



Daily



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MAX - MENA Region Daily Summary - February 7, 2025

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

Highlights of the Day

- **Iraq:** Three Governors, Council Chairman protest Federal Court's suspension of implementation of laws on February 5; tensions to persist
- **Lebanon & Israel:** IDF conducts strikes in Nabatiyeh, Bekaa Valley against Hezbollah on February 6; unlikely to trigger escalation
- **Yemen:** PCC forces thwart 18 Houthi infiltration attempts in Taiz in January, per February 5 reports; highlights security volatility in Taiz

Actionable Items

Oman: Cycling event slated in Muscat from February 8-12; allot for disruptions

Current Situation - The “Tour of Oman” is scheduled to take place from February 8 – 12. It will be held across five stages, with each stage taking place daily from 10:00 to 16:00. A detailed map of the races and their routes can be accessed [here](#). The Royal Oman Police announced partial road closures for the first stage of the event, beginning at 11:30 on February 8. Parking of vehicles will be prohibited on both sides of the roads adjacent to the race route. The following areas will be affected: Bousher, Sultan Qaboos street, Route 17 (toward al-Hajar), Muscat Expressway, Bousher-Amerat road, Muscat-Sur road, al-Quryat street, Wadi Jab, Wadi Quatifa (Quryat) and Bimma Sinkhole. A detailed map of this route can be found [here](#), and a written breakdown of the roads that will be used can be found [here](#). While road closure details for other stages of the Tour have not yet been released, traffic disruptions and similar road closures along the race routes are anticipated.

Recommendations - Those operating or residing in Muscat on February 8-12 are advised to allot for travel disruptions near the aforementioned locations due to the slated cycling events and announced road closures. Remain cognizant of authorities’ updates regarding additional road closures during this period.

Source: [Royal Oman Police](#) ; [Tour of Oman](#)

Oman: ROP announces partial road closures in Muscat Governorate on February 8 due to triathlon; allot for disruptions

Current Situation - The Royal Oman Police (ROP) has announced partial road closures in Muscat Governorate for February 8 due to the Ironman World Championship. The triathlon will include swimming, cycling, and running events. The race will start at 06:30 (local time). The ROP has stated that parking will be banned on both sides of the following roads along the designated cycling route. The cycling race will begin at the W Muscat Hotel and go past the following locations: Ministry of Foreign Affairs building, the Royal Opera House, Al Thaqafah Roundabout, the Ministry of Health, al Sarouj, Darsait-Qurum Road, Matrah Corniche, al Bustan, Wadi al Kabir, Darsait, Wilayat of al Amerat, Wadi Aday, al Amerat Police Station, Qurum, Wadi Aday, and Wattayah. The race will end at the starting point near the W Muscat Hotel. The running event will begin at the W Muscat Hotel and will pass the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Children’s Museum, Qurum Natural Park and Shatti al-Qurum Road. A detailed map of the races and routes can be accessed [here](#) and [here](#).

Recommendations - Those operating or residing in Muscat Governorate on February 8 are advised to allot for travel disruptions near the aforementioned locations due to the slated cycling and running events and subsequent road closures.

Source: [ROP](#)

Turkey & Egypt: Authorities issue inclement weather warnings for Sea of Marmara, Mediterranean Sea on February 7; maintain heightened vigilance

Current Situation - Turkey's General Directorate of Meteorology has issued a storm warning for the Sea of Marmara until the evening hours (local time) on February 7. The winds are expected to blow from the north to the northeast, ranging from 6 (strong breeze) to 8 (gale) on the Beaufort Wind Scale. The storm is likely to affect Istanbul and may disrupt maritime traffic in the Sea of Marmara, including vessels transiting through the Bosphorus. Meanwhile, the Egyptian Meteorological Authority issued a warning for disturbance to maritime navigation in the Mediterranean Sea till 21:00 (local time) on February 7. Winds at sea are expected to range from 40 - 60 km/h, with waves likely reaching heights of three to four meters. Authorities have advised taking necessary precautions to mitigate the impact of maritime navigational disruptions.

Recommendations - Those operating or residing in Turkey and Egypt on February 7 are advised to maintain heightened vigilance and allot for disruptions due to inclement weather warnings in the Sea of Marmara and the Mediterranean Sea. Reconfirm all maritime itineraries in light of current conditions.

