



# CURRENT EVENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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*Politics and Society in the Middle East*

# NEW COLD WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

## 1. "Saudi" - inaccurately "Sunni" bloc

- maintaining the conservative regimes of the Middle East (mainly Saudis, UAE + Bahrain, Egypt) + Israel

## 2. "Iranian" - inaccurately "Shiite" bloc

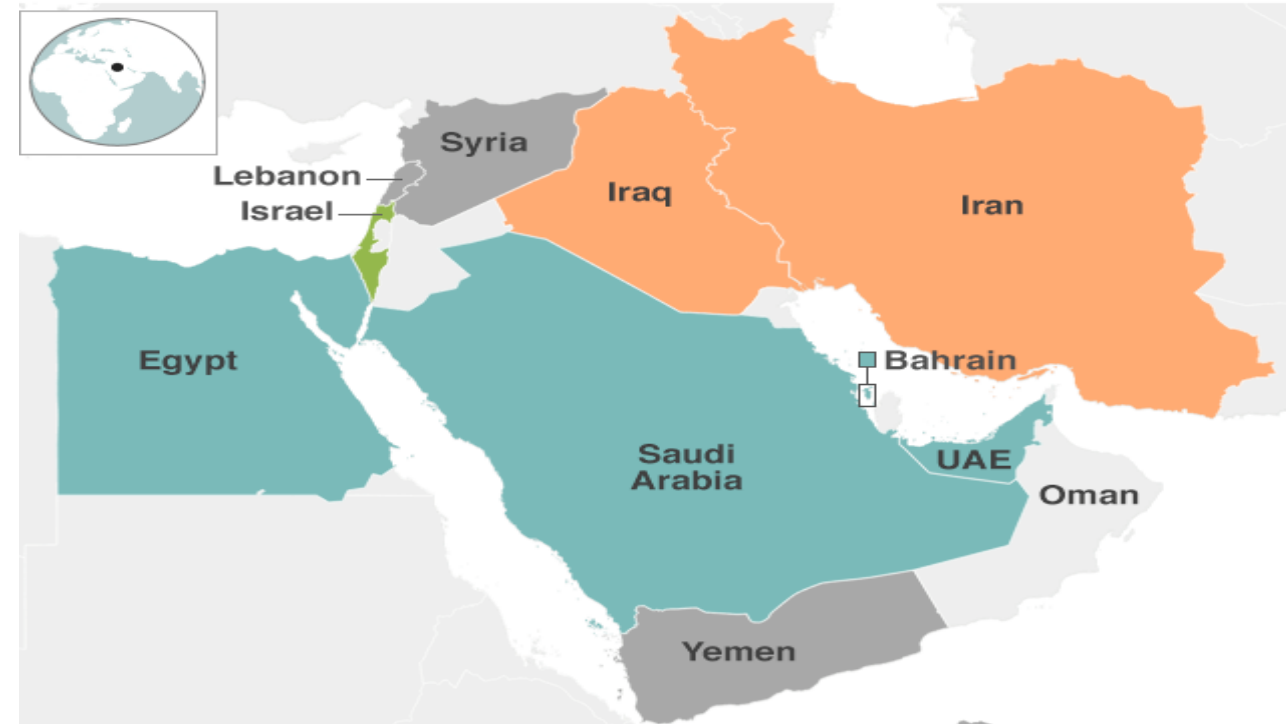
- Iran, Syria, Lebanese Hezbollah, largely the government in Iraq

## 3. Qatar and Turkey

Proxy Wars - Iraq, Syria, Yemen, etc.

