

NE Insights

CONFLICTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

18 Oct 2025

INTRODUCTION

What's happening in the Middle East?

Tensions in the Middle East are heightened since the start of the Israel-Hamas conflict in October 2023.

On 30 September, the White House released Trump's 20-point peace plan that was negotiated with the support of other Arab countries. A major development came on 9 October 2025, when Israel and Hamas agreed to the first phase of the peace plan, which included a ceasefire and hostage release deal. The agreement marked a significant step towards ending nearly two years of war in Gaza. Since the ceasefire agreement, Hamas has handed back 20 surviving hostages to Israel in exchange for over 1,900 Palestinian prisoners as part of a reciprocal exchange. However, challenges remain, including the return of the remains of Israeli hostages, reconstruction and governance of Gaza, and Hamas disarmament.

Since the start of the conflict in October 2023, intense fighting in Gaza has led to countless civilian casualties and a dire humanitarian crisis. The impediment of humanitarian aid had caused food insecurity, displacement, and limited access to medical services. The suffering of innocent civilians underscores the urgency of a lasting peace solution between the two countries.

In June 2025, hostilities between Israel and Iran had intensified. The fight had drawn in Iran-backed groups such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen. Although tensions have somewhat eased following the ceasefire, concerns of a broader regional spillover persist.



SINGAPORE'S POSITION ON THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICTS

**Singapore condemns
all acts of terrorism
and wanton violence.**

Terrorist acts cannot be justified by any rationale, regardless of problems or historical grievances.

Singapore condemns all acts of terrorism and violence. Such acts cannot be justified by any rationale, regardless of historical grievances.

The scale of civilian deaths and the severe humanitarian situation in Gaza remains deeply concerning. Singapore continues to call for the protection of civilians and the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance. The recent US-brokered ceasefire and the release of hostages are important steps towards de-escalation. Singapore urges all parties to uphold the ceasefire and work towards a lasting peace.



For Singapore, we should maintain our consistent, principled approach. We should continue to have effective bridges and access to all the stakeholders. We should, wherever possible, within the limits of our capability, be constructive, reliable partners for peace, for development and long-term reconciliation between two peoples who have been through unimaginable horrors in the last two years.

- Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan's Oral Reply to Parliamentary Questions on the "Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict", 15 October 2025

To support the call for peace and security and humanitarian aid, Singapore has:

October 2023

Supported UN General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution for a humanitarian truce.



November 2023

Supported UN Security Council Resolution for the immediate, safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance to Gaza.

Deployed a Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) Multi-Role Tanker Transport (MRTT) to deliver second tranche of aid to Gaza.



December 2023

Co-sponsored and voted for an UNGA resolution that called for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza.



March 2024

Deployed RSAF C-130 transport aircraft for its first airdrop operation into Gaza to deliver the third tranche of humanitarian aid.



May 2024

Supported UN Security Council Resolution that recommended for the admission of Palestine as a UN member but was vetoed.



October 2025

Supported the first phase of the US-brokered ceasefire agreement, which includes a ceasefire and the release of surviving hostages, marking a key step towards de-escalation.



September 2025

MFA reaffirmed support for a negotiated two-state solution as the only viable path to lasting peace. May recognise Palestine under appropriate conditions, and will review its stance as the situation evolves.



August 2025

Deployed RSAF C-130 transport aircraft for second airdrop operation into Gaza, delivering the ninth tranche of humanitarian aid.



July 2025

Delivered Singapore's National Statement at the High-Level Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution at the United Nations in New York



September 2024

Voted for an UN Security Council Resolution for Israel to end its actions in the Palestinian territories.



“The SAF stands ready to support humanitarian assistance into Gaza. This is one way to show how the whole community rallies together to show compassion and shows how it brings together all the resources and Singaporeans...This reflects the SAF's operational readiness, commitment and professionalism to aid those in need,...”

- Senior Minister of State for Defence Mr Zaqy Mohamad
at the send-off ceremony of the ninth tranche of humanitarian aid
for Gaza, 12 August 2025

KEY REFLECTIONS FOR SINGAPORE

Security threats are real and can happen to any country.

