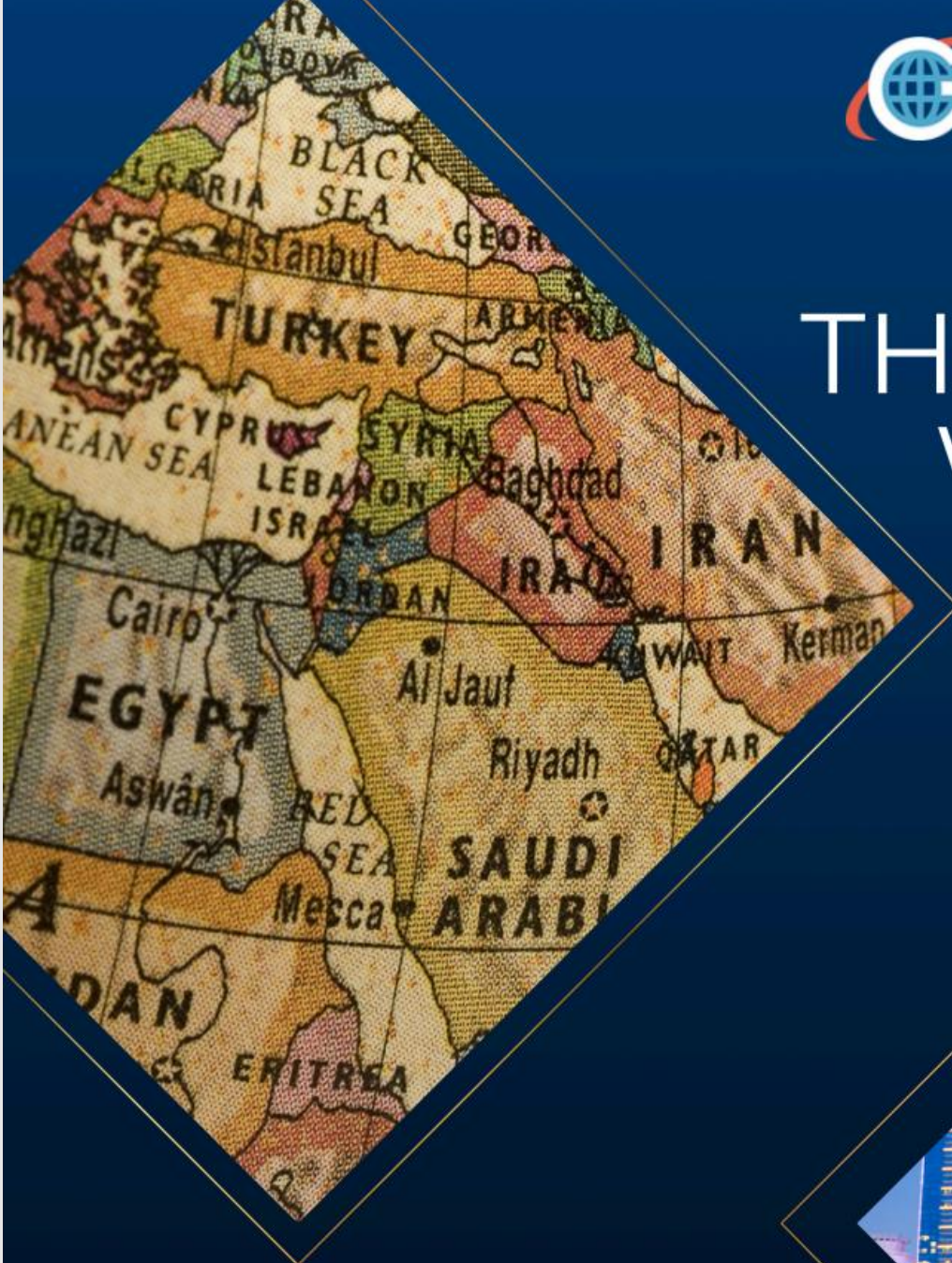


THE MENA WEEKLY



19 June 2026

Key Takeaways

- Iran – US and Iran agree peace deal – **HIGH**
- Israel – Somaliland opens Jerusalem embassy – **HIGH**
- Israel/Lebanon – Israel launches fresh strikes on Lebanon despite US criticism – **HIGH**
- US/Syria/Lebanon – Trump says Syria should take on Hezbollah – **HIGH**

