

GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL REGION

GCC Weekly Intelligence

14 September 2026

Actionable Intelligence — Regional Protection



Executive Summary

BOTTOM LINE UP FRONT

Yesterday (13 Sept), Iranian state media reported a cargo vessel struck off Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz, killing one of its 10-member crew and wounding four others; Iran's state broadcaster blamed a "terrorist enemy" and the projectile has not been identified. UKMTO separately reported another vessel hit by an unknown projectile in the Strait, with a fire and an evacuation of crew underway.

Escalation continues on two simultaneous fronts: a fresh deadly attack on shipping inside the Strait of Hormuz, and continued fallout from the September 10–11 drone strike on Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline. Diplomatic efforts are ongoing, with a Gulf states–Iran meeting in Oman scheduled for Monday to discuss a temporary Hormuz shipping corridor. Oil prices remain elevated on escalation risk.

Iran and UAE both signed the BRICS "maximum restraint" statement (Sept 12), a notable diplomatic signal amid the ongoing blockade standoff.

Yemen's Houthis completed a rapid takeover of the country's Red Sea coastline over 10-12 Sept: they captured the port city of Mocha, then the town of Dhubab, then Perim Island (Mayyun) after Saudi-backed government forces withdrew. A senior Yemeni official told NBC News, "this is the first day Iran really started winning the war," reflecting the strategic weight of the gain. The Houthis declared shipping "safe for all companies except Saudi vessels."

Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline (Petroline, ~1,200km, carrying 4-5m bpd, roughly 4-5% of global oil supply) was shut down as a precaution after drone strikes hit pumping stations near Al Mesba'ah, Riyadh and Medina regions, causing fires and injuries. Riyadh and Baghdad said the drones originated in Iraq; Saudi Arabia said it would not retaliate for now at the Iraqi PM's request, while reserving the right to act to protect its sovereignty and critical facilities. Iraq dismissed a military commander in response.

Secretary of State Rubio has said Iran is clearly behind at least some of the Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia, describing the group as Tehran's "agents and proxies." Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is reported to be urging President Trump to take direct military action against the Houthis; the US military is already helping Saudi Arabia develop and coordinate targets inside Yemen.

Watch item: Whether the Houthis can consolidate and hold Perim Island long-term or face a Saudi/US-backed counter-effort to retake it; any Saudi retaliation decision on the pipeline strikes once the precautionary pause ends; outcome of tomorrow's Oman talks and whether other GCC states join Bahrain in declining to attend; any further Iranian action against tankers in Kuwaiti/Bahraini ports.

COUNTRY RISK ASSESSMENTS

Saudi Arabia	▲ WORSENING	SEVERE
Kuwait	▶ WATCH	HIGH
UAE	▶ WATCH	HIGH
Oman	▶ WATCH	HIGH
Bahrain	▶ WATCH	HIGH
Qatar	▶ WATCH	HIGH



PLANNING ASSUMPTION

Plan for active containment with near-standstill Hormuz traffic, sustained Red Sea disruption and no immediate diplomatic breakthrough. Movement remains possible across most of the GCC, but posture should stay elevated until Hormuz traffic recovers materially, attacks against GCC-linked vessels stop, Bab el-Mandeb becomes usable for Saudi exports, Iran and the US establish an implementable maritime arrangement, Iraq prevents further cross-border attacks and Bahrain/Kuwait experience a sustained period without renewed missile or drone activity.
[ASSESSED — MODERATE CONFIDENCE]

Regional Risk Snapshot

COUNTRY	STRIKE	INFRA	OPS	TREND	ONE-LINE STATUS
Bahrain	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	► WATCH	US-linked posture and the unresolved US-Iran confrontation keep Bahrain severe despite no major new direct incident.
Kuwait	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	► WATCH	Northern Gulf exposure, infrastructure vulnerability and Iraq-linked threats continue to keep Kuwait severe.
Qatar	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	► WATCH	Near-standstill Hormuz traffic materially increases Qatar's LNG and tanker-access exposure.
UAE / Dubai	HIGH	MODERATE	HIGH	► WATCH	Repeated attacks against ADNOC-operated tankers increase direct UAE-linked maritime exposure.
Saudi Arabia	SEVERE	HIGH	HIGH	▲ WORSENING	Hormuz disruption and Houthi pressure on Bab el-Mandeb increasingly constrain both Saudi maritime outlets.
Oman	MODERATE	HIGH	HIGH	► WATCH	Musandam and Gulf of Oman exposure remain high as Hormuz traffic falls towards commercial standstill.

