

NE Insights

CONFLICTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

8 Oct 2024

INTRODUCTION

What's happening in the Middle East?

Tensions in the Middle East have persisted since the attacks between Israel and Hamas a year ago.

More recently, hostilities between Israel and Iran further heightened tensions in the Middle East. The fight has since drawn in Iran-backed groups such as the Lebanese armed group, Hezbollah.

Thousands of lives, including many women and children, have been killed as a result of these conflicts.

Suggested readings:

Explainer - What is the history of the Israel-Palestinian Conflict?
Straits Times, 1 Oct 2024

What is Hezbollah's role in the Israel-Hamas war?
Straits Times, 25 Aug 2024



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.



“We have consistently advocated for a negotiated two-state solution, that is consistent with the relevant United Nations (UN) Security Council resolutions, because we believe this is the way for Israelis and Palestinians to live side by side in peace and security... As Singapore is a friend to both, Singapore will continue to offer our encouragement and tangible support to both Palestinians and Israelis.”

- Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan's
Oral Reply to Parliamentary Questions on Palestine, 2 July 2024

Singapore is deeply distressed by the increasing civilian casualty toll and deepening humanitarian crisis in the Middle East.

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

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

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

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

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

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

October 2023

November 2023

December 2023

January 2024

March 2024

April 2024

July 2024

September 2024

Extended humanitarian support to civilians in Gaza.

Deployed a Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) aircraft to deliver aid to Gaza.

Deployed two medical personnel from the Singapore Armed Forces to treat casualties from Gaza onboard the French hospital ship FS Dixmude.

Completed airdrop operations for third tranche of humanitarian aid.

Announced Singapore's fourth tranche of humanitarian assistance for Gaza.



“...the mission was complex and the humanitarian needs of the civilians were urgent. ... we demonstrated that the SAF can respond quickly and effectively to contingencies...More importantly, this ability gives confidence to the SAF and Singaporeans at large that Singapore can play a positive role in a troubled World.”

- Speech by Minister for Defence, Dr Ng Eng Hen, at the Overseas Service Medal Presentation Ceremony on 25 Jun 2024

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."

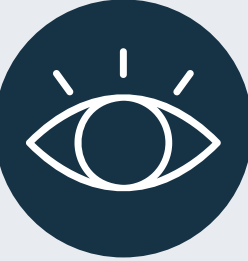
- Minister for Home Affairs and Law Mr K Shanmugam,
during his opening speech at the IPS-MHA forum on non-violent ethnic hostilities,
1 Jul 2024

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.



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.