Iran — US and Iran agree peace deal — **HIGH**

Situation Update

On 14 June 2026, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif [announced](#) that the United States (US) and Iran had agreed on a deal to bring their nearly four-month war to an end, with both sides declaring the immediate and permanent termination of military operations on all fronts. Pakistan has served as a mediator between the two countries throughout the war, including in Lebanon. Soon after Sharif’s announcement, US President Donald Trump confirmed the deal in a social media post on Truth Social. Although the official signing ceremony was scheduled for 19 June 2026, Trump [signed](#) the memorandum of understanding (MoU) on 17 June 2026 at the Palace of Versailles in France. The agreement, titled the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, brings a formal framework to end a conflict that began on 28 February 2026, when the US and Israel launched coordinated air strikes against Iran. The 14-point document sets out provisions for reopening the Strait of Hormuz, easing financial restrictions on Iran, and addressing Iran's nuclear programme in future technical talks.

Assessment/Impact/Business Implications

Trump appeared to have made a number of concessions to reach the agreement. Speaking at the G7 Summit, he adopted a far softer stance on Iran’s nuclear programme, [stating](#) that: “It is a little hard, though, when you say that somebody wants it, other people have it, other, adjoining states have it”. His comments appeared to leave the door open “for purposes of electricity and things like that”. He also walked back months of insistence that confiscating Iran's enriched uranium stockpile was a central war aim, maintaining instead that there was “no rush” to retrieve the material. The remarks stood in sharp contrast to the stated justifications for the war, and drew immediate scrutiny given that preventing Iran from accumulating weapons-grade material had been cited by both Washington and Tel Aviv as a core objective of Operation Epic Fury. Unsurprisingly, Trump has faced widespread, bipartisan criticism from both Republicans and Democrats over the interim peace agreement, which many feel heavily favours Iran. A rift also appears to have emerged between the US and its ally Israel, which was not party to the MoU. With Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [vowing](#) not to leave Lebanon and Syria, there is a risk of Israel derailing the situation. The deal has been viewed as a strategic failure for Netanyahu, who may now be feeling the pressure to change the narrative.

Factor	Risk Rating	Factor	Risk Rating
Political	HIGH	Business	HIGH
Economic	HIGH	Conflict	HIGH
Civil Unrest	HIGH	Environment	HIGH
Crime	HIGH	Legal	HIGH

Israel — Somaliland opens Jerusalem embassy — **MODERATE**

Situation Update

On 15 June 2026, Somaliland officially [opened](#) an embassy in Jerusalem, six months after Israel became the first country to recognise it as an independent nation. The opening ceremony was held while Somaliland President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi was on an official visit to Israel. During a meeting between Abdullahi and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the latter spoke of “a deep spiritual bond between our peoples”. However, Somalia, which considers Somaliland to be part of its territory, called it a “violation of its sovereignty”. Israel's recognition of Somaliland in December 2025 was controversial, with dozens of countries and organisations, including China, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and the African Union, criticising the declaration.

Assessment/Impact/Business Implications

Since Israel's recognition of Somaliland, the pair have been cementing ties. This was demonstrated earlier this year when Israel's Foreign Minister Gideon Saar made an official visit to Somaliland's capital, Hargeisa. The establishment of a Somaliland embassy in Jerusalem signals a significant shift in East African geopolitics, intensifying diplomatic tensions, altering Red Sea security, and introducing new operational risks for regional businesses. The move challenges the African Union's status quo and escalates friction with Somalia and its allies, while providing Israel with a strategic foothold in the Horn of Africa.

