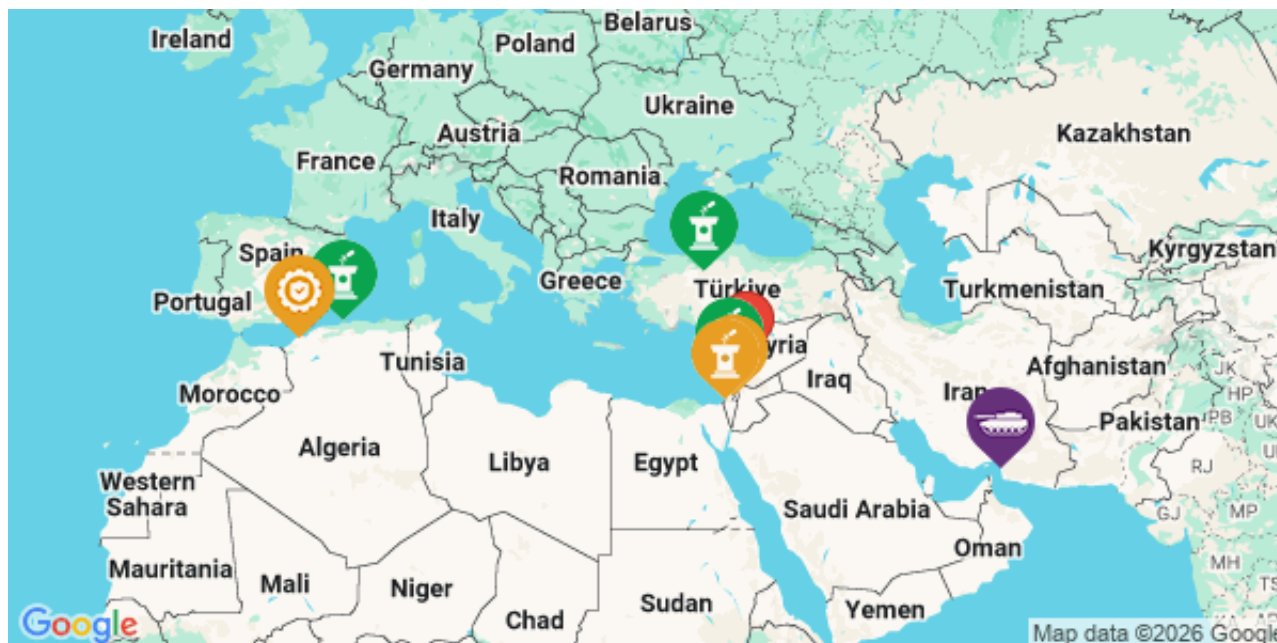




Daily



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MAX - MENA Region Daily Summary - July 8, 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:** US, Iran engage in tit-for-tat exchanges on July 7-8 amid disillusionment with MoU; renewed escalation plausible, take precautions
- **Algeria:** FLN secures largest parliamentary bloc amid record low turnout, per July 6 reports; to further solidify presidential power
- **Syria:** IED explosions recorded near Ministry of Tourism in Damascus, wounding 18 on July 7; highlights persistent militant threat
- **Turkey:** Trump signals willingness to restore defense ties at July 7-8 NATO summit; likely to intensify strategic tensions with Israel

Actionable Items

MENA: US, Iran engage in tit-for-tat exchanges on July 7-8 amid disillusionment with MoU; renewed escalation plausible, take precautions

Current Situation - The US Central Command (CENTCOM) struck over 80 sites in southern Iran overnight on July 7-8, including 60 Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) small boats. The IRGC retaliated by launching UAVs and missiles against Bahrain and Kuwait. On July 8, Iran's Parliamentary Speaker, Mohammed Ghalibaf, accused the US of violating the [Memorandum of Understanding \(MoU\)](#), while US President Donald Trump stated that, for him, the MoU is "over," adding that negotiations were a "waste of time" but can continue. On July 7, Washington reimposed sanctions on Iran's oil sector.

Assessments & Forecast - The US strikes were in response to Iran's attacks on three commercial vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz on [July 6-7](#), mirroring the cycles of tit-for-tat escalation recorded on [June 26-28](#). However, the latest round was marked by a quantitative and qualitative intensification of military action by both sides, with both sides conducting a larger volume of strikes. Washington's reimposition of sanctions also reflected the US's growing impatience and willingness to retract trust-building measures in response to Iran's defiance. Speaker Ghalibaf's and President Trump's remarks further increase the prospect of a collapse of negotiations and a potential military escalation.

Recommendations - Throughout the region, monitor regional developments, conduct timely risk assessments, refresh security protocols and business contingency plans (BCPs), and continuously confirm travel itineraries. Only conduct business-critical travel to Kuwait and Bahrain at this juncture.

