



GRC Events & Activities

Annual 15th Gulf Research Meeting 2025

Organized by the
Gulf Research Center



Participants of the 15th Gulf Research Meeting

The 15th Annual Gulf Research Meeting (#GRM2025), organized by the Gulf Research Center, officially commenced at the University of Cambridge on July 22, 2025. Held over two and a half days, the meeting featured 12 thematic workshops and brought together more than 400 participants from a wide range of academic, research, and policy institutions. This year, the GRM received 44 workshop proposals, of which 12 were selected. In total, over 600 abstracts were submitted, resulting in 240 accepted papers, demonstrating the continued global relevance of Gulf-

focused scholarship and dialogue. The GRM Opening Ceremony was held on July 22 and was moderated by GRC Director of Research and Executive Director of the GRC Foundation Brussels Office, Dr. Christian Koch and included welcoming remarks by **Dr. Abdulaziz Sager**, Chairman of the GRC. This was followed by recorded speeches from **H.H. Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud**, Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and **H.E. Mr. Jasem Mohamed Albudaiwi**, Secretary General of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf.

◆ GRC Events & Activities

15th Gulf Research Meeting 2025

Gulf-EU Policy Roundtable Program: EU–Gulf Cooperation: Connectivity, Security, and Peacebuilding

Webinar: 'Escalation and Diplomacy: Gulf Perspectives on the Israel-Iran War'

◆ GRC Publications

◆ GRC Programs

Gulf Labour Markets, Migration, and Population (GLMM) Programme

Environmental Security and Sustainability Program

Cultural & Media Program

◆ GRC Participations

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Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC)



Dr. Christian Koch, GRC Director of Research and Executive Director of the GRC Foundation Brussels Office

H.H. Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud highlighted today's growing global uncertainty and stressed the need to preserve a rules-based international order as a cornerstone for preventing conflict and fostering meaningful international cooperation. In his remarks, he underscored the importance of platforms such as the Gulf Research Meeting (GRM) in cultivating regional and cross-sectoral trust, promoting informed dialogue, and bridging policy and academic communities. He also reaffirmed the Kingdom's position that the establishment of a viable, sovereign Palestinian state remains essential for achieving lasting peace and justice not only in the region but globally. **You can watch the full video of the remarks [here](#).**



H.E. Jasem Mohamed Albudaiwi, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), highlighted the Council's evolving role as a pragmatic mediator and a stabilizing force amid an increasingly complex and volatile global landscape. He emphasized the GCC's growing contributions across multiple domains, including regional security, proactive diplomacy, humanitarian assistance, and climate action, demonstrating the Council's commitment to addressing both traditional and emerging challenges. In his remarks, H.E. Albudaiwi praised the Gulf Research Meeting (GRM) as a vital and timely platform that brings together diverse voices to deepen collective understanding of the region's most pressing issues. He underscored the importance of knowledge-based engagement in shaping effective policy responses and expressed confidence that the GRM will continue to support informed decision-making at both regional and international levels. **You can watch the full video of the remarks [here](#).**



Among the attendees of the Opening Ceremony was **H.E. Prof. Einas Al Eissa**, Vice Minister of Education of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, whose presence underscored the importance of education



and knowledge exchange in shaping regional and global discourse. The Opening Ceremony brought together a diverse group that included policy experts, GRM participants, academics, practitioners, and government officials reflecting the interdisciplinary and international nature of the Gulf Research Meeting.

As part of the Opening Ceremony, a panel discussion was held featuring **Dr. Comfort Ero**, President & CEO, International Crisis Group; **H.E. Luigi Di Maio**, European Union Special Representative (EUSR) for the Gulf region, European External Action Service (EEAS); **H.E. Dr. Abdelaziz Aluwaisheq**, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs & Negotiation, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC); and **H.E. Dr. Majed Al-Ansari**, Advisor to the Prime Minister and Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, President of the Center for International Policy Research (CIPR). The panel addressed key challenges in the Gulf and wider region, from ongoing conflicts to humanitarian crises, and assessed international responses to a global order in transition. Panelists offered a sober assessment of how the international system, marked by fragmentation, multipolar competition, and weakened multilateral institutions, has struggled to deliver coherent responses to these crises.

The discussion also highlighted the EU's evolving role in the Middle East and the GCC's increasing global engagement amid rising regional tensions. A central theme throughout the discussion was the unresolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Panelists stressed the urgency of realizing the two-state solution, with the Gulf asserting that lasting security hinges on a just resolution for a sovereign Palestinian state. The discussion also explored the European Union's evolving posture in the Middle East. Speakers acknowledged the EU's growing diplomatic outreach and development assistance, but called for a more assertive, coordinated role that moves beyond statements of concern to tangible political action. The panel further recognized the Gulf Cooperation Council's increasing global engagement, noting that Gulf states are no longer passive actors but active contributors

to international diplomacy, conflict mediation, climate negotiations, and humanitarian aid. As regional tensions intensify, whether in Gaza, the Red Sea, or beyond, panelists agreed that platforms like the Gulf Research Meeting are essential in shaping cross-regional understanding and advancing cooperative solutions to shared challenges. **You can watch the full panel session [here](#).**



GRM 2025 Opening Ceremony Panelist Speakers

GRM 2025 Opening Ceremony & Photo Gallery



H.E. Prof. Einas Al Eissa, Vice Minister for Education, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



H.E. Dr. Abdelaziz Aluwaisheq, GCC Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs & Negotiation



Hana Jalloul Muro, Vice-Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs (S&D Group) and the Parliament's Rapporteur for Saudi Arabia



H.E. Dr. Majed Al-Ansari, Advisor to the Prime Minister and Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, President of the Center for International Policy Research (CIPR)



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, GRC Chairman, Itonde Kakoma, President of Interpeace, Hannan Alghamdi, GRC Researcher



H.E. Luigi Di Maio, H.E. Dr. Majed Al-Ansari, and H.E. Dr. Abdelaziz Aluwaisheq



GRM 2025 participants at the Opening Ceremony



GRM 2025 participants at the Opening Ceremony



Dr. Comfort Ero, President & CEO, International Crisis Group



H.E. Dr. Abdelaziz Aluwaisheq, GCC Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs & Negotiation



H.E. Luigi Di Maio, European Union Special Representative (EUSR) for the Gulf region, European External Action Service (EEAS)



H.E. Dr. Majed Al-Ansari, Advisor to the Prime Minister and Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, President of the Center for International Policy Research (CIPR)



GRM 2025 Opening Ceremony participants: Sahar El Mizairi, Bloomberg Asharq News, Saudi Arabia



GRM 2025 participants at the Opening Ceremony



GRM 2025 Opening Ceremony participants: Rawana AlDajani, Bahrain Center for Strategic, International and Energy Studies "Derasat," Assistant Analyst



H.E. Prof. Einas Al-Eissa, Vice Minister of Education, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Hana Jalloul Muro, Member of the European Parliament



GRM 2025 participants at the Opening Ceremony





Over the following two days, the Gulf Research Meeting conducted the following 12 parallel workshops:

GRM 2025 Workshops



Workshop 1: GCC 2030 and Beyond: National Visions, Fintech, and the Future of Finance



Workshop 2: Sustainable and Regenerative Tourism Strategies in the Gulf after COVID-19



Workshop 3: Nature-Based Solutions for a Circular Economy Transformation in the GCC Countries



Workshop 4: Net Zero Gulf Cities: Innovations and Sustainable Strategies



Workshop 5: Great Power Competition in the Asia-Pacific: Challenges for Gulf Economic and Political Interests



Workshop 6: GCC States and Non-Arab Regional Middle Powers: Opportunities and Challenges Amidst Shifting Regional Balances



Workshop 7: Power Relations Between the GCC and the Horn of Africa in an Uncertain World



Workshop 8: Digital and Social Media Influencers Impact on Developing Country Image in Light of GCC National Visions



Workshop 9: GCC Futurescapes: Past and Present



Workshop 11: Highly Skilled Migrants and the GCC Countries Drivers, Perceptions, Policies, and New Dynamics



Workshop 10: Internationalization of Higher Education in the Gulf: Reality or Fantasy?



Workshop 12: Enhancing the Gulf States Security against Hybrid Threats: Building Resilience and Regional Cooperation within GCC



Participants at the Opening Ceremony



Gulf-EU Policy Roundtable Program: EU–Gulf Cooperation: Connectivity, Security, and Peacebuilding

Organized by the
Gulf Research Center

July 23, 2025



Participants of the Gulf-EU Policy Roundtable on the sidelines of the 15th Gulf Research Meeting in Cambridge



On the sidelines of the 15th Annual Gulf Research Meeting in Cambridge, the Gulf Research Center (GRC) convened a high-level Gulf–EU Policy Roundtable to assess pathways for advancing cooperation between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the European Union (EU). The roundtable brought together senior officials, diplomats, and experts from leading institutions across the Gulf and Europe to address pressing regional challenges and opportunities for enhanced collaboration.

Opening remarks were delivered by **Dr. Abdulaziz Sager**, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC); **H.E. Abdelaziz Aluweisheq**, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Negotiations at the GCC; and **H.E. Luigi Di Maio**, EU Special Representative for the Gulf. All three emphasized the urgency of revitalizing the EU-Gulf relationship, particularly in light of the growing complexities in the global order, rising regional instability, and the need for a more structured and mutually beneficial partnership.



Panel I: Connectivity and Trade – Reinforcing EU–Gulf Relations and Regional Stability

Participants explored how regional connectivity can serve as a foundation for economic diversification and strategic resilience. Infrastructure initiatives like the

India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) were seen as transformative for supply chain security and trade route diversification. Recommendations included enhancing port infrastructure, expanding rail connectivity, digitizing customs procedures, and implementing 'single window' systems to streamline trade documentation.

There was a strong call to embed sustainability into connectivity strategies. Green infrastructure, renewable energy corridors, and cross-border hydrogen pipelines were highlighted as critical components of future EU-GCC infrastructure cooperation. Public-private partnerships and foreign direct investment (FDI) incentives were viewed as essential tools for financing these large-scale projects.

The conversation also touched on trade diplomacy. Experts underscored the importance of moving beyond traditional bilateral trade models toward more flexible, multi-aligned strategies that engage emerging markets in Africa and Asia. While discussions around the long-standing EU-GCC Free Trade Agreement (FTA) remain unresolved, participants emphasized the need to overcome regulatory barriers, reduce protectionist tendencies, and build more inclusive and rules-based frameworks for trade and investment.

Developing secure and harmonized digital infrastructure was seen as a strategic priority. Establishing joint cybersecurity protocols, protecting intellectual property rights, and promoting shared digital standards were seen as essential to protecting supply chains and reducing compliance costs.





Panel II: Conflict Resolution, Security, and Defense Cooperation – Aligning EU–GCC Tools and Priorities

The second panel focused on the evolving security landscape across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and the Red Sea corridor. Participants discussed the growing complexity of regional threats, from conventional military risks to cyberattacks, and highlighted the limitations of relying solely on U.S. security guarantees. In this context, they called for building a more autonomous and issue-specific EU–GCC security partnership.

Maritime security cooperation, early warning systems, and crisis response mechanisms were identified as practical entry points for deepening strategic collaboration. The panel emphasized the need to enhance institutional innovation, including the creation of EU–GCC intelligence-sharing platforms and joint operational centers capable of responding swiftly to hybrid and conventional threats.

One of the key challenges identified was the EU's limited understanding of GCC institutional structures and regional priorities. This knowledge gap has often hindered the effectiveness of EU engagement in the region. Greater efforts are needed to build mutual awareness and tailor policy tools accordingly.

Finally, the panel underlined the importance of investing in coordinated mediation and peacebuilding strategies. Drawing on frameworks like the Arab Peace Initiative and EU diplomatic mechanisms, participants stressed the need to develop flexible, legally sound mediation models that support peace efforts in regional flashpoints such as Yemen, Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria. Building practical mediation skills and professional training programs was seen as essential to ensuring that diplomatic ambitions translate into durable outcomes.





Escalation and Diplomacy: Gulf Perspectives on the Israel-Iran War

Webinar Summary & Key Outcomes

July 3, 2025



On June 30, 2025, the Gulf Research Center (GRC) hosted a webinar titled "Escalation and Diplomacy: Gulf Perspectives on the Israel-Iran War." The session brought together GRC experts and analysts to examine the implications of the recent Iran-Israel conflict, focusing on the potential repercussions for the Gulf region and broader Middle East. Speakers included **Dr. Abdulaziz Sager**, Chairman of the GRC; **Prof. Giacomo Luciani**, Trustee and a Founding Member of the Gulf Research Center Foundation Geneva; **Dr. Mustafa Alani**, Director of Security and Defense Studies at the GRC; **Dr. John Sfakianakis**, Chief Economist and Head of Economic Research at the GRC; and **Prof. Saleh Al-Khathlan**, Senior Advisor at the GRC. **Dr. Christian Koch**, Director of Research at the GRC, moderated the webinar.

The webinar covered six themes:

1. Gulf states' diplomatic and strategic positioning in light of recent regional events
2. Assessment of the Israel-Iran military exchange and nuclear implications
3. Impact on oil markets and fiscal stability in the Gulf
4. The limits of external mediation and the need for regional engagement
5. Prospects for GCC-led diplomacy and security frameworks
6. Lessons for nuclear non-proliferation and geopolitical changes

The discussions assessed military outcomes, regional stability, diplomatic engagement, and the shifting balance of power in light of Iran's nuclear program and the Gulf's strategic position. Dr. Abdulaziz Sager emphasized that the Gulf states condemned the Israeli aggression and its actions under international law but remain cautious toward Iran, particularly its nuclear ambitions. He highlighted the importance of diplomacy and reaffirmed the Kingdom's stance on the two-state solution in the Israel-Palestine conflict as a precondition of Saudi Arabia's normalization with Israel. Dr. Sager also pointed out that foreign military operations, especially on Gulf territory (i.e., Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar), are unacceptable and undermine sovereignty. In addition, he asserted the GCC's opposition to regime change in Iran, stressing that such matters must be resolved internally by the Iranian people. He expressed a Saudi willingness to mediate between Iran and the US, citing historical



efforts such as that of Russia and Ukraine, but called for Iran to abandon threatening rhetoric and militia-based regional influence.

Prof. Giacomo Luciani emphasized that oil prices are more influenced by speculation than real geopolitical disruptions. Therefore, markets remained relatively stable during the recent crisis. He stated that OPEC+ dynamics may shift post-conflict with Saudi Arabia increasing oil production, aiming to lower prices and undercut high-cost producers, especially in the US. Arguing that issues of nuclear enrichment and proliferation are likely to dominate much of the agenda in the coming period, he advocated for a collective and regional approach to nuclear enrichment, including Iran, to prevent proliferation crises.

Dr. Mustafa Alani evaluated the military operation against Iran's nuclear facilities, claiming that Israel achieved around 90% of its objectives. He underlined the fact that the operation was not put together at the last minute but had, in fact, been in preparation for about 10 years backed by intense intelligence planning from both Israel and the US. Despite this, Iran's broader nuclear ambitions remain unresolved. Dr. Alani dismissed any suggestion that Iran was close to nuclear weapon capability, yet affirmed the program was military in intent. He also questioned Iran's ability to recover quickly under the threat of continued strikes from the US and Israel, despite Iran's surviving leadership structures. He then noted how the GCC's influence over the nuclear dimension remains minimal, although its strategic alignment will matter in the post-conflict phase. Dr. Alani also highlighted the irony of two nuclear-armed states joining forces to attack a non-nuclear state in order to prevent it from acquiring nuclear weapons.

Dr. John Sfakianakis observed that global financial markets are extremely desensitized to the Middle East's unpredictable circumstances unless it directly impacts supply chains. For example, he noted the disconnect between economic analysts and Middle East conflicts except in cases involving global escalation or nuclear

risk. He mentioned that high oil prices could benefit Saudi's fiscal situation, particularly in funding its Vision 2030 projects, though unpredictable circumstances remain a concern. Dr. Sfakianakis warned that the war could affect the GCC's international image as a stable, emerging hub of soft power and neutrality.

