

2025 Israel-Iran war: Implications on Global Peace and security

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<i>The Israel-Iran conflict, long rooted in deep-seated geopolitical, ideological, and strategic rivalries, entered a perilous new phase with the outbreak of open hostilities in 2025. This paper critically examined the implications of the Israel-Iran war on global peace and security, situating the conflict within broader historical tensions, regional power dynamics, and international responses. Drawing on international relations theory, security studies, and empirical developments, the study analyzed the war’s cascading effects across the Middle East, including proxy escalations in Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen, and the broader reconfiguration of alliances involving the United States, Russia, China, and Gulf states. The conflict’s impact on global energy markets, maritime security in the Strait of Hormuz, and the fragile stability of nuclear non-proliferation regimes was also assessed. The paper explored the weakening of multilateral institutions, the paralysis of the United Nations Security Council, and the erosion of international norms governing warfare. The findings suggested that the Israel-Iran war intensified global insecurities, revealed the inadequacies of existing peace frameworks, and underscored the urgent need for renewed diplomatic engagement and regional conflict resolution mechanisms. In sum, the war represented not merely a regional crisis, but a critical juncture with far-reaching consequences for the international order.</i>
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INTRODUCTION

The Israel-Iran conflict, long rooted in historical, ideological, and geopolitical rivalries, has entered a particularly volatile phase in 2025, reflecting a culmination of decades of tension between the two states and their regional proxies.¹ Israel, seeking to maintain its strategic advantage in the Middle East, and Iran, aspiring to assert its regional influence and expand its strategic depth, have consistently engaged in a range of confrontational tactics, including military posturing, cyber operations, and proxy engagements in neighboring states.² This enduring rivalry has evolved from localized tensions into a conflict with significant implications for regional stability, global security, and international diplomatic frameworks.³ Historically, the origins of the Israel-Iran confrontation can be traced to ideological, political, and religious divergences, intensified by the 1979 Iranian Revolution, which transformed Iran from a pro-Western monarchy into a theocratic state opposed to Israel's existence.⁴ Over the

subsequent decades, Iran's support for militant organizations such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and various Shiite militias in Iraq and Syria has been perceived by Israel as a direct threat to its national security.⁵ Conversely, Israel's military strategies and intelligence operations aimed at neutralizing perceived threats from Iran have often exacerbated regional instability.⁶ These historical trajectories illustrate a persistent pattern of action and reaction, where localized skirmishes and proxy conflicts frequently escalate into broader crises.⁷ The 2025 escalation represents a departure from previous periods of tension due to its intensity, geographic spread, and the involvement of multiple state and non-state actors.⁸ The conflict has manifested in direct hostilities, heightened missile exchanges, and targeted strikes on critical infrastructure, signaling a departure from primarily proxy-based confrontations to open warfare.⁹ This escalation has profound consequences not only for Israel and Iran but also

for neighboring states such as Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen, where existing political fragilities and ongoing conflicts create fertile ground for secondary crises.¹⁰ Additionally, the conflict threatens key global interests, including energy supply routes in the Strait of Hormuz, the stability of global oil markets, and maritime security in strategically significant regions.¹¹

From an international relations perspective, the Israel-Iran war underscores the limitations of contemporary multilateral mechanisms in conflict prevention and resolution.¹² The paralysis of the United Nations Security Council in responding to regional crises, coupled with competing strategic interests of major powers such as the United States, Russia, and China, has created an environment in which unilateral or regionalized actions often supplant coordinated diplomatic engagement.¹³ Consequently, the 2025 conflict challenges existing paradigms of international governance, demonstrating the vulnerabilities inherent in global security architectures when faced with rapidly escalating regional wars.¹⁴ Furthermore, the conflict exemplifies the intersection of regional rivalries with global strategic calculations.¹⁵ Israel's reliance on strategic alliances with the United States and Gulf states contrasts sharply with Iran's partnerships with Russia, China, and various non-state actors, creating a complex web of international involvement.¹⁶ The interplay of these alliances has implications for global peace and security, as regional confrontations increasingly influence broader geopolitical dynamics and risk drawing external powers into direct or indirect participation.¹⁷ Given the far-reaching implications of the 2025 Israel-Iran conflict, there is a pressing need for comprehensive scholarly analysis that situates the war within historical, regional, and global contexts.¹⁸ While media coverage has largely emphasized immediate military events, there is a paucity of research addressing the systemic and structural factors that contribute to escalation, the long-term consequences for international norms, and the efficacy of current diplomatic interventions.¹⁹ This paper seeks to fill that gap by examining the conflict's origins, its unfolding dynamics, and the broader consequences for global security, energy markets, and the international order.²⁰ The Introduction establishes the 2025 Israel-Iran conflict as not merely a regional confrontation but a pivotal event with **global ramifications**. By framing the conflict historically and strategically, this study highlights the interplay between state actions, regional power dynamics, and international responses, providing a foundational context for the subsequent analysis.²¹ This approach emphasizes that understanding contemporary conflicts requires not only attention to immediate military and political developments but also to the deeper structural, historical, and geopolitical forces that shape them.²²