The expansion of diplomatic ties is expected to increase security risks for foreign investments and create a more fragmented regulatory landscape for maritime logistics. For instance, Commercial vessels using Somaliland's Port of Berbera face an elevated risk of asymmetric attacks, drone strikes, or harassment by regional non-state actors like the Houthis, who target assets linked to Israel. Additionally, multinational corporations must navigate parallel legal frameworks, as contracts or licenses approved by Somaliland face immediate rejection and legal challenges from the federal government of Somalia.

Factor	Risk Rating	Factor	Risk Rating
Political	HIGH	Business	LOW
Economic	LOW	Conflict	MODERATE
Civil Unrest	MODERATE	Environment	LOW
Crime	MODERATE	Legal	MODERATE

Israel/Lebanon — Israel launches fresh strikes on Lebanon despite US criticism — HIGH

Situation Update

Israel has launched fresh [strikes](#) on Lebanon despite public criticism from Donald Trump, underlining how fragile and contested the current ceasefire environment remains. The attacks came after Trump said at the G7 that he was unhappy with Israel's tactics in Lebanon and believed too many civilians were being killed in efforts to target Hezbollah. Reporting on the latest [assault](#) indicated that Israeli action continued in and around Beirut and southern Lebanon even as Washington tried to preserve momentum behind its wider diplomacy with Iran. The latest wave of attacks reinforces the pattern seen throughout the conflict: ceasefire language remains in place, but military operations continue at a scale that prevents any meaningful stabilisation.

The significance of the latest escalation lies in the growing gap between diplomatic messaging and battlefield reality. Trump's criticism was unusual given his longstanding political alignment with Benjamin Netanyahu, and it suggested rising US frustration that the Lebanon front is complicating broader regional diplomacy. At the same time, Israeli officials have continued to insist that operations against Hezbollah are necessary for security and that Lebanon cannot be treated as insulated from the wider war environment. The result is a deeply unstable situation in which international actors speak of de-escalation while fighting continues on the ground. Wider [coverage](#) has also shown that Lebanon remains a sticking point in US-Iran diplomacy, with Tehran linking progress to an Israeli withdrawal.

Assessment/Impact/Business Implications

For businesses, aid actors, and infrastructure planners, the latest strikes confirm that Lebanon remains an extremely difficult operating environment despite repeated diplomatic efforts to contain the war. Continuing attacks, civilian casualties, and the absence of a durable political framework mean that access, staffing, insurance, logistics, and reconstruction planning remain highly constrained. The fact that Israeli operations persisted even after open US criticism also suggests that outside diplomatic pressure is not yet sufficient to change conditions on the ground.

The conflict continues to combine military escalation, diplomatic incoherence, and widening regional consequences. For any organisation with exposure to Lebanon, the practical reality is that the security environment remains highly volatile and that current ceasefire arrangements provide limited protection against renewed or continuing disruption.

Factor	Risk Rating	Factor	Risk Rating
Political	HIGH	Business	HIGH
Economic	HIGH	Conflict	HIGH
Civil Unrest	MODERATE	Environment	LOW
Crime	MODERATE	Legal	LOW

US/Syria/Lebanon — Trump says Syria should take on Hezbollah — HIGH

Situation Update

Donald Trump has said he spoke with Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa about taking on Hezbollah, opening a new and potentially controversial line in US thinking on Lebanon. Trump said he had suggested that Syria might do a better job of dealing with Hezbollah than Israel if Israeli tactics continued to generate heavy civilian casualties. Reporting on the [conversation](#) indicated that Trump was increasingly frustrated by the conduct and duration of Israel's campaign in Lebanon and was looking for alternative ways to contain Hezbollah without escalating civilian harm. The related [analysis](#) suggested that this reflects a notable shift in US rhetoric, given Syria's long history of interference in Lebanon and the sensitivity of any outside encouragement for Syrian involvement there.

