



Daily



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MAX - MENA Region Daily Summary - August 1, 2026

The following report reviews current events in the MENA region and their possible effect on business continuity and security.

Highlights of the Day

- **MENA:** August 1 reports indicate US, Israel to launch major escalation against Iran imminently; continue to prepare for escalation scenarios
- **Iraq:** PM al-Zaidi raises level of alertness in all military units on July 31; effort to appease Iran-backed militias after US-Saudi strikes
- **Morocco:** Large-scale migrant crossing into Spain's Ceuta prompts joint security response on July 31; border security to remain high
- **Saudi Arabia:** Riyadh establishes maritime security coalition on July 30 to protect navigation in Red Sea; unlikely to deter Houthi attacks

Actionable Items

MENA: August 1 reports indicate US, Israel to launch major escalation against Iran imminently; continue to prepare for escalation scenarios

Current Situation - Two US-based news agencies, citing US officials, reported that US President Donald Trump is considering coordinating with Israel to conduct strikes on Iranian energy infrastructure as early as this weekend and would last for several days, although a final decision has yet to be made.

Assessments & Forecast - These reports appear highly plausible and indicate that the conflict is approaching a critical inflection point. Washington likely assesses that its limited strikes against Iran's coastal military assets have failed to alter Tehran's position on the Strait of Hormuz, increasing the likelihood of a broader campaign targeting Iran's energy infrastructure. President Trump's apparent willingness to involve Israel marks a notable shift in US strategy, likely influenced by his recent meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Meanwhile, Tehran has adopted a more proactive posture, as demonstrated by its recent attack on [US forces in Jordan](#), increasing the likelihood of pre-emptive strikes against US military assets across the Gulf. Should military action begin, the regional security environment would deteriorate rapidly. Iran would likely retaliate by targeting Israel, US military assets, and critical infrastructure across the GCC and Jordan while expanding attacks against regional energy infrastructure, including Israeli offshore gas platforms, with spillover risks extending into the Eastern Mediterranean.

Recommendations - Throughout the region, conduct timely risk assessments, refresh security protocols and business contingency plans (BCPs) for short-notice escalation scenarios, and continuously confirm travel itineraries.

Source: [CBS](#)

Iraq: Arbaeen Pilgrimage to end in Karbala on August 4-5; avoid nonessential travel to procession route, remain cognizant of disruptions

Current Situation - The Arbaeen pilgrimage period in Iraq will culminate on August 4-5 in Karbala, located 75 km southwest of Baghdad. Pilgrims typically travel along the 70 km route from Najaf to Karbala, as well as from Baghdad, other Iraqi governorates, and neighboring countries. The event annually draws millions of people, including foreign nationals. Over two million foreign pilgrims have already reportedly entered Iraq since the mourning period began on June 16. Iraqi authorities have implemented security, traffic, communications, and public service plans throughout the country. The Baghdad Operations Command stated that no road closures are planned, although large trucks and motorcycles will be prohibited from pilgrimage routes.

Assessment & Forecast - Heavy congestion and prolonged travel delays are expected across Najaf, Karbala, Baghdad, and along the main routes linking the three cities throughout the pilgrimage period. Iraqi security forces are also likely to deploy extensively around shrines, processional routes, border crossings, airports, and PMF-affiliated facilities to manage crowds and mitigate the persistent threat of militant

attacks. Regional tensions and the recent US-Saudi strike are likely to increase anti-US and anti-Saudi rhetoric and militia visibility along pilgrimage routes.

Recommendations - Those operating or residing in Iraq between August 1-5 are advised to avoid nonessential travel in Najaf and Karbala area due to the influx of pilgrims and associated security and logistical challenges.

Source: [INA](#)

Libya: Protests continue in capital on July 31 amid armed convoy movements; continue avoiding travel to Tripolitania

Current Situation - The Souq al-Jumaa Movement claimed to have welded shut several Government of National Unity (GNU)-linked offices in Tripoli, including the Tripoli Projects Office, Libya Africa Investment Portfolio, Audit Bureau, and Housing and Infrastructure Board, among others. The movement also held protests at Tripoli's Algeria Square. Unconfirmed reports on August 1 indicated armed convoy movement from Misrata into Tripoli.