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The escalation of the Israel-Iran conflict in 2025 presents a critical challenge to regional stability and the maintenance of global peace. While the historical rivalry between Israel and Iran has been widely acknowledged, most analyses focus narrowly on bilateral tensions, nuclear programs, or isolated proxy conflicts. There is a notable lack of comprehensive research that situates the 2025 hostilities within the broader context of global security, energy stability, and multilateral diplomatic frameworks. The recent direct engagements between Israeli and Iranian forces, alongside intensified activities by allied non-state actors, have created unprecedented security risks in the Middle East. This heightened state of conflict has the potential to destabilize neighboring states, exacerbate humanitarian crises, and disrupt critical international trade routes, particularly in the energy sector. Additionally, the limitations of international institutions in managing escalating conflicts underscore the inadequacies of current diplomatic and conflict-resolution mechanisms. Beyond immediate regional consequences, the 2025 conflict highlights the interplay between local rivalries and global strategic calculations. Competing interests of major powers, including the United States, Russia, and China, further complicate prospects for effective conflict management. Without a nuanced understanding of these interconnected dynamics, policymakers and scholars risk underestimating the far-reaching implications of the war for global security architectures, multilateral governance, and international norms. This study, therefore, seeks to examine the 2025 Israel-Iran conflict in its historical, regional, and international dimensions, addressing the gap in scholarship concerning the broader consequences of the conflict. By doing so, it aims to provide insights into the structural vulnerabilities, strategic considerations, and policy challenges that define contemporary Middle Eastern crises.

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study of the 2025 Israel-Iran conflict requires a robust conceptual and theoretical grounding to understand both the proximate causes of hostilities and their far-reaching implications for regional and global security. This framework draws primarily on international relations (IR) theory, security studies, and conflict analysis, integrating perspectives that illuminate the interplay between state behavior, regional dynamics, and global structures.²³ From an IR theoretical perspective, realism provides a foundational lens through which to analyze the Israel-Iran rivalry. Realist theory emphasizes the centrality of power, survival, and strategic interests in shaping state behavior within an anarchic international system.²⁴ In the context of the 2025 escalation, Israel's preoccupation with securing its

territorial integrity, maintaining regional military superiority, and countering perceived existential threats from Iran aligns with the realist focus on national security and self-preservation.²⁵ Similarly, Iran's strategic calculus, including its support for regional proxies and pursuit of asymmetric capabilities, reflects a realist logic aimed at maximizing influence and ensuring regime survival in a competitive regional environment.²⁶ Realism also explains the broader pattern of alliance formation, deterrence strategies, and military escalation, highlighting why unilateral and coalition-based responses have dominated the conflict.²⁷

Complementing realism, neorealism or structural realism underscores the role of the international system in shaping state behavior.²⁸ The distribution of power, particularly the involvement of global actors such as the United States, Russia, and China, influences both the strategic decisions of Israel and Iran and the regional balance of power.²⁹ Neorealism suggests that systemic constraints, rather than purely domestic considerations, drive the escalation and intensity of conflicts, providing a lens to understand the 2025 war not merely as a bilateral rivalry but as a conflict embedded in a broader global security structure.³⁰ In addition to realist perspectives, constructivist approaches offer insights into how ideational factors identity, ideology, and historical memory shape state perceptions and policies.³¹ The ideological dimension of the Israel-Iran conflict, rooted in the post-1979 Iranian revolutionary discourse and Israel's conception of existential security, demonstrates that military and diplomatic actions are not solely driven by material interests.³² Constructivism highlights how narratives of resistance, legitimacy, and moral obligation influence decision-making processes, exacerbate mutual mistrust, and reinforce cycles of retaliation.³³ Such perspectives are crucial for understanding why certain escalation thresholds, including the direct hostilities of 2025, become politically and psychologically salient for both actors.³⁴

Security studies provide additional analytical tools, particularly through the concepts of asymmetric warfare, proxy engagement, and regional security complexes.³⁵ The Israel-Iran conflict exemplifies asymmetric dynamics, wherein Iran leverages non-state actors such as Hezbollah and regional militias to project power, while Israel relies on advanced conventional capabilities, intelligence operations, and preemptive strikes to counter perceived threats.³⁶ The regional security complex theory, proposed by Barry Buzan, underscores how geographically proximate states and actors form interlinked security dynamics that amplify the consequences of conflict.³⁷ Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, and Iraq are integral to this framework, as their internal instabilities and susceptibility to external influence create

opportunities for the conflict to spill over and escalate beyond Israel and Iran's immediate spheres.³⁸

