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Regional Overview: Middle East 5-11 November 2022

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Last week in the [Middle East](#), Houthi forces conducted a new drone strike on a port harboring an oil tanker in southern Yemen, amid an overall decrease in political violence levels across the country. In Syria, Russian airstrikes and regime shelling killed nine displaced civilians in Idlib province. In Iraq, suspected pro-Iran militants killed an American teacher in Baghdad. In Iran, protests were held in Sistan and Baluchistan condemning state violence. In Palestine, three Palestinians – one rioter, one gunman, and one worker – were killed in different violent events in the West Bank.

In **Yemen**, Houthi forces conducted a drone strike on the Qana port in Shabwah governorate on 9 November as a tanker was preparing to unload imported fuel derivatives. One source claims that two workers were injured in the strike ([Al Mashhad Al Yemeni, 9 November 2022](#)). Houthi forces claim that the strike prevented the 'looting' of Yemeni oil ([Ansar Allah, 10 November 2022](#)), echoing a statement made following a similar strike in neighboring Hadramawt governorate [on 21 October](#). Houthi forces also conducted a drone strike on Yemen's Red Sea coast on 10 November, targeting Internationally Recognized Government coast guards in Al Haymah port, injuring three guards.

In the south of the country, five new brigades of Saudi-trained Yemeni forces were deployed to Aden on 7 November, tasked with securing the city ahead of the return of the Presidential Leadership Council ([Al Mashhad Al Yemeni, 7 November 2022](#)). In neighboring Lahij governorate, anti-Houthi forces launched Operation 'Arrows of the West,' claiming to target "terrorist cells and Houthi elements" along the Lahij-Taizz border ([Aden Al Ghad, 10 November 2022](#)). Violence between Houthi and anti-Houthi forces in the area contributed to the 222% increase in average weekly violent events in Lahij in the past month relative to the weekly average for the preceding year flagged by [ACLED's Subnational Threat Tracker](#). The Subnational Tracker also warned of increased violence in Lahij during the preceding four weeks.

In southern **Syria**, local gunmen, supported by regime forces, clashed with Islamic State (IS) militants in Dara city last week for the second consecutive week. The clashes resulted in the reported deaths of at least five IS members, five gunmen, and one civilian.

Meanwhile, Russian airstrikes and regime shelling targeted several refugee camps in rebel-held areas in Idlib province last week, reportedly killing nine civilians. In response, Hayat Tahrir al Sham attacked regime forces' positions in Al-Ghab Plain in Hama, reportedly killing at least 13 regime fighters. Rebel and Islamist factions also responded to Russian and regime activity with increased shelling of regime positions in the frontline areas of Hama, Latakia, Aleppo, and Idlib.

Elsewhere, Turkish and rebel forces shelling and airstrikes of Syrian Democratic Forces and the People's Protection Units positions in the north of the country notably increased last week compared to the week prior. Meanwhile, US drones targeted pro-Iran militia positions in Deir ez Zor province, reportedly killing 14 fighters.

In **Iraq**, suspected Iranian-backed militants killed an American teacher in Baghdad city, after first failing to kidnap him. The attack was reportedly carried out to avenge the killing of Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps commander Qassem Soleimani and Popular Mobilization Forces leader Abu Mahdi Al Muhandis in a US airstrike in 2020 ([11 November 2022, The New Arab](#)). Violence in Baghdad is both common and highly volatile; it is considered an area of 'extreme risk' by [ACLED's Volatility and Risk Predictability Index](#).

Elsewhere, fighting between Turkish forces and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) continued to decrease last week for the fifth consecutive week. However, fighting continued at similar levels in Markaz Al Amadiya district in Duhok, where Turkish airstrike events¹

more than halved but shelling by the PKK doubled. These trends are consistent with [a typical decrease in fighting seen during the winter](#) in northern Iraq.

In **Iran**, nationwide demonstration events triggered by the death of Mahsa Amini significantly declined last week. Despite this, at least three demonstrators were killed when state forces intervened in demonstrations. Meanwhile, multiple protests were held in Sistan and Baluchistan province condemning previous acts of state violence against [Balochi protesters](#). In Iranshahr and Rasak cities, Iranian police opened fire at protesters, injuring dozens. In response to the violence, rioters stormed a police station and clashed with police in Rasak city. Meanwhile, an ethnic Baloch in the Iranian army attacked a police checkpoint killing five in Bampur country. These trends contribute to the 189% increase in average weekly violent events in Sistan and Baluchistan in the past month relative to the weekly average for the preceding year flagged by [ACLED's Subnational Threat Tracker](#). The Subnational Tracker also warned of increased violence in Sistan and Baluchistan during the preceding four weeks.

Last week in **Palestine**, three fatalities were reported as a result of violent clashes and attacks in the West Bank. On 5 November, Israeli forces shot a Palestinian rioter dead after he and other Palestinians threw stones at passing Israeli settler vehicles near Sinjil village in Ramallah and Al Bireh governorate. On 9 November, Israeli forces and various Palestinian armed factions clashed at the Shrine of Prophet Joseph² in Nablus city. The clashes reportedly erupted after militants opened fire at Israeli worshippers – including members of the Knesset – visiting the shrine, and the Israeli military forces and border police escorting the visitors returned fire. During the exchange, a Palestinian gunman – later identified as a member of Fatah's Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade – was killed when an explosive device detonated, with some reports suggesting he was killed accidentally while planting the device ([Times of Israel, 9 November 2022](#)). Other sources claim his death was the result of direct Israeli fire ([Arab 48, 9 November 2022](#)). On the same day, Israeli military forces shot a Palestinian while he was attempting to cross the border fence near Anin village in Jenin governorate. He later died from his injuries. The Israeli military claimed the Palestinian was shot after vandalizing the fence, while other sources reported he was a worker trying to cross the border for his job inside Israel ([AP, 9 November 2022](#); [PCHR, 10 November 2022](#)). These trends contribute to the 104% increase in average weekly violent events in West Bank in the past month relative to the weekly average for the preceding year flagged by [ACLED's Subnational Threat Tracker](#). The Subnational Tracker also warned of increased violence in the West Bank during the preceding four weeks.

Note: This dashboard automatically updates to cover the latest four weeks of data released by ACLED. Use the date filters to view data for the one-week period covered by this Regional Overview.



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Emile Roy

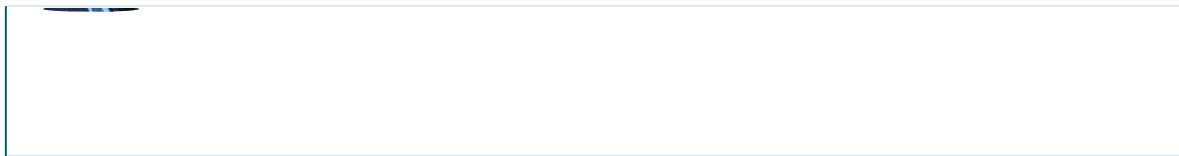
Emile Roy is an ACLED Researcher. He has covered political violence and protest in Yemen and has also contributed to the ACLED-Religion pilot project tracking religious repression and disorder in the Middle East and North Africa.



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.





Fanan Bilal

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

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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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