

REGIONAL DYNAMIC IN THE CONTEXT OF ISRAEL'S CURRENT RED LINES

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Abstract: *This paper aims to analyze the reporting of regional dynamics on the current red lines of Israel in the context of the modern geopolitical game that is foreshadowed. The Middle East region is of interest to the European Union, being a territory whose effects are directly or indirectly propagated on it, the Union having strategic and economic stakes in the area. Given the study of Israel's red lines, how does the European Union relate to the international geopolitical situation they create? In the analysis of the problem, qualitative research will be considered as a priority, as well as the study of certain red lines of Israel in order to understand the geopolitical game that is being played, how global actors relate to it and the position of the Union in relation to it. It will also highlight the active dynamics and geopolitical corridors, which represent inflection points in the competition between powers. Thus, this article emphasizes the perspective of Israel and the active players in the Middle East, capturing the location of the European Union in terms of the situation in which the limits of a state are materialized and the consequences that the possibility of overcoming them have on the community as a whole.*

Keywords: *European Union, Israel, geopolitical consequences, red lines.*

DOI **10.56082/annalsarscimilit.2026.3.41**

Introduction

The middle-eastern space in which the state of Israel is located is positioned at the intersection of several continents, being considered from a geopolitical perspective to have an intermediate area character, showing interest in regional and global dynamics. Its importance is captured by a diverse range of players, including the European Union, not only in terms of geographical proximity, but also in terms of the problems it entails, such as the conflict in Iran and the volatile situation in which states such as Syria and Lebanon are found. Thus, the fragmented nature that the Middle East possesses makes it prone to various types of conflicts caused by the instability that characterizes it, this is why it remains a region with a special geopolitical status. According to Cohen (2009), the geographical area is visualized in terms of the concept of the “*belt of ruins*”, being also his representation on the situation, as shown in figure no.2.¹ He captures the specificities of the area, being a core containing crises, underdevelopment

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¹ Cohen S., (2015). *Geopolitics. The Geography of International Relations*, third edition, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, New York, pp. 375-416.

and which has the potential to influence the international community globally. The intermediate area feature that this territory possesses explains the instability and stakes it has in the competition between global players. A compression, buffer zone located in the geopolitical game of power cores and strongly characterized by their involvement limits it to the competition between them. This geopolitical position is favorable to conflicts and crises, being doubled by the existing geostrategic and geo-economic stakes.



Figure no.1: Map of the Middle East²

Competitive powers such as the Russian Federation, the United States of America and People's Republic of China pursue control over the area, its geography determining the interests of each player. Control of strategic and economic corridors, supremacy over hydrocarbons, the nuclear program of Iran and Saudi Arabia, terrorism are active dynamics in the competition between them. In this context, the red lines of Israel are highlighted, a special category of elements that have the ability to intensify the problems in the region. The European Union approach in relation to the current red lines of Israel is a topical issue, having importance in terms of the situation present at global level.

² Source: GIS Geography available at <https://gisgeography.com/middle-east-map/>, accessed on 08.08.2026.