The proposal is significant because it cuts across long-established regional fault lines. Syria has only recently begun rebuilding diplomatic credibility after years of civil war, sanctions, and regional isolation, and its leadership has been careful not to be drawn directly into the Lebanon war. Reuters reported that al-Sharaa denied any intention to send Syrian forces into Lebanon, arguing that such a move could inflame sectarian tensions and create a fresh front. That reluctance matters. While Washington may see Syria as a possible counterweight to Hezbollah, Damascus appears to view involvement as a major political and security risk. External [analysis](#) has similarly warned that encouraging Syria to enter Lebanon could widen instability rather than contain it.

Assessment/Impact/Business Implications

For businesses and regional planners, the idea is significant less because Syrian intervention looks imminent and more because it shows how unsettled US thinking on Lebanon has become. If Syria were pushed into a more active role, it could alter border dynamics, increase the risk of miscalculation, and complicate already fragile efforts to stabilise both Syria and Lebanon. Even without direct intervention, the episode highlights that the Lebanon file is no longer being treated solely as an Israel-Hezbollah confrontation, but as a broader regional problem in which Washington may seek new local partners.

The proposal adds another layer of uncertainty to an already volatile theatre. Syria does not appear willing to intervene militarily, but the fact that the idea is being discussed at senior levels indicates that the regional balance around Hezbollah, Lebanon, and post-war Syria remains fluid. For organisations with exposure to either country, that means continued uncertainty over borders, armed actors, diplomatic alignments, and the direction of US policy.

Factor	Risk Rating	Factor	Risk Rating
Political	HIGH	Business	HIGH
Economic	MODERATE	Conflict	HIGH
Civil Unrest	HIGH	Environment	LOW
Crime	MODERATE	Legal	HIGH

Syria — Signing of a new gas deal with US energy companies — HIGH

Situation Update

On 16 June 2026, the Syrian Petroleum Company (SPC), a state-owned entity, [signed](#) an agreement in Damascus at the Ministry of Energy headquarters with the US energy companies ConocoPhillips and Novaterra to revive gas production. The agreement, which follows the signing of a memorandum of understanding in November 2025, aims to develop new gas fields and expand production at existing ones. The project is [seen](#) by Syrian Energy Minister Mohamed al-Bashir as an opportunity to “improve the stability of Syria’s electricity network” and by ConocoPhillips Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Ryan Lance and Novaterra CEO Alex Macdonald as a significant initiative for both the companies involved and Syria. In a country where national gas production is [estimated](#) to have fallen by two-thirds from its pre-war peak of 30 million cubic metres per day (m³/d), recorded in 2011, and where around 18 million m³/d is needed to power the electricity grid, this represents a crucial development. Indeed, as stated by SPC CEO Youssef Qabalawi, the agreement would increase gas production by 4–5 million m³/d within a year, thereby contributing to Syria’s economic recovery.

Assessment/Impact/Business Implications

The agreement between the SPC, ConocoPhillips, and Novaterra is part of the efforts undertaken by the Syrian government, under the leadership of President Ahmad al-Shara, to strengthen the country’s energy sector. The project is of significant importance as it consolidates the legitimacy of the new government and strengthens bilateral relations with Washington, following the June 2025 signing by US President Donald Trump of a decree lifting sanctions to [encourage](#) American investment in Syria. Although the agreement could improve energy supply and reduce public discontent over ongoing blackouts, the actors involved will have to contend with a fragile legal framework, given the remaining sanctions. In addition, there remains a context [characterised](#) by systemic illicit markets and the presence of figures linked to the former regime, responsible for crimes and violations.

The development of new gas fields carries moderate environmental risks, as the ecosystem could be negatively affected by extraction activities, while the economic and commercial impact is largely positive. The agreement not only enhances energy security but also [serves](#) as “a vote of confidence for other companies” and a means of attracting international investment. There are significant opportunities for businesses, particularly in the energy and infrastructure sectors, although these are not without operational risks for personnel and assets, which could become targets for clandestine cells of the Islamic State or other insurgent militias.

