

# [UAE, Qatar to become members of Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean](#)

Author:

Mon, 2022-03-07 19:56

ROME: The parliaments of the UAE and Qatar will become full members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, an international forum comprising representatives of the national parliaments of the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The inclusion of the UAE's Federal National Council and Qatar's Shoura Council will be formalized at PAM's 16th plenary session on March 9-10.

It will be held in Dubai under the presidency of Italian MP Gennaro Migliore and hosted by the FNC.

PAM supports the work of other international bodies entrusted with fostering security, stability and peace in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

It will be the first time that PAM will meet in the Arabian Peninsula since the organization, which has observer status at the UN General Assembly, was established in 2005.

"Our vision is that peace, dialogue and cooperation in our Mediterranean region isn't divisible, and the Gulf region isn't far away from us," Migliore told Arab News before traveling from Rome to Dubai.

In the past few years, both the FNC and the Shoura Council "have been very active in all the activities of the assembly, especially regarding initiatives on counterterrorism and de-radicalization, as well as women's empowerment and energy transition," he added.

Developments in the Middle East and North Africa – including Libya, Syria, Lebanon and Western Sahara – as well as those in Europe – such as Ukraine and Bosnia and Herzegovina – will be on the session's agenda, as will water scarcity, said Migliore.

"PAM has always been convinced that international parliamentary cooperation is the key to encourage national and international policymakers to harmonize legislative frameworks," he added.

"This assembly is a unique platform for parliamentary diplomacy, promotes constructive dialogue and support initiatives."

The role of parliaments, he added, "is every day more crucial for Mediterranean stability and cooperation because they can help to overcome issues and points of friction paralyzing governments in conflict or limiting their scope of action."



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Middle East](#)

[UAE](#)

[Qatar](#)

Italian, Qatari FMs discuss Libya Saudi Arabia, UAE bolster defense expenditure to thwart threats

---

## [Russia-Ukraine conflict could prompt Mideast food riots: Analysts](#)

Author:

Mon, 2022-03-07 15:24

The Russia-Ukraine conflict could have a knock-on effect in the Middle East due to the rapidly increasing prices of wheat and disrupted supply of other goods, the Daily Telegraph reported on Monday.

Analysts warn that violence could break out amid a 25 percent spike in the price of wheat, with Russia and Ukraine representing 14 percent of the global export market for the grain, and a similar percentage of the world's corn

market.

Wheat prices are up 37 percent since the start of the year, to levels not seen since 2008 and the last great global financial crisis.

BCA Research said the supply line from the Black Sea to the Middle East has become strained.

Russia, Ukraine and Belarus are also among the world's leading fertilizer exporters. With sowing normally beginning in late February, harvests in Ukraine could be severely disrupted.

BCA said state reserves abroad could quickly become depleted, and developments "could lead to civil unrest similar to the food riots that occurred during the Arab Spring in 2011."

Lebanon imports 40 percent of its wheat from the region, and is currently in the grip of an unprecedented series of economic, social and political crises.

Risk advisors Dragonfly warned that the country has just one month of wheat reserves, and "hardship-related protest and unrest are likely."

War-torn Syria and Yemen are also likely to feel the knock-on effects of increasing prices and reduced supply.

Ukrainian authorities have talked up the prospect of using the country's still largely functioning railway network to transport vital goods to other European ports for export.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Russia-Ukraine Conflict](#)

UAE sends 30 tons of emergency aid to UkraineRussia snubs UN court hearings in case brought by Ukraine

---

## [UAE's daily Covid-19 cases drop below 400](#)

Author:

Mon, 2022-03-07 15:07

DUBAI: The UAE recorded 386 new Covid-19 cases on Monday, the lowest daily tally reported in weeks.

The new cases bring the total number of recorded cases in the UAE to 883,270.

One person also died due to COVID-19 complications, the report added, bringing the total number of deaths in the country to 2,302.

It also noted that an additional 1,203 individuals had fully recovered from COVID-19, bringing the overall number of recoveries to 844,308.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Coronavirus](#)

[UAE](#)

UAE sends 30 tons of emergency aid to Ukraine  
UAE announces Ramadan working hours for federal authorities

---

## [Gas queues in Lebanon as fears mount over food security](#)

Author:

Sun, 2022-03-06 22:36

BEIRUT: Hour-long queues outside gas stations have returned to Lebanon, as supplies of cooking oil and flour in shops dwindle amid mounting fears of a food security crisis.

Citizens told Arab News: "We saw on social media that a new crisis is underway. We arrived at the supermarket to find people fighting over cooking oil and flour."

"We do not trust the promises made by the ruling authority and we have previously run out of basic foodstuffs and medicines," they said.

"We fear this could happen again, especially since Ramadan is approaching," they added.

Lebanon lost important wheat silos in the Beirut port blast in 2020. The facilities used to store about 120,000 tons of wheat.

Today, the country stores much of its wheat in warehouses in the north, which are stocked after supplies are unloaded in the port of Tripoli.

But Lebanon still lacks sufficient storage space, and is dependent on regular imports to secure its monthly demand for wheat, which is about 50,000 tons.

In 2020, Lebanon imported more than 630,000 tons from Ukraine, which represented 80 percent of its total imports. Russia supplied 15 percent of the remainder, while 5 percent came from other countries.

And in 2021, Lebanon imported 520,000 tons from Ukraine and the rest from Russia.

Lebanon's remaining stockpile is estimated to last a little more than a month, especially if the Central Bank fails to transfer money for wheat shipments that Lebanese mills have ordered.

Economy Minister Amin Salam said the government is seeking to reach agreements with several countries to import wheat at reasonable prices and secure reserves of up to two months.

"But the problem remains in the source and price, in addition to the speed of delivery of supplies before our stock runs out," he added.

As a result of the financial collapse and currency devaluation, Lebanon's purchasing power has significantly declined, meaning its economy is almost entirely dependent on imports.

The prices of commodities, foodstuffs and services are now intertwined with global markets, and any international events, such as the Ukraine conflict, have direct effects on the Lebanese public.

Lebanon's annual imports from Ukraine total about \$500 million.

Head of the Syndicate of Food Importers in Lebanon Hani Bohsali said: "Lebanon imports 100,000 tons of oils per year, 90,000 tons of which are sunflower oils, and 60 percent of sunflower oil comes from Ukraine, 30 percent from Russia, and 10 percent from Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Ukraine is currently no longer exporting, while Russia may encounter problems with the SWIFT system, which will disrupt imports."

While the government seeks alternative countries to supply wheat, Bohsali warned that there were no alternatives to source cooking oils or the raw materials needed to produce them.

On Sunday, members of the State Security Directorate carried out inspections on gas stations that closed on Saturday, claiming that they had run out of supplies. Authorities forced them to reopen if they had remaining stock.

Queues at gas stations returned on Saturday following rumors of a fuel crisis.

The official prices of fuel surged on Thursday, with a 20-liter canister of gasoline costing more than 400,000 Lebanese pounds (\$20). A 20-liter canister of diesel reached 375,000 Lebanese pounds.

However, Energy Minister Walid Fayad denied that there was a crisis on Sunday.

Ships carrying gasoline supplies are at sea and will soon unload their cargo, he added. "It seems that fuel suppliers want to issue a daily price schedule to keep pace with the global markets," Fayad said.

The General Directorate of Petroleum is expected to issue a new table of fuel prices to take into account surging global fuel prices.

Georges Brax, a member of the gas station owners' syndicate, called on citizens to avoid panicking and stockpiling gasoline.

"It is true that the quantities arriving in Lebanon are now less than before due to the global crisis, but what we receive is sufficient for local needs," he said.

Brax called on the Central Bank to speed up the prepayments for ships to unload their cargoes in order to avoid a crisis, especially since the situation could worsen in the future.

Acting Information Minister Abbas Al-Halabi said: "Lebanon is in communication with international companies to address the issue of food security."

Many countries are experiencing difficulties in exports and imports amid concerns over the war in Ukraine, he added.

Prime Minister Najib Mikati's government will soon prevent the export of foodstuffs produced in Lebanon until the crisis caused by the Ukraine crisis subsides, and afterward will limit the export of wheat and flour to maintain domestic bread supplies.

The Economy Ministry will also work to prevent monopolisation and price gouging.

During his Sunday sermon, Maronite Patriarch Bechara Boutros Al-Rahi called for an end to wars that "lure fighters to practice barbarism against one other."

He said: "We pray that the war stops, as a mercy to the innocent. We pray for an end to the destruction, killing and displacement.

“We pray anger and hatred would subside. We pray that the parties to the conflict could sit down and resolve their conflict peacefully. We emphasize the need to adopt a neutrality policy.”



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Lebanon](#)

[food security](#)

[gas stations](#)

State losing stature, crime rising as economic gloom envelops LebanonTwo years after pandemic, Lebanon succeeds in coping with COVID-19

---

## [15 Syrian army troops killed in Daesh attack on military bus near Palmyra](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1646584324256223800

Sun, 2022-03-06 16:14

BEIRUT: Fifteen soldiers died Sunday in an Daesh group attack on an army bus in the central Syrian desert, a war monitor said, as state media reported a "terrorist attack."

Despite the fall of Daesh's "caliphate" in 2019, the group continues to launch deadly attacks from hideouts in the Syrian desert, which extends from the outskirts of the capital Damascus to the Iraqi border.

Daesh cells "attacked a military bus" in the Palmyra desert, "killing 15 soldiers and wounding 18 others," the British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

State news agency SANA had reported 13 dead "including officers" and 18 wounded in a "terrorist attack" on a military bus on Sunday afternoon.

The Observatory, which relies on a network of sources across the country, said the death toll could rise as most of the soldiers were "seriously wounded."

Daesh did not immediately claim responsibility for the attack.

Sunday's violence came after three regime soldiers died Friday east of Palmyra when the vehicle they were traveling in came under attack, the Observatory added.

So far this year 61 pro-regime soldiers and Iran-affiliated militiamen had been killed in Daesh attacks in the desert of Syria, it said.

About half a million people have been killed and millions have been displaced since the Syrian conflict erupted in 2011, after nationwide protests against the government were met with a brutal crackdown.

It escalated into a devastating war that drew in regional and international powers.

Daesh leader Abu Ibrahim Al-Hashimi Al-Qurashi blew himself up in early February during a raid by US forces on his house in Syria's northwest region of Idlib, Syria's last major opposition bastion.

Qurashi had taken over with Daesh weakened by years of assaults by US-backed local forces and the loss of its self-proclaimed "caliphate" in Syria and northern Iraq.

Daesh ruled with brutality over the "caliphate" which it had proclaimed in 2014.

The majestic ancient city of Palmyra, a World Heritage site, became the scene of public executions, where Daesh also blew up ancient monuments and looted other treasures.

In January Daesh fighters launched their biggest assault in years, attacking a prison in the Kurdish-controlled northeast Syrian city of Hasakah, aiming to free fellow extremists.

Almost a week of intense fighting left more than 370 dead, according to the Observatory.

Earlier in January, nine Syrian soldiers and allied fighters were killed in an attack on a military convoy in Syria's east, while in November last year, the Observatory said another eastern Syria attack left a general and four soldiers dead.

Two bombs planted on an army bus in central Damascus killed 14 people in October last year, SANA had reported.

That was the deadliest attack in the capital since a bombing claimed by Daesh targeted the Justice Palace in March 2017, killing at least 30 people.





Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Syria](#)

[Palmyra](#)

[Abu Ibrahim Al-Hashimi Al-Qurashi](#)

[Daesh](#)

Syrian war monitor says Israeli strike near Palmyra kills 9 Pro-Iran militias  
warn of 'very cruel' response after Israeli strike on Palmyra