Another critical dimension is global governance and international norms. The 2025 escalation challenges the capacity of multilateral institutions to prevent or manage conflict.³⁹ Realist interpretations would emphasize the limitations imposed by state sovereignty and power asymmetries, while liberalist perspectives highlight the potential for collective action through international organizations and treaty regimes.⁴⁰ The failure of mechanisms such as the United Nations Security Council to effectively mediate or contain hostilities underscores structural weaknesses in global conflict management frameworks.⁴¹ Moreover, norms governing proportionality, humanitarian law, and non-aggression are tested when regional conflicts involve strategic strikes, missile exchanges, and threats to civilian infrastructure.⁴² From a policy-oriented perspective, the security dilemma provides a useful conceptual lens to interpret escalation dynamics.⁴³ As Israel enhances its defensive and offensive capabilities, Iran perceives these measures as threatening, prompting countermeasures that, in turn, reinforce Israeli security anxieties. This feedback loop explains how both states' pursuit of defensive security paradoxically produces greater insecurity, escalating the likelihood of direct confrontation.⁴⁴ This framework also helps explain the proliferation of proxy warfare, as both actors seek to manage threats indirectly without triggering full-scale direct war, though such strategies proved insufficient in 2025.⁴⁵

Finally, the framework incorporates a regional-international interaction perspective, recognizing that local conflicts increasingly have global implications.⁴⁶ The involvement of external powers through arms transfers, intelligence cooperation, and diplomatic mediation illustrates how regional conflicts are embedded in a wider system of international strategic interests.⁴⁷ This perspective emphasizes that analyzing the 2025 Israel-Iran conflict requires integrating multiple levels of analysis: the domestic drivers of state behavior, the regional security environment, and the structural pressures of the international system.⁴⁸ The theoretical and conceptual framework for this study integrates realism, neorealism, constructivism, security studies, and regional-international interaction theories to provide a multidimensional lens for analyzing the 2025 Israel-Iran conflict.⁴⁹ By combining materialist and ideational approaches, this framework allows for a nuanced understanding of escalation dynamics, regional consequences, and global security implications, establishing the analytical foundation for the subsequent discussion of findings.⁵⁰

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Historical Context and Preceding Tensions

The Israel-Iran rivalry has deep historical roots, shaped by ideological, political, and strategic divergences spanning decades.⁵¹ The 1979 Iranian Revolution marked a watershed in Middle Eastern geopolitics, transforming Iran from a pro-Western monarchy to an ideologically driven Islamic republic openly opposed to Israel's existence.⁵² This ideological opposition was compounded by geopolitical concerns, as Iran sought to assert regional influence, particularly in the Levant, Iraq, and the Gulf, while Israel aimed to maintain strategic superiority and secure its national borders.⁵³ Over the subsequent decades, the conflict largely manifested through indirect confrontations, such as proxy engagements in Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq.⁵⁴ Iran's support for Hezbollah and other Shiite militias enabled it to project influence without direct engagement, while Israel employed precision strikes and intelligence operations to counter these threats.⁵⁵ This pattern of action and reaction established a cycle of mistrust and escalation, with each side perceiving the other's defensive measures as offensive threats.⁵⁶ Several key regional events exacerbated tensions in the early 21st century. The U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 altered the regional balance of power, enabling Iran to expand its influence in Iraq's political and security sectors.⁵⁷ Israel, interpreting these developments as a threat to its strategic depth, increasingly adopted preemptive doctrines aimed at neutralizing Iranian proxies and nuclear ambitions.⁵⁸ Iran's pursuit of nuclear technology, coupled with its missile development programs, further intensified Israeli security concerns, culminating in repeated warnings of potential military intervention should Iran acquire nuclear capabilities.⁵⁹

The historical context is also characterized by periods of tentative diplomacy interspersed with heightened confrontations. The 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) offered a temporary framework for containing Iran's nuclear program, yet its partial implementation and the eventual U.S. withdrawal in 2018 reinvigorated mutual suspicions.⁶⁰ Israel criticized the JCPOA as insufficient for preventing Iran's regional expansion and nuclear ambitions, while Iran viewed U.S. withdrawal and renewed sanctions as evidence of Western unreliability, justifying a more assertive posture.⁶¹ Ideologically, the rivalry is underpinned by contrasting state identities. Israel frames its security in terms of existential survival in a hostile regional environment, emphasizing technological and military superiority.⁶² Iran, by contrast, defines its strategic identity through revolutionary rhetoric, resistance against Western and Israeli influence, and protection of Shiite populations

across the Middle East.⁶³ These contrasting narratives reinforce the security dilemma, where defensive measures by one actor are interpreted as existential threats by the other, creating a self-perpetuating cycle of escalation.⁶⁴ Historically, external actors have further shaped the conflict dynamics. U.S. military support for Israel, coupled with European diplomatic engagement and Russian involvement in regional security, has created a complex web of strategic interdependencies.⁶⁵ Iran's partnerships with Russia and China, along with its support for non-state actors, have mirrored Israel's alliance strategies, embedding the bilateral rivalry within broader international security frameworks.⁶⁶

