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Calls for Reform of the UN Security Council



Iran's Reaction to Netanyahu's Speech at the UN



Hakan Fidan's Diplomatic Contacts in New York



Iran-US Tensions Persist: "Trump Remains Predictable"



Türkiye's Security Diplomacy along the Kabul-Islamabad Axis



International Coalition Center in Iraq to Close



The Iranian Nuclear Issue in the U.S.-China Understanding



Houthis Targeted Saudi Arabia's Capital, Riyadh.



Calls for Reform of the UN Security Council

On 22 September 2026, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan called for comprehensive reform of the United Nations Security Council during his address to the 81st session of the UN General Assembly, particularly raising the issue of abolishing the veto power held by the five permanent members. Erdoğan's proposal goes beyond adding new permanent members to the Council and instead calls for ending the current system of permanent membership altogether. Under his proposed model, Security Council members would be elected by the General Assembly for fixed terms, while countries seeking to serve again would have to obtain renewed approval from the General Assembly. Erdoğan based this approach on the argument that allowing the decisions of more than 190 countries to remain subject to the veto power of five states creates problems of representation and legitimacy, once again emphasizing his long-standing "the world is bigger than five" approach. The call for reform comes amid growing debate over the Council's ability to

respond effectively to major international crises. In conflicts involving Gaza, Ukraine, and Iran, divisions among the permanent members have highlighted tensions between the veto mechanism, decision-making capacity, and the Council's representative legitimacy. At the same time, the veto should not be viewed solely as an instrument that obstructs decision-making. It was also designed as a structural element of the post-World War II international system intended to keep the major powers within the UN framework and prevent direct confrontation among them on fundamental security issues. For this reason, abolishing the veto would represent not merely a procedural adjustment but a fundamental change to the distribution of power within the UN system. Erdoğan's proposal therefore faces significant institutional and political obstacles, as amendments to the UN Charter require the agreement of the permanent members themselves. Russia's response on 22 September illustrates this divergence. While Moscow expressed support for expanding the number of permanent members, it argued that the existing veto system should be preserved, describing permanent membership and veto rights as important elements of the UN structure. Türkiye's approach is also not limited to increasing the number of states represented on the Security Council; strengthening the authority of the General Assembly and establishing a broader mechanism of



ODAP
Dünyayı Okumak İçin...

international representation are central elements of the proposal. From this perspective, Ankara's position can be understood as an attempt to promote a more inclusive international decision-making structure in which political authority is not concentrated among a limited number of major powers. However, greater representation does not automatically translate into more effective decision-making. Increasing the number of members or modifying the veto mechanism would not necessarily eliminate differences in interests among major powers or guarantee faster responses to international crises. The significance of Erdoğan's statement may therefore lie less in the prospect of an immediate institutional transformation than in its contribution to the broader debate over representation, legitimacy, and decision-making capacity within the existing international order. Ultimately, the 22 September statement brought Türkiye's long-standing "the world is bigger than five" position back to the international agenda in the context of current global crises, while highlighting the central challenge facing Security Council reform: whether growing demands for institutional change can be translated into a concrete consensus capable of altering the existing privileges of the major powers.



Hakan Fidan's Diplomatic Contacts in New York

In September 2026, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan's intensive diplomatic contacts in New York during the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly highlighted Türkiye's efforts to maintain dialogue with multiple regional and international actors amid growing geopolitical tensions. Fidan's meetings included bilateral and multilateral contacts with representatives from countries such as the United Kingdom, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, as well as meetings within frameworks such as MIKTA and the Türkiye-Egypt-Pakistan-Saudi Arabia format. The breadth of these contacts is significant because Türkiye's diplomatic agenda at the UN General Assembly extends beyond individual bilateral relations and reflects the interconnected nature of the crises affecting the Middle East and the wider international system. In particular, discussions involving Iran, the Gulf, Syria, Gaza, regional security, and relations with the United States form part

