

The Euro-Gulf Monitor

19 - 26 August 2025

by Matthew Robinson

5 Top Points

1. Hamas accepts Gulf-mediated Gaza truce proposal: Qatar announced that Hamas has agreed in principle to a ceasefire plan 'almost identical' to a previous version accepted by Israel. While Qatari officials cautioned this positive response does not guarantee a final deal, it raises hopes for a 60-day truce with hostage releases and unhindered humanitarian access to Gaza.
2. E3-Iran talks in Geneva carry high stakes for the Gulf: UK, France and Germany met Iranian officials in Geneva to try to avert UN 'snapback' sanctions (26 August), with the Europeans pressing Tehran to restore IAEA access and curb enrichment ahead of an autumn deadline. For the GCC, the outcome bears directly on regional security and energy trade. From Doha (20 August), Iran's foreign minister said the 'timing [is] not right' for direct talks with the US, signalling any movement will likely run through European channels while Gulf mediators keep lines open.
3. UAE flies 75th aid airdrop into besieged Gaza: The UAE carried out its 80th humanitarian airdrop over Gaza (25 August) as part of Operation 'Birds of Goodness', delivering essential food supplies to areas unreachable by land. Conducted in coordination with Jordan and several European and Asian partners.
4. Saudi Arabia to launch expat pension and savings scheme: Riyadh is poised to introduce a new voluntary pension and savings program open to all workers (including over 10 million expatriates) aimed at boosting domestic savings and curbing massive remittance outflows. By encouraging expats to invest in local pension accounts, officials hope to retain more capital in-country and enhance long-term financial security for residents.
5. Oman unveils 'Golden Visa' to woo global investors: Muscat announced the launch of a new Golden Residency Visa programme, set to roll out as part of efforts to attract foreign investment and accelerate economic diversification. The scheme, introduced by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, will offer five and ten-year residence visas to qualifying investors and entrepreneurs.

'Round and About the Gulf'

Kingdom of Bahrain

Monday, 25 August - Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif Al Zayani reaffirmed Bahrain's unwavering support for Palestine at an emergency OIC Foreign Ministers' meeting in Jeddah. He urged an immediate halt to the war in Gaza and condemned the worsening humanitarian crisis, emphasising the shared Islamic duty to protect Palestinian lives and dignity. Al Zayani praised Saudi Arabia's role in pushing a two-state solution and backed Qatari, Egyptian and American mediation efforts toward a permanent ceasefire and post-war reconstruction in Gaza. He also noted Bahrain will prioritise the Palestinian cause during its upcoming UN Security Council term (2026-27) .

Monday, 24 August - The Supreme Council for Environment announced that new licensing regulations for Bahraini commercial fishermen (issued earlier this year) will take full effect (on 28

August). The rules require all fishermen to obtain annual, non-transferable licences via the national eGovernment portal, and set limits on crew sizes based on vessel type. Aimed at bolstering sustainability and food security, the licensing system ensures only registered Bahraini fishermen operate, thereby protecting marine resources and preserving the fishing tradition for future generations, officials said.

State of Kuwait

Monday, 25 August - Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, chaired the inaugural meeting of a committee tasked with organising the construction of new mosques and husseiniyas (religious ritual sites). The ministry noted that the meeting set out clear licensing procedures and standards to maximise these institutions' positive impact in serving the community, adding it 'underscores Kuwait's commitment to organising religious and charitable work [and] safeguarding the country's leadership role [...].'

Sultanate of Oman

Tuesday, 26 August - Oman is introducing a 'Golden Visa' residency programme for investors (on 31 August) as part of a drive to stimulate its economy and digitalise business services. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion confirmed the long-term visa scheme will launch at an event in Salalah under the auspices of Dhofar's Governor. It will coincide with new initiatives, such as the 'Al Majida Companies' support program and an online system for commercial registration transfers to empower local enterprises and streamline processes.