The historical patterns of confrontation also underscore the role of proxy warfare in amplifying instability.⁶⁷ Hezbollah's operations in Lebanon, Iranian-backed militias in Iraq and Syria, and the recurrent flare-ups along Israel's northern borders exemplify how indirect engagements extend the conflict beyond the immediate actors.⁶⁸ These proxies not only complicate conflict management but also increase the risk of miscalculations and regional spill overs, as local actors may act independently or escalate tensions beyond the control of their sponsors.⁶⁹ The historical context of the Israel-Iran conflict demonstrates that the 2025 hostilities are not isolated events but the culmination of decades of ideological enmity, strategic competition, and regional power contests.⁷⁰ The combination of asymmetric capabilities, ideological differences, and structural vulnerabilities in regional security architectures has created conditions in which localized conflicts escalate rapidly into broader crises. Understanding this historical backdrop is essential for analyzing the causes, dynamics, and implications of the current conflict, as it provides the foundational context for subsequent sections addressing the June–July 2025 escalation and its regional and global consequences.⁷¹

The June–July Conflict: Causes and Dynamics

The June–July 2025 escalation between Israel and Iran represented a significant intensification of hostilities, reflecting both long-standing tensions and immediate triggers that brought the conflict into open confrontation.⁷² While historical rivalries laid the foundation, a combination of strategic miscalculations, regional developments, and provocative actions catalysed direct military engagement during this period.⁷³ One primary cause of the June–July conflict was the ongoing contest for regional dominance, particularly in contested theatres such as Syria, Lebanon, and the Strait of Hormuz.⁷⁴ Iran's continued support for Hezbollah, as well as Shiite militias in Syria, provided it with forward-operating capabilities against Israel.⁷⁵ In early 2025, intelligence reports indicated a marked increase in cross-border smuggling of weapons and precision-guided

missile technologies from Iranian-supported groups into Lebanon and Syria, heightening Israeli security concerns.⁷⁶ These developments, coupled with Israel's proactive airstrikes aimed at neutralizing perceived threats, created a volatile cycle of action and retaliation.⁷⁷ The conflict was also shaped by Iran's domestic and geopolitical calculations.⁷⁸ Internally, Iran faced economic pressures stemming from prolonged sanctions, energy disruptions, and domestic unrest.⁷⁹ The leadership, seeking to consolidate domestic legitimacy and project strength externally, escalated military activities as a demonstration of resolve.⁸⁰ Geopolitically, Iran perceived an opportunity to test the cohesion of Israel's regional alliances, particularly in light of shifting U.S. policies in the Middle East.⁸¹ The timing of the June–July escalation coincided with diplomatic uncertainties, as global powers debated renewed negotiations over Iran's nuclear program, creating an environment conducive to assertive action.⁸²

Strategically, the conflict reflected both conventional and asymmetric dynamics.⁸³ Israel deployed advanced aerial strikes, missile defense systems, and cyber capabilities to target Iranian-linked facilities and infrastructure.⁸⁴ In response, Iran relied on proxy actors to conduct rocket attacks, drone incursions, and limited sabotage operations.⁸⁵ The interplay of these strategies created a highly fluid battlefield, where rapid escalation and localized flare-ups often threatened to trigger broader regional involvement.⁸⁶ Several immediate triggers contributed directly to the June–July hostilities. One key event was a reported Israeli airstrike on an Iranian-supported weapons depot in Syria, which resulted in significant casualties and infrastructure damage.⁸⁷ Iran and its allied militias interpreted this strike as a deliberate provocation, prompting retaliatory attacks against Israeli positions in the Golan Heights and northern border regions.⁸⁸ These exchanges quickly escalated into sustained hostilities, demonstrating how a single tactical incident can ignite strategic-level confrontation when underlying tensions are high.⁸⁹ Maritime security also played a crucial role in the dynamics of the conflict.⁹⁰ Iran's periodic interference with commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, including threats to oil tankers and regional trade routes, increased the economic stakes and drew international attention.⁹¹ Israel, alongside allied navies, intensified patrols and intelligence operations to secure shipping lanes, further contributing to an atmosphere of confrontation.⁹² The interaction between land-based strikes and maritime manoeuvres underscored the multidimensional nature of the conflict, involving both conventional military operations and strategic leverage over critical global infrastructure.⁹³

The dynamics of the June–July conflict were further complicated by external actors' involvement.⁹⁴ The United

