

# Israel-Iran War: A Snapshot Analysis

By Yusuf Kanli

## What the Israel–Iran war tells Türkiye about reality

As the geopolitical map of the Middle East is redrawn, Türkiye finds itself forced to manage both the collapse of a neighboring country and its own internal vulnerabilities simultaneously. This war is not only a cross-border conflict; it is a stress test for Türkiye's decision-making structure, energy dependence, and diplomatic capacity.

Israel's air campaign against Iran quickly surpassed the boundaries of a conventional war. This is not just a military clash; it is a deliberate campaign of infrastructure destruction, intelligence dominance, and regime degradation. Beyond the illusion created by missile exchanges, international assessments clearly indicate that Iran is undergoing a systematic collapse.

What makes this war particularly critical is its impact beyond Iran's borders. Türkiye is not only geographically but also strategically positioned near the epicenter of the crisis in terms of energy, security, and diplomacy. In this context, the Israel–Iran war raises not only military concerns for Türkiye but also profound managerial and strategic questions.

## Iran's collapse: Not just a military defeat, but systemic disintegration

Iran is waging a war in isolation—both militarily and ideologically. Israel's operations, empowered by cyberattacks, air superiority, and deep intelligence penetration, have systematically targeted Iran's refineries, power stations, communication networks, and, most importantly, nuclear facilities.

Strikes against deeply buried nuclear enrichment facilities like Fordow are only feasible with advanced U.S. bunker-buster munitions like the GBU-57. According to BBC analyses, the U.S. is reportedly preparing for such technical operations and may directly intervene.

Since 1979, Iran's foreign policy centered on exporting the Islamic Revolution through sectarian alliances and proxy wars. While this approach yielded tactical gains in the short term, it ultimately resulted in strategic isolation. Today, Iran has no reliable ally—neither from Arab states nor from the East-West axis.

Moreover, Mossad's infiltration into Iran's inner circle not only reveals intelligence vulnerabilities but also exposes the regime's unraveling. Assassinations of high-ranking officials point to irreversible fractures within the Iranian state apparatus.

## The cost of dependence on Iranian natural gas

Iran supplies approximately 16–20% of Türkiye’s natural gas needs, with this figure rising in winter months. In a war scenario, disruptions or sabotage to gas pipelines pose a direct threat to Türkiye’s energy security.

Already grappling with inflationary pressures, high interest rates, and fragile currency balances, Türkiye could face the following consequences if Iranian gas supplies are cut:

- Industrial production may slow, losing competitiveness due to rising costs,
- Electricity generation could suffer interruptions,
- Household heating and utility bills could surge,
- Inflation may once again spiral into double digits,
- Fiscal balances and Central Bank reserves would come under severe strain.

Such an economic shock would derail the post-2023 stabilization efforts, fuel social unrest, and intensify political tensions across the country.

### **Border security: Not only migration but also growing terror risks**

Developments in Iran threaten Türkiye not only in terms of energy but also in terms of border security. Iran’s collapse brings about the following risks:

- Iranian-backed militias targeting Türkiye from Iraq and Syria,
- Proxy conflicts between Türkiye-backed SMO and Iranian-aligned Shiite forces,
- Mass migration of Azerbaijani Turks (especially from the Tabriz–Urmia region),
- An increase in ethnic, social, and security-related tensions due to migration.

Thus, Türkiye must bolster its technical and administrative security measures, especially along its eastern border provinces like Van and Hakkari. Migration management is no longer merely a humanitarian issue—it is now a matter of national strategy.

### **Diplomatic erosion: Neutrality or compelled partisanship?**

Unlike its effective mediation in the Russia–Ukraine war, Türkiye has failed to assume a similar role in this conflict. Reasons for this include:

- The use of undiplomatic and extreme rhetoric against Israel (e.g., “genocide,” “terror state”),
- Open ties with Hamas undermining Türkiye’s image as a neutral actor,
- The withdrawal of ambassadors effectively cutting direct diplomatic channels.

These factors have pushed Türkiye from the role of active mediator to that of a marginal observer. This is not merely a temporary loss of position—it may lead to a broader erosion of influence in multilateral diplomacy.

### **The Syrian theater and the SMO: Gain or new risk?**

Iran's withdrawal from Syria has shifted the balance of power on the ground. While this opens up space for the Türkiye-backed Syrian National Army (SMO), it also creates the following risks:

- Uncontrolled expansion of SMO and ideological drift,
- A rise in Salafist tendencies and growing international concerns of radicalization,
- Diplomatic dilemmas over how to engage with Syria's new post-Assad leadership.

Therefore, Türkiye must reinforce its oversight of the SMO, curb radical ideological tendencies, and establish a cautious but interest-based communication channel with the new Syrian government.

### **What Türkiye must learn from Iran's unraveling**

Iran's fragility is not solely the result of military pressure but of deep-rooted internal structural decay. For Türkiye, the following warnings are instructive:

- Collapse in scientific output and the erosion of meritocracy in academia,
- Brain drain accelerated by suppression of free expression,
- Politicization of the judiciary and the rise of legal unpredictability,
- Social unrest and generational alienation from the regime.

Iran's case serves as a stark reminder: to project strength abroad, a nation must first establish accountable governance at home. Otherwise, foreign policy becomes a performative display masking internal dysfunction—until it crashes.

### **The necessity of a realism-based foreign policy**

The Israel–Iran war is a multi-dimensional test for Türkiye. Energy security, border control, diplomacy, governance capacity, and regional strategy must all be reexamined.

In this context, Türkiye must:

- Diversify energy sources,
- Recalibrate and control relations with proxy actors,
- Rebuild its image of diplomatic neutrality,
- Undertake a domestic reform agenda based on rule of law, meritocracy, and institutional integrity.

Progress without realism, and rhetoric without structure, is no longer sustainable. The Israel–Iran war is indeed a crisis—but for Türkiye, it may also be an overdue wake-up call.