### Who supports whom

■ Saudi side ■ Iran side ■ Split\* ■ Non-aligned

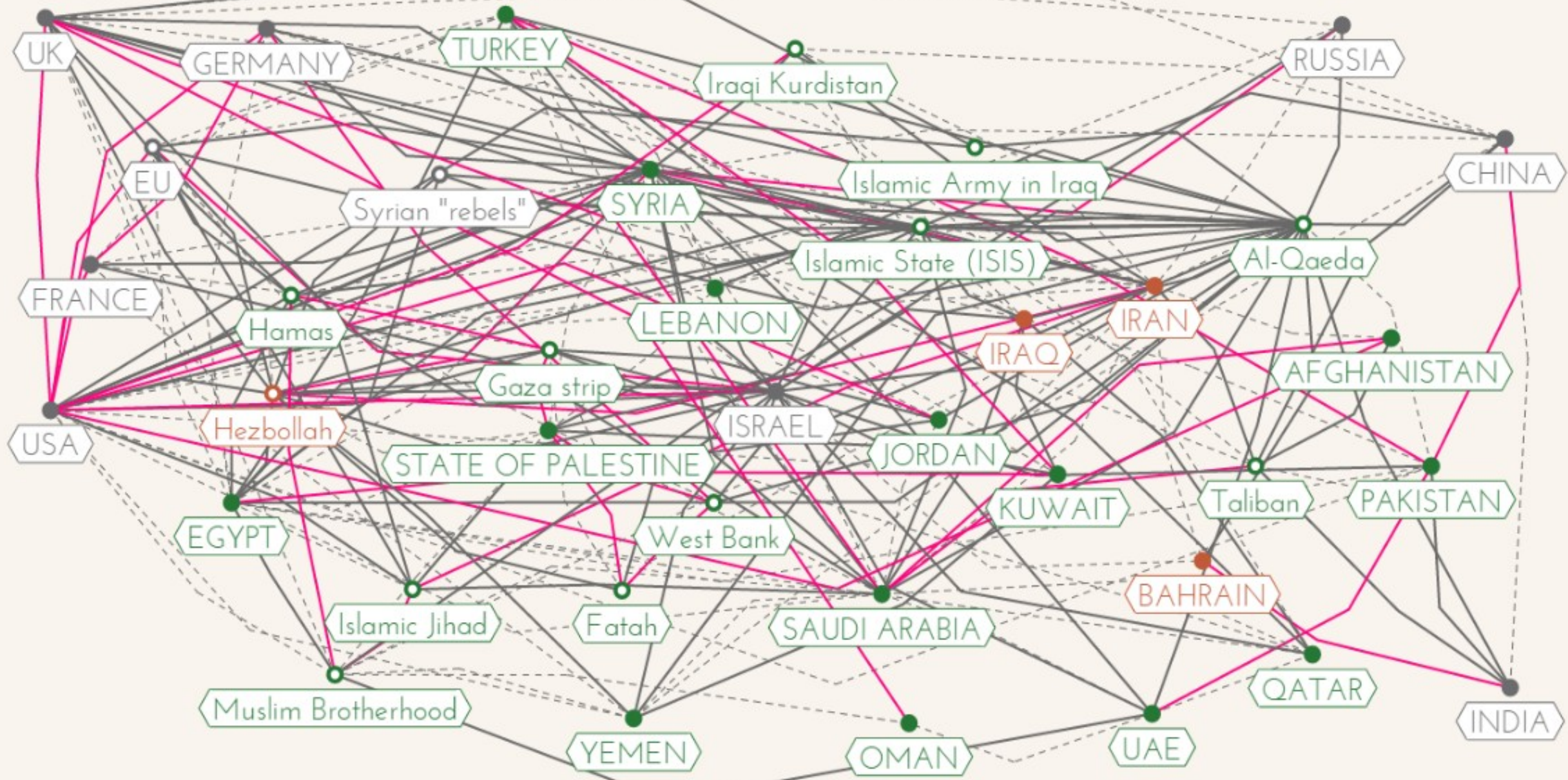


\***Syria:** Govt pro-Iran, opposition pro-Saudi. **Lebanon:** Hezbollah pro-Iran, main Sunni bloc pro-Saudi. **Yemen:** Govt-in-exile pro-Saudi, Houthi rebels pro-Iran

# The Middle East

Key players & notable relationships

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# TURKEY AS A NEW KEY PLAYER

- Member of NATO (2nd strongest army).
- Fighting Kurds (YPG / PKK).
- It benefits from the problems of Syria.
- An important role in the context of the migration crisis.
- Increasing domestic and foreign influence of President Erdogan.
- Business partner of the United States.



# EU AND MIGRATION CRISIS

- Start in 2015 – sharp increase in the number of migrants – over a million people came.
- EU response was quite slow.
- Cooperation of neighbouring countries is crucial for tackling illegal migration.
- Most problematic border is Turkey-Greece – FRONTEX action needed – Treaty with Turkey.
- Currently most people come through Spain, but the numbers are much smaller.