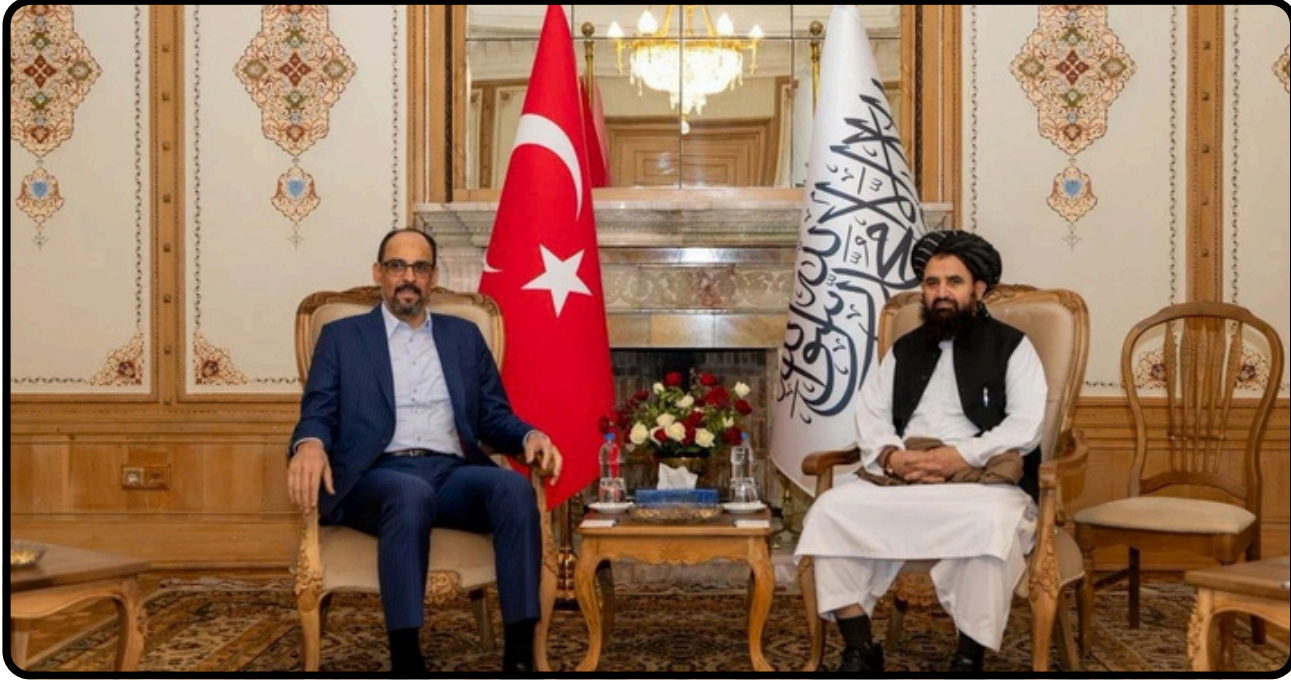


of a broader diplomatic environment in which developments in one area can directly affect others. Fidan's diplomatic activity should therefore be considered within the context of Türkiye's efforts to preserve communication channels while regional tensions remain high. In an interview shortly before the UN General Assembly, Fidan stated that Türkiye was closely following the indirect negotiations between Iran and the United States and emphasized the importance of maintaining dialogue despite the difficulties facing the process. He also described Türkiye's approach to regional crises as involving not only its own mediation efforts but also contacts with other mediating countries and actors. This approach is particularly relevant in the context of the Iranian crisis, where Türkiye has sought to maintain communication with both Tehran and Washington while emphasizing a diplomatic solution. At the same time, Ankara's contacts with Gulf countries have gained additional significance as regional security concerns have expanded beyond the Israel-Iran confrontation to issues involving maritime security, energy routes, and the security of Gulf states. The coordination meeting attended by Fidan alongside the foreign ministers of Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates illustrates an effort to maintain consultation among countries directly affected

by regional developments. Türkiye's participation in different diplomatic formats also suggests that Ankara is seeking to operate through multiple channels rather than relying on a single institutional framework. This is particularly relevant at a time when divisions among major powers have complicated collective responses to regional crises. However, the existence of intensive diplomatic contacts should not be interpreted as evidence that these countries share identical positions or that specific negotiations have produced concrete outcomes. The available official information primarily confirms the meetings and their broad institutional context, while the detailed content and results of many discussions remain undisclosed. The significance of Fidan's New York diplomacy therefore lies primarily in the continuation of Türkiye's engagement with diverse actors and its effort to preserve diplomatic space amid interconnected regional crises. In this sense, the General Assembly provides Ankara with an opportunity not only to communicate its own positions but also to maintain dialogue across different regional groupings and contribute to diplomatic efforts aimed at preventing further escalation.



ODAP
Dünyayı Okumak İçin...



Türkiye's Security Diplomacy along the Kabul–Islamabad Axis

The contacts undertaken by İbrahim Kalın, Director of Türkiye's National Intelligence Organization (MIT), in Afghanistan and Pakistan in September 2026 represented a notable example of Ankara's growing interest in security developments in South Asia and its efforts to maintain communication channels with regional actors. Kalın's meetings with Afghan officials in Kabul and Kandahar, followed by discussions in Islamabad with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir, and intelligence officials, suggest that Türkiye views developments along the Afghanistan–Pakistan axis not merely through the framework of bilateral relations between the two countries, but within a broader regional security perspective. Border security, the activities of armed groups, and the lack of mutual trust remain major sources of tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan, while also carrying consequences that extend beyond the domestic

security concerns of either country. Alleged attacks against Pakistan originating from Afghan territory, together with Pakistan's cross-border military operations, have further intensified the security dimension of the dispute. In this context, Kalın's visits to both countries within a relatively short period highlight the importance Türkiye attaches to maintaining direct communication with each side. Discussions in Afghanistan reportedly addressed security and intelligence cooperation, as well as transnational threats such as terrorism, drug trafficking, and human smuggling, indicating that Ankara does not assess the region's security challenges in isolation but instead considers them interconnected elements of a wider regional environment. During the meetings in Pakistan, the impact of developments in the Middle East on regional security was also reportedly discussed alongside Afghanistan–Pakistan relations, reflecting Türkiye's broader approach, which takes into account the links between different crisis zones. Despite the geographical distance between South Asia and the Middle East, terrorist networks, irregular migration, drug trafficking, and energy and transportation corridors can generate shared security consequences, making it increasingly difficult to evaluate the security agendas of the two regions as entirely separate. Nevertheless, there is not yet sufficient evidence to conclude



that Türkiye's contacts will produce a direct short-term solution to the problems between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The disputes are rooted in long-standing structural challenges, particularly border security and the presence of armed groups, making diplomatic progress difficult. The significance of Kalın's visits therefore lies less in the emergence of a specific agreement than in Türkiye's ability to monitor developments directly, communicate with both sides, and keep channels open for possible future diplomatic initiatives. Türkiye's existing defense and security relationship with Pakistan, combined with its diplomatic engagement with Afghanistan in recent years, provides Ankara with a distinctive position from which to communicate with both countries simultaneously. This suggests that Türkiye is seeking to develop a diplomatic role based not on direct involvement in South Asian security disputes, but on sustained engagement with multiple regional actors. Kalın's meetings in Kabul, Kandahar, and Islamabad are therefore important because they demonstrate that Türkiye's security diplomacy operates not only through traditional foreign-policy channels, but also through direct communication between intelligence and security institutions.



The Iranian Nuclear Issue in the U.S.-China Understanding

On 25 September 2026, following Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Washington and his meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump, the United States and China reached an eight-point framework of understanding covering economic relations, artificial intelligence, and regional security. Among the issues addressed was the development of more favorable tariff arrangements for \$30 billion worth of non-sensitive goods traded between the two countries, the establishment of a bilateral trade council, and the continuation of outcomes reached in previous negotiations. The two sides also agreed to initiate dialogue on the risks and applications of artificial intelligence and establish a communication mechanism for AI-related emergencies. Beyond these issues, however, one of the most notable elements was the emergence of a shared position that Iran should fulfill its commitment not to develop nuclear weapons. This development is particularly significant given China's



comprehensive strategic partnership with Iran. Although Beijing does not support Iran acquiring nuclear weapons, its approach toward Tehran has not fully aligned with Washington's policy of military pressure and sanctions. On 16 September, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, during his meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, stated that the continuation of the U.S.-Iran conflict would not serve the common interests of the parties or the international community and called for a return to negotiations. Therefore, the position expressed on 25 September can be understood less as China's adoption of Washington's broader Iran policy and more as an indication that the two powers share an interest in preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. For China, Iran's potential acquisition of nuclear weapons could create risks extending beyond nuclear non-proliferation. A nuclearized Iran could affect energy security, maritime trade, and regional stability in the Gulf, all of which are relevant to China's economic interests. As a major economic partner of Iran, China could be directly affected by prolonged regional instability and disruptions to energy flows and trade. For the United States, meanwhile, preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons remains a central security concern amid the continuing crisis surrounding Iran's nuclear program. In this

context, China's support for Iran's non-nuclear commitment may represent a limited area of strategic convergence rather than an endorsement of U.S. policy toward Tehran as a whole. China has simultaneously continued to emphasize Iran's "legitimate rights and interests" and encourage the resumption of diplomatic negotiations between Washington and Tehran. This indicates that strategic competition between the United States and China can coexist with selective cooperation when their interests overlap. The Iranian nuclear issue is therefore a relatively significant area of convergence between Washington and Beijing. Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons could increase the risk of regional proliferation and potentially influence the security policies of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. Such developments would have implications for both China's economic interests and the United States' regional security concerns. The significance of the 25 September understanding consequently lies not in China's broader convergence with U.S. policy toward the Middle East, but in the two powers' ability to identify a shared strategic interest in preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons despite their continuing geopolitical rivalry.



