

# MEIWeekly.



A Syrian rebel fires a rocket at Syrian regime forces on 9 February 2020 from the Idlib countryside, where current tensions are flaring between Turkish reinforcement troops and Syrian regime forces. Photo: Omar Haj Kadour/AFP

## CALENDAR: UPCOMING INSTITUTE EVENTS

### Feb, March Events Postponed

In view of the Ministry of Health's advisory to cancel or defer all non-essential large-scale events, all our public events for February and March, including the Middle East Film Fest, will be deferred. We will announce new dates when the coronavirus situation has stabilised. Stay tuned!



## WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

### Turkey Drawn Deeper into Syrian War

Tensions between Turkish forces and the Syrian government continue to escalate following a Syrian army attack in the rebel-held northwestern province of Idlib that killed eight Turkish soldiers and a civilian contractor last week, and five more Turkish soldiers on Monday (10 February), reported *The New York Times* on Tuesday (12 February). Turkey is demanding a safe zone in northwestern Syria to prevent a further influx of Syrian refugees across the border, and to act as a buffer against Kurdish forces, which Turkey deems a threat.



An Iranian wearing a mask of General Qasem Soleimani was among the thousands that attended the Iranian Revolution Anniversary celebrations on 11 February 2020 in Tehran's Azadi Square. Photo: Atta Kenare/AFP

### Iran Marks Anniversary Amid Tensions with US

Tens of thousands of Iranians came together in Tehran on Tuesday (11 February) to commemorate the 41st Islamic revolution against the backdrop of tensions with the United States over the assassination of General Qasem Soleimani, US sanctions and the upcoming parliamentary elections in the country. President Hassan Rouhani took the opportunity to bolster nationalist sentiments and unite Iranians against the United States, reported *Al-Jazeera*.

### Lebanon Govt Established Despite Protests

Lebanon's parliament has backed a new cabinet and the government's financial rescue plan on Tuesday (11 February) despite months of protests against the proposed cabinet since October, *Al-Jazeera* reported. Thousands of protestors attempted to block the vote by blockading roads and raining projectiles and stones on vehicles driven by members of parliament, but a quorum was still achieved. Despite this failure to block the vote, protestors remain hungry for change in the Lebanese government.

## LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP WATCH ON

### Saudi Smart Cities and Summit Expo

The biggest smart cities conference and exhibition in Saudi Arabia is set to take place next Tuesday (18 February) and Thursday in Jeddah. It will see a consortium of over 50 representatives from governments, municipalities, economic authorities and other sectors that will catalyse and facilitate the growing conversation on smart cities, as well as Saudi Arabia's Kingdom Vision 2030.

### Gulfood Festival in Dubai

Gulfood, the world's largest annual food, beverage and hospitality exhibition hosted by the city of Dubai, will kick off from Sunday (16 February). The five-day event will feature more than 5000 exhibiting companies from more than 182 countries and is set to attract thousands of visitors and connoisseurs from all over the world.



## #MUSTREAD: WHAT'S POPULAR ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

**FACEBOOK:** The voices of young people all over the Middle East were captured in this feature by *The Financial Times*, attesting to the instability of the status quo and the need for change, political and economical, for countries in the region.  
<https://on.ft.com/2uHjEu4>

In a recent in-depth analysis published in *The Arab Times*, MEI Principal Research Fellow Alessandro Arduino examines issues such as repatriation, outbreak containment and potential economic vulnerabilities as the Middle East and North Africa region braces itself for the impact of the coronavirus that first emerged in Wuhan, China.  
<https://nus.edu/3bA96O0>



**TWITTER:** What happened to the Palestinians who remained in West Jerusalem after the 1948 war? In this latest MEI Insight, Dr Issam Nassar tells the story of Jeries Salti.  
<https://nus.edu/39z9MI0>

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## CAN'T MAKE IT TO OUR EVENTS? LISTEN AT YOUR OWN TIME!

