

Regional Overview – Middle East 11 June 2018

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June 12, 2018



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Bringing clarity to crisis

Nationwide anti-austerity demonstrations ended in Jordan last week following the withdrawal of a controversial tax bill. In Palestine, on the other hand, riots continued in both Gaza and the West Bank, as did Israeli airstrikes against Hamas. Throughout Turkey, violent groups targeted political offices, especially those of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), in the lead up to the June 24th general elections. In Yemen, intense fighting continued in Hudayda governorate, while in Syria the continued mobilization of both regime and anti-regime forces in the south hints at an upcoming regime offensive should negotiations fail.

In Jordan, the massive nationwide demonstrations have ended as a result of the Prime Minister's resignation in addition to the withdrawal of a controversial austerity bill which would have raised income tax by 5 percent (for more information around this development, see [this recent ACLED piece](#)). However, it is unclear how long this calm will last given that the country's economic problems, which the bill had attempted to address, remain unchanged.

In Palestine, Israeli airstrikes continued to hit the Gaza Strip, although not with the same ferocity as in previous weeks. A number of Palestinians were reportedly killed in clashes with Israeli security forces in both the West Bank and Gaza.

Meanwhile in Turkey, as the June 24th general elections approach, a string of pro-regime violent attacks on political offices occurred in cities across the country. The vast majority of the targeted offices and booths are owned by the HDP, a pro-Kurdish political party accused of having links to the militant Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). In some cases, activists themselves were injured in the attacks, although none reportedly seriously.

In Yemen, Al-Houthi fighters and coalition-backed National Resistance forces, Southern Resistance militias, and Tihama Resistance militias continued to fight intense gun battles in Hudayda governorate, with most clashes occurring in the Ad Durayhimi district located just south of the port city of Hudayda. Both sides reported victories, although actual territorial exchange was limited, and both sides incurred heavy casualties. Pro-Houthi fighters reported

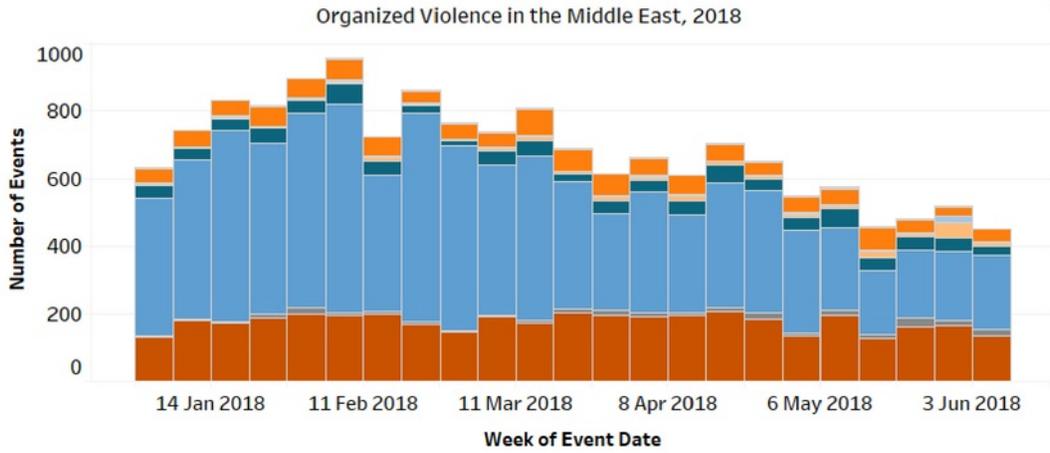
success in the Maton district of Al-Jawf governorate, reportedly claiming to have killed up to 50 anti-Houthi soldiers. Elsewhere in the country, security forces once again started operations against a number of militant factions within the city of Taiz following popular demonstrations that demanded they take action.

In Syria, the Global Coalition and the Syrian Democratic Forces (QSD) moved in on the remaining Islamic State (IS) pockets in al-Hasakeh province. Concurrently, IS fighters attacked regime and loyalist militia positions in Deir ez-Zor province near al-Bokamal, inflicting a large number of casualties. QSD achieved territorial advances in southern al-Hasakeh countryside, closing in on IS-held Dadisha.

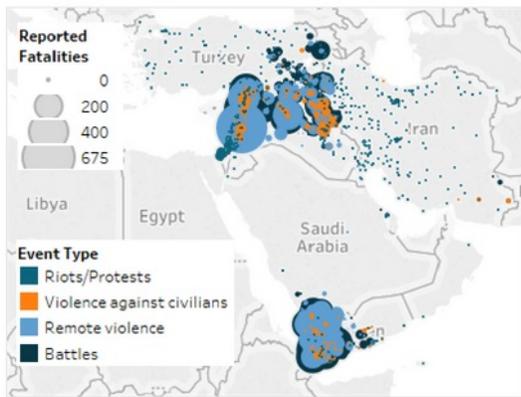
In the west of the country, Syrian regime forces continued to shell areas in northern Hama and southern Idlib provinces. Indirect fire was exchanged between regime and pro-regime forces in western Aleppo city and opposition factions in the northern Aleppo countryside. The continued mobilization of forces by both sides in Dar'a and Quneitra provinces hints at an expected regime offensive should ongoing negotiations for surrender and evacuation deals fail. Already, there are clashes occurring in Dar'a between regime forces and Islamist and rebel fighters.

At the same time, diplomatic tensions are increasing between Iran and Russia due to an agreement made between the latter and Turkey to end the Iranian presence in northern Syria. Up till this moment, Iranian sponsored Hezbollah continues to refuse to withdraw from the fighting.

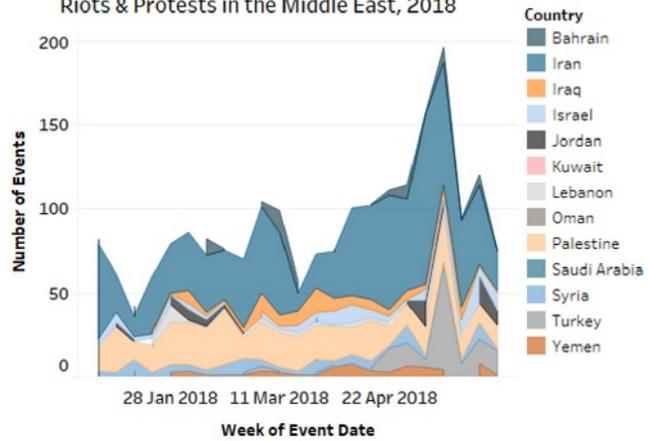
Political Violence & Protest in the Middle East, 2018



Reported Fatalities Stemming from Political Violence & Protests in the Middle East, 2018



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