Source: [CENTCOM](#)

Israel: Haredi protesters set fire, block traffic at Jerusalem's Bar-Ilan Intersection on July 7; remain cognizant of further protests

Current Situation - Israeli Police and Border Police forces dispersed dozens of ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) protesters who blocked access to the light rail construction site at Jerusalem's Bar-Ilan Intersection, disrupting infrastructure works. Protesters set fires on the road and threw stones at security forces, reportedly wounding two personnel. Police used a water cannon to clear the area and arrested one protester. Authorities reopened all roads after several hours, and construction resumed.

Assessments & Forecast - The protest forms part of a recurring pattern of unrest over the Jerusalem light rail route through ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods, where community leaders argue that the project will alter the area's religious character. Similar demonstrations, particularly at the Bar-Ilan intersection, have repeatedly disrupted construction and led to confrontations with security forces. This comes amid a report estimating that Haredi demonstrations have caused more than 130 million USD in cumulative damage to the light rail, underscoring the financial impact of the unrest.

Continued opposition, combined with ongoing infrastructure works, will likely prompt further protests in the coming days and weeks in Jerusalem's ultra-Orthodox population centers. These are likely to cause temporary road closures, traffic disruptions, attacks on security personnel and infrastructure, and localized clashes between protesters and police.

Recommendations - Those operating or residing in Israel are advised to remain cognizant of further ultra-orthodox protests, which may cause travel disruptions, road closures, and localized civil unrest.

Source: [Kikar HaShabat](#)

Notable Events

Algeria: Authorities arrest 23 individuals in Oran involved in illegal sea migration, per July 6 statement; crackdown to continue

Current Situation - Authorities in western Algeria's Oran dismantled a criminal network last week involved in organizing illegal sea migration, arresting five suspected organizers. During the operation, authorities searched a property used to accommodate migrants, where they arrested 18 Moroccan nationals. Four vehicles and foreign currencies used to facilitate smuggling operations were also seized.

Assessments & Forecast - This follows similar arrests made in May, when authorities in Oran arrested 67 Moroccan nationals and multiple individuals involved in organizing smuggling operations. The latest operation comes amid a reported increase in illegal migration via the Western Mediterranean route, which reportedly registered a 46 percent year-on-year increase compared to 2025. Against this backdrop, the repeated operations underscore sustained law enforcement efforts to target smuggling networks and curb illegal migration through this route. The repeated arrests in Oran also likely indicate that the province remains a key hub for migrant smuggling networks, potentially indicating the relocation of such networks from elsewhere to the area due to its proximity to the Spanish coast. Consequently, authorities will likely continue conducting targeted operations against migrant smuggling networks in Oran and other key coastal areas in the coming weeks.

Source: [APS](#)

Algeria: FLN secures largest parliamentary bloc amid record low turnout, per July 6 reports; to further solidify presidential power

Current Situation - The Independent National Electoral Authority (ANIE) announced that, despite a voter turnout of 21.24 percent, parties aligned with President Abdelmadjid

Tebboune secured the largest share of parliamentary seats. The National Liberation Front (FLN) won 90 seats, followed by the National Democratic Rally (RND) with 73 and the Future Front with 59. Meanwhile, the Movement of Society for Peace, Algeria's largest opposition-aligned party, won 43 seats, a decline of 22 seats from the 2021 election.

Assessments & Forecast - Algeria's declining voter turnout is partly attributable to continued [opposition election boycotts](#). However, these boycotts also favor government-aligned parties, as opposition voters are more likely to abstain when they view the electoral process as unfair. This is reflected in the sharp decline in seats won by independent candidates. The pro-government bloc's strengthened position in the People's National Assembly (APN), where President Tebboune's loyalist parties won 222 of 407 seats, will likely facilitate the executive's legislative agenda, including parliamentary approval of the prime minister's appointment. The outcome is also likely to reinforce perceptions of the APN as a rubber-stamp institution. As the election largely preserves the existing political balance, broad policy continuity is expected.

Source: [ANIE](#)

Israel: Jerusalem launches Mediterranean gas exploration tender on July 6; efforts to bolster regional exports

Current Situation - The Israeli Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure (MoE) announced the launch of the country's fifth offshore natural gas exploration licensing round, offering 13 blocks across the Mediterranean Sea. The ministry stated that the tender aims to expand natural gas reserves, strengthen Israel's energy security, and increase exports. Licenses are expected to be awarded by the beginning of 2027.

Assessments & Forecast - Recent disruptions to maritime energy flows through the Persian Gulf have renewed interest in alternative export corridors, increasing the strategic relevance of Eastern Mediterranean gas projects. The tender supports Israel's long-term strategy to strengthen energy security, expand export capacity, and consolidate its position as a regional gas supplier to European markets. Regionally, the initiative is likely to deepen both cooperation and competition between Israel and other Eastern Mediterranean energy actors, particularly Cyprus, Egypt, and Greece. Additional discoveries could strengthen commercial incentives for cross-border infrastructure and export coordination. However, maritime boundaries, exclusive economic zones, and resource rights in the Levantine Basin will remain a potential source of diplomatic friction. Israel will likely advance efforts to attract offshore investments in the coming months.