Factor	Risk Rating	Factor	Risk Rating
Political	HIGH	Business	HIGH
Economic	HIGH	Conflict	MODERATE
Civil Unrest	LOW	Environment	MODERATE
Crime	MODERATE	Legal	HIGH

Tunisia/Libya/Algeria — Meeting on cooperation for border security — HIGH

Situation Update

On 16 June 2026, security officials from Tunisia, Libya, and Algeria [held](#) talks in Tripoli to discuss possible ways to ensure the security of their shared borders. The joint Libyan-Algerian-Tunisian task force aims to strengthen cooperation along the frontier in response to threats arising from ongoing changes in the region. Among the issues addressed were the need to combat irregular migration from sub-Saharan Africa, cross-border organised crime and

smuggling operations, as well as to tackle terrorism and the risk of militant infiltration. The meeting had a dual focus: at a theoretical level, the recognition of existing challenges, and at a practical level, the development of operational mechanisms to protect the shared interests of the region’s populations. Within this tripartite security coordination framework, Morocco, represented by Prime Minister Aziz Akhannouch, was absent largely due to deep political differences with Algeria. The country led by President Abdelmadjid Tebboune also [faces](#) significant security challenges along its border with Morocco, where between 06 and 12 May 2026 the Algerian People’s National Army intercepted an attempt to smuggle 2.5 quintals of processed cannabis from Moroccan territory.

Assessment/Impact/Business Implications

The meeting between Tunisia, Libya, and Algeria, coupled with Morocco’s exclusion, carries significant geopolitical weight, as it strengthens the partnership among the three countries while highlighting the persistent regional tensions exacerbated by the heavy militarisation of the Algerian-Moroccan border. At the international level, the meeting takes place within the context of the entry into force of the new European Pact on Migration and Asylum. Although there is no direct link between the two developments, enhanced border cooperation could facilitate future forms of European support, including financial resources and technical assistance for the management of migration flows and cross-border security, building on [existing](#) initiatives such as the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) in Libya.

In this context, characterised by high levels of crime, a complex legal environment persists, marked by regulatory gaps and differing legal definitions across the three countries. While the tripartite dialogue could help [ease](#) protests —such as those currently taking place in front of the International Organization for Migration office in Tripoli and in other areas of Libya— the absence of concrete measures could fuel further demonstrations. From an economic perspective, improved border security could facilitate trade flows, the movement of people and goods, and the establishment of economic zones, but operational risks along border areas remain high.

Factor	Risk Rating	Factor	Risk Rating
Political	HIGH	Business	HIGH
Economic	MODERATE	Conflict	MODERATE
Civil Unrest	MODERATE	Environment	MINIMAL
Crime	SEVERE	Legal	HIGH

Libya — Important discussions held in Libya to developing fishing industry — **LOW**

Situation Update

A meeting was held between high-level officials in Libya on 15 June, reviewing the proposed National Strategy for Marine [Fisheries](#) for the period of 2027 to 2037. The attendees were Mohamed Ben Ghalbon, Libya’s Minister of State for Prime Ministerial and Cabinet Affairs, representatives of the General Syndicate of Fishermen, and senior officials from the Libyan Fund for Domestic Investment and Development. The discussions concerned strengthening the sustainable use of Libya’s marine resources and establishing the fisheries sector as an important driver of national economic diversification in a way that goes beyond oil dependence. The officials looked at establishing policy frameworks that could improve sector efficiency, production capacity, and bring investments into the marine fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

Outlined targets include raising seafood export value to about US\$100 million per year in the short term and increasing aquaculture production output to 50,000 tonnes per year and to 100,000 tonnes by 2037.

Assessment/Impact/Business Implications

The move is part of a broader strategy to align with broader national development guidelines and priorities for the next decade. It follows a series of state-led discussions and [moves](#) in an effort to assess the structure of the domestic fisheries sector and how to develop it. It is also a result of growing concerns about the underperformance of the country’s fishing industry due to the state’s hyperfocus on its oil and gas sector. Indeed, Libya has one of the lowest fish production totals among Mediterranean countries, despite its long coastline and extensive marine resource potential. Small-scale fisheries, accounting for over 85% of domestic production, are still underconsidered in national development planning and enjoy few government support services. An excess reliance on foreign labour and nutrient-poor waters also undercut blue economy goals, requiring comprehensive legal, economic, and policy reforms.