Source: [Turkey](#), [Egypt](#)

Notable Events

Iraq: Three Governors, Council Chairman protest Federal Court's suspension of implementation of laws on February 5; tensions to persist

Current Situation - The Governors of Nineveh, Anbar, and Salahuddin, along with Kirkuk's Council Chairman, reportedly suspended public sector work to protest the Federal Court's February 4 decision to halt the implementation of three laws, including the General Amnesty Law, to check their constitutional validity. Other Sunni politicians condemned the move and called for protests against the court's decision. The Coordination Framework (CF), a coalition of Shiite parties, and other Shiite politicians have expressed support for the ruling.

Assessments & Forecast - The court's decision followed reports of alleged voting irregularities during the passage of the laws on January 21. The General Amnesty Law is widely perceived as disproportionately benefiting Sunni detainees. This perception has likely exacerbated sectarian tensions and contributed to the recent statements by leaders of Sunni-majority provinces. The dispute underscores Iraq's enduring sectarian divisions and the adverse impact this has on parliamentary functions and law-making. In the immediate term, tensions are expected to remain high as the Federal Court deliberates on the law's implementation. This is likely to trigger protests, both in support of and opposition to the ruling in the coming weeks.

Source: [Al-Hurra](#)

Lebanon & Israel: IDF conducts strikes in Nabatiyeh, Bekaa Valley against Hezbollah on February 6; unlikely to trigger escalation

Current Situation - The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) stated that it conducted targeted airstrikes on two military sites containing weapons linked to Hezbollah. Israeli media, citing official sources, reported that the airstrikes were in response to Hezbollah's alleged violations of the truce terms — specifically attempts to smuggle arms across the Syria-Lebanon border and the establishment of new Hezbollah infrastructure in the targeted areas.

Assessments & Forecast - The latest airstrikes were relatively extensive compared to previous IDF strikes targeting Hezbollah-linked sites in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley on [January 30-31](#). This likely indicates that the IDF is intensifying its efforts to counter Hezbollah's perceived violations of the ceasefire agreement before its planned withdrawal from Lebanon by [February 18](#). The strikes align with Israel's broader strategy to prevent Hezbollah from rearming and rebuilding its infrastructure. Hezbollah has refrained from explicitly threatening retaliation and has not responded to the earlier strikes in January, suggesting a deliberate restraint to avoid triggering a broader conflict. Therefore, Hezbollah is unlikely to retaliate in a significant manner to the latest strikes. Overall, additional IDF airstrikes are likely to recur in southern Lebanon in the coming days although these are unlikely to escalate tensions.

Source: [IDF](#)

Syria: PSD to clear former government checkpoints in Deir Ezzor, per February 5 report by state media; part of efforts to solidify control

Current Situation - The Public Security Department (PSD) will reopen roads and "reposition" checkpoints previously set up under Bashar al-Assad's government, which the PSD director described were "sources of fear, arbitrary arrests, torture, and repression." The director added that this forms part of a broader campaign to improve the security situation throughout the governorate, including guaranteeing civilians their "basic rights".

Assessments & Forecast - Before the Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham-led transitional government took control of most of Syria in [December 2024](#), parts of Deir Ezzor were under the control of the Assad-led government. Thus, this announcement aligns with the HTS-led authorities strategy of consolidating control in areas it has recently established its presence in. By framing the move as a commitment to security and contrasting it with the PSD director's view of previous checkpoints as sources of "repression," the PDS seeks to present the new government as a stabilizing force. The messaging, positioning the transitional government as one that upholds individual rights, is likely intended to garner support from Deir Ezzor residents. Similar efforts to portray the transitional government as the antithesis of the previous Assad government are likely to recur in the coming

weeks.

Source: [SANA](#)

Tunisia: President replaces finance minister on February 5; similar reshuffles not ruled out in coming months

Current Situation - President Kais Saied removed Finance Minister Sihem Boughdiri for undisclosed reasons and appointed Michkat Khaldi as her replacement. Khaldi, a former judge, previously chaired the “criminal reconciliation committee,” which was created by Saied to facilitate financial settlements with businessmen accused of corruption.

Assessments & Forecast - Boughdiri, Tunisia’s finance minister since 2021, was one of the longest-serving members of Saied’s cabinet. Saied has repeatedly reshuffled his government, most notably in August 2024, when 19 ministers, including the Prime Minister, were dismissed. The dismissal comes amid high inflation, rising debt, and Tunisia’s ongoing struggle to secure foreign financing. In the absence of an official rationale, Boughdiri’s is likely intended to appease public dissatisfaction by shifting blame to her tenure, signaling leadership change while avoiding deeper structural reforms. Given Saied’s retention of control over major economic decision-making, the ministerial change by itself does not indicate the possibility of broad economic policy reforms or changes. This development may also affect investor sentiment, given perceptions of policy discontinuity and governance uncertainty. Similar cabinet reshuffles or portfolio changes cannot be ruled out in the coming months.