States maintained strategic support for Israel through intelligence sharing, missile defense coordination, and diplomatic backing, while Russia and China pursued a more nuanced approach, advocating for restraint but providing Iran with avenues for strategic and economic support.⁹⁵ This international entanglement created a complex environment in which local hostilities risked escalation into broader geopolitical confrontations.⁹⁶ Ideological and narrative factors also amplified the conflict.⁹⁷ Both Israel and Iran leveraged media and political messaging to frame the escalation in existential terms, portraying military actions as necessary for national survival and regional legitimacy.⁹⁸ Such rhetoric hardened public and elite perceptions, reducing incentives for compromise and creating a context in which escalation became politically expedient.⁹⁹ The June–July 2025 hostilities illustrate the limits of deterrence in highly asymmetrical and ideologically charged conflicts.¹⁰⁰ Israel's conventional superiority did not fully deter Iranian-supported actors from engaging in provocative actions, while Iran's indirect strategies through proxies were insufficient to prevent Israeli counter-strikes. The result was a rapidly escalating confrontation that highlighted both the vulnerabilities of regional security architectures and the persistent challenges in managing modern interstate conflicts in the Middle East.¹⁰¹ However, the June–July 2025 Israel-Iran conflict was the product of long-term historical tensions, strategic miscalculations, and immediate triggers in the regional and international environment.¹⁰² The combination of conventional and asymmetric warfare, regional power struggles, and external actor involvement created a complex and highly volatile conflict landscape. Understanding these causes and dynamics is essential for analyzing the subsequent regional consequences and the broader implications for global peace and security.¹⁰³

CONSEQUENCES AND REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The June–July 2025 escalation of the Israel-Iran conflict had immediate and far-reaching consequences for the Middle East, reshaping regional dynamics and affecting neighboring states in multiple dimensions political, security, economic, and humanitarian.¹⁰⁴ The direct military engagements between Israel and Iran's proxies destabilized already fragile political systems in countries such as Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen, amplifying pre-existing social and governance vulnerabilities.¹⁰⁵ In Lebanon, Hezbollah's involvement in the conflict further intensified political polarization and heightened security risks.¹⁰⁶ Israeli airstrikes targeting Hezbollah positions in southern Lebanon triggered retaliatory missile and rocket attacks, creating a security dilemma for the Lebanese state, which lacks both the capacity and legitimacy to effectively manage escalatory violence.¹⁰⁷ The conflict strained

Lebanon's already fragile institutions, exacerbated internal divisions, and increased the risk of domestic unrest, illustrating how regional conflicts can destabilize third-party states that serve as arenas for proxy warfare.¹⁰⁸ Syria's ongoing civil war intersected with the Israel-Iran hostilities, adding layers of complexity to regional stability.¹⁰⁹ Iranian-backed militias operating in Syria became active participants in the conflict, leading to further Israeli airstrikes and targeted operations.¹¹⁰ The presence of multiple actors Syrian government forces, Iranian proxies, and Israeli military interventions produced a multidimensional battlefield in which civilian populations faced increased displacement, infrastructural destruction, and humanitarian crises.¹¹¹ These developments underscore how conflicts between major regional powers can exacerbate local vulnerabilities and produce spill over effects far beyond the immediate theatre of confrontation.¹¹²

In Yemen, although geographically distant, Iran's support for the Houthi movement contributed indirectly to the regional consequences of the Israel-Iran conflict.¹¹³ The escalation reinforced Houthi perceptions of strategic opportunity, prompting missile and drone attacks against Saudi-led coalition targets.¹¹⁴ These operations complicated ongoing efforts to negotiate peace in Yemen, highlighting the interconnectedness of Middle Eastern conflicts and the ways in which local insurgencies can become entangled in broader regional rivalries.¹¹⁵ The economic consequences of the conflict were also profound.¹¹⁶ The Strait of Hormuz, through which a significant portion of global oil trade passes, became a flashpoint as Iranian threats to disrupt shipping raised global energy market anxieties.¹¹⁷ Insurance premiums for maritime transport surged, oil prices spiked, and energy-dependent economies faced heightened uncertainty.¹¹⁸ These disruptions illustrate the broader international ramifications of localized conflicts, demonstrating that regional hostilities can generate ripple effects across global markets.¹¹⁹ The 2025 escalation further undermined regional security architectures.¹²⁰ Organizations such as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) faced challenges in coordinating responses to the conflict, particularly in balancing the need for collective defense with the risk of exacerbating tensions.¹²¹ Similarly, multilateral attempts to mediate the escalation were hindered by diverging strategic interests among regional and external powers, revealing both the strengths and limitations of contemporary regional governance structures.¹²²

The conflict's consequences also include a reconfiguration of regional alliances.¹²³ Israel's relations with Gulf states strengthened through intelligence-sharing agreements and coordinated defensive measures, reflecting the deepening alignment of Sunni Arab states against perceived Iranian

