

MEIWeekly.



Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian delivered a sharp rebuke to a threat by US President Donald Trump from the same rostrum the previous day to annihilate the country at the United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday. During his defiant speech, he held up pictures of Iranian schoolgirls killed in a US strike on their school, among others. Photo: AFP

WHAT'S HOT: MEI PUBLICATIONS, PODCASTS, & MORE

READ: A grand peace plan, a stalled disarmament, and a ticking clock to elections - read more on why Mr Donald Trump's Board of Peace for Gaza is unravelling. Read the article [here](#).

READ: Throughout its history as a strategic maritime channel, various powers have struggled to dominate the Strait of Hormuz, and the current situation is no different. MEI looks at the passage's rich past - to read, click [here](#).

WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

Iran Will Not Be Bullied, President Says in Defiant UN Speech

Vowing his country would defend itself until "its last breath" and would not give up its civilian nuclear programme, President Masoud Pezeshkian left the door open for negotiations with the US. A day earlier, US President Donald Trump threatened to annihilate Tehran unless a deal was struck.

Israeli Election Committee Bars Main Arab Parties from Polls

Following petitions from groups in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's far-right coalition, all the main Arab parties were blocked from taking part in the upcoming elections. This move to block Ra'am and the Arab Joint List needs to be approved by Israel's Supreme Court to take effect.



Polls currently suggest that neither Mr Netanyahu's coalition nor the Zionist opposition bloc will reach the 61 seats required for a parliamentary majority, meaning that Israel's Arab parties could play a crucial role in deciding. Photo: AFP

US Refuses to Intervene for Saudi Arabia Against the Houthis

Mr Trump's reluctance to join Riyadh's conflict with the rebels added new strain to Washington's relationship with the Gulf nation, one which has already been shaken by the US' conduct of its war with Iran. Former US officials said that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman "will not forget this".

CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS

MEI-Bisa Seminar Series 2026: Session Two

Escalation of war in the Middle East has had far-reaching consequences for the Gulf region. Iran's retaliatory strikes targeted not only US military bases but also civilian infrastructure in the Gulf states, transforming the conflict into a broader regional confrontation with significant implications for security, geopolitics, and economic stability. How will the Gulf states recalibrate their defence strategies after the conflict? This session, titled "Restructuring Regional Security Reconfiguration in the Gulf", takes place online on Tuesday, 29 September 2026, from 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM (SGT). Register [here](#).



Gulf states like the UAE and Qatar have urged a reset and a new mindset in dealing with Tehran. Photo: AFP

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP A WATCH ON

Turkey to Turn over Military Camp in Northern Iraq

Ankara and Baghdad agreed on Wednesday for Turkish forces to hand over the military camp in to the Iraqi government gradually, they said after talks in New York. Both nations also committed to eliminating the footprint of banned militant groups within northern Iraqi territories. After Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi and Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan met on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, the sides said in a joint statement they had also agreed to deepen security cooperation.



Turkey is pursuing a peace initiative aiming to disarm the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party militants. Photo: AFP

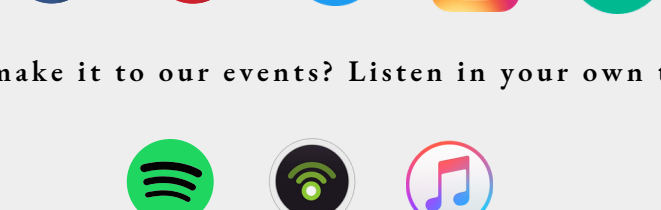
Golan Heights will Remain 'Syrian', Vows al-Sharaa

Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa insisted at the UN Wednesday that the Golan Heights region will remain Syrian after Colombia last month recognised Israeli sovereignty over the strategically important territory. "Any attempts that violate our sovereignty, violate international law, will be stopped. Golan will remain Syrian territories", Mr al-Sharaa said at the UN meeting of world leaders in New York. Israel's Defence Minister Israel Katz responded by saying that the Golan Heights would remain under Israeli sovereignty "forever".

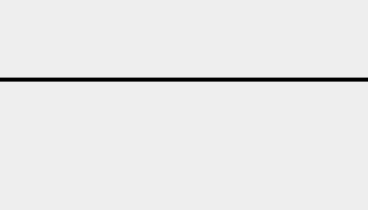


Mr Al-Sharaa used his second turn at the UN rostrum to denounce repeated Tel Aviv's strikes on his country.

Follow us for the latest updates!



Can't make it to our events? Listen in your own time!



Copyright © 2026 Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore.
All rights reserved. Middle East Institute Events and Publications.

Our mailing address is:
Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore
29 Heng Mui Keng Terrace
Block B, #06-06
Singapore 119620
Singapore

Subscribe to our mailing list [here](#).