



Regional Security Risks and Incidents

May Day rallies and demonstrations likely in several Middle Eastern and North African countries May 1-4. Violence possible in some areas.

International Workers' Day (May Day) rallies and demonstrations are possible in several countries throughout the Middle East and North Africa May 1-4. The largest events will likely take place in countries where labor disputes occur frequently, including Tunisia, Israel, Morocco, and Lebanon. Smaller demonstrations may occur in other countries with large immigrant workforces and where public gatherings are restricted, such as Kuwait, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia. Below is an overview of potential and announced International Workers' Day events in selected countries:

- **Algeria:** Labor unions usually call for protests on May 1; the largest events in recent years have been recorded in Algiers, Oran, Constantine, Annaba, and Bejaia - usually held in public squares and stadiums.
- **Iran:** Organizers typically call for nationwide protests. Large rallies cannot be ruled out, particularly in Tehran, Esfahan, Mashhad, and other large cities. Police may resort to tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse crowds. Protests related to worsening socioeconomic conditions have become a daily occurrence nationwide.
- **Israel:** Rallies by the Communist Party of Israel (CPI) and Hadash (The Democratic Front for Peace and Equality) are likely on May 1 in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Nazareth. Additional May Day rallies are possible in Israel on May 1.

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Regional Security Risks and Incidents

- Kuwait/United Arab Emirates/Saudi Arabia/Qatar: While protests have not been announced, expatriate workers from Asian countries with a strong tradition of May Day activism may hold small protests, most likely near construction sites.
- Lebanon: Labor Day is a national holiday. Unions, political parties, and organizations often stage protests over myriad economic and political issues. Labor activists will likely protest outside major government buildings and popular rally sites, including Riad El Solh Square, Martyrs' Square, and the Parliament building in central Beirut. Localized skirmishes between participants and security forces are possible.
- Morocco: The Moroccan Workers Union (UMT) has previously organized demonstrations and rallies on May 1 and will likely do so this year.
- Tunisia: The Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT) has called on workers to demonstrate on May 1. Rallies may materialize in Tunis at Mohamed Ali Square in front of UGTT headquarters. Additional labor-related gatherings are possible nationwide.

May 1 is an official holiday in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Bahrain, Yemen, and Western Sahara, and many businesses and/or government offices will be closed. Thousands of people are likely to attend May Day rallies. Police will increase security near any labor or protest activity, which could lead to movement restrictions and localized transport disruptions. Road closures are possible along march routes, which would lead to increased traffic congestion on alternative roads.

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While most events will likely pass off without major incident, security forces in the region often will not hesitate to disperse gatherings forcibly if they threaten to become disruptive. (<https://www.garda.com/crisis24/news-alerts>)

Saudi Air Defence intercept Al-Houthi launched missile targeting Narjan Province early May 3

There have been number of isolated incidents in recent months that have reported how Saudi Arabia have intercepted and destroyed missile and drone attacks from the Al-Houthi militia in nearby Yemen. The latest report was issued from The Royal Saudi Air Defense Forces (RSADF) on May 3. It stated they had intercepted and destroyed an Al-Houthi launched missile targeting Narjan Province. It remains unclear whether the interception occurred in Yemeni or Saudi airspace. There was no immediate reports of damage or casualties.

Localized disruptions to transport and business operations are possible near drone fragment impact sites. Additional cross-border attacks are highly likely in the coming days.

The lack of objective sources covering the conflict between the Saudi-led coalition and Al-Houthi rebels makes it challenging to independently verify reports of longer-range weaponized drone and ballistic missile attacks or intercepts inside Saudi Arabia. Each side relies heavily on propaganda and misdirection in the media to shape the narrative to its policy objectives. As is often the case with reports of alleged drone or ballistic missile attacks or intercepts, neither Riyadh nor the Al-Houthi rebels provide much, if any, verifiable proof to support their respective claims.

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The Al-Houthi rebels have demonstrated an intent to target major population centers in Saudi Arabia with weaponized drones and ballistic missiles. While their precise tactical capabilities are unclear, the rebel group claims to possess several short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) with ranges from 30 km (18 miles) to 1,000 km (620 miles). The group, with help from Iran, also claims to possess several indigenously produced drones with ranges from 15 km (9 miles) to 500 km (310 miles). Nevertheless, the Saudi military employs a wide array of air defense platforms and appears to have significantly mitigated the drone and ballistic missile threat in its southern border provinces; however, falling debris post-intercept remains a potentially lethal hazard.

Previous Al-Houthi cross-border attacks have resulted in civilian casualties; however, most are due to shorter-range mortar and rocket attacks that concentrate near areas within 10 km (6 miles) of the Saudi-Yemeni border. (<https://www.garda.com/crisis24/news-alerts>)

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Saudi naval forces confirm interception and destruction of waterborne bomb off coast of Yanbu April 27 following reports of vessel attack.

Saudi authorities claim to have intercepted and destroyed a waterborne improvised explosive device (WBIED) off the coast of Yanbu at approximately 0640 April 27. It remains unclear whether there was any collateral damage as a result of the Saudi naval operation to destroy the WBIED. The incident followed unconfirmed media reports that an explosion had impacted a vessel in the Red Sea. Some reports allege the NCC Dammam may have been targeted, approximately two nautical miles from Yanbu Port. The UKMTO has acknowledged reports of an incident, though additional details remain unclear. No casualties have been reported.

Saudi authorities and its allies could increase naval and aerial surveillance in the coming days, which could potentially cause some disruptions to shipping and maritime transport throughout the Red Sea, including the Bab al-Mandeb Strait.

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Regional Security Risks and Incidents

A series of high-profile incidents involving vessels and oil tankers has occurred in the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, and the Red Sea in recent years. The most recent maritime incident involved an alleged Israeli vessel that was damaged following an apparent Iranian attack off the coast of Fujairah. As tensions between Washington and its allies and Tehran persist, further similar incidents remain likely. (<https://www.garda.com/crisis24/news-alerts>).

Emerging media reports indicating an explosion struck an Israeli vessel in the Gulf of Oman, April 13; no casualties reported.

Emerging media reports April 13 indicate that an explosion has impacted an Israeli vessel in the Gulf of Oman, near Fujairah, UAE. Local authorities have yet to comment on or confirm the incident; additional details about the incident are unclear. No injuries have been reported.

Persian Gulf littoral states and their allies could increase naval and aerial surveillance in the days ahead. The incident will likely prompt heightened security measures and could disrupt shipping and maritime transport through the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Gulf of Oman.

A series of high-profile incidents involving vessels and oil tankers have occurred in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman in recent years. The most recent maritime incident involved an alleged Iranian military vessel stationed in the Red Sea that was damaged following an apparent Israeli mine attack. Tensions between Tel Aviv and Tehran have been further heightened following an alleged Israeli cyberattack against Iran's Natanz nuclear facility. As tensions between Washington and its allies and Tehran persist, further similar incidents remain likely. (<https://www.garda.com/crisis24/news-alerts>)

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