Iran's Reaction to Netanyahu's Speech at the UN

On 24 September 2026, the departure of numerous country representatives from the United Nations General Assembly hall during Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's address at the 81st session of the UN General Assembly brought the diplomatic dimension of the conflict between Iran and Israel back into focus. In his speech, Netanyahu defended Israel's military operations against Iran, presenting Tehran's nuclear capabilities and regional activities as security threats to Israel, while also rejecting criticism directed at Israel over the war in Gaza. As the speech began, representatives from numerous countries, including Iran, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, Jordan, Indonesia, and Malaysia, left the hall, an action that was interpreted as a diplomatic protest against Netanyahu's remarks. From Iran's perspective, this development may be viewed not only as a reaction to Israel but also as part of Tehran's broader effort to advance its own narrative on international platforms. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, who

addressed the General Assembly one day before Netanyahu, criticized the attacks by the United States and Israel against Iran while signaling that the possibility of a diplomatic solution with Washington had not been completely ruled out. Accordingly, Iran's response to Netanyahu's speech may be understood within the broader context of a conflict being contested not only militarily but also in terms of international public opinion and diplomatic legitimacy. Netanyahu's decision to use the UN platform is also significant in this regard. While the Israeli government presents Iran's nuclear capabilities and regional activities as security concerns, it also appears to seek to prevent international criticism over the Gaza war from overshadowing Israel's security arguments. The departure of delegations during the speech consequently increased the visibility of international disagreements over Israel's military policies; however, this does not necessarily mean that these countries support all of Iran's policies or share identical assessments of Israel. Another dimension of the development concerns the role of the UN as both a platform for diplomatic engagement and a forum in which the parties seek to present their claims to international legitimacy. Iran's participation in the General Assembly provided Tehran with an opportunity to engage in diplomacy and communicate its security narrative to the international community amid



continuing military pressure. Following U.S. President Donald Trump's strong statements regarding Iran on 22 September, Pezeshkian's willingness to leave the door open to diplomacy was particularly noteworthy. During the same period, the Iranian government also indicated that it would be prepared to reopen the Strait of Hormuz if the United States reduced military pressure and lifted the blockade of Iranian ports, suggesting that Tehran was keeping the option of negotiations on the agenda alongside its military rhetoric. In this context, the significance of the protest on 24 September lies primarily in the fact that tensions between Iran and Israel became visible at the UN General Assembly not simply as a bilateral dispute, but as part of a broader geopolitical issue connected to the Gaza war, Iran's nuclear program, regional security, and debates over international law. However, further developments and evidence would be necessary to determine whether the walkout will have a direct and lasting impact on the diplomatic positions of the countries involved.



Iran–US Tensions Persist: “Trump Remains Predictable”

US President Donald Trump is once again in the spotlight with his assertive remarks. Known for frequently shifting his position on Middle East policy, Trump answered reporters' questions at the White House on September 26. Stating that he had rejected the proposal from Iran, Trump said that “Iran has been severely defeated.” The continued closure of the Strait of Hormuz is damaging not only US–Iran relations. Because this situation also has direct implications for energy markets, it raises the question of whether the world is entering a new energy crisis. The Strait of Hormuz is a strategic chokepoint of critical importance to the continuity of global energy trade. A prolonged disruption to shipping along this route could heighten uncertainty over oil and natural gas supplies, placing significant pressure on energy prices, transportation costs, and market expectations. Iran is likely to continue using the strategic advantage arising from its geographical position as a diplomatic and economic instrument. Nevertheless, limiting the current tensions to the context of US–Iran relations would provide an inadequate assessment. An escalation of the conflict and the failure of the parties to establish common ground could disrupt global supply chains, intensify inflationary pressures in energy-importing countries, and weaken international economic stability. From



Türkiye's perspective, sharing a border with a country involved in a war poses a serious security risk, particularly if the conflict intensifies. The pressure on energy markets is also being felt in Türkiye. A sustained rise in oil prices could make the winter months especially difficult worldwide. Diplomatic initiatives must therefore be intensified to bring the war to an end. It is evident that the Middle East would bear the greatest costs of this situation. For this reason, countries in the region must adopt a more constructive approach to diplomacy and demonstrate a stronger commitment to compromise.