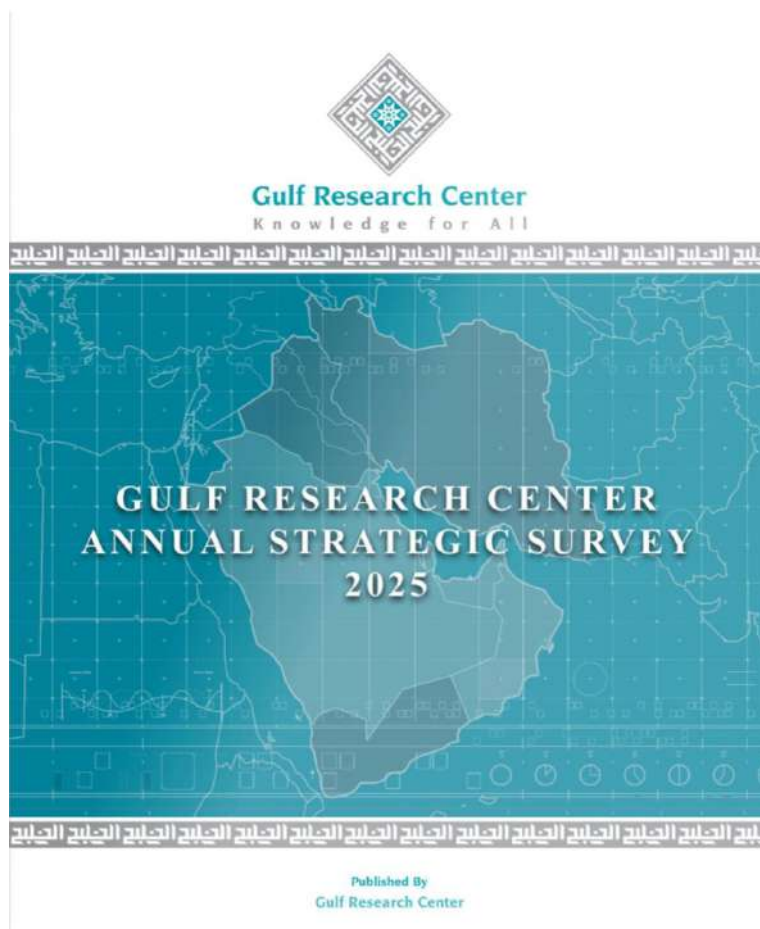
Prof. Saleh Al-Khathlan labeled the conflict the most dangerous since the 2003 Iraq War due to its regional implications. He argued that both Israel and Iran emerged from the conflict politically weakened, presenting the GRC with the golden opportunity to pursue constructive engagement. He outlined a three-track response: opposition to Iran's nuclear armament, renewed diplomatic outreach to Iran, and stronger political pressure on Israel over its destabilizing regional policies. Dr. Al-Khathlan argued that strategic decisions often rely on perception, not just facts, and that the Gulf must be active in shaping both.

Overall, the webinar conveyed a sense that the GCC states must use their diplomatic leverage and position of economic influence in shaping the post-conflict landscape. This would include:

- **Reinvesting in Multilateral Diplomacy:** The GCC is encouraged to actively pursue confidence-building frameworks with Iran and other neighbours, especially around nuclear risk and military transparency.
- **Reasserting Commitment to a Two-State Solution:** Normalization with Israel must be tied to concrete advances toward Palestinian statehood.
- **Balancing Energy Diplomacy with Stability:** While oil price gains benefit fiscal goals, Gulf producers are advised to manage perception by reinforcing their commitment to global stability.
- **Shaping Strategic Narrative:** With Iran and Israel both politically weakened, the GCC has an opportunity to shape the next phase of regional order through proactive engagement and multilateral alignment.



GRC's Main Publication of July 2025:
The 2025 Annual Strategic Survey



The Gulf Research Center was pleased to announce the release of its 2025 Annual Strategic Survey at the closing session of the Gulf Research Meeting held on July 24, 2025. This flagship publication offers critical insights into the Gulf region's diplomatic engagement, security landscape, economic transformation, and international partnerships. The survey provides a distinctly Gulf perspective on regional and global challenges, authored by leading experts and scholars.

The Annual Strategic Survey is structured in three sections: the first provides a review of key regional developments during 2024/2025; the second examines thematic focus issues of strategic relevance to the Gulf; and the third explores the region's evolving relationships with key global territories.

Read the full publication [here](#).

Below you will find a content overview of the main chapters included in this edition.



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The Regional Security Environment in 2025
Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman



The Gulf's Evolving Role in the Global Order
Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research, Executive Manager of the GRC Foundation Brussels



Security and Defense Issues
Dr. Mustafa Alani, Senior Advisor & Director of the Security and Defense Research Program



The Future of Reshaping Gulf Economies
Dr. John Sfakianakis, Chief Economist and Program Director - Economic Research



Multipolar Energy Futures: Navigating Transition, Security, and Competition
Prof. Giacomo Luciani, Member of the Board of Trustees

Section II: Focus Issues



The GCC and Regional Conflicts: A Shared Vision and Individual Actions
Prof. Saleh Al-Khatlan, Senior Advisor



Preparing for COP30: GCC Climate Diplomacy and Green Industrial Policy.
Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Director of the Environmental Security & Sustainability Research Program



Pillars of Arab Strength: Egypt-Gulf Relations Amidst Regional Uncertainty
Jamal Amin Hammam, Publishing Manager, Araa Magazine Editor-in-Chief



Maritime Flashpoints and Strategic Chokepoints: Securing the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Strait of Hormuz
Layla Ali, Senior Research Associate



Maritime Flashpoints and Strategic Chokepoints: Securing the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Strait of Hormuz
Layla Ali, Senior Research Associate



Gulf States and the New Global Middle: Strategic Autonomy in a Fragmenting Order
The Arabian Gulf and the Rise of Strategic Middle Powers
Hannan Alghamdi, Researcher

"Beyond Labour Nationalization: Building a Skilled, Inclusive, and Sustainable GCC Workforce"



Gulf Labour Markets, Migration and Population (GLMM) Programme



Cultural Diplomacy: The Enduring Cornerstone of Arab Gulf Soft Power
Dr. Zaid Ali Al Fadeil, Director of the Cultural and Media Program



Future-Proofing Security: Trends in Gulf Defense Procurement and Strategic Capabilities
Rafael Hernández de Santiago, Senior Researcher

Section III: Global Territories



Diplomacy and Deals: The Evolving U.S.-GCC Partnership
Annah Mosly, Researcher



Strategic Realignments in Gulf-Asia Relations
Layla Ali, Senior Research Associate



Gulf-EU Relations: Strategic Dialogue in a Shifting Global Order
Houda Barrong, Researcher



