

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	1747
Land:	Syrien
Kilde:	The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED)
Titel:	REGIONAL OVERVIEW: MIDDLE EAST 9-15 JULY 2022
Udgivet:	21. juli 2022
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	29. september 2022



Regional Overview: Middle East 9-15 July 2022

Last week in the [Middle East](#), overall political violence levels remained stable in Yemen for the fourth consecutive week, while official Islamic State (IS) sources claimed an attack in the country for the first time in almost two years. In Syria, IS targeting of regime forces and pro-regime militias increased in the Syrian desert. In Iraq, overall levels of violence decreased. In Palestine, hundreds protested US President Joe Biden's visit to the region, while Palestinian militants shot at settler visitors at the shrine of the Prophet Joseph in Nablus ([CGTN, 15 July 2022](#)). In Israel, Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid and US President Biden signed a joint declaration reaffirming their governments' alliance against Iran. In Turkey, two Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militants were killed during a clash with gendarmerie forces, while a Turkish soldier was killed by a mine planted by a Kurdish armed group.

In **Yemen**, violence levels remained stable last week with only a slight increase observed, driven by Houthi drone strikes in Ad Dali governorate. These contribute to the 117% increase in violence in Ad Dali in the past month relative to the past year flagged by [ACLED's Subnational Threat Tracker](#), which first warned of increased violence to come in Ad Dali [in the past month](#). Political violence also increased in Hodeidah governorate last week, while decreasing in Marib governorate to reach its lowest levels of the year (see [ACLED's Yemen Truce Monitor](#) for more on truce violations). Meanwhile, no Saudi-led coalition air raids from fighter jets were reported for the 15th consecutive week, and no Houthi drone or missile attacks on **Saudi Arabia** for the 16th consecutive week.¹

At the political level, UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg announced that he was exploring the possibility of a longer truce extension and of an expanded truce agreement during his briefing to the UN Security Council on 11 July ([Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, 11 July 2022](#)). Grundberg also stated that the Houthis had yet again rejected a proposal on reopening roads in Taizz and other governorates.

Elsewhere in Yemen, IS claims to have carried out a suicide operation against Houthi forces in Al Bayda governorate on 9 July, representing the organization's first claimed operation in the country since August 2020. Some observers have cast doubt on whether the operation happened ([Twitter @Dr_E_Kendall, 11 July 2022](#)), while at least one source has claimed that the bomber accidentally detonated their explosives against a wedding convoy rather than Houthi forces ([Twitter @aalnaasi, 14 July 2022](#)). In Hadramawt, local security forces clashed with a leader from Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), leading to his arrest. This contributed to the 129% increase in violence in Hadramawt last week relative to the past month flagged by [ACLED's Subnational Surge Tracker](#), which first warned of increased violence to come in Hadramawt [in the past month](#).

In **Syria**, IS attacks against regime forces and pro-regime militias increased significantly in the Syrian desert, particularly in the deserts of Homs and Ar Raqqa provinces where one regime fighter was killed and seven were seriously injured. Elsewhere, Turkish and rebel shelling of QSD and People's Protection Units (YPG)-controlled areas in northern Syria declined significantly last week. Shelling and airstrikes continued to center on Aleppo province where at least two YPG fighters and one civilian were killed.

In **Iraq**, overall levels of violence decreased last week compared to the week prior. This decrease coincided with the Muslim *Eid Al Adha* festival on 8 July and Moqtada Al Sadr's annual mass prayer event in Baghdad city on 15 July. Both the festival period and the mass prayer witnessed extensive security deployments ([Shafaq News, 15 July 2022](#)). Despite the overall decline in violence, clashes between tribal militias slightly increased countrywide, contributing to the 56% increase in violence in the country over the past month relative to the past year, as flagged by [ACLED's Conflict Change Map](#), which first warned of increased violence to come in the country in the past month. Meanwhile, unidentified militants attacked the house of a Patriotic Union Party (PUK) leader in Erbil city on 10 July, injuring his guard. This is the first attack on a member of a political party in Erbil city since the killing of the leader of the Iranian branch of the Kurdistan Democratic Party in August 2021.

Meanwhile, fighting between the PKK and Turkish forces declined last week following a spike of activity the week prior, driven by a significant drop in Turkish airstrike events.² Despite this decrease in activity, Turkey's Operation Claw Lock continues to be a key driver of violence contributing to the 154% increase in violence in Duhok in the past month relative to the past year flagged by [ACLED's Subnational Threat Tracker](#). The Subnational Tracker first warned of increased violence to come in Duhok in the past month.

In **Turkey** itself, two PKK members and one Turkish soldier were killed in violent events last week. Two PKK militants were killed in a clash with Turkish gendarmerie forces near Yolbilen village in Bitlis province. Meanwhile, a Turkish soldier was killed after driving a military vehicle over a mine planted by the Peoples' United Revolutionary Movement (HBDH) – of which the PKK is a constituent member – in the Hazro district of Diyarbakir province. This violence contributed to the 28% increase in violence in Turkey in the past month relative to the past year flagged by [ACLED's Conflict Change Map](#), which first warned of increased violence to come in the country in the past month.

In **Palestine**, hundreds of Palestinians protested against US President Biden's visit to Israel and Palestine in Jerusalem, Nablus, Gaza city, Bethlehem and Ramallah, and accuse the US of bias in favor of Israel ([Ma'an News Agency, 14 July 2022](#)). Some protesters also demand that Biden hold Israel accountable for the [killing](#) of Palestinian-American Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh. Meanwhile, Palestinian gunmen fired on a group of settlers visiting the shrine of the Prophet Joseph in Nablus city. One settler was injured when the car, with which they tried to escape the area, crashed. [ACLED's Conflict Change Map](#) first warned of increased violence to come in Palestine in the past month.

In **Israel**, Israeli Prime Minister Lapid signed a new joint strategic declaration with US President Biden last week, to reaffirm the two countries' alliance against Iran. The US vows in the declaration to use "all elements in its national power" to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and to confront its "aggression," whether direct or in the form of "proxies," naming Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and Hezbollah specifically ([Times of Israel, 14 July 2022](#)). Notably, only the US affirmed its support for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the declaration.

Note: This dashboard automatically updates to cover the most recent data release. Use the date filters to view data for the period covered by this regional overview if necessary.



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The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) is a disaggregated data collection, analysis, and crisis mapping project.

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