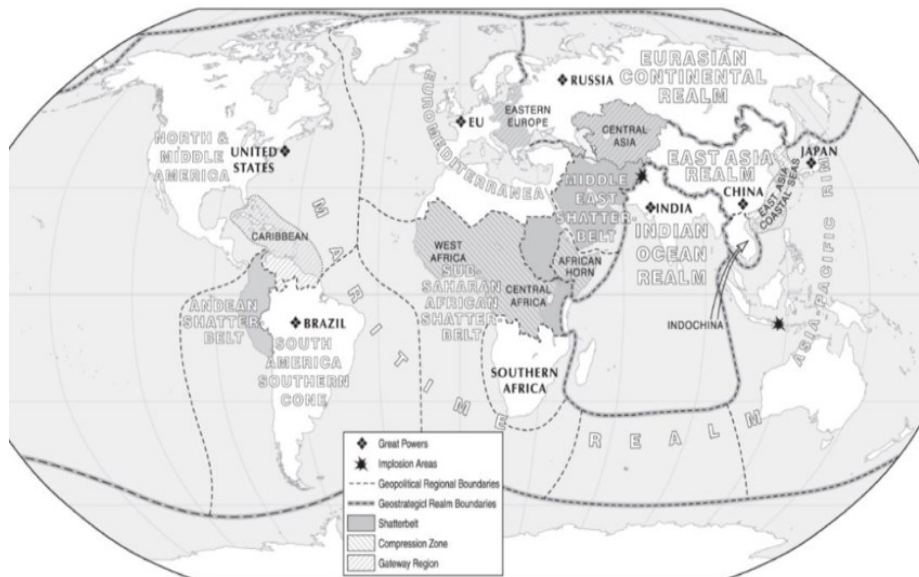


Figure no.2: American geopolitical vision of geopolitical fields³

From the point of view of civilizational geopolitics, the Middle East represents a region of compression with a particular complexity, being an islamic space presenting fractures between denominations and including in it the “*land of milk and honey*”. In this regard, Kissinger (2021) characterizes the area as “*the clutter of the Islamic world*”. Also, he notes the need for joint efforts by global players to destabilize actions that could influence the changing of the international order, such as religious and political conflicts.⁴ Hence, he emphasises that the challenges the Middle East presents in terms of the international order have a particular difficulty. Russia's goals are to strengthen its position in the United States. Geo-economic, the land and sea corridors that unite the Eastern Hemisphere areas and stimulate the development of the region are highlighted. Among them is the Silk Road, the Via Maris/Philisteni Road, the Tamil Road, the India-Middle East-Europe (MEC) economic corridor and the Ben Gurion Canal. Given the geopolitical and geostrategic analysis done previously, the concept of red lines of Israel acquires special valences, a strategic term in geopolitical play. The phrase has another meaning in the conception of the state of Israel, namely the “*kav adom*” from the Sea of Galilee, that is the

³ Cohen S., *op. cit.* p. 45.

⁴ Kissinger, H., (2021). *World order. Reflections on the specifics of nations and the course of history*, RAO Publishing House, Bucharest, pp. 154-155.

line of 213 meters below the sea level, which replenishes the natural freshwater reserves from the lake and which, if it becomes difficult to extract it, the water pumped from the lake is no longer allowed.⁵ Thus, it is noted that the state of Israel is in an area of particular importance, which causes its red lines to acquire a special character.

The red lines of Israel

The concept of *red lines* has several definitions depending on the areas analyzed, in this article considering the sphere of international relations, the notion pursuing their analysis in this area. Derleth și Pickler (2022) show that the red lines mean the barriers laid down by certain states, which seek to protect interests and which, if exceeded, can have severe effects.⁶ Examples of this may be the adoption of positions, the setting of time limits for certain actions or the adoption of decisions, the creation of sensitive technologies. However, no matter what the red line is called, its role is to discourage and maintain the situation in certain parameters, its breach reconfiguring the circumstances. In the context of this article, the concept of red lines means those themes that are of great strategic, economic and political value. Analyzing the history of the state of Israel, it is highlighted that its main objective concerns the security and protection of its statehood, indeed which is in close connection to its red limits. These include access to drinking water sources, the conflict between Israel and Hamas/Hezbollah, the Iranian nuclear program and more.

Israel's current red line is the Iranian nuclear weapons program. As part of the collaboration between the United States and Iran in 1957, the “*Atoms for Peace*” program was established, which allowed the latter to develop as a civilian-military nuclear power. With the Islamic Revolution and the US support halting, the Iranian state has refocused on the support offered by China and the Russian Federation, noting a concretization of the “*axis of evil*”, which prompted Washington's decision at the time to impose sanctions on its aid in its nuclear program. Prime Minister Netanyahu's presentation of the “*Amad Program*” highlighting Iran's intention to produce and test nuclear weapons, has determined the Trump administration in 2018 to withdraw the US from the nuclear deal.⁷ This led to an escalation on the part of the Iranian state in the development of the program, culminating in the announcement made in 2021 that the uranium enriched by 60% was

⁵ Kordova, S., (2012). *Word of the Day / Kav Adom: don't cross that line. The red one*, Haaretz.

⁶ Derleth J., Pickler J. (2022). Twenty-First Century Threats Require Twenty-First Century Deterrence. *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 21, no. 2, pp .11–23.

⁷ The project was created in 1989 for the development of nuclear capabilities. (Source: Rezaei, F., (2017). *Iran's Nuclear Program: A Study in Proliferation and Rollback*, Palgrave Macmillan Cham, p. 181.

obtained.⁸ The expansion of Iran's nuclear program has been a constant threat to the international community to block the steps taken to reinstate the sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council if the Iranian state does not allow verification activities of its nuclear facilities. However, questions arise such as the existing damage to nuclear infrastructure after recent attacks, the current position of uranium enriched by 60%, etc.

