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Regional Overview: Middle East 8-14 October 2022

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Last week in the [Middle East](#), Yemen continued to witness low levels of political violence for the second consecutive week, despite the failure to renew the UN-mediated truce that expired on 2 October. In Syria, rebel and Islamist factions clashed in Aleppo province. In Iraq, parliament elected a new prime minister and president amid increased violence in Baghdad city. In Iran, countrywide demonstrations turned increasingly violent. In Turkey, one Gendarmerie soldier was killed in clashes with Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) militants in Van province. In Palestine, five Palestinian militants and two Israeli soldiers were killed during separate armed clashes in the West Bank.

In **Yemen**, last week witnessed some of the lowest levels of reported violence since the start of the conflict. Although the UN-mediated truce officially [expired on 2 October](#) after a failure to renew, warring parties continue to show restraint for the second consecutive week, keeping armed clashes limited. Clashes between Houthi and the Internationally Recognized Government (IRG) forces took place mainly in the frontlines of Taizz governorate, but were also reported to a lesser degree in Sada and Marib.

Meanwhile, armed tribal groups contributed to violence in both Houthi and IRG-controlled territories last week. In Lahij governorate, a Subayha tribal militia and pro-Southern Transitional Council (STC) Security Belt forces clashed after several tribesmen were detained at an STC checkpoint on the road connecting Aden and Lahij. Meanwhile, members of the Bani Nawf tribe clashed with IRG forces and IRG-affiliated tribes near the borders of Al Jawf and Marib governorates after a member of Bani Nawf was reportedly killed by IRG forces. In Sanaa, Houthi fighters attacked residents of Saraf area in Bani Hushaysh district. Houthi forces have claimed lands in the area that residents have refused to hand over. This dispute has led to an increased presence of Houthi forces in the area ([Al Shareaa News, 13 October 2022](#)).

In Abyan governorate, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) continued to be active last week, engaging in remote explosive attacks that targeted pro-STC forces in Mudiya and Zingibar districts. Several other unclaimed IED explosions targeting pro-STC forces also took place in various districts in the governorate. Sources have speculated that these attacks were also carried out by AQAP ([Al Masdar, 9 October 2022](#)). These trends contribute to the 181% increase in average weekly violent events in Abyan 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 Abyan during the preceding four weeks.

In **Syria**, Hayat Tahrir al Sham (HTS) and the Syrian National Army's (JWS) 3rd Corps clashed in the Afrin and Al Bab areas in Aleppo province last week, following the killing of a media activist and his wife by members of JWS-affiliated Hamza Division in Al Bab city. The clashes resulted in the reported deaths of at least 10 fighters and five civilians. HTS seized control of Afrin city and various towns and villages in the Afrin area, before withdrawing its fighters from Afrin city following a Turkish-brokered truce ([Middle East Eye, 15 October 2022](#)). However, HTS police forces and the Syrian Salvation Government continue to participate in the governance of the city as part of an agreement to unify the administration of rebel-controlled areas in Aleppo ([North Press Agency, 18 October 2022](#)).

In **Iraq**, parliament elected Abdul Latif Rachid as president, who in turn nominated Mohammed Shia al-Sudani as prime minister-designate, on 13 October amid increased violence in Baghdad city last week. Notably, a militant rocket attack temporarily interrupted the parliamentary election session, injuring 10 civilians and security personnel within the Baghdad Green Zone. This violence contributes to the 195% increase in average weekly violent events in Baghdad in the past month relative to the weekly average for the preceding year flagged by [ACLED's Subnational Threat Tracker](#), which warned of increased violence in Baghdad during the preceding four weeks. Meanwhile, Iranian airstrikes and shelling of Kurdish militias in Erbil province saw a significant decline last week compared to the week prior.

In **Iran**, continued nationwide demonstrations triggered by the death of Mahsa Amini turned increasingly violent last week. While demonstrations and protests [continued at a similar pace as the previous week](#), violent demonstrations and police interventions increased significantly and resulted in the deaths of several civilians in Kermanshah and Mashhad cities. Meanwhile, demonstrators clashed with the Basij forces in Kurdistan. Violent demonstrations contributed to the 83% increase in violent events in Iran last week relative to the weekly average for the preceding month. [ACLED's Conflict Change Map](#) also warned of increased violence in the country during the preceding four weeks. Demonstrations denouncing Amini's death and expressing solidarity with Iranian protesters were also reported in **Turkey** and **Lebanon**.

In **Turkey**, Turkish Gendarmerie forces clashed with PKK militants in the Catak district of Van province last week, reportedly resulting in the death of one soldier.

Last week in **Palestine**, five Palestinian militants and two Israeli soldiers were reportedly killed in armed clashes in the West Bank. On 8 October, an armed Palestinian opened fire on the Israeli border police checkpoint at the Shuafat refugee camp in East Jerusalem, reportedly killing one soldier and injuring two border policemen. While the Al Nasser Salah Al Deen Brigades, the armed wing of the Popular Resistance Committees, and the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades both claimed responsibility for the attack, some Palestinian sources disputed their claims and maintained that the attacker had no clear political affiliations ([Haaretz, 8 October 2022](#)). On 11 October, Lion's Den militants — a recently formed militant group — reportedly killed an Israeli soldier during a drive-by shooting near the Shavei Shomron settlement.

Israeli forces reportedly killed four Palestinian gunmen — including a Palestinian Islamic Jihad militant and a member of Fatah — during raids on the Jenin refugee camp targeting wanted militants. Meanwhile, Israeli forces also shot and killed a Hamas gunman near Bayt El settlement after he opened fire on the settlement.

Finally, Israeli forces reportedly killed a Palestinian rioter during clashes in Al Arrub refugee camp in Hebron. The clashes erupted during demonstrations against the Israeli blockade of the Shuafat camp following the Israeli border police checkpoint attack on 8 October ([Haaretz, 12 October 2022](#)). Violence in the West Bank contributed to the 71% increase in violent events in Palestine last week relative to the weekly average for the preceding month. [ACLED's Conflict Change Map](#) also warned of increased violence in the country 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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Raed Khelifi is a Yemen and Saudi Arabia Researcher with ACLED. He holds an MA in Philosophy and a BA in Political Studies and Philosophy from the American University of Beirut. Raed has worked for a range of international and regional research institutions, focusing on Yemen's war economy, economic governance, conflict mapping, and conflict analysis.

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