Source: [TAP](#)

Turkey: Authorities arrest 164 IS-linked suspects across 21 provinces, per February 5 statement; underscores latent threat from IS militancy

Current Situation - The Turkish Minister of Interior, Ali Yerlikaya, stated that the arrests were made as part of the “Gurz-44” operation against the Islamic State (IS) across 21 provinces including Istanbul. He further stated that unlicensed guns, rifles and digital materials were seized as part of the operation.

Assessments & Forecast - There is a latent threat of militancy posed by IS in Turkey. For instance, on [November 26, 2024](#), two IS-linked individuals who were planning a bomb attack were detained in Istanbul. In response to this threat, Turkish security forces conduct regular counter-militancy operations nationwide with at least 251 IS-linked suspects having been arrested in January alone. The frequency of these counter-militancy operations and the high number of detainees in the latest instance underscores the persistent threat posed by IS operatives in Turkey. This is particularly as some of the detainees were in possession of firearms. However, the latest development does not indicate a significant escalation in the threat posed by IS given the absence of major IS-linked attacks in recent months, highlighting the effectiveness of Turkish intelligence and

security forces in thwarting militant activity. Additional counter-IS operations are likely in the coming weeks.

Source: [MOI](#)

Yemen: PCC forces thwart 18 Houthi infiltration attempts in Taiz in January, per February 5 reports; highlights security volatility in Taiz

Current Situation - The Taiz Axis Media Center stated that four Houthi members were killed, and six others were wounded in operations to repel Houthi infiltration attempts in January. Additionally, Presidential Command Council (PCC)-affiliated forces shot down a Houthi drone on the al-Dhubab front. The Media Center further stated that the Houthis created new fortifications across 20 locations on the frontlines of Taiz.

Assessments & Forecast - Skirmishes between the Houthis and PCC-affiliated forces in Taiz are frequent, driven by Houthi efforts to expand territorial control and weaken the PCC's security apparatus. On January 6, the Taiz Axis Media Centre reported repelling eight Houthi infiltration attempts in the last ten days. While such infiltration attempts are often thwarted by the PCC, these incidents highlight the volatility of the security situation in Taiz, particularly along the borders of PCC- and Houthi-controlled areas. The pattern of these infiltration attempts, which have majorly taken place in Taiz and Marib in the last few months, suggests the Houthis are primarily exploiting their proximity to PCC-held areas rather than aiming to trigger the resumption of a full-scale conflict. In the immediate term, similar skirmishes will likely recur.

Source: [Taiz Axis Media Center](#)

Other Developments

- **Algeria:** Authorities arrested seven individuals supporting terrorist activities and seized multiple weapons between January 29 - February 4, in operations in Tamanrasset and Bordj Badji Mokhtar, per an official report from February 5.
- **Egypt, Turkey, Israel & Palestinian Territories:** Egypt has reportedly taken in at least 79 Palestinians, while Turkey accepted 15 after they were released by Israeli authorities as part of the Gaza ceasefire deal, per February 5 reports.
- **Iran:** Iran's currency reportedly plunged to a record low of 850,000 rials per USD on February 5, following the reinstatement of the [maximum pressure](#) campaign against Iran by US President Donald Trump.
- **Saudi Arabia:** Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Interior announced the execution of two citizens convicted on several charges related to terrorism, per a February 5 statement.
- **Syria:** On February 5, Syria's state-linked media reported that French President Emmanuel Macron invited Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa to visit France in the coming weeks during a congratulatory call following al-Sharaa's assumption of the presidency.
- **Turkey & Egypt:** Egypt is set to receive Turkey's floating storage and regasification unit (FSRU) "BOTAS" in June, which is set to supply at least 500 million cubic feet of natural gas per day, per February 5 reports.

- **UAE:** According to February 5 reports, the UAE successfully mediated the exchange of 300 prisoners between Russia and Ukraine.

Notable Dates

9
APR Tunisia Holiday: Martyrs' Day

9
APR Iraq Holiday: Baghdad Liberation Day (KRG only)

12
APR Israel Holiday: Passover

13
APR MENA Holiday: Palm Sunday

13
APR Iran Holiday: Martyrdom of Imam Sadeq

17
APR Syria Holiday: Independence Day