influence.¹²⁴ Conversely, Iran reinforced ties with Syria, Lebanon, and non-state actors, consolidating its influence through strategic proxy networks.¹²⁵ These alignments indicate a bifurcation in regional geopolitics, with the potential to institutionalize enduring rival blocs that heighten the risk of recurrent conflicts.¹²⁶ From a security perspective, the escalation demonstrated the continuing relevance of **asymmetric and hybrid warfare** in shaping regional outcomes.¹²⁷ While Israel relies on technologically advanced conventional capabilities, Iran's use of proxies, cyber tactics, and missile threats exemplifies a strategic approach that compensates for relative conventional inferiority.¹²⁸ This combination of strategies complicates traditional military planning and underscores the adaptive nature of modern Middle Eastern conflicts.¹²⁹ Humanitarian consequences were equally significant.¹³⁰ Civilian populations in affected regions experienced displacement, infrastructure damage, and restricted access to essential services, further exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities.¹³¹ These conditions intensified social grievances and could create long-term cycles of instability, as populations subjected to repeated crises may be more susceptible to radicalization or support for militant actors.¹³² The regional consequences of the June–July 2025 Israel-Iran conflict extend far beyond direct military engagements.¹³³ The escalation destabilized neighboring states, reconfigured alliances, disrupted economic flows, and underscored the vulnerabilities of regional security mechanisms.¹³⁴ Understanding these consequences is critical for analyzing the broader implications of the conflict and for informing policies aimed at conflict mitigation, regional stabilization, and long-term peacebuilding.¹³⁵

International Responses and Policy Debates

The 2025 Israel-Iran conflict elicited a range of international responses, reflecting the diverse strategic interests of global powers and the complex architecture of contemporary diplomacy.¹³⁶ While regional actors were directly engaged in the hostilities, major powers such as the United States, Russia, China, and European states also played critical roles in shaping the conflict's trajectory, either through direct support, diplomatic initiatives, or broader policy debates. The United States maintained robust support for Israel, emphasizing intelligence sharing, military coordination, and diplomatic backing in multilateral forums.¹³⁷ Washington's strategy was guided by a dual objective: deterring Iranian aggression while preventing escalation into full-scale regional war. U.S. policymakers also sought to reinforce Israel's technological and missile defense capacities, signaling a commitment to its security without directly deploying combat forces.¹³⁸ This approach reflected a calculated balance between

deterrence and containment, designed to minimize risks to U.S. interests in the Middle East while supporting a key regional ally. European responses were more nuanced.¹³⁹ The European Union and select individual states prioritized diplomatic engagement and humanitarian concerns, calling for restraint and adherence to international law.¹⁴⁰ European actors also emphasized the importance of reviving negotiations over Iran's nuclear program as a mechanism for conflict mitigation. However, their limited influence on both Israel and Iran, relative to the United States, constrained their ability to shape immediate outcomes on the ground.¹⁴¹ Russia and China adopted more cautious and strategic postures, reflecting broader geopolitical calculations.¹⁴² Moscow expressed concern over regional instability but also maintained strategic ties with Iran, leveraging the conflict to advance its influence in the Middle East and to counterbalance U.S. and Israeli interests.¹⁴³ Beijing, while advocating for restraint, focused on safeguarding energy interests and preserving stability to ensure uninterrupted trade and investment flows.¹⁴⁴ Both powers employed diplomatic channels to discourage escalation, though without the coercive leverage that might compel direct conflict resolution.¹⁴⁵ The United Nations faced significant challenges in responding to the escalation.¹⁴⁶ The Security Council, divided along geopolitical lines, was largely unable to issue enforceable resolutions, demonstrating the limitations of multilateral institutions in managing highly polarized conflicts.¹⁴⁷ Although calls for ceasefires and humanitarian access were made, the paralysis of the Council reflected the broader structural inadequacies of global governance mechanisms when confronted with conflicts involving strategically aligned major powers.¹⁴⁸

Policy debates at the international level focused on several critical questions: how to balance deterrence with diplomacy, how to prevent the escalation of regional proxy wars, and how to safeguard global economic and energy interests amid the conflict.¹⁴⁹ Analysts emphasized the risks of unilateral military actions that could inadvertently widen the war, while others argued for stronger sanctions and coercive measures to pressure Iran into compliance with international norms.¹⁵⁰ These debates highlighted the persistent tension between *realpolitik* considerations and normative imperatives in global conflict management.¹⁵¹ The conflict also spurred discussions on the adequacy of existing security architectures.¹⁵² Regional alliances such as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and security partnerships with the United States were tested, revealing both strengths in intelligence-sharing and weaknesses in coordinated response capacities.¹⁵³ Scholars and policymakers alike recognized the need for more robust mechanisms to manage escalatory cycles, including early-warning systems, confidence-building measures, and

conflict-resolution frameworks tailored to the complexities of modern Middle Eastern conflicts.¹⁵⁴ In addition, humanitarian considerations played a critical role in shaping international responses.¹⁵⁵ The potential for civilian casualties, refugee flows, and infrastructural damage prompted calls for neutral humanitarian corridors and enhanced monitoring of conflict zones.¹⁵⁶ These interventions, though limited in scope, underscored the interconnectedness of security and human welfare considerations in global policy debates. Overall, the international responses to the 2025 Israel-Iran conflict reveal the interplay of strategic, diplomatic, and normative factors that define contemporary global governance.¹⁵⁷ While direct interventions were largely limited to supporting allies and diplomatic engagement, the conflict stimulated broader debates on the adequacy of existing institutions, the role of major powers in regional conflicts, and the persistent challenges of balancing deterrence with diplomacy.¹⁵⁸ These discussions provide critical insights for policymakers seeking to prevent escalation, stabilize conflict-prone regions, and preserve international norms governing war and peace.