Assessments & Forecast - The protests and actions targeting government offices formed part of a [July 31](#) mobilization against the Abdul Hamid al-Dbeibah-led GNU. The use of welding to seal government offices is consistent with the movement's stated emphasis on civil disobedience and non-violent protest. The reported movement of armed convoys from Misrata into Tripoli may indicate that GNU-linked armed groups are reinforcing security in the capital to prevent anti-GNU groups from exploiting the vulnerability in the capital posed by the protest movement. The increased presence of armed groups in Tripoli is liable to heighten tensions and increase the risk of localized clashes. While no protests have been called, anti-government protests and civil disobedience actions cannot be ruled out in the coming hours and days.

Recommendations - Those operating or residing in the Tripolitania area on August 1 and in the coming days are advised to avoid all travel to the region due to the volatile security situation and possibility of unrest and inter-militia attacks, particularly in the capital.

Source: [Souq al-Jumaa Movement](#)

Turkey: Ankara Governor on July 31 extends forest fire-related restrictions till October 15; adhere to authorities' instructions

Current Situation - The Ankara Governor's Office announced that the ban on entry to forested areas, initially imposed from May 22 to September 30, will be extended until October 15. Several measures will be implemented with immediate effect, including a ban on any activity that could cause a fire in forested areas. All rural and forest-adjacent areas will be under constant surveillance by law enforcement and forest protection teams.

Designated village officials have also been instructed to monitor for anyone lighting fires and immediately report violations. All Public institutions will remain fully mobilized to conduct inspections, while legal and administrative action will be taken against anyone found in violation of the restrictions. Any damages or administrative costs incurred by fire activity will be paid for by those found responsible.

Assessments & Forecast - The decision to extend forest access restrictions reflects authorities' assessment of a prolonged period of elevated wildfire risk. Since July 29, 206 wildfires have required emergency response operations amid extreme temperatures and strong winds. Although 202 fires have been contained, firefighting operations remain ongoing in at least five provinces, highlighting the continued risk of additional outbreaks.

Recommendations - Those operating or residing in Turkey are advised to adhere to the authorities' directives and remain cognizant of the elevated risk for forest fires over the coming days and weeks.

Source: [Ankara Governor's Office](#)

Notable Events

Iran: US sanctions Mahan Air facilitators, company soliciting locations of US/Israeli assets on July 30; aims to cripple sanction circumvention

Current Situation - The Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) announced that it is sanctioning six entities and individuals in China, India, Russia, and Iran for allegedly serving as "general sales agents" for Mahan Air. It also designated an alleged front company affiliated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), that solicited locations of US and Israeli equipment to support Iranian attacks.

Assessments & Forecast - While Mahan Air was originally sanctioned in 2008, the latest measures indicate that Washington is expanding its economic campaign to target those aiding in the circumvention of sanctions for state-linked assets. The timing of the announcement follows the landing of a Mahan Air flight to Sanaa on July 3, which catalyzed the [escalation on the Saudi-Yemen front](#). This likely strengthened the US assessment that the airline and its overseas facilitators are integral to sustaining IRGC-backed proxy operations. Against this backdrop, the designation will fuel Houthi and Iranian perceptions of US-Saudi alignment in the regional confrontation. Additionally, the designation of an alleged front company soliciting locations of sensitive US and Israeli assets suggests Washington's assessment that Iran is receiving external support to launch precise attacks, which continue to make impact in the region.

Source: [US Department of Treasury](#)

Iraq: PM al-Zaidi raises level of alertness in all military units on July 31; effort to appease Iran-backed militias after US-Saudi strikes

Current Situation - Prime Minister (PM) Ali al-Zaidi also reportedly ordered the adoption of preventive intelligence plans to thwart “any targeting or infiltration attempts.” A spokesperson for the PM reportedly stated that this aims to accelerate plans to modernize Iraq’s aerial defense systems, including radar, early warning, and air defense systems. He emphasized that upholding internal security is the sole responsibility of the state.