The GCC and Africa: Strategic Investment, Security, and Food Sovereignty
Michael William Wilson, Researcher



New Horizons: The Emerging Gulf-Latin America Partnership
Hannan Alghamdi, Researcher



The Gulf Research Center (GRC) continues to provide in-depth analysis and thought leadership on key regional and global developments. Our latest publications in March cover a wide range of topics, from U.S. foreign policy under Trump's second term to Saudi Arabia's evolving diplomatic role in global affairs. We also explore sustainable development in the Gulf, Russia's repositioning in the Middle East, and Gulf relations with Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

Below are some of our most recent works:

Commentary & Analyses



Gulf Research Center
Knowledge for All

**The End of Ambiguity:
A Global Call for a Two-State Solution**

Amnah Mosly
July 2025



Gulf Research Center
Knowledge for All

**Margins of Power: The EU's Crisis of Strategic
Autonomy and Relevance**

Houda Barroug
July 2025



Gulf Research Center
Knowledge for All

**Turning Point or Setback? The Future of
GCC-Iran Relations**

Layla Ali
July 2025

[The End of Ambiguity: A Global Call for a Two-State Solution](#)

Amnah Mosly
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[Margins of Power: The EU's Crisis of Strategic Autonomy and Relevance](#)

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[Turning Point or Setback? The Future of GCC-Iran Relations](#)

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Gulf Research Center
Knowledge for All

**The United Nations at 80: Reforming Global
Governance and Arab Inclusion**

Mohammad S. Alzoubi
Researcher at GRC



Gulf Research Center
Knowledge for All

**The Danish Mandate: Navigating Complexity in a
Shifting European Landscape**

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[The United Nations at 80: Reforming Global Governance and Arab Inclusion](#)

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[The Danish Mandate: Navigating Complexity in a Shifting European Landscape](#)

Houda Barroug
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Gulf Research Center
Knowledge for All

**Strategic Implications of the
Development of Duqm Port in Oman:
New Avenue for Japan-Oman
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Kenta Aoki
May 2025

[Strategic Implications of the Development of Duqm Port in Oman: New Avenue for Japan-Oman Cooperation](#)

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Commentary & Analyses



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BRICS in Rio: Expansion, Absence and the Gulf's Calculated Engagement

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Selected Arabic Articles



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[Failure of security and military solutions in Sweden](#)

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[Disarmament of the PKK: An Analysis of the Positions of Kurdish Groups in the Middle East](#)

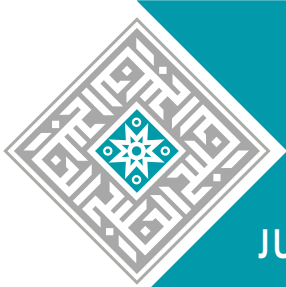
Rasha Al Azzawi
July 2025

Araa



Issue #211 (July 2025)

[The Future of Armed Militias and Political Islam in the Arab World](#)



Country Updates & Trade Reports



Canada - GCC Relations
Gulf Research Center
July 2025



Malaysia - GCC Relations
Gulf Research Center
July 2025

You can browse more of our country updates and trade reports [here](#).

Country Updates and Trade Reports

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Country Updates

The Gulf Research Center (GRC) routinely produces updates on the relationship between various international states and the GCC countries. These overviews present a brief outlook on the domestic political and foreign policy development of a given country, in addition to reflecting the diplomatic, economic, and foreign relations with the six GCC countries. References are also provided to recent literature on the relationship, economic and trade data and well as GRC links to further resources. In addition, these profiles are regularly updated in order to assess the impact of global events on the specific country, and in turn its relations with the Gulf. Information is gathered from government websites and major news channels and combined with the GRC's analysis.

| Title | Author | Topics |
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Gulf Labour Markets, Migration, and Population (GLMM) Programme



GLMM

The Gulf Labour Markets, Migration, and Population Programme (GLMM) is an international, independent, non-partisan, non-profit programme established in 2010 and is hosted and supported by the Gulf Research Center. The programme provides data, analyses, and recommendations contributing to the improvement of the understanding and management of Gulf labour migration, population, and labour markets, engaging with and respecting the viewpoints of all stakeholders. Visit the website [here](#).

Workshop: Highly Skilled Migrants and the GCC Countries: Drivers, Perceptions, Policies, and New Dynamics

GLMM organized a very successful workshop on 23 and 24 July 2025 in the framework of the 15th Gulf Research Meeting which took place in Cambridge, UK: [“Highly Skilled Migrants and the GCC Countries Drivers, Perceptions, Policies, and New Dynamics”](#), directed by Dr Françoise De Bel-Air and Prof Anju Paul. From 55 applications received, a total of 20 were selected and 16 papers were eventually presented and discussed in depth:

- Anushka Bose: Nationality, Racialized: Imperial Legacies and High-Skilled Migration Policy Reform in the GCC
- Ameena Almeer: Step-Migration Trajectories of Female Pakistani Migrants in Qatar
- Mohammad Al-Mailam: Who Comes and Who Goes? Explaining Citizens' Migration Preferences in the Gulf
- Hee Eun Kwon: Transnational Ties and Temporary Lives: Korean MNCs and Skilled Migration to the Gulf
- Shroug Alotaibi: Navigating the Workforce of Vision 2030: Highly Skilled Migrants in Saudi Arabia
- Mohammad Siddiqui and Manal Nadeem: Roots and Routes: South Asian Immigrants in the UAE and Emergent Public Opinion and Policy Themes
- Michael Ewers, Bethany Shockley, and Salma Thani: Social Networks and Skilled Migration: Navigating Belonging, Career Mobility, and Community in the UAE
- Sanaa Ashour: Comparative Perspectives on Reforms to Long-term Residency and Citizenship Policies in GCC States



