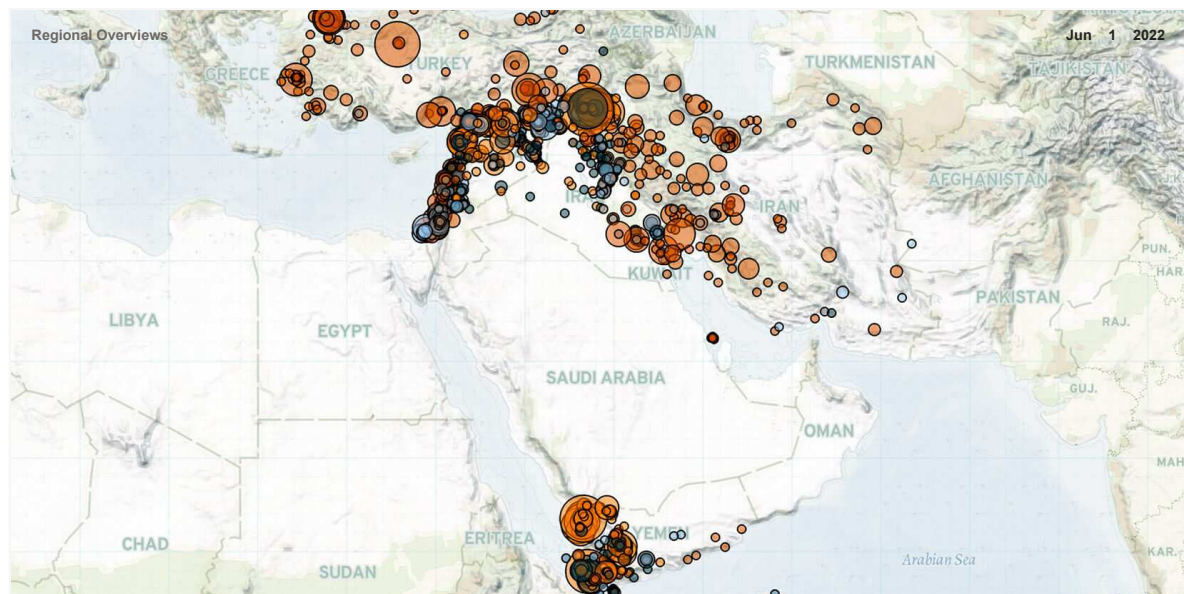


Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

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Regional Overview: Middle East 21-27 May 2022



Last week in the [Middle East](#), conflict events increased in Yemen ahead of the end of the first phase of the UN-sponsored truce, which has now been extended for another two months. In Syria, violence declined significantly following a two-week surge. In Iraq, fighting between the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and Turkish forces remained at heightened levels despite an overall decrease in activity. Meanwhile, deadly clashes between Turkish forces and the PKK continued in Turkey. In Iran, suspected Israeli Mossad agents assassinated an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) officer. In Palestine, Israeli forces killed three Palestinians in separate clashes in the West Bank, including a member of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ).

In **Yemen**, violence increased last week going into the last full week of the first phase of the truce (*for more, see [ACLED's Yemen Truce Monitor](#)*). The increase was primarily driven by events in Sadah governorate, where Houthi forces reported pro-Hadi shelling on Saudi-Yemen border areas. [ACLED's Subnational Surge Tracker](#) warned of increased violence to come in Sadah [in the past month](#). Skirmishes between Houthi and anti-Houthi forces also took place last week in Hajjah, Hodeidah, Marib, Shabwah, and Taizz governorates. In Taizz governorate, "unprecedented" Houthi reinforcements of around 65 vehicles were reportedly deployed ([Yemeni Army, 23 May 2022](#)).

Elsewhere, Saudi-led coalition drone strikes contributed to the 129% increase in violence in Ad Dali governorate last month relative to the past year flagged by [ACLED's Subnational Surge Tracker](#), which warned of increased violence to come the [week prior](#). In Sanaa, Houthi forces claim that three civilians were killed and three were injured from the fall of a Saudi reconnaissance drone they shot down over the city ([Yemen News Agency, 24 May 2022](#)). Despite this, no Saudi-led coalition air raids from fighter jets were reported for the eighth consecutive week last week, and no Houthi drone or missile attacks on **Saudi Arabia** for the ninth consecutive week.