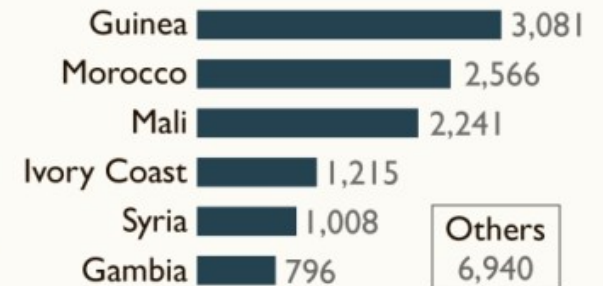


## Migrants arriving by sea

Year	Spain	Italy	Greece
2018*	23,048	18,645	16,114
2017	22,108	119,310	29,595
2016	8,162	181,436	173,561

\*to date

## Nationality of migrants arriving in Spain (by land and sea)



Sources: International Organisation for Migration, UN

# MORIA CAMP, GREECE



# CHANGE OF ISRAELI POSITION

- Move of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in 2018.
- Normalization of the diplomatic relations with selected Muslim countries in 2020:
  - United Arab Emirates.
  - Bahrain.
  - Sudan.
  - Morocco.
  - Intensifying cooperation between Israel and the Sunni countries of the region.
- Arab-Israeli conflict is no longer the dividing line of the region – Has the world forgotten the Palestinians?



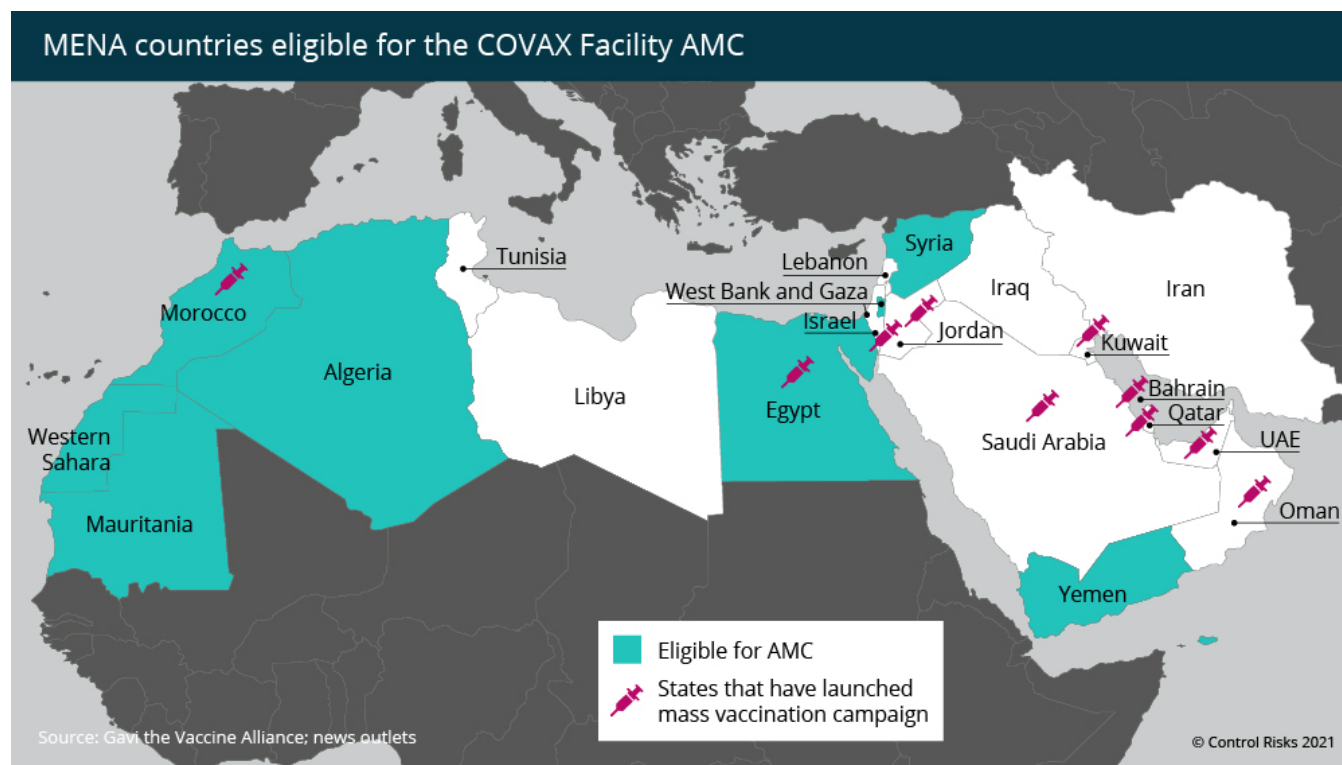
# CURRENT CRISIS ISRAEL vs. HAMAS





# CURRENT POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Change in US foreign policy - gradual abandonment of the Middle East X increase of Russian and Chinese influence in the region (COVID-19 vaccine diplomacy).
- Post-conflict reconstruction, high unemployment in post-war states (Iraq, Syria).
- High debt and corruption.
- Political and religious instability.
- Missing and insufficient infrastructure.
- Consequences of covid-19 pandemic.



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION**