

Middle East Flashpoints: Hard-Hitting Questions on Recent Geopolitical Shifts

Middle East News · Answer Key · 12 Questions

1. What significant diplomatic event occurred in March 2023 involving Iran and Saudi Arabia, brokered by China, which aimed to re-establish relations after a seven-year rift?

- A) They signed a comprehensive free trade agreement.
- B) They agreed to reestablish diplomatic ties and reopen embassies.**
- C) They formed a joint military alliance against external threats.
- D) They announced a unified currency for regional trade.

2. In May 2026, the UAE announced its withdrawal from OPEC and OPEC+ and launched coordinated military strikes inside Iran with US and Israeli forces. What was the primary stated reason for this drastic policy shift?

- A) To secure new oil exploration rights in the Persian Gulf.
- B) As a response to Tehran's sustained campaign of missile and drone attacks against Emirati territory.**
- C) To gain a competitive advantage in renewable energy technology.
- D) To fulfill a new defense treaty with Russia and China.

3. Which nation's civil war, ongoing since 2014, continues to be a major humanitarian crisis with millions in need of aid, and has seen Houthi rebels repeatedly attack ships transiting the Red Sea in response to Israel's war on Hamas?

- A) Syria
- B) Iraq
- C) Yemen**
- D) Lebanon

4. Egypt has launched a massive \$15 billion 'New Delta' project aimed at transforming desert land into arable territory. What is a key objective of this initiative, aligned with Egypt's Vision 2030 strategy?

- A) To establish a new luxury tourism destination.
- B) To reclaim desert land for cultivation amid growing population pressure and limited arable land.**
- C) To build a high-speed rail network connecting to neighboring countries.
- D) To develop advanced technological research and development centers.

5. As of February 2026, Iraq continues to face challenges in its recovery six years after the war against the Islamic State. What is a significant internal political challenge the Iraqi government is grappling with?

- A) Establishing a unified national currency.
- B) Integrating powerful Shiite militias into the Iraqi security forces.**
- C) Resolving border disputes with Turkey.
- D) Developing a comprehensive national education system.

6. In May 2026, Israel's Cabinet approved a deal for a ceasefire in Gaza and the release of dozens of hostages. What was the duration of this initial ceasefire agreement?

- A) Ten days
- B) Three weeks
- C) Six weeks**
- D) Three months

7. Jordan is facing significant economic challenges, including high unemployment and a high debt-to-GDP ratio. As of 2024, what was the approximate projected unemployment rate in Jordan?

- A) 5%
- B) 12%
- C) 21%**
- D) 35%

8. Following the fall of the Bashar al-Assad regime in December 2024, Syria entered a fragile transition. Who is leading the new transitional government in Syria?

- A) Ahmed al-Sharaa**
- B) Bashar al-Assad
- C) A representative of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)
- D) A UN-appointed interim leader

9. Lebanon is experiencing one of the worst economic collapses in modern history. What was the approximate loss in value of the Lebanese lira between 2023 and early 2024?

- A) Over 50%
- B) Over 75%
- C) Over 98%**
- D) Around 25%

10. In June 2026, Saudi Arabia announced the lifting of a five-year ban on imports from Lebanon. What was the economic significance of this ban prior to its lifting?

A) It had minimal impact on Lebanon's economy.

B) Saudi Arabia was one of Lebanon's leading export markets before the ban.

C) The ban primarily affected luxury goods and tourism.

D) Lebanon had already found alternative major export markets before the ban was lifted.

11. As of February 2026, the conflict in Syria has seen various actors involved. Which Kurdish-led force continues to clash with Turkish-backed factions and Arab tribes in the northeast?

A) The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)

B) The Syrian National Army (SNA)

C) The Free Syrian Army (FSA)

D) The Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG)

12. In the context of the 2026 Iran war, which Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) country, having faced the most attacks, adopted a defiant and forceful posture toward Iran, while Saudi Arabia called for de-escalation?

A) Qatar

B) Oman

C) United Arab Emirates (UAE)

D) Kuwait