

# MEI Weekly.



Protesters gathering in Strasbourg, France, to call for Ocalan's liberation earlier this year. Clashes between Turkish forces and Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) fighters last Sunday (28 June) resulted in the death of a Turkish soldier, which could possibly further escalate the conflict. Photo: Frederick Florin / AFP.

## WHAT'S HOT: MEI PUBLICATIONS, PODCASTS AND MORE

**READ:** In this edition of MEI Insights, Mehran Haghirian explores the ramifications of Iran developing its relations with Russia and China on the Gulf states, who increasingly look toward Eurasia as they are concerned over the American "pivot to Asia", which is seen as its retreat from the Persian Gulf region.

<https://nus.edu/31BIoIC>

**READ:** In light of the global "Black Lives Matter" movement, the Middle East and North African region should use this opportunity to highlight its own problems with racism. Dnyanesh Kamat elaborates more on the problems and challenges facing the Black community in the region, ranging from marginalisation to slavery.

<https://nus.edu/2VDsdAg>



**WATCH & LISTEN:** The Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries recently finalised a production cut of nearly 10 million barrels of oil due to the impact from the coronavirus pandemic. On Thursday (2 July), Dr Fereidun Fesharaki discussed the grim economic outlook for the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and its implications for net oil-importing Asian countries. Missed the event? Fret not. Listen to the full podcast at <https://www.podbean.com/ew/pb-6yeq3-e1d998> or watch the full video at <https://youtu.be/KySMORiqNUo>

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

### Turkish Soldier Dies in Clashes With PKK

The conflict between Turkish forces and the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) has seen tensions worsen in recent months, with Turkey becoming more assertive in its foreign policy in the region. The latest casualty from the conflict was a Turkish soldier, who was killed last Sunday (28 June). Turkey has since launched an air and ground offensive against the Kurdish forces, bringing about criticism from countries like the United Arab Emirates (UAE), who believe that Turkey is infringing on Iraqi territory.



US embassy employees in Tel Aviv preparing for Independence Day celebration at the ambassador's residence in Israel on 3 July 2014. The lavish five-bedroom estate has been put up for sale at a record-breaking price of US\$87 million. Photo: US Department of State as shared on Flickr.

### Iran Reintroduces Lockdown Measures

Following a recent surge of new Covid-19 cases in its cities, Iran has reintroduced a one-week lockdown, which involves the closure of most public spaces, in seven towns to curb the spread of the pandemic. One of these cities affected is Bandar Abbas, in the Hormuzgan province, which is a major trading hub and one of its busiest port cities in the Persian Gulf. The Iranian government has also authorised eight provinces to reintroduce lockdown measures and put another seven on standby to take to action if needed.

### US Ambassador's Home in Tel Aviv for Sale

Situated on Israel's ambassadors' and billionaires' row, the five-bedroom Malibu-style seaside residence just outside Tel Aviv, has been passed down from one US ambassador to the next. Ever since the new embassy was built in Jerusalem, the property was deemed too far from Jerusalem to serve as housing for American ambassadors. It has therefore lost its function and has been put on the block at a record-breaking price of US\$87 million. Real-estate agents say the lofty price tag is justified since the property sits on Gali Tchelet, Israel's most prestigious street.

## CALENDAR: UPCOMING MEI EVENTS

### Qatar Blockade: is A Solution at Hand?

Amid the turbulent relationship between Qatar and its neighbouring Gulf countries, several factors have heavily influenced each state's regional and domestic policy. These include the changing economic climate in the region and rising tensions between states like the US and Iran. Dr Kristian Coates Ulrichsen aims to unpack Qatar's methodology in handling these issues, and how the tiny emirate has continued to stand on its own.



Join us for this virtual public talk conducted via Zoom on 8 July from 4pm to 5.30pm. Registration is free and all are welcome. Check out <https://nus.edu/38kjYy6> for more details now!

## LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP WATCH ON

### Dubai to Reopen for Tourism

From next Tuesday (7 July), Dubai will reopen its borders to accept tourists after gradually easing its lockdown measures. This will be implemented along with strict healthcare regulations, like compulsory testing for Covid-19 at least 96 hours before travelling to the emirate. Tourism has been badly affected in many countries due to the coronavirus pandemic. Dubai's decision to reopen, if done correctly, will help its economy recover.



### Lebanon's Extended Lockdown to End

The extended "general mobilisation against the Covid-19 pandemic" announced by the Lebanese government last month is scheduled to end this Sunday (5 July). The additional four weeks of lockdown were undertaken to prevent the threat of a second wave, which could have more detrimental effects on the people and the state's economy. On Wednesday (1 July), Lebanon reopened Beirut airport in hopes of boosting its tourism sector. The lifting of the lockdown and opening to tourism may provide Lebanon with the much-needed nudge to recover from its economic problems.

## FOLLOW US FOR THE LATEST UPDATES!



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