State of Qatar

Tuesday, 19 August - Doha's mediation efforts yielded a breakthrough as Hamas conveyed approval of a Qatari-Egyptian proposal for a comprehensive Gaza truce. Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesperson Majed Al-Ansari confirmed Hamas's 'positive response' to a ceasefire deal nearly identical to one Israel had earlier accepted. The plan reportedly includes a two-month halt in fighting, release of Israeli hostages in phases, and a major scale-up of humanitarian aid into Gaza. Qatar, working closely with Egypt and the US, cautioned that this is not yet a final agreement, but called it a decisive moment to prevent an even worse humanitarian catastrophe.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Sunday, 24 August - Saudi Arabia is preparing to roll out a voluntary Pension and Savings Program for both citizens and expatriate workers, aiming to strengthen household savings and reduce capital outflows. According to an IMF report shared via local media, expat remittances from the Kingdom topped 38 billion USD in 2024. Under the new scheme, foreign workers (who comprise roughly 77% of Saudi insurance contributors) will be able to invest in domestic pension funds, bolstering their future security while retaining funds in the Saudi economy. This initiative complements recent pension reforms enacted to ensure the system's long-term sustainability and align with Vision 2030 goals of economic resilience.

Monday, 25 August - The Royal Saudi Air Defence Forces announced the graduation of a third cohort of personnel trained to operate the US-made THAAD missile defence system. Dozens of Saudi officers and soldiers completed intensive training at Fort Bliss in Texas, including live simulations and exercises on the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence platform. Conducted with support from American experts, the programme is building a fully qualified Saudi team to deploy one of the world's most advanced anti-ballistic missile systems.

United Arab Emirates

Tuesday, 19 August --The UAE carried out its 80th humanitarian aid airdrop over Gaza, continuing an air-bridge that has delivered vital relief to civilians trapped by fighting. Under the UAE's 'Birds of Goodness; operation (part of its wider Gallant Knight 3 mission), an Emirati Air Force transport – joined by planes from Jordan, Germany, Italy, France, the Netherlands, Singapore and Indonesia – parachuted food parcels into inaccessible areas of the Gaza Strip. Abu Dhabi affirmed it will sustain these multi-nation airdrops to alleviate Gaza's dire shortages, highlighting the Emirates' commitment to humanitarian leadership and the value of Euro-Arab cooperation in crisis response.

Saturday, 23 August - The Ministry of Education announced that Artificial Intelligence will be introduced as an official subject in all UAE public schools starting from the 2025-26 academic year . The new AI curriculum (integrated across Kindergarten to Grade 12) will cover fundamental concepts, data and algorithms, real-world applications and ethics, with content tailored to each age group. Around 1,000 teachers have been trained to deliver the material, which will be folded into existing ICT classes without adding to students' weekly hours.

EU Corner

Tuesday, 26 August - officials from Britain, France and Germany met their Iranian counterparts in Geneva (with EU representatives in attendance) to restart talks on the Iran nuclear issue. This marked the first round of EU/E3-Iran negotiations since a 12-day Israel-Iran military confrontation in June temporarily derailed diplomacy. The Geneva meeting addressed Tehran's reduced cooperation with the IAEA and its expanded uranium enrichment, which European powers warn could trigger the 'snapback' reimposition of UN sanctions by October. EU officials indicated willingness to extend that deadline if Iran shows good-faith engagement with the UN and Washington. All sides emphasised de-escalation after the summer's hostilities, aiming to revive elements of the previous 2015 JCPOA accord, even as Iran insists that any limits on its programme be met with economic relief from Europe and the US.

Key Official Visits & Contacts

Sunday, 23 August - Salalah, Oman: His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain paid a fraternal visit to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik of Oman. The two leaders held a warm evening meeting at Bait Al Rubat in Salalah, during which Sultan Haitham welcomed King Hamad and his delegation. No formal agreements were signed during this informal gathering, but the encounter underscored the close brotherly relations between Manama and Muscat and the tradition of high-level Gulf dialogue. Sultan Haitham expressed joy at King Hamad's visit to Dhofar, reflecting the goodwill and mutual respect at the highest levels of both states.