On the other hand, the 12-day war between Israel and Iran captures the red lines from a different perspective. Thus, the operation “Midnight Hammer” carried out last year by the United States to strike at Iran's nuclear facilities, represented a direct involvement of the United States against the Islamic Republic. In a Pentagon report, it is noted that the damage done to the Iranian state is measured in a maximum of two years.⁹ According to CNN, about a quarter of the entire American stock of THAAD interceptor missiles was used in the June 2025 war between Israel and Iran.¹⁰ On this subject, in the European Union Declaration on Nuclear Weapons of the First Committee of the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly, it highlights its commitment to a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear issue.¹¹¹² It is also important to note that Israeli officials stressed that Iran's ballistic missile program poses a threat to Israel, which is why it was analyzed whether to act independently if the interests of the state are at risk.¹³ In view of the above, Israel is emphasising the possibility of being in danger of annihilation, a valuable topic in its collaboration with the United States and cooperation with Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, the fact that Iran is becoming a nuclear power in the Middle East is a challenge that

⁸ Nikou S., (2021). *Timeline of Iran's Nuclear Activities*, United States Institute of Peace, The Iran Primer, available at <https://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/timeline-irans-nuclear-activities>, accessed on 08.08.2026.

⁹ Stewart P., Ali, I. (2025, 3 July). *Iranian nuclear program degraded by up to two years, Pentagon says*. Reuters, available at <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iranian-nuclear-program-degraded-by-up-two-years-pentagon-says-2025-07-02/>, accessed on 09.08.2026.

¹⁰ Mezzofiore G., Qiblawi T., Araujo M. (2025, 31 July). *US used about a quarter of its high-end missile interceptors in Israel-Iran war, exposing supply gap*. CNN, available at <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/07/28/middleeast/us-thaad-missile-interceptor-shortage-intl-invs>, accessed on 09.08.2026.

¹¹ The European External Action Service. (2025). *EU Statement – UN General Assembly 1st Committee: Nuclear Weapons* available at https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/un-new-york/eu-statement-%E2%80%93-un-general-assembly-1st-committee-nuclear-weapons-1_en, accessed on 09.08.2026.

¹² European Council. (2025). *European Council meeting (26 June 2025) – Conclusions (EUCO12/25)*. Council of the European Union available at <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/cjtb3oep/20250626-european-council-conclusions-en.pdf>, accessed on 09.08.2026.

¹³ Ashkenazi A. (2026, 8 February). *Israel warns Trump: We may act alone if Iran crosses ballistic missile red line*. The Jerusalem Post, available at <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/defensenews/article885948?fbclid=>, accessed on 10.08.2026.

concerns international society, which could launch the nuclear arms race of the other states in the East, intensifying the security risk that could culminate in a new war in the Gulf.

In this context, the conflict in Iran acquires special geopolitical valences. Due to the conflict of resistance in the Middle East, based on the strategy of resource management and the ability to sustain attacks, global consequences are already being observed. An example is the rise in oil prices (Brent and WTI), a key resource for the EU energy sector, which is driving an increase in price volatility, as shown in Figure no.3. In addition, gas prices have risen, with European gas recording an increase of 24%. Also, the price of gold has also escalated, with investors seeking to obtain the refuge assets and the dollar, following its appreciation on the world market.¹⁴

From a political perspective, the German Chancellor Merz showed willingness to support the United States and Israel in the conflict with Iran.¹⁵ Also, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte stated that Europe supports US actions in Iran.¹⁶ The President of the European Commission reacted to the situation in the Middle East by invoking the diplomatic solution and at the same time emphasizing European solidarity with the Persian Gulf states, namely Saudi Arabia and Qatar.¹⁷ On the other hand, Spain has refused the United States the possibility of using Spanish military bases to attack Iran.¹⁸ As is apparent from the analysis of figure no.3, it is noted the fact that the duration of the conflict in the Middle East will affect the stock markets in Europe and the price of hydrocarbons. At the same time, Europe will be influenced by the consequences of the conflict in Iran, its economic and

¹⁴ Stan Ș. (2026, 2 February). *Prețurile petrolului și gazelor au crescut puternic luni, după extinderea conflictului din Orientul Mijlociu: În Europa, gazele au urcat cu 24% la deschidere, iar Petrolul cu 13%*. Ziarul Financiar, available at <https://www.zf.ro/-eveniment/preturile-petrolului-si-gazelor-au-crescut-puternic-luni-dupa-23072433>, accessed on 10.08.2026.