The long-drawn and ongoing Russia-Ukraine and Middle East conflicts remind us that even as we enjoy the peace and security here in Singapore, we must never take national security and social harmony for granted.

All Singaporeans can play a part in defending Singapore.

We must ourselves protect our home and safeguard our way of life.

A strong and capable Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) will protect our sovereignty and national interests, and deter potential adversaries.

National Service (NS), as the bedrock of our fighting force and national security, remains critical for Singapore's continued survival and success.

In this complex threat landscape, all Singaporeans must play an active role in Total Defence and SGSecure to protect Singapore and our shared way of life.

Total Defence: There's a Part for Everyone

Since the launch of Total Defence in 1984, Total Defence has rallied Singaporeans together in responding to challenges that threaten Singapore's independence and well-being, such as terrorism, SARS, economic downturn and more recently the COVID-19 pandemic.



SGSecure is Singapore's community response to the terrorism threat. It is a national movement to sensitise, train, and mobilise everyone in Singapore to play a part to prevent and deal with a terrorist attack.



Find out more on Total Defence here:
<https://go.gov.sg/totaldefencesg>



Find out more on SGSecure here:
<https://go.gov.sg/-sgsecure>

We must not let external events affect Singapore's racial and religious peace.



Singapore Red Cross supports relief efforts for affected communities in Gaza. Image: Singapore Red Cross

The mutual trust and respect among different races and religions in Singapore have been built over many years by generations of Singaporeans.

We must treasure the racial and religious peace that we enjoy in Singapore and not take it for granted.

The ongoing conflicts in the Middle East could evoke concerns and emotions among people. Thankfully, most Singaporeans responded in a measured and positive manner by being respectful and constructive in our dialogues. Singaporeans also came together to donate generously towards the relief efforts.

Let's continue to stay united and protect our precious cohesion and harmony.



"External events can pull our population in different directions and make it more challenging for the government and society to hold together in a united way to continue to move our society forward... We have made tremendous progress in building racial and religious harmony over the last 50 years... But it requires constant attention, constant effort, and the experiences of other countries, much more advanced than us, compared to where we started, (to) offer us cautionary tales."

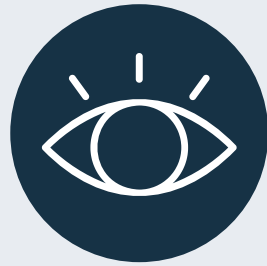
- Then Minister for Home Affairs and Law Mr K Shanmugam,
during his opening speech at the IPS-MHA forum on non-violent ethnic hostilities,
1 July 2024

We must also be mindful of online attempts to rile up emotions and sow distrust in our society. Disinformation targeted at particular segments of society can whip up communal tensions.

How can we stay vigilant against disinformation:



Be discerning to comments aimed to stir up discord amongst different communities in Singapore.



Be aware of current affairs and tactics used to spread fake news.



Use social media responsibly, such as verifying information before reacting to or sharing content.



Find out more about Foreign Influence and disinformation here:
<https://go.gov.sg/foreigninterference>



Source - Pexels

We must stay ready and prepared for uncertainties and possible disruptions.

There are global concerns that a drawn out conflict could introduce risks to the two vital shipping choke-points in the Middle East, disrupt supply chains, and increase shipping and freight costs.

Singapore will continue to adapt ourselves to evolving global circumstances - enhancing our economic resilience by diversifying our sources of supplies, strengthening our supply chain strategies and investing in connectivity infrastructure to keep trade flows going and minimise supply chain disruptions.

Together, we can overcome any disruptions or challenges that come our way.

Find out more about Singapore's economic resilience strategies on SG101:
<https://go.gov.sg/sg101economy>





CONCLUSION

Our future is built upon our shared values, experiences and aspirations as Singaporeans – let's cherish the long-standing bonds amongst our people and stay as one united people to keep Singapore, our home, safe and strong.



Find out more about the conflicts in the Middle East here:
<https://go.gov.sg/sg101conflictmiddleeast>



Any feedback on this issue?
Let us know through
<https://go.gov.sg/neinsights>
or email us at nexus@defence.gov.sg.