CONCLUSION

The 2025 Israel-Iran conflict represents one of the most consequential escalations in the Middle East in recent decades, demonstrating the enduring interplay of historical rivalries, regional strategic calculations, and global geopolitical considerations. This study has examined the conflict from multiple perspectives, including historical context, the immediate causes and dynamics of the June–July hostilities, regional consequences, and international responses. The analysis underscores the complexity of contemporary Middle Eastern conflicts, where local, regional, and global factors converge to produce multifaceted crises that challenge conventional frameworks of peace and security. Historically, the Israel-Iran rivalry is rooted in a long-standing ideological, political, and strategic contest. While earlier decades were marked by proxy confrontations and diplomatic manoeuvring, the 2025 escalation revealed that the underlying tensions remain unresolved and have evolved in scope and intensity. The historical grievances, combined with regional ambitions, create a volatile foundation upon which relatively minor incidents can rapidly escalate into broader hostilities. Understanding this historical context is essential for assessing both the immediate causes of conflict and the long-term risks posed to regional stability. The June–July conflict itself was characterized by rapid escalation, asymmetrical tactics, and the interplay of conventional and proxy forces. Israel's advanced military capabilities, including precision airstrikes and missile defense systems, were met with Iranian-supported proxy operations,

demonstrating the adaptive and multidimensional nature of modern warfare. The conflict's triggers, such as targeted strikes on strategic facilities and retaliatory attacks, highlight how local incidents can quickly become catalysts for large-scale confrontations in environments where mutual suspicion and historical grievances are deeply entrenched. The June–July hostilities underscore the critical need for effective early-warning systems, robust diplomacy, and crisis management mechanisms to prevent local incidents from escalating into wider conflicts.

Regionally, the conflict had profound consequences for neighboring states and broader Middle Eastern dynamics. Countries such as Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen faced heightened security risks, political polarization, and humanitarian challenges. The spill over effects included the destabilization of already fragile states, increased displacement and infrastructural damage, and the amplification of existing social and political grievances. These outcomes demonstrate that conflicts between major regional powers rarely remain confined to the primary belligerents; rather, they ripple across borders, impacting civilian populations, regional institutions, and local governance structures. The consequences of the 2025 escalation emphasize the importance of considering indirect and systemic effects when evaluating the costs and risks of conflict. The international response to the Israel-Iran conflict further highlights the complex interaction between regional hostilities and global governance structures. Major Powers such as the United States, Russia, China, and European actors navigated competing strategic interests, employing a combination of diplomatic engagement, military support, and public statements to influence the conflict's trajectory. The limitations of the United Nations Security Council in effectively managing the crisis revealed structural weaknesses in the current international system, demonstrating the challenges of enforcing norms and maintaining peace when powerful states have conflicting interests. The international community's varied responses underscore the necessity for more coherent, multilateral approaches to conflict management that are capable of addressing both immediate threats and structural sources of instability.

One of the key insights from this study is the interplay between military action and diplomacy. While military operations remain central to state strategy, they are insufficient for achieving sustainable security outcomes in isolation. Diplomatic initiatives, including mediated dialogue, confidence-building measures, and long-term negotiation frameworks, are essential to complement military strategies and prevent cycles of retaliation and escalation. The 2025 conflict demonstrates that without proactive and sustained diplomacy, even localized

confrontations can spiral into broader crises with regional and global implications. The economic and humanitarian dimensions of the conflict further highlight the far-reaching impact of regional hostilities. Disruptions to maritime trade, particularly in critical areas such as the Strait of Hormuz, affected global energy markets and highlighted vulnerabilities in international economic systems. Concurrently, the displacement of civilians, destruction of infrastructure, and humanitarian crises underscore the human cost of conflict and the need for proactive protection and relief measures. Addressing these dimensions requires coordinated international responses, robust contingency planning, and the integration of economic and humanitarian considerations into security strategies. The 2025 Israel-Iran conflict also reinforces the importance of regional and global institutional capacity. Regional organizations such as the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab League, as well as international mechanisms under the United Nations, require strengthened structures for crisis response, monitoring, and mediation. These institutions must be equipped to manage not only conventional interstate conflicts but also asymmetrical and proxy engagements that increasingly characterize modern warfare. Enhancing institutional effectiveness involves improving coordination, ensuring transparency, and fostering inclusive participation among all relevant actors, including smaller states and non-state stakeholders.