RISK SCALE

LOW

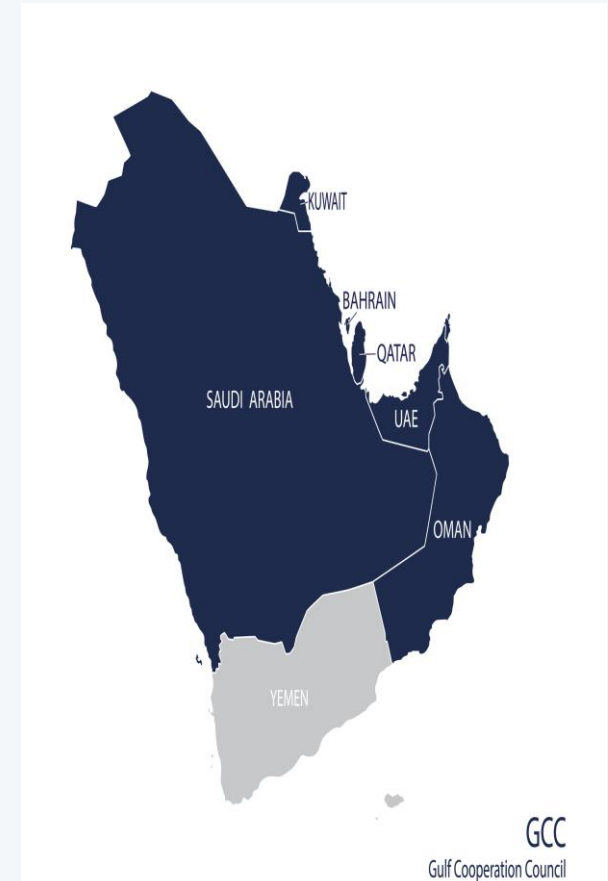
MODERATE

HIGH

SEVERE

CRITICAL

GCC MEMBER STATES





SECURITY SITUATION

Yemen's Houthis completed a rapid takeover of the country's Red Sea coastline over 10-12 Sept: they captured the port city of Mocha, then the town of Dhubab, then Perim Island (Mayyun) after Saudi-backed government forces withdrew. A senior Yemeni official told NBC News, "this is the first day Iran really started winning the war," reflecting the strategic weight of the gain. The Houthis declared shipping "safe for all companies except Saudi vessels."

Whether the Houthis can consolidate and hold Perim Island long-term or face a Saudi/US-backed counter-effort to retake it; any Saudi retaliation decision on the pipeline strikes once the precautionary pause ends.



AVIATION

Airspace remains operational but requires active management. Principal risk zones: Yemen-linked activity in the south, Iraq-linked corridors in the north/east, and Eastern Province infrastructure exposure. Interception activity could trigger warning alerts, NOTAM changes and fuel-planning adjustments.



MARITIME

- Yemen's Houthis captured Perim Island (Mayyun) on 11-12 Sept, the volcanic outcrop that splits the Bab el-Mandeb Strait into its two navigable channels, completing their takeover of Yemen's Red Sea coastline.
- This gives an Iran-aligned actor physical presence at a second major chokepoint alongside Iran's own hold on Hormuz



MOVEMENT — SUPPLY CHAIN

- East-West pipeline shut after drone strikes; Houthis now hold Bab el-Mandeb on its Red sea flank.
- Land-border connectivity remains broadly functional via the UAE, Bahrain (King Fahd Causeway), Qatar, Kuwait and Jordan crossings. The primary concern is maritime, not road. Maintain buffers for fuel pricing, insurance, vessel delays and customs; avoid just-in-time assumptions for chokepoint-dependent inputs.
- The primary supply-chain concern is maritime rather than domestic road movement. Simultaneous disruption in Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb increases pressure on alternative tanker routing, Suez/SUMED capacity, inventories and air or road freight for time-sensitive goods.

RISK RATINGS

Political	HIGH
Business	HIGH
Economic	HIGH
Conflict	SEVERE
Civil Unrest	MODERATE
Environmental	LOW
Crime	LOW
Legal	LOW



MITIGATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Confirm war-risk cover, monitor Hormuz, Red Sea, Suez, Bab el-Mandeb and Iraq-linked routes, and review staff-accountability procedures. Maintain resilience plans for water, fuel, power and essential supplies. Monitor Jizan and Jubail developments closely. pressure.