At the political level, last week saw the first meeting between representatives of the Houthi-run government and the internationally recognized government to discuss the opening of roads in Taizz and other governorates. The three-day discussions, however, did not yield concrete results ([Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, 28 May 2022](#)). The lack of progress on this issue led to

several protests in Taizz for [the second consecutive week](#). UN Special Envoy Hans Grundberg also engaged with the parties last week to renew the truce as it approached its end date ([Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, 25 May 2022](#)). As the truce was about to expire, Grundberg announced that the parties had agreed to renew the deal for an additional two months, extending the truce until 2 August ([Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, 2 June 2022](#)); these developments will be covered in more detail in next week's Regional Overview.

In **Syria**, Turkish and rebel shelling of People's Protection Units (YPG) and Syrian Democratic Forces (QSD) areas almost doubled in Ar-Raqqa province last week, despite an overall decline across northern Syria. Likewise, Islamic State (IS) attacks against regime forces significantly declined last week in the Syrian desert. Meanwhile, Russian airstrikes targeting IS continued at a similar pace to the week prior. Russian airstrikes also targeted rebel-controlled areas in Ras al-Ain in Al Hasakeh province and Tall Abiad in Ar Raqqa province.

Meanwhile, Israel targeted Syrian regime forces and pro-Iran militias for the third consecutive week, killing three regime fighters in Rural Damascus province. [ACLED's Subnational Surge Tracker](#) first warned of increased violence to come in Rural Damascus in the past month.

In **Iraq**, overall levels of violence decreased last week, with fighting between Turkish forces and the PKK slightly declining for the second consecutive week. Despite this decrease, Turkey's Operation Claw Lock, which mainly targets Dohuk province, continued to contribute to the 200% increase in violence in Duhok last month relative to the past year, as flagged by [ACLED's Subnational Threat Tracker](#). The Tracker first warned of increased violence to come in Duhok in the past month.

Last week in **Iran**, suspected Israeli Mossad agents assassinated an IRGC officer from Unit 840 in Tehran city. The officer had reportedly participated in Iranian operations in Syria and oversaw other covert operations, including the alleged abduction of Israelis ([The Times of Israel, 26 May 2022](#)). Elsewhere, the IRGC seized two Greek tankers near the Strait of Hormuz in retaliation for the seizure of an Iranian vessel by Greek and US forces last month ([RFE/RL, 28 May 2022](#)).

In **Turkey**, deadly clashes between the PKK and Turkish forces continued to be recorded last week. Turkish gendarmerie forces killed four members of the PKK in separate security operations in Osmaniye and Sirnak provinces, including a reportedly high-ranking PKK figure ([Haber 7, 24 May 2022](#)). Meanwhile, PKK militants killed four Turkish soldiers during clashes in Judi mountain in Sirnak province, which borders Syria and Iraq. Lastly, members of the Civil Protection Units (YPS) – an affiliate of the PKK – shot and killed a man in Batman town for allegedly collaborating with Turkish police ([ANF News, 27 May 2022](#)).

Last week in **Palestine**, Israeli forces killed three Palestinians in separate clashes in the West Bank. On 21 May, Israeli forces raided the Jenin refugee camp and exchanged fire with PIJ militants, killing one militant and injuring another. On 24 May, Israeli forces killed an underage Palestinian rioter during clashes between the Israeli military and Palestinians at the Jewish shrine of the Prophet Joseph¹ near Nablus city. The clashes broke out when hundreds of Palestinian rioters threw stones and Molotov cocktails at Israeli forces escorting Jewish pilgrims to the shrine, with Israeli forces firing live rounds and rubber bullets in response ([AP News, 24 May 2022](#)). Elsewhere, Israeli forces killed another underage Palestinian rioter in Al Khadir town, shooting at Palestinian rioters after they reportedly threw stones and Molotov cocktails at Israeli forces. This violence contributed to the 26% increase in violence in Palestine last week relative to the past month flagged by [ACLED's Conflict Change Map](#), which first warned of increased violence to come in the country in the past month.



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Matti Suomenaro

Matti Suomenaro is a Syria and Iraq conflict researcher from Finland. His research interests are violent non-state actors and third-party interventions in civil wars.



Sherwan Hindreen Ali

Sherwan Hindreen Ali is an Assistant Research Manager for the Middle East desk and has been with the organization since February 2021. He was originally hired as an Iraq researcher for the ACLED-Religion pilot project. He holds an MA in Islamic Studies from McGill University and a BA in International Studies from the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani. Sherwan's main area of interest is religion and politics in the MENA region.



Emile Roy

Emile Roy is an ACLED Researcher. He has covered political violence and protest in Yemen and has also contributed to the ACLED-Religion pilot project tracking religious repression and disorder in the Middle East and North Africa.



Fanan Bilal

Fanan Bilal is a Gulf Researcher at ACLED with a focus on Yemen

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