- Sebastian Rajan and Varsha Joshi: Evolving Migration Patterns: The Rise of Highly Skilled Migrants in the India-GCC Corridor
- Sharique Umar: Intermediary Spaces in Global Migration: Second-Generation Migrants in Saudi Arabia and the UAE
- Yuree Noh, Bethany Shockley and Simone Marsilio: Fostering Acceptance of Skilled Migrants in the GCC: Insights from the UAE
- Gennaro Errichiello: Second generation highly skilled Pakistanis in Dubai. Everyday integration and future trajectories
- Areej Jamal, Nasra Shah and Richa Shivakoti: Factors influencing future mobility: A case study of South Asian Migrants in Saudi Arabia
- Froilan Malit and Mouawiya Alawad: Citizenship Penalty in the Global South: Highly Skilled (Non-Western) Migrants, Mobility Pathways, and 'Forced' Stepwise Labor Migration
- Musaab Othman Alkhtib: Experiences of Highly Skilled Residents born in Qatar On the Permanent Residency Law
- Anurag Devkota and Froilan Malit: From Serial to Stepwise Corridor Migration? The Nepali State and Its Shifting Regional 'Brokering' Migration Management from the Gulf to Europe

Workshop: Highly Skilled workers' Onward Migration from the Gulf to the EU and North America: Trends and Patterns of the Global Competition for Talents

On 22 July in Cambridge, UK GLMM organized with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) Regional Programme Gulf States another very successful workshop in the framework of their joint policy research project: [Highly Skilled Migration to the Gulf States: How do GCC Countries Fare in the Global Competition for Talent?](#) The workshop, part of the second phase of the project, focused on the transnational migration patterns of non-Gulf highly skilled workers from the GCC to third countries in the EU and North America, and back. This phase of the project also explored the trends and characteristics of migration from selected European countries to Gulf states (e.g., Germany, France, and the UK). Taking stock of the multiple types (repeated, secondary, serial, onward, stepwise, etc.) and trajectories (linear, circular, lateral, hierarchical, etc.) characterizing such migration, the project seeks to estimate the scale of the phenomenon and analyze the processes, characteristics, and drivers of these movements, seeking to pinpoint whether patterns exist in these movements and their possible differentials according to specific variables, as well as highlight their outcomes on Gulf states and selected destination or transit countries in the EU and North America.

Publication

"Beyond Labour Nationalization: Building a Skilled, Inclusive, and Sustainable GCC Workforce," by Francoise De Bel-Air (Senior Fellow), Gennaro Errichiello (Non-Resident Fellow), Froilan Malit (Senior Associate Researcher), Georges Naufal (Non-Resident Fellow), Mehmet Soytas (Non-Resident Fellow) and Sharique Umar (Non-Resident Intern) at the Gulf Labour Markets, Migration, and Population (GLMM) programme in: [Gulf Research Center Annual Strategic Survey 2025](#), GRC, July 2025, pp. 71-78.



Data

For fifteen years, GLMM has gathered, analyzed, and published official data related to labour and migration from multiple sources of all six GCC states. The database contains more than 1,000 tables.

Particularly interesting additions on the GCC and Saudi Arabia:

- [GCC: Labour force participation rates by nationality \(national/non-national\) and sex in GCC countries \(%\) \(2013-2024\)](#)
- [SA-EMP 1.2 Saudi Arabia: Total employed population by occupation category \(Q1 2021-Q1 2025\)](#)
- [Saudi Arabia: Non-Saudi workers newly registered with the General Organisation for Social Insurance, by occupation category \(Q3 2021-Q1 2025\)](#)
- [Saudi Arabia: Saudi workers newly registered with the General Organisation for Social Insurance, by occupation category \(Q3 2021-Q1 2025\)](#)
- [Saudi Arabia: Non-Saudi employed population by occupation category \(Q1 2021-Q1 2025\)](#)
- [Saudi Arabia: Saudi employed population by occupation category \(Q1 2021-Q2 2024\)](#)
- [Saudi Arabia: Labour Force participation rates by nationality \(Saudi/non-Saudi\), sex and education level \(Q4 2024\)](#)
- [Saudi Arabia: Labour force participation rates by nationality \(Saudi/non-Saudi\) and sex \(Q1 2021-Q4 2024\)](#)
- [Saudi Arabia: Employed population by nationality \(Saudi /non-Saudi\) and sex \(Q1 2017-Q4 2024\)](#)

Country tables

- Access Bahrain Data [here](#)
- Access Kuwait Data [here](#)
- Access Oman Data [here](#)
- Access Qatar Data [here](#)
- Access Saudi Arabia Data [here](#)
- Access UAE Data [here](#)

GCC regional tables

GLMM also constructs unique GCC regional tables based exclusively on the official country data. Access them [here](#).

Contact: Mr. Imco Brouwer: imco.brouwer@grc.net



Environmental Security and Sustainability Program

3 July 2025

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program Director at the Gulf Research Center participated in the fourth virtual meeting with the Africa Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace for the project Alternative Jurisdictions and Instruments of Climate Finance for Africa to discuss the various book chapter outlines by potential authors as well as arrangements for hosting the first workshop for the project in Abu Dhabi.

7 July 2025

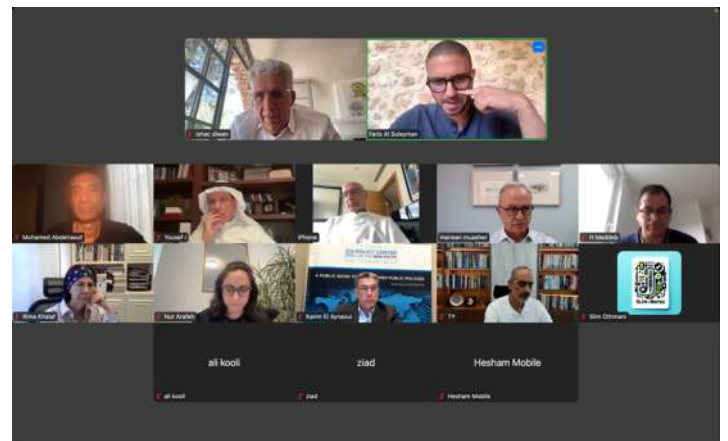
Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program Director at the Gulf Research Center, participated in the monthly coordination meeting for UNEP Major Groups to discuss the various preparations and task forces by Major Groups for the next UNEA-7 in December 2025.