SECURITY SITUATION

Algeria/UAE — Severance of diplomatic relations

Algeria severed diplomatic relations with the UAE on 10 September, citing an unspecified pattern of "provocative or hostile" Emirati conduct after what it called the "exhaustion of all means to preserve bilateral relations." The Emirati ambassador, Yousef Saif Khamis Subaa Al-Ali, was summoned and given 48 hours to comply. Algeria also closed its airspace to UAE-registered military and civilian aircraft from the following day (with a carve-out for UAE commercial flights to/from Algiers, exempted until end-2026).

No reported attacks, drone/missile activity, or interceptions on UAE territory in the past 36 hours. **US Embassy** Abu Dhabi reissued a security alert (Sept 11) reminding citizens to exercise caution near Jewish/Israeli-associated sites; travel advisory level unchanged (Level 3)



AVIATION

- Airspace remains operational but should be actively managed.
- Passenger travel, executive movement and time-sensitive cargo can continue, but operators should verify current NOTAM.
- Cathay Pacific and several other international airlines continue to suspend flights at Dubai International Airport (DXB/OMDB) through 30 November due to security concerns amid regional escalation.



MARITIME

- Maritime exposure remains the UAE's principal external vulnerability. Repeated attacks against ADNOC-operated vessels demonstrate that UAE-linked shipping is directly within the current threat environment.
- Iranian state media reported a cargo vessel struck off Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz, killing one and wounding four, with a second vessel separately hit by an unknown projectile per UKMTO



MOVEMENT — SUPPLY CHAIN

- UAE land connectivity remains one of the country's strongest resilience advantages.
- The Saudi border at Ghuwafat/Ai Batha and Oman crossings including Hatta/Ai Wajajah and Khatmat Malaha remain important alternatives for passenger movement, road freight and contingency relocation.
- The principal supply-chain vulnerability remains external maritime and aviation connectivity rather than domestic road movement. Simultaneous pressure on Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb can affect UAE cargo moving both east and west.
- Maintain buffers for vessel delays, insurance review, air-freight disruption and maritime rerouting. Keep Saudi and Oman road alternatives live for critical cargo and personnel where practical.

RISK RATINGS

Political	HIGH
Business	HIGH
Economic	MODERATE
Conflict	HIGH
Civil Unrest	LOW
Environmental	LOW
Crime	LOW
Legal	LOW



MITIGATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Confirm NOTAMs before air movement, verify war-risk cover, keep UAE–Saudi and UAE–Oman land-route options live, and maintain executive movement controls. Review energy, fuel, port and data-centre continuity planning if regional infrastructure threats return.



SECURITY SITUATION

No new attacks. The main development is diplomatic and directly tied to Hormuz: Iran and Oman have reportedly finalized a framework for temporary shipping routes, to be presented to Gulf states (including Iraq) at Monday's Muscat meeting though an Iranian source cautioned this won't mean immediate reopening of the strait, and reopening still depends on US-Iran terms.

Bahrain has said it will not attend, and Iran has played down prospects for a breakthrough, with President Pezeshkian saying the waterway will reopen only if the US ends its naval blockade of Iranian ports.



AVIATION

Airspace remains important to regional resilience, but routes around Musandam and the western Gulf of Oman stay exposed to wider military developments. Monitor NOTAMs, GNSS interference and any renewed US-Iran strike cycle affecting northern Muscat FIR routing.



MARITIME

Four unidentified projectiles struck two vessels roughly four nautical miles west of Khasab at 1910 UTC (Fri) in the Arabian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Gulf of Oman, setting one vessel ablaze while the condition of the second remains unclear. Separately, the IRGC Navy claimed to have struck and captured a US-operated unmanned surface vessel near the Strait's entrance, alongside strikes on two US vessels, eight tankers, and ten other ships.



MOVEMENT — SUPPLY CHAIN

- Oman–UAE land crossings remain operational and should continue to serve as important resilience routes for passenger movement, freight and contingency access between Muscat, Sohar, Buraimi, Hatta and the wider UAE logistics network.
- The principal supply-chain vulnerability remains maritime. Hormuz-linked cargo, Gulf of Oman movements, tanker scheduling and marine insurance remain highly uncertain.
- Keep UAE land routes available for urgent movements and maintain additional inventory buffers for goods dependent on Gulf shipping. Sohar and Omani logistics facilities provide important resilience capacity, but their wider maritime connections remain exposed to the same conflict environment affecting Hormuz.