From a policy perspective, the conflict illustrates the enduring relevance of strategic foresight and evidence-based decision-making. Understanding historical patterns, regional dynamics, and the potential consequences of various actions allows policymakers to craft interventions that are both context-sensitive and forward-looking. Scenario planning, risk assessment, and integration of scholarly research into policy formulation are essential components of effective conflict management in a complex, multipolar environment. Such approaches enable states and international actors to anticipate escalatory triggers, design preventive strategies, and implement measures that reduce the likelihood of unintended consequences. Finally, the 2025 Israel-Iran conflict serves as a stark reminder that peace and security require sustained, multidimensional efforts that integrate military, diplomatic, economic, and humanitarian strategies. Sustainable resolution is not achievable through coercion alone; it demands dialogue, institutional cooperation, and mechanisms for building trust and interdependence among actors. Long-term stability will depend on the ability of regional and international stakeholders to address structural sources of tension, manage crises proactively, and ensure that civilian populations are protected from the collateral impacts of hostilities. In conclusion, the conflict represents more than a regional crisis; it is a critical juncture with implications

for the Middle East and the broader international order. Its lessons extend beyond immediate hostilities to the fundamental challenges of managing modern conflicts in a complex and interconnected world. By emphasizing proactive diplomacy, robust institutional capacity, comprehensive security strategies, and humanitarian protection, the international community can work toward mitigating the risks of future escalations and fostering conditions for lasting peace. The 2025 Israel-Iran conflict thus serves as both a cautionary tale and a guide for shaping effective, multidimensional approaches to contemporary and future conflicts in the Middle East and beyond.

Recommendations

In light of the 2025 Israel-Iran conflict, it is imperative that efforts to prevent future escalations and promote regional stability are multifaceted, combining diplomatic, security, economic, and humanitarian strategies. Central to these efforts is the need to strengthen diplomatic engagement between Israel and Iran through sustained dialogue facilitated by neutral and respected mediators. Such engagement should focus on building trust, addressing grievances, and establishing clear communication channels to prevent misunderstandings that can rapidly escalate into hostilities. Multilateral diplomatic frameworks must be reinforced, ensuring that both regional and global actors participate in facilitating negotiations and confidence-building measures. Regional security structures also require significant enhancement. Organizations such as the Gulf Cooperation Council and other regional alliances must improve coordination, intelligence sharing, and crisis management protocols to respond swiftly and effectively to emerging tensions. Establishing mechanisms for monitoring proxy forces and conflict-prone areas can help anticipate potential escalations and reduce the likelihood of localized incidents spiraling into broader confrontations. Building these capacities will not only strengthen immediate security but also foster greater resilience and cooperation among regional actors. Early-warning and preventive systems are critical components of conflict mitigation. The integration of real-time intelligence, predictive analytics, and scenario planning can provide policymakers with timely information to anticipate and address potential flashpoints. Coupled with diplomatic engagement, these systems enable proactive intervention and reduce the risks associated with miscalculations or inadvertent escalations.

Protecting civilian populations and ensuring humanitarian assistance remain central to sustainable peace efforts. The conflict has demonstrated the devastating impact on civilians, including displacement, infrastructure destruction, and threats to essential services. Humanitarian corridors, rapid response teams, and coordinated relief

measures must be prioritized, alongside long-term initiatives for reconstruction and support for displaced communities. Ensuring civilian protection not only alleviates human suffering but also strengthens the legitimacy and effectiveness of conflict resolution efforts. Economic and energy security must also be considered in conflict prevention strategies. Securing critical trade routes, particularly those vulnerable to disruption, and diversifying energy supply sources can reduce the broader economic impact of regional hostilities. By enhancing resilience in trade and energy systems, regional and international actors can limit the spill over effects of conflict and maintain stability in global markets. Promoting norms of restraint and adherence to international humanitarian principles is equally essential. Encouraging predictable military conduct, protecting civilians, and avoiding deliberate targeting of infrastructure can reduce the humanitarian cost of conflicts and create conditions more conducive to negotiation and diplomacy. Likewise, engaging with proxy and non-state actors in structured frameworks can ensure that these groups operate within agreed-upon parameters and contribute to de-escalation rather than further instability. Finally, long-term strategies must focus on sustainable conflict resolution through reconciliation, trust-building, and cooperative initiatives that reduce structural tensions. Inclusive dialogue involving states, civil society, and international actors is necessary to foster shared understanding, monitor compliance with agreements, and address emerging grievances. Integrating evidence-based research, historical analysis, and scenario modelling into policy planning further enhances the capacity of decision-makers to craft strategies that are both proactive and adaptive, addressing immediate threats while building frameworks for enduring peace. In essence, the lessons of the 2025 Israel-Iran conflict emphasize the need for a comprehensive, integrated approach to security and diplomacy, combining short-term crisis management with long-term strategies for stability. By prioritizing dialogue, institutional strengthening, humanitarian protection, and evidence-informed policy, the international community can mitigate the risks of future escalations and lay the foundations for a more secure and resilient regional and global order.

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