a result, temporarily reduced hostilities. Military interventions such as the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen and U.S.-backed counterterror operations mostly aim to stabilize the area and combat terrorist groups, complemented by the protection of vital waterways from piracy and militant attacks, such as the Red Sea in this case. UN and NGOs also try to provide humanitarian assistance to certain regions however, not all can reach their target places because of certain limits (such as Israel not allowing for humanitarian aid to reach Palestine). Despite these efforts, proxy

involvement and overlapping crises undermine progress, highlighting the need for integrated solutions.

Possible Solutions

To address the issue, a layered approach that tackles both immediate risks and long-term reasons for instability should be taken into account. In the short term, coordinated diplomatic pressure, such as UN-brokered ceasefires, renewed U.S.-EU diplomacy, and the support or neutral states for mediation can reduce the immediate violence and reopen humanitarian corridors in conflict zones like Gaza, Yemen, and southern Lebanon. Strengthening de-confliction mechanisms between rivals (for example, U.S.–Iran naval hotlines or Israel–Lebanon border monitoring via UNIFIL) can prevent accidental clashes from escalating into full regional wars. To counter the maritime insecurity in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, intelligence sharing between states to form multinational missions in support of coastal states can reduce the attacks by militias, pirates, and terrorist groups and their results. Medium-term solutions include arms control measures, enforcing embargoes on weapons transfers that destabilize the region, and creating incentives, such as sanctions relief or aid, for parties to engage in negotiations. Longer-term de-escalation depends on addressing the political and economic roots of the conflicts: supporting inclusive governance reforms, rebuilding state institutions weakened by proxy wars, and investing in economic recovery. Progress requires a secure environment, which could only be achieved through dialogue involving Gulf states, Iran, and North African countries to manage rivalries peacefully and reduce reliance on armed proxies.

Useful Links

[Twenty-First Century Proxy Warfare: Confronting Strategic Innovation in a Multipolar World](#)

- Includes a list and detailed analysis of the conflicts that were or still are present in the region, focusing mostly on the proxy wars. Though since this article was last updated in 2019, it includes conflicts until 2015.

▶ Nakba anniversary: Uncovering the roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

- An informative video on the historical background of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

▶ A historical timeline of Israel's brutality towards Palestinians

- Another video about the background of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (includes information on the intifadas)

[Who Governs the Palestinians? | Council on Foreign Relations](#)

- An article about the governing powers in Palestine and the political dynamics

[Timeline: The Iraq War](#)

- A timeline of events of the Iraq War

[UN Documents for Yemen: Security Council Resolutions](#)

- Includes resolutions that were written in order to solve the conflicts happening in Yemen

[UN Documents for Sudan: Security Council Resolutions](#)

- Includes resolutions that were written in order to solve the conflicts happening in Sudan

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