RISK RATINGS

Political	HIGH
Business	HIGH
Economic	MODERATE
Conflict	MODERATE
Civil Unrest	MODERATE
Environmental	LOW
Crime	LOW
Legal	LOW



MITIGATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Confirm Omani, IMO and UKMTO routing guidance, verify war-risk insurance, monitor VHF instructions, keep AIS/LRIT active where required, and maintain UAE land-route alternatives. Track whether the Hormuz route becomes an operationally recognised mechanism, not only a political announcement.



SECURITY SITUATION

Bahrain remains one of the GCC's most sensitive environments given the US Fifth Fleet presence and limited strategic depth. No major new direct incident this period, but the near-collapse of commercial Hormuz traffic shows the underlying dispute is unresolved. Exposure is driven by the Washington–Tehran trajectory rather than domestic instability; a renewed strike cycle could quickly trigger air-defence activity and movement restrictions.

Bahrain announced (Sept 12) it will not attend any Hormuz-related meeting with Iran — including Monday's planned Oman-hosted Gulf states meeting until diplomatic ties between Manama and Tehran are restored (severed since 2016). This is a real diplomatic complication for the Monday talks. No new kinetic attacks on Bahrain reported in this window.



AVIATION

Aviation remains open but highly sensitive. Regional missile, drone or air-defence activity can affect Bahrain FIR even without Bahrain being the target. Executive travel and time-sensitive cargo should proceed only after checking current flight status and NOTAMs.



MARITIME

Exposure is linked to the wider Gulf rather than a specific port shutdown. Near-zero Hormuz traffic reflects vessel avoidance, insurer caution and uncertainty over safe passage, which can delay cargo and raise war-risk costs even with normal port operations. Confirm vessel schedules and insurer approval before critical movements.



MOVEMENT — SUPPLY CHAIN

- The King Fahd Causeway is Bahrain's most important physical resilience corridor for passenger movement, freight, relocation and medical evacuation. Keep staff-accountability and relocation plans current; avoid unnecessary movement near sensitive facilities during heightened US-Iran activity.
- It should remain central to passenger movement, freight support, staff relocation, medical evacuation planning and contingency access to Saudi Arabia and the wider GCC road network.
- Routine movement continues, but staff-accountability procedures and relocation plans should remain current. During periods of heightened

RISK RATINGS

Political	HIGH
Business	HIGH
Economic	HIGH
Conflict	HIGH
Civil Unrest	LOW
Environmental	LOW
Crime	LOW
Legal	MODERATE



MITIGATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Verify airspace status, keep Causeway relocation plans live, avoid sensitive sites during alerts, maintain staff-accountability checks, and confirm cross-border transport availability. Reinforce debris-awareness guidance and avoid suspicious objects following interceptions.



SECURITY SITUATION

No security incidents in this window. Qatari coverage over the past few days has been diplomatic (Doha reiterating it's working toward a diplomatic end to the war) rather than incident-related.

Qatar remains operationally stable, but the near-standstill in Hormuz materially raises strategic exposure given the LNG export system's dependence on the Strait. Only five commodity vessels transited on Saturday and none on Sunday. LNG infrastructure itself is not disrupted, but tanker scheduling, insurance and market confidence are affected. Doha's mediation role remains potentially important, though talks appear stalled.



AVIATION

Airspace remains operational with indirect regional risk. Renewed US-Iran hostilities could affect neighbouring FIRs and Qatar-linked routing. Maintain diversion plans and monitor Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, Iran and northern Gulf conditions; air cargo demand may rise if maritime delays deepen.



MARITIME

Despite the scale of disruption, transit has not fully stopped: the laden Qatari LNG carrier AL MARROUNA cleared the Strait of Hormuz outbound for Port Qasim, Pakistan this week, illustrating that commercial traffic continues to move on a case-by-case basis rather than the waterway being closed outright.