Source: [Israeli Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure](#)

Palestinian Territories: Hamas dissolves governance committee in Gaza, per July 6 reports; amid reconstruction framework discussions

Current Situation - Hamas officials held a press conference at al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir al-Balah to announce the dissolution of its de facto Gaza Strip government, the Committee for Government Work Follow-up. They stated that all administrative and legal preparations to transfer authority to the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG) had been completed, while technical government employees would remain in place.

Assessments & Forecast - The dissolution comes amid reports that the US has provided Israel with a contingency framework to advance Gaza's reconstruction even if Hamas retains its weapons. Hamas's announcement likely seeks to signal willingness to relinquish formal administrative control, facilitate the NCAG's assumption of governance responsibilities, and pressure Israel to accept a phased postwar approach. However, Israel has repeatedly maintained that reconstruction and durable postwar arrangements remain conditional on Hamas's disarmament. Chiefs of NCAG and the Board of Peace have similarly emphasized weapons decommissioning and a unified security mechanism. Hamas may meanwhile use the reduced administrative burden to focus on decentralized insurgent operations, including ambushes and IED attacks, particularly if Israeli forces remain deployed in the Strip.

Source: [Quds](#)

Syria: IED explosions recorded near Ministry of Tourism in Damascus, wounding 18 on July 7; highlights persistent militant threat

Current Situation - Two IEDs detonated near Damascus's Four Seasons Hotel, wounding 18 people, including four police officers. Security personnel reportedly detected and attempted to neutralize the devices before they exploded. Authorities stated that the blasts occurred outside the security perimeter for French President Emmanuel Macron's visit and posed no direct threat. No group has claimed responsibility, and investigations remain ongoing.

Assessments & Forecast - The latest attack follows a [similar incident in Damascus on July 2](#), when an IED explosion targeted a cafe, underscoring a persistent militant threat in the capital. Its timing and location during President Macron's visit suggest that the perpetrators likely sought to maximize symbolic and psychological impact. Although no group has claimed responsibility, Islamic State (IS) cells and residual pro-Assad networks remain likely perpetrators, given their anti-Western orientation and demonstrated intent and capability to undermine the Syrian government. The incident also highlights the potential threat posed by extremist, anti-Western insider elements within Syria's state structures, as such actors may be able to access information on the movements, accommodation, or security arrangements of foreign officials. This will prompt increased security operations in the country.

Source: [SANA](#)

Turkey: Trump signals willingness to restore defense ties at July 7-8 NATO summit; likely to intensify strategic tensions with Israel

Current Situation - The NATO Summit is underway in Ankara, with US President Donald Trump attending after citing his relationship with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. During bilateral talks, Trump indicated that he intends to lift the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) sanctions and is considering Turkey's reintegration into the F-35 program. Separately, Israeli Prime Minister (PM) Benjamin Netanyahu urged Washington in a July 6 interview not to restore Turkey's F-35 access, arguing that the Erdogan government poses a regional security threat.

Assessments & Forecast - The summit offers Turkey an opportunity to reinforce its role as a key NATO security partner amid continued uncertainty over US engagement with the Alliance. Trump's remarks indicate a potential reset in US-Turkey defense ties, though congressional approval and Republican opposition remain significant obstacles. PM Netanyahu's public intervention reflects Israel's growing perception of Ankara as a regional security competitor rather than solely a diplomatic adversary. His lobbying against the F-35 deal underscores the further deterioration of Turkey-Israel relations, which are increasingly characterized by strategic rivalry and competing regional security interests. This highlights the further deterioration of relations between Turkey and Israel into a confrontational stance.

Source: [NYT](#), [FOX News](#)

Other Developments

- **Iraq:** Authorities seized 25 billion Iraqi dinars and one million USD during a corruption investigation into a previously detained Oil Ministry undersecretary, bringing the total amount seized since the launch of a broader [anti-corruption campaign](#) to approximately 120 million USD.
- **Libya:** On July 7, local residents protested outside the Misrata International Airport and the city's municipal council headquarters against the US-backed Boulos proposal for the unification of rival governments in Libya.
- **Syria:** On July 7, President Ahmed al-Shaara appointed a President and six members of the Supreme Constitutional Court, and defined the tasks of the court.
- **Yemen:** In a July 7 statement, Shaya al-Zindani, the Prime Minister of the Aden-based government, denounced the [July 4](#) Houthi attack in Hodeidah, and called for a return to dialogue between the Houthis and the Presidential Command Council (PCC).

Notable Dates

12 JUL	Lebanon Travel: 20th Anniversary of second Israel-Lebanon war
14 JUL	Iraq Holiday: Republic Day
15 JUL	Turkey Holiday: Democracy and National Unity Day
22 JUL	Israel Holiday: Tisha B'Av
23 JUL	Egypt Holiday: Revolution Day
25 JUL	Tunisia Holiday: Republic Day