18 July 2025

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program Director at the Gulf Research Center, participated in the fourth virtual meeting with the Africa Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace for the project Alternative Jurisdictions and Instruments of Climate Finance for Africa to discuss the outline for the introduction chapter of the planned book.

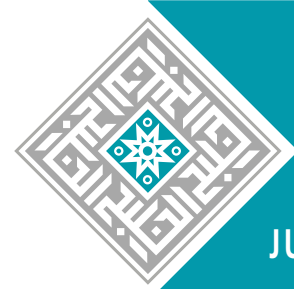
22 July 2025

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program Director at the Gulf Research Center participated in a virtual call of the "Commission on Decarbonization" with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace-Beirut office. The session focused on the evolution of business-government relations in the region, in the context of decarbonization and economic diversification as well as the role of sovereign wealth funds and state-owned companies in the energy transitions of developing countries, particularly the oil rich states of the Gulf.



28 July 2025

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program Director at the Gulf Research Center participated in a virtual call with the UN Science Policy Business Forum to discuss possible cooperation in future international forums such as COP30 and UNEA-7.



Cultural & Media Program



Publications

July 3, 2025



The GRC's Cultural & Media Program published a paper titled "Cultural Resistance: The Battle for Palestinian Memory and Identity." Access the full paper [here](#).

July 7, 2025



The GRC's Cultural & Media Program published a paper titled "Arab-Kurdish Reconciliation" by Sihank Dibo. Access the full paper [here](#).

July 16, 2025



The GRC's Cultural & Media Program published a paper titled "What is the Shape of the State in the Third Millennium?" Access the full paper [here](#).

GRC Podcast Activities

July 2, 2025

The Gulf Research Center Podcast presented a short episode titled "Can One City Change the World?" Watch the episode [here](#).

July 8, 2025

The Gulf Research Center Podcast presented a short episode titled "From Entertainment to Influence... Saudi Sports as Soft Power." Watch the episode [here](#).

July 10, 2025



The GRC Podcast hosted Dr. Ihsan Al-Shammari in an episode titled "The Rising Influence of Armed Groups in Iraq and How They Have Become a Parallel Entity to the State," moderated by Dr. Zaid Alfadeil, Director of the GRC's Culture and Media Program. Access the full episode [here](#).



July 13, 2025



The GRC Podcast presented an episode entitled "Women as Agents in Confronting Violence" featuring Dr. Alyssa Jaloul and moderated by Dr. Zaid Alfadeil, Director of the GRC's Culture and Media Program. Access the full episode [here](#).

July 14, 2025



The Gulf Dialogue Lab presented a Cultural Stance Seminar titled "How Can the Growing Western Awareness of the Palestinian Cause Be Leveraged?" Access the report [here](#) and watch the episode here.

July 23, 2025



Part of the Diplomatic Experiences series, The GRC Podcast hosted former ambassador H.E. Dr. Saud Zaidan in an episode entitled "A Tale of Two Generations...and Lessons in Politics and Culture." The episode was moderated by Dr. Zaid Alfadeil, Director of the GRC's Culture and Media Program. Access the full episode [here](#).





July 23, 2025



Dr. Zaid Alfadeil, Director of the GRC's Culture and Media Program, participated in a panel discussion organized by Masarat (Jordanian Masarat for Development and Progress), entitled "The Middle East and the Options of the Phase."

The sixteenth session of the Conference of Parties (COP16) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) decided to grant observer status to the Gulf Research Center Foundation, following the recommendation made by the UNCCD secretariat. This accreditation is valid for all sessions of the COP and its Subsidiary Bodies. This is a UN recognition of the GRCF work and activities in the field of environmental protection, climate change, and desertification.

July 11, 2025



The GRCF Brussels office received a delegation from the Council for Mediterranean Diplomacy (Diplomeds). The discussion focused on the role of the EU and GCC states in fostering greater stability in the wider MENA region.

July 14, 2025



On July 14, 2025, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), welcomed Dr. Celaledin Duran, Director General of the Center for International Relations and Diplomacy (Milletlerarası İlişkiler ve Diplomasi Merkezi) (MID) in Turkey, along with his colleagues, at the GRC office in Jeddah. Both sides discussed political, economic, and security issues related to Saudi Arabia, the Gulf region, and Turkey. They also explored potential joint research initiatives on these topics.

July 10, 2025



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Mr. Kristijonas Gedvilas, Chief Executive Officer of the European Chamber of Commerce in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the GRC's office in Riyadh. The meeting covered areas of mutual interest on EU-GCC relations.

July 14, 2025





July 8, 2025



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Brigadier General Zhu Jie, Defense Attaché of the People's Republic of China to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the GRC's office in Riyadh. The meeting included a discussion on recent regional developments and areas of mutual interest.

July 7, 2025



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Mr. Alexis Konstantopoulos, Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the GRC's office in Riyadh. The meeting included a discussion on recent regional developments and areas of mutual interests.

July 6, 2025



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Dr. Sebastian Mitrache, Ambassador of Romania to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on July 6, 2025. The meeting reviewed areas of mutual interest, as well as recent regional development.

July 6, 2025



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Ms. Kjersti Tromsdal, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the GRC's office in Riyadh. The meeting reviewed areas of mutual interest, as well as recent regional developments.