MOVEMENT — SUPPLY CHAIN

- The Abu Samra/Salwa crossing with Saudi Arabia is Qatar's principal road-based resilience link. Domestic supply chains remain broadly functional, but prolonged Hormuz disruption raises exposure around LNG exports and maritime imports. Maintain cargo-delay buffers and review air-freight alternatives.
- Maintain cargo-delay buffers, verify insurer and shipping conditions and keep Qatar–Saudi land-route options active for appropriate goods and personnel.
- Simultaneous disruption in Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb also complicates wider Asia-Europe cargo routing. Businesses should review inventory levels, supplier lead times and air-freight alternatives where critical inputs depend on maritime transport.

RISK RATINGS

Political	HIGH
Business	HIGH
Economic	HIGH
Conflict	MODERATE
Civil Unrest	MODERATE
Environmental	MODERATE
Crime	LOW
Legal	LOW



MITIGATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Monitor LNG, maritime and aviation conditions; confirm insurer and port guidance; maintain Qatar–Saudi land-route options; keep executive travel flexible; treat any maritime resumption as positive but not full normalisation.



SECURITY SITUATION

Kuwait remains one of the GCC's most exposed states given its northern Gulf geography, critical power/water infrastructure and proximity to Iraq. No major new strike this period, but near-zero Hormuz traffic shows the confrontation is unresolved; renewed escalation could quickly return Kuwait to a missile/drone posture. A recently disrupted ISIS-linked plot against a vital facility reinforces the need to protect critical infrastructure from both external and domestic threats.

On 8 Sept, Iran's IRGC Navy additionally warned tanker crews in Kuwaiti ports to evacuate, calling vessels there "legitimate targets." Kuwait's Foreign Ministry condemned the attacks in the strongest terms and cited its Article 51 self-defence rights.



AVIATION

Aviation remains highly sensitive given proximity to Iraq, Iran and northern Gulf military activity. Renewed missile or drone operations could affect Kuwait FIR through air-defence activity or routing restrictions. Confirm flight status and NOTAMs before passenger, executive or cargo movement.



MARITIME

Exposure remains high as northern Gulf access ultimately depends on Hormuz. Near-zero weekend transit volumes show safe passage has not been restored; the main threat is vessel avoidance and war-risk pricing rather than port closure. Sustained incident-free Hormuz traffic would materially improve the outlook.



MOVEMENT — SUPPLY CHAIN

- Kuwait–Saudi crossings (Nuwaisib, Salmi) are the preferred overland resilience routes. The Iraq border remains operationally sensitive — do not route staff or time-sensitive cargo through it without current security review. Maintain three-day resilience planning for water, power, fuel and essential supplies.
- The Iraq border should remain operationally sensitive. Do not route staff or time-sensitive cargo through Iraq without current security review and appropriate movement authority.

RISK RATINGS

Political	HIGH
Business	HIGH
Economic	HIGH
Conflict	SEVERE
Civil Unrest	LOW
Environmental	HIGH
Crime	LOW
Legal	LOW



MITIGATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Confirm air permissions, prioritise Kuwait–Saudi overland routing, treat Kuwait–Iraq movement as sensitive even where crossings are open, maintain staff-accountability checks, and keep three-day resilience plans for water, power, fuel and essential supplies. Review power and water continuity plans until a clean period is established.

Escalation Triggers

RED — ACT NOW



- Another ADNOC-operated or GCC-linked tanker is struck, disabled or suffers casualties in Hormuz.
- A Houthi attack strikes or sinks a Saudi-linked tanker in Bab el-Mandeb.
- US and Iranian forces enter a direct major exchange around Hormuz or the Gulf of Oman.
- Renewed US strikes on Iran trigger missile or drone retaliation against GCC territory.

AMBER — WATCH



- Hormuz traffic stays below ten commodity vessels/day without a political breakthrough.
- Additional GCC-linked ships avoid Hormuz, turn back, or switch off AIS.
- Yemen missile, drone or ground activity continues around Marib, Mocha or southern front lines.
- Bahrain or Kuwait reactivates public-safety or air-defence alerts without a confirmed strike.

GREEN — IMPROVING



- ADNOC and other GCC-linked tankers transit without further attacks.
- Iran and the US agree an implementable mechanism for commercial passage.
- Houthi threats against Saudi-linked maritime traffic decline.