The underdevelopment of the industry is seen as a considerable economic loss, and [challenges](#) such as illegal fishing, smuggling, and an overreliance on licensing to fishing companies remain major barriers to further developing the sector. Nonetheless, the government is making extensive efforts to [develop](#) its fishing industry, aiming to establish it as a major contributor to the country’s GDP, providing employment opportunities and increased exports, especially as Libya still imports a good amount of its seafood.

Factor	Risk Rating	Factor	Risk Rating
Political	MINIMAL	Business	LOW
Economic	LOW	Conflict	LOW
Civil Unrest	LOW	Environment	MODERATE
Crime	MINIMAL	Legal	LOW

Libya — Libya aims to integrate AI and robotics into oil and gas sector — **LOW**

Situation Update

Libya’s Ministry of Oil and Gas announced it plans to launch a new national initiative to integrate artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics into the energy industry in order to fix certain operational challenges and improve overall efficiency. This [program](#) is known as “New Energy Tech”, announced on 14 June, and seeks to improve decision-making processes in the industry and promote local industrials in their development of technological solutions. The ministry hopes to bring together engineers, software developers, researchers, academics, AI specialists, students, start-ups, and various other professionals in the field by allowing individuals more opportunities, promotional support, and financial awards.

Assessment/Impact/Business Implications

The move comes amid considerable [efforts](#) and investments by Libya to develop and streamline its oil and gas industry after years of political instability following the 2011 overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi in the Arab Spring. Persistent production shutdowns and export disruptions were caused by prolonged conflict between rival factions and militant groups over oil production and revenue shares. However, confidence in foreign investments in Libya has been steadily rising, and the government has been largely leveraging that into [developing](#) the operational and commercial aspects of its energy industries. As Africa’s first oil producer and third gas producer, it has positioned the industry as central to its economic goals, with few plans for diversification.

The plan to introduce AI and robotics to the energy industry is part of this broad strategy to continually develop, expand, and invest in the oil and gas sectors. The hope is to modernise the industry to eventually improve efficiency, reduce operating costs, decrease emissions, and encourage the development of new Libyan technology start-ups. The move also comes after the recently launched National Artificial Intelligence Strategy for 2026 to 2030, adopting a national charter on AI use and ethics. The Libyan government recognises the growing importance of [AI](#) as a

potentially critical tool to modernise the economy, making it more competitive, and improve public services, such as government efficiency and developing a digital economy.

Significant [barriers](#) nevertheless persist in the goals to digitise Libya. Legislation, regulation, and legal infrastructures still need to be established, connectivity infrastructures are still somewhat lacking, and online digital rights and safety are still underconsidered. These state efforts to increase digital services in key economic sectors may help in breaching these challenges, helping breed both competition and digitisation.

Factor	Risk Rating	Factor	Risk Rating
Political	LOW	Business	LOW
Economic	LOW	Conflict	MINIMAL
Civil Unrest	LOW	Environment	MODERATE
Crime	MINIMAL	Legal	LOW

Global SA Risk Methodology

THREAT LEVEL RATING	
SCORE	LEVEL
5	SEVERE
4	HIGH
3	MODERATE
2	LOW
1	MINIMAL



Global Situational Awareness

www.globalsitu.com



Disclaimer

This report produced by Global Situational Awareness is for general information purposes only within the specified area as defined within the report and/or maps provided as part of the report. All reasonable efforts have been made to ensure that material contained herein is correct. However, no express or implied warranty is given and no responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the material is accepted by Global Situational Awareness. The content does not in any way constitute any assurance against threats or risk. Clients are advised not to rely solely on this information when making any decision. Clients should seek specific specialist advice before making any decision. This report is for the benefit of the client only and may not be disclosed in part or in whole to any third parties without the prior written consent of Global Situational Awareness Senior Leadership Team. Unless otherwise specifically noted. Sharing of this report or the information within may result in a material breach of any contract between Global Situational Awareness and the recipient of the report.