July 6, 2025



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Mr. Hans Peter van der Woude, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the GRC's office in Riyadh. During the meeting, they discussed recent regional developments and areas of mutual interest.



GRC media participation can be accessed [here](#), at the GRC official YouTube channel.

Reflections on the Official Opening of #GRM2025



Dr. Hana Jalloul Muro, Member of the European Parliament (Spain), Vice-Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs, and rapporteur for Saudi Arabia, shared her impressions of the **Opening Ceremony of the 15th Annual Gulf Research Meeting (#GRM2025)** at the University of Cambridge, organized by the Gulf Research Center:

"A true pleasure to attend the Official Opening Ceremony of the 15th Annual Gulf Research Meeting #GRM2025 organized by @Gulf_Research at the University of Cambridge.

Keynote speeches by H.H. Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, Dr. @AbdulazizOSager, and Dr. Christian Kotch set the stage for #GRM2025.

This was followed by an enriching panel discussion featuring @EroComfort, @EUSR_Gulf, @abuhamad1, and @majedalansari, which addressed key challenges facing the Gulf region."

Follow this thread to learn more about #GRM2025.

[View tweet here](#)



H.E. Luigi Di Maio, European Union Special Representative for the Gulf region since June 2023, described his experience at the **15th Annual Gulf Research Meeting (#GRM2025)** in Cambridge as exceptionally rewarding:

"A great pleasure to be in Cambridge and have such excellent exchanges at the 15th Annual Gulf Research Meeting (#GRM2025) organized by the Gulf Research Center,"

In accompanying LinkedIn remarks, he shared that he participated in the **opening panel** and co-chaired a high-level **EU-GCC roundtable** alongside Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, H.E. Abdelaziz Aluwaisheg, Comfort Ero, and Hana Jalloul. The discussions focused on shared regional priorities like trade, connectivity, and security.



Qatar's MOFA Covers Participation in #GRM2025

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar highlighted the participation of **Dr. Majed Al Ansari**, Advisor to the Prime Minister and Official Spokesperson, in a panel at the **15th Gulf Research Meeting** at the University of Cambridge. He addressed key regional challenges and Qatar's diplomatic role.

[Read More](#)

Bahrain's Derasat Joins Global Experts at GRM 2025

Abdulla Mohamed Alahmed, Executive Director of the Bahrain Centre for Strategic, International and Energy Studies (Derasat), represented Bahrain at the 15th Gulf Research Meeting, held on 24 July 2025 at the University of Cambridge. He highlighted the need to advance Gulf–Europe cooperation — calling for deeper engagement through trade diplomacy, security collaboration, and structured dialogues linking security with sustainable development.

[Al-Watan News Coverage](#)

[Al-Bilad Press Coverage](#)

KUNA Highlights Kuwaiti Researchers at Gulf Research Meeting in Cambridge

باحثون كويتيون يثرون ملتقى الخليج للأبحاث في (كامبريدج) البريطانية بدراساتهم العلمية

LOC 18:24 | 23/07/2025
GMT 15:24



صورة جماعة للباحثين الكويتيين

In an article titled "Kuwaiti Researchers Enrich Gulf Research Meeting at the University of Cambridge with Their Scientific Contributions," the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) spotlighted a key workshop at the Gulf Research Meeting (GRM), focusing on the future of

energy in the Gulf region. The session explored the geopolitical and environmental transformations shaping regional and global energy policies.

[Read the full article \(Arabic\)](#)

الرئيسية • سياسة • تقارير • تهمة ازدواجية المعايير تخرج أوروبا في مؤتمر الخليج للأبحاث

احتضنت جامعة كامبريدج النسخة الـ 15 من الملتقى العلمي وسط استياء واضح من السلوك الإسرائيلي في المنطقة

عيسى النহারي، مدير الشؤون السياسية @ES_Nahari | الأربعاء 23 يوليو 2025 16:47



Western Double Standards Critiqued at GRM 2025 by Eisa Nahari (Independent Arabia)

Independent Arabia journalist Eisa Nahari reported on discussions at the 15th Gulf Research Meeting, arguing that debates in the GRM highlighted a perceived double standard in Western approaches to human rights. Analysts at the meeting emphasized how Western policies often differ in their response to similar human rights situations depending on political and strategic interests

[Read the full article here](#)



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager on Al-Ekhbariya: "The New Middle East – Realities and Opportunities"

On July 15, 2025, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, appeared on Al-Ekhbariya Channel's program #Huna_AlRiyadh, in an episode titled:



"The New Middle East: Realities and Opportunities"
(الشرق الأوسط الجديد.. الوقائع والفرص).

[Watch the full episode](#)



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager Featured in Crisis Group's 30th Anniversary Campaign

In a milestone video marking **30 years** of the **International Crisis Group's mission** – "Authoritative. Global. Essential." – Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, appears discussing the organization's imperative role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

[Watch the video on X](#)



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager on Iraq 24: "Neighbors as a Gateway to Prosperity, Not Conflict"

On July 8, 2025, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, appeared on the program "Al-Jar Al-Sabea" with Ali Kazan on Iraq 24. The episode, titled

"Neighbors: A Gateway to Prosperity, Not a Door to Conflict" (الجوار فرصة للازدهار وليس بابًا للصراع), explored the potential of regional cooperation over confrontation.

[Watch the full episode](#)



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager on Al Arabiya: "A Sudden Shift by Khamenei"

On July 8, 2025, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, appeared on Al Arabiya's program #ساعة حوار (Hour of Dialogue) in an episode titled:

"A Sudden Shift by Khamenei" (تحول مفاجئ لـ خامنئي), offering expert insight into recent developments in Iranian leadership dynamics.

[Watch the full episode](#)



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JULY 2025



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