ADDITIONAL WATCH ITEMS

- Daily Hormuz vessel counts and direction of travel
- Further attacks involving ADNOC-operated vessels
- War-risk insurer response to the latest tanker incidents
- Houthi enforcement of the Saudi maritime blockade
- Bahrain Fifth Fleet posture and public-safety alerts
- GCC aviation NOTAMs and GNSS-interference reporting

POSITIVE CONFIRMATION SIGNALS

- Hormuz records sustained growth in commercial traffic
- No further attacks occur against ADNOC or GCC-linked vessels
- Marine insurers restore wider cover without added restrictions
- Saudi oil movements resume through Bab el-Mandeb
- Iran and the US resume substantive negotiations
- GCC airspace remains open without major new restrictions

Look Ahead

Items to watch for next 24 hours

- Outcome/statements from the Monday Oman meeting (Iran–GCC–Iraq).
- Any claim of responsibility for the Hengam attack.
- Further Iraqi government action re: Maysan province drone launches.
- Saudi pipeline restart timeline.
- Oil market reaction to Oman talks outcome.

1

NEXT 72–96 HOURS

Watch Hormuz traffic first: whether vessels resume transiting after the near-zero weekend, or the standstill persists. Watch Bab el-Mandeb simultaneously whether Saudi crude exports resume through the southern Red Sea or continue shifting to Suez/SUMED.

2

NEXT 7–14 DAYS

The central question is whether near-zero Hormuz traffic becomes the new baseline. Continued Houthi restrictions would reduce the Red Sea's value as an alternative. Qatar needs particular attention given its dependence on sustained LNG transit confidence.

3

NEXT MONTH

Most likely: prolonged active containment with simultaneous impairment of Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb. Saudi Arabia faces the most complex maritime challenge; the UAE stays resilient but exposed through its fleet; Oman remains central to any workable solution.

MARKET SNAPSHOT

7

\$104.51

\$100.5

Hormuz crossings, Tue (vs. 7
Mon; 10-day avg 8)

Brent crude / barrel

WTI crude / barrel

INDICATORS TO WATCH

- Iranian statements naming specific GCC states individually
- Evidence linking GCC territory or airspace to US strike operations
- Additional trade embargoes, port restrictions or airspace closures
- Shifts in aerial-refuelling patterns and force-protection posture
- Iranian boarding, inspection or tariff enforcement in Hormuz
- Emergency GCC meetings or coordinated defence announcements
- A shift from rhetorical warnings to published rules of engagement

ABOUT & CONTACT

Global Situational Awareness

Global Situational Awareness delivers decision-ready security intelligence to corporate security teams, travel risk managers and executive leadership operating across the Gulf Cooperation Council and the wider MENA region.



METHODOLOGY

Risk ratings (LOW to SEVERE) are professional judgements based on the information available at the time of writing and are not guarantees of outcome. Strike, infrastructure and operational risk are scored independently for each country and tracked week-on-week.



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Risk Matrix

Level	Definition	Typical Indicators	Recommend Response
Low	Stable environment with minimal threat of disruption. Normal political, security, and economic conditions prevail.	No active conflict: stable diplomatic relations: functioning institutions: open trade/travel routes:	Routine monitoring only, Business/travel proceeds normally.
Moderate	Underlying tensions or risk factors exist but are being actively managed. Isolated incidents possible but not systemic.	Diplomatic friction: sanctions rhetoric: occasional posturing: consented but unresolved disputes:	Increased situational awareness. Contingency planning advisable but no operational changes needed.
High	Active tensions or recent hostile activity with a real possibility of escalation. Disruption to trade, travel, or infrastructure is plausible.	Recent attacks or military posturing: breakdown of talks: troop/asset build-up: targeted sanctions: localized unrest.	Active monitoring, scenario planning, risk mitigation measure (insurance, alternative routes, security protocols).
Severe	Significant, ongoing disruption or hostilities affecting a state directly. Escalation is likely without intervention.	Direct attacks on infrastructure or territory: closure/restriction of key routes (e.g., Hormuz): casualties reported: emergency diplomatic sessions.	Reduce exposure where possible: activate contingency/evacuation plans: heightened security posture: close coordination with authorities.
Critical	Active conflict, existential threat, or conditions where major regional or systemic disruption is imminent or underway.	Ongoing warfare: regime instability or collapse: major infrastructure destroyed: blockade or strategic chokepoints: large-scale casualties.	Avoid all non-essential presence /exposure: full contingency activation: treat as an acute crisis requiring real-time reassessment.



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