¹⁵ Bose N., Rinke A., Shalal A. (2026, 3 March). *Trump says Germany helping with Iran strikes, meets Merz at White House*, Reuters available at <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/trump-hosts-germanys-merz-against-backdrop-iran-strikes-tariff-threats-2026-03-03/>, accessed on 10.08.2026.

¹⁶ Reuters. (2026, 2 March). *NATO's Rutte praises US, Israeli military action against Iran but says alliance won't be involved*, available at <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/natos-rutte-praises-us-israeli-military-action-against-iran-says-alliance-wont-2026-03-02/>, accessed on 10.08.2026.

¹⁷ The Economic Times. (2026, 2 March). *Middle-East conflict: EU chief von der Leyen affirms support to member states in times of threat*, available at <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/middle-east-conflict-eu-chief-von-der-leyen-affirms-support-to-member-states-in-times-of-threat-cyprus-attack/articleshow/128939741.cms?from=mdr>, accessed on 10.08.2026.

¹⁸ Jopson B. (2026, 4 March). *Pedro Sánchez calls US-Israeli war in Iran a 'disaster' amid spat with Trump*, Financial Times available at <https://www.ft.com/content/69e598d5-793d-413b-ae44-c2f4c1dbfb2f?syn-25a6b1a6=1>, accessed on 10.08.2026.

political interests being affected by the active dynamics existing in the Middle East.



Figure no.3: Oil evolution diagram¹⁹

The second red line is constituted by the existence of the HAMAS organization and the lebanese militia Hezbollah. The terrorist attack carried out on October 7, 2023, by HAMAS aims to influence the global configuration of power through the crises it propagates, the islamic space becoming a chessboard of the political game with points with huge geostrategic, geo-economic and geopolitical values. In addition, the presence of Iran with ties to Hezbollah and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood is driving an intensification of the terrorist network, whose branches span the world. Also, on the conflict of forces overlap the two competing powers, namely the United States and China, which give the situation an international dimension. For example, although the agreement proposed by President Trump to stop the conflict between Israel and Hamas is in force, the terrorist group affirms the continuation of the resistance actions.²⁰ Also, taking into account the russian-ukrainian war and the conflict in Iran, the stakes arising from the region are growing exponentially.

¹⁹ Source: <https://tradingeconomics.com/commodity/crude-oil>, accessed on 11.08.2026.

²⁰ Al Jazeera. (2026, 8 February). *Hamas leader rejects disarmament while Israeli occupation of Gaza continues*, available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/-2026/2/8/hamas-leader-rejects-disarmament-while-israeli-occupation-of-gaza-continues>, accessed on 11.08.2026.

Through the actions carried out by HAMAS, complex threats are being made to the state of Israel that pursue its geographic and civilizational existence, while the activities carried out by Hezbollah in countries such as Syria amplify the intensity of multilateral attacks that Israel is in a position to counter. It is important to note that following the protests in Iran and the reaction of the regime to them, the foreign ministers of the Union have designated the Guardians of the Revolution in Iran as a terrorist organization.²¹ After the conflict started in Iran, Israel attacked Hezbollah targets in Lebanon after it launched missiles and drones on it in response to recent events.²² The President of the European Council stressed the importance of resuming cooperation between Israel and Lebanon in order to disarm Hezbollah.²³ Thus, it is noted that these groups are active and can influence the geopolitical game by destabilizing the situation using civilizational conflicts based on ideological associations, blocking strategic corridors and increasing the risks of escalation at european level.

The third red line is access to drinking water sources. There are three major water sources in Israel, namely Lake Kinneret and the Jordan River. The Sea of Galilee is located in northern Israel near the border between Syria and Lebanon. It has an area of 166 km², a maximum depth of 48 m and an altitude of 212 m below sea level. The Jordan river, 300 km long, flows south through it, to the north of it. It merges with the rivers Yarmuk and Zarqa, continuing its trajectory to the Dead Sea. To the south of this, the course continues reaching the Red Sea. In this respect, the Jordan – Sea of Galilee network through which the use of the water resource is carried out, is an active stake of the state of Israel, being points of particular strategic value from the military and economic point of view. The control of drinking water sources, such as lakes and freshwater streams, is another issue of great importance, taking into account the geographical features that characterize the region. The drinking water deficit that Iran and the Gaza Strip are experiencing is an example of the crucial role that this red line

²¹ Rankin J., Stacey K. (2026, 29 January). *EU designates Iran's Revolutionary Guards as a terrorist organization*, The Guardian available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/jan/29/eu-formally-designates-iran-irgc-revolutionary-guards-terrorist-organisationm>, accessed on 12.08.2026.