International Coalition Center in Iraq to Close
The U.S.-led international coalition center in Iraq will close on September 30. Abdul Amir al-Shammari, Chief of Staff of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of the Iraqi Armed Forces, stated that control has largely been established across the country and that no security problems remain. The withdrawal of U.S. troops after many years is regarded as a

significant development for Iraq. It is also claimed that October 1 will be declared Independence Day. U.S. troops had entered the region in response to growing domestic unrest and the terrorist threat following the emergence of the terrorist organization Daesh in 2014. The end of the foreign military presence on September 30 indicates that Iraq's sovereignty has strengthened and that political stability has largely been achieved. Nevertheless, the ongoing war in the region should not be overlooked. Some countries in the Middle East have only recently attained political stability or are still seeking to free themselves from the influence of armed groups. Therefore, after the coalition center withdraws, regional threats should be monitored more closely and addressed with due vigilance. Armed groups known to operate within the country must either be disarmed or integrated into the national armed forces, as in the case of the SDF in Syria. The Baghdad administration must adopt a clear and firm position on these matters. Although the withdrawal of a foreign military force that has long been present in the country is undoubtedly positive, armed groups unwilling to compromise may engage in terrorist activities to gain influence over the country's governance. From Türkiye's perspective, this process is a positive development. It is particularly



significant for Türkiye, which supports the political stability and national sovereignty of countries in the region. Iraq also holds an important position with regard to joint projects between the two countries. At a time when problems in the Strait of Hormuz are affecting energy security, any instability in Iraq would also have adverse consequences for the world.



Houthis targeted Saudi Arabia's capital, Riyadh.

Following strikes by the Houthis against Saudi Arabia, U.S. embassies across the Middle East issued security alerts. U.S. citizens were urged to remain on "high alert," with warnings that the conflict could escalate rapidly and lead to airspace closures. The Iran-backed Houthis announced that they had launched missile and drone attacks targeting Riyadh and oil facilities in Saudi Arabia. U.S. embassies in the Middle East issued security warnings to their citizens in the region following the attacks carried out by the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen against Saudi Arabia. Alerts published by U.S. embassies in Bahrain, Israel, Iraq, Jordan,

Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) called on citizens to maintain "high vigilance." The U.S. Department of State issued an advisory for U.S. citizens due to heightened security risks and the increased likelihood of military conflict in the region. The warning urged individuals to prepare for potential flight cancellations, airspace closures, and travel disruptions. This development came after the Houthis announced new attacks targeting Saudi Arabia. The Houthis stated that they targeted critical infrastructure in Riyadh and Aramco facilities in Yanbu in retaliation for Saudi military operations. Explosion sounds were heard near King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh, with rising smoke captured on social media, leading to flight disruptions at the airport. Meanwhile, the Saudi-led coalition reported that a ballistic missile fired toward Riyadh was intercepted by air defense systems. A spokesperson confirmed that the Houthis also targeted the cities of Baish, Taif, Farasan, and Yanbu. The Houthis, who declared a naval blockade in July, have recently intensified both their attacks on Saudi Arabia and their advances within Yemen. On the other hand, Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General, stated regarding the escalating conflict in Yemen that at least 28 civilians have been killed and 82 injured in Taiz, Hodeidah, and Marib since August.



ODAP
Dünyayı Okumak İçin...

Emphasizing that access restrictions mean the actual casualties could be higher, the UN called on all parties to halt hostilities and protect civilians. The spillover of Yemen's conflict dynamics back onto Saudi Arabia's critical infrastructure and airspace demonstrates that the crisis has evolved from a local civil war into a regional security crisis threatening the entire Persian Gulf. The Houthis directly targeting logistics, energy, and transportation hubs carries the potential to make the economic ramifications felt on a global scale. Furthermore, the simultaneous warnings issued by the U.S. across all regional missions point to a serious military assessment that the escalation will not subside in the short term. While the interception capabilities of air defense systems limit short-term risks on the military front, the damage to logistics lines and civil aviation compounds the overall cost of the crisis. When ground data and UN warnings on civilian casualties are evaluated together, it becomes clear that should diplomatic channels remain blocked, the cross-border impacts of military escalation will deepen, leading to prolonged disruptions in regional energy security and air travel.