Assessments & Forecast - This constitutes a response to the US-Saudi strikes on [July 28-29](#) and aims to project the government’s proactive stance to different parties. The pledge to establish aerial defense systems seeks to appease Iran-backed militias, several of whom have demanded the acquisition of defensive installations to protect Iraqi sovereignty. In this context, the directives also seek to reduce tensions with the Islamic Resistance in Iraq (IRI), which set an [August 6 deadline](#) for Baghdad to outline its response to the strikes. Concurrently, the government spokesperson’s reported affirmation that internal security is the sole responsibility of the state aims to appease foreign audiences, namely the US and Gulf states, particularly Saudi Arabia. Nonetheless, tensions will persist given the government’s limited ability to control Iran-backed militias.

Source: [INA](#)

Morocco: Large-scale migrant crossing into Spain’s Ceuta prompts joint security response on July 31; border security to remain high

Current Situation - Spain’s Interior Ministry reportedly stated that approximately 48,300 of the roughly 50,000 migrants who crossed into Spain’s North African enclave of Ceuta have since returned to Morocco. Meanwhile, clashes between migrants and security forces were reported in Nador near the Melilla border and near the Bab Ceuta/Tarajal border crossing. At least 57 people were reportedly killed during attempted crossings.

Assessments & Forecast - The surge was likely driven in part by misinformation surrounding a Spanish Supreme Court ruling requiring individual processing of migrants arriving by sea, prohibiting immediate expulsion, which smugglers and social media falsely portrayed as guaranteeing entry and eventual regularization. The return of most migrants to Morocco indicates that further attempts to enter Ceuta are less likely in the coming days, particularly as migrant accounts have highlighted poor treatment upon entry. Nonetheless, returning migrants will likely increase crowding in frontier towns, including Fnideq, Tetouan, and Tangier, placing temporary strain on local services. While Spain has emphasized Moroccan cooperation throughout the crisis, the scale of the migration flow and Morocco’s inability to pre-empt the wave may prompt an internal review of bilateral relations in the coming months.

Source: [RTVE](#)

Saudi Arabia: Riyadh establishes maritime security coalition on July 30 to protect navigation in Red Sea; unlikely to deter Houthi attacks

Current Situation - Saudi Arabia and 14 other countries, including Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, and Pakistan announced the establishment of a Multinational Maritime Defense Alliance to secure freedom of navigation and international trade routes in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, the Red Sea, and the Gulf of Aden. Saudi Arabia will serve as the coalition's founding and leading state.

Assessments & Forecast - The establishment of the multinational maritime coalition reflects growing regional concerns over the Houthi threat to critical maritime trade routes in the Red Sea. It highlights Saudi Arabia's efforts to take a leading regional security role by creating a coordinated maritime security framework to protect this strategic waterway which is vital to both Saudi and global shipping. While the coalition is likely to improve maritime surveillance and defensive coordination, it is unlikely to deter the Houthis, who have previously demonstrated resilience despite sustained airstrike campaigns. Over the coming days, Riyadh is likely to encourage more countries to join the coalition while strengthening the capabilities of its allied forces in Yemen to better counter Houthi threats.

Source: [MoD](#)

Other Developments

- **Algeria:** On July 31, a passenger bus veered off the road and fell into a ravine in the el-Karama area of Boumerdes Province, killing 25 people and injuring 44 others.
- **Egypt:** Authorities will charge a "departure fee" of 100 EGP (approximately two USD) on individuals leaving Egyptian territory, per July 31 reports.
- **Israel:** On July 30, dozens of Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers reportedly left the Sde Taiman base following a dispute with their commander. At least 14 soldiers were sentenced to 30 days in military prison and will be discharged from combat duty.
- **Yemen:** On July 31, the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) updated its travel advisory for Yemen, warning of the risk of further military escalation in Yemen and the Red Sea at short notice amid ongoing tensions between the [Houthis and Saudi Arabia](#).

Notable Dates

25 AUG	MENA Holiday: The Prophet’s Birthday (Mawlid)
1 NOV	Algeria Holiday: Revolution Day
31 DEC	MENA Holiday: New Year’s Eve