²² Dumitrache C. (2026, 3 March). *Trupe IDF în sudul Libanului. Ambasadorul Israelului în România: "Vrem să le tăiem orice fel de sprijin dinspre Iran"*, DefenseRomania available at https://www.defenseromania.ro/idf-desfasoara-trupe-suplimentare-in-sutul-libanului-ambasadorul-israelului-in-romania-vrem-sa-le-taiem-orice-fel-de-sprijin-dinspre-iran_641688.html, accessed on 12.08.2026.

²³ Reuters. (2026, 2 March). *EU's Costa backs Lebanon's decision to end Hezbollah military activities*, available at <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/eus-costa-backs-lebanons-decision-end-hezbollah-military-activities-2026-03-02/>, accessed on 12.08.2026.

plays.²⁴²⁵ In this respect, the demographic framework of the area has the capacity to determine political crises, regional instability determined by economic differences between states and the accentuation of competition between regional and global players.

The fourth red line is determined by ore deposits of important economic value, which are essential in their use in war. Among them are the mines of copper (Timna), phosphate (Oron, Rotem), salt (Atlit - Carmel), potash (Shefeya) and much more. In addition to these, it is essential to mention oil, its supply being the reason why Israel's first declared the red line in 1957, namely free navigation in the Straits of Tiran. Furthermore, the temporary closure of the Strait of Hormuz by Iran, a strategic gas transportation point, is causing increased instability in the region, given the presence of the American army in the Persian Gulf.²⁶ The Strait of Hormuz connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea, making it possible to pass more than 20 percent of global liquefied oil and gas exports.²⁷ Thus, it represents an element with important geostrategic value in the geopolitical game, affecting both the economic (eg international trade) and the military aspect (eg the deployment of military capabilities in the territory). It is also necessary to specify the economic corridors that establish a network of connections between the Middle East and the European Union. The economic corridor India - Middle East - Europe (IMEC) would establish the economic link between India, the Arab Peninsula and the European Union. Additionally, the North-South International Transport Corridor (INSTC) is a complex route linking Europe with Asia, with global geo-economic effects. Also, the Basra-Aqaba pipeline project of Iraq and Jordan would directly influence Iran's Hormuz Strait. As regards the Middle East, figure no.5 shows the energy corridors and routes that crude oil travels to Asia (via Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Yemen, Iran), Africa and Europe (via Iraq).

²⁴ Meadway J. (2026, 15 January). *How 'day zero' water shortages in Iran are fuelling protests*. The Guardian, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/jan/15/how-day-zero-water-shortages-in-iran-are-fuelling-protests>, accessed on 12.08.2026.

²⁵ Middle East Monitor. (2026, 22 January). *UN says 70% of Gaza's water production disrupted as Israel blocks 'dual-use' repair item*, available at <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20260122-un-says-70-of-gazas-water-production-disrupted-as-israel-blocks-dual-use-repair-item/>, accessed on 12.08.2026.

²⁶ Makoi A., Barnes J., and Bodkin H. (2026, 17 February). *Iran closes Strait of Hormuz amid US military build-up*. The Telegraph, available at <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2026/02/17/trump-to-join-iran-talks-indirectly/>, accessed on 13.08.2026.

²⁷ Britannica. (2026, 25 July). *Strait of Hormuz*, available at <https://www.britannica.com/place/Strait-of-Hormuz>, accessed on 13.08.2026.

