



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

WEST ASIA DIGEST

Monthly Compilation of News Items from West Asia

- **New government formed in Kuwait**
- **Palestine receives “Observer State” status at the United Nations**
- **International Partners Meeting on Palestine takes place in Brussels**
- **33rd Arab League Summit takes place in Bahrain**
- **Turkiye bans trade with Israel**
- **Houthis claim attacking 3 ships & 2 US destroyers**
- **Iraq requests end of UNAMI by 2025**

New government formed in Kuwait

On 12 May 2024, Kuwait's Amir Sheikh Meshal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah issued a decree forming Kuwait's 46th cabinet with 13 ministers, led by Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al Ahmad Al Sabah. This followed the resignation of the 45th Government on 17 January 2024, after the National Assembly elections on 4 April 2024. Key ministers, including Emad Al Atiqi, Anwar Ali Al Mudhaf and Abdullah Ali Al Yahya, retained their oil, finance, and foreign affairs posts. Earlier, the Emir dissolved the parliament indefinitely on 10 May 2024, suspending constitutional articles and assuming legislative powers with the cabinet, citing a need to review the democratic process over four years. The powers of the National Assembly would be assumed by the Amir and the country's cabinet till the review process.

Palestine receives "Observer State" status at the United Nations

On 10 May 2024, the United Nations General Assembly held an emergency special session in New York concerning the Gaza crisis, passing a resolution to upgrade Palestine's status to an Observer State, though not granting full membership. The resolution, adopted with 143 votes in favour, 9 against and 25 abstentions, urges the Security Council to favourably reconsider Palestine's membership request. India voted in favour of the resolution. While the resolution enhances Palestine's participation modalities, it maintains that Palestine, as an Observer State, lacks the right to vote in the General Assembly or to run for positions in UN organs like the Security Council. Meanwhile, Ireland,

Norway and Spain recognised Palestine as an independent State. The recognition aims to enhance diplomatic relations, acknowledging Palestine based on pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. Israel has accused these countries of "rewarding terrorism."

International Partners Meeting on Palestine takes place in Brussels

The International Partners Meeting on Palestine took place in Brussels on 26 May 2024. The meeting saw participation from Australia, Canada, Egypt, EU, France, Germany, IMF, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Norway, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkiye, UAE, UN, UK, USA and World Bank, highlighting a collective commitment to Palestinian stability and progress. Palestinian Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Mustafa outlined plans for Gaza aid, institutional reforms and economic development. The participating leaders emphasised the need for Israeli policy changes and increased financial aid to counteract economic decline. Unity of the West Bank and Gaza under a viable Palestinian Authority was stressed as crucial for the two-state solution.

33rd Arab League Summit takes place in Bahrain

The Council of the League of Arab States convened its 33rd Ordinary Session on 16 May 2024 in Bahrain. The Summit issued the Bahrain Declaration, focusing on the ongoing Israel-Hamas War and regional issues such as Libya, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. The declaration called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, the

deployment of peacekeepers and a two-state solution. The leaders condemned Israeli actions in Gaza, urged lifting of the siege and demanded protection for civilians and humanitarian access. They supported Sudan's sovereignty and peace efforts, emphasised a political solution in Syria, endorsed Yemen's Presidential Leadership Council and stressed Libya's need for elections and national unity. The declaration also reiterated support for Palestinian rights, regional stability and economic cooperation, while condemning terrorism and external interference in Arab affairs.

Turkiye bans trade with Israel

On 3 May 2024, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced a complete shutdown of trade with Israel, citing the ongoing Israel-Hamas War. This sudden embargo has disrupted a major trade route, affecting prices and supply chains in Israel, especially for kosher food. Erdogan's recent statements suggest continued tension, complicating future trade and diplomatic engagement between the two nations. In retaliation, on 16 May 2024, Israel's Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich stated that Israel would abolish its free trade agreement with Turkiye and impose a 100 per cent tariff on other imports from Turkiye once the cabinet approves the plan. Israel has termed the Turkish trade ban as a violation of World Trade Organisation rules.

Houthis claim attacking 3 ships & 2 US destroyers

On 27 May 2024, Yemen's Houthis claimed carrying out three attacks in

solidarity with the Palestinian people and in response to what it terms as 'American-British aggression.' The first operation targeted the American ship *Larego Desert* in the Indian Ocean. The second targeted the Israeli ship *MSC Mechela* in the Indian Ocean. The third operation targeted the ship *Minerva Lisa* in the Red Sea for violating the ban on entry to the ports of occupied Palestine. Additionally, the Yemeni Air Force successfully targeted two American military destroyers in the Red Sea. The Houthis pledged to continue their actions until the aggression stops and the siege on Gaza is lifted. Houthis' attacks on ships have compelled shipping companies to opt for longer and costlier routes around southern Africa, raising concerns about the potential escalation of the Israel-Hamas conflict and regional destabilisation. In response to the attacks on vessels, the United States and Britain have conducted several retaliatory strikes against Houthi targets.

Iraq requests end of UNAMI by 2025

Iraq has requested the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), established after the 2003 US-led invasion, to end its work by the end of 2025, citing significant progress towards stability. Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al Sudani has expressed his desire to deepen cooperation with other UN organisations but deemed the UNAMI's work as unnecessary. Sudani believes that Iraq has made good progress in recent years, however, concerns remain in global circles about the stability of Iraq's stability, democracy and human rights issues.