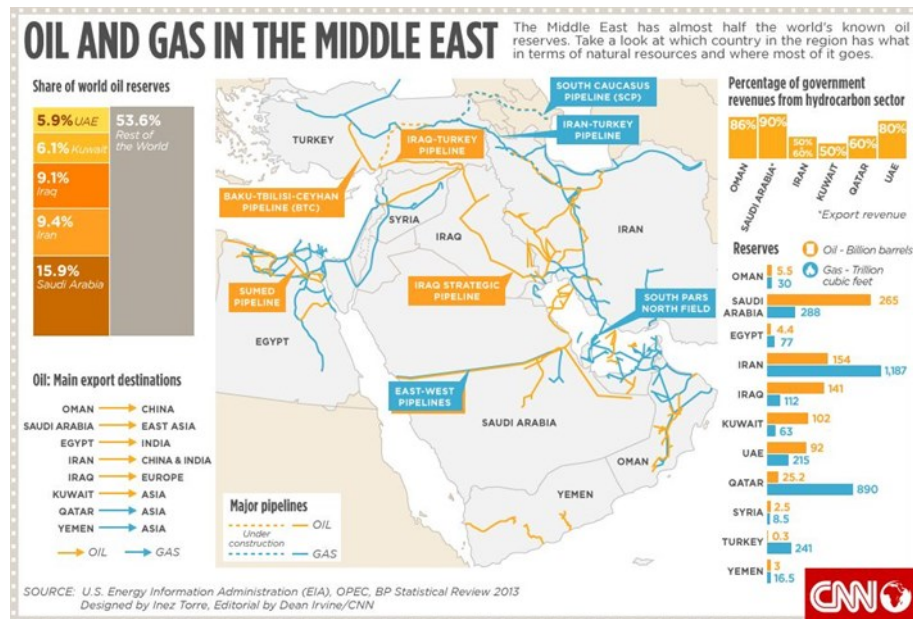


Figure no.4: The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)²⁸

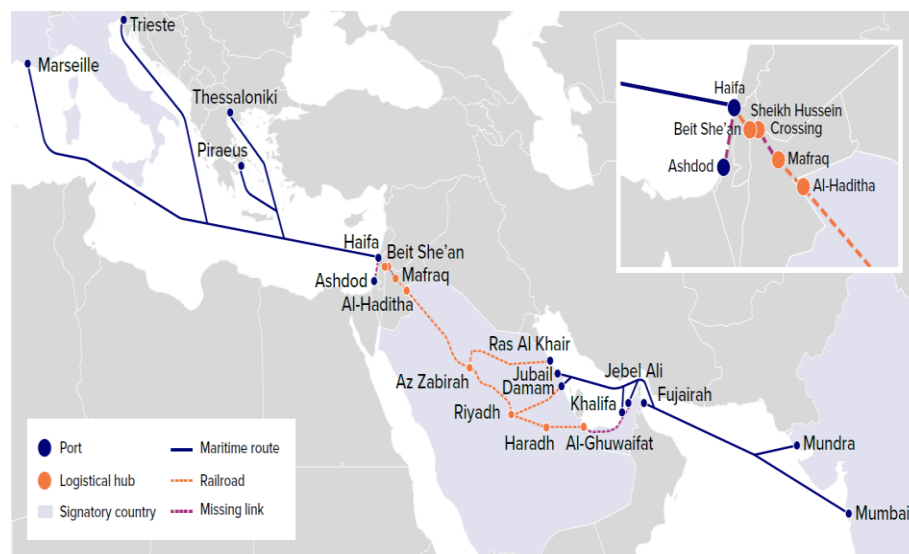


Figure no.5: Hydrocarbon corridors in the Middle East²⁹

²⁸ Hussain A., Shafer N. (2025, 27 August). The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor: Connectivity in an era of geopolitical uncertainty. Atlantic Council, available at <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/the-india-middle-east-europe-economic-corridor-connectivity-in-an-era-of-geopolitical-uncertainty/>, accessed on 13.08.2026.

²⁹ CNN. (2014, 12 June). *Fueling the world: A guide to the Middle East's oil and gas reserves*. available at <https://edition.cnn.com/2014/06/11/world/meast/middle-east-oil-and-gas-who-has-what>, accessed on 14.08.2026.

In the analysis of Israel's red lines, it is necessary to mention the Palestinian cause. The expansion of military operations by Israel's Defense Forces (IDF), into the Gaza Strip also have this main problem. French President Macron has posted on a social network the French state's intention to recognize the Palestinian state at the UN General Assembly last year.³⁰ US Secretary of State Rubio also called the claim a "imprudent" solution that harms peace.³¹ On the other hand, the Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas welcomed the French president's intention alongside Saudi Arabia. The Israeli Prime Minister, however, reiterated the continuation of the Gaza operation with a view to eliminating Hamas and recovering the hostages.³² Thus, it is noted that the issue of the Palestinian cause is directly related to the red lines of Israel, having effects at the level of the entire international community. Consequently, the region captures in its composition elements of essential economic value such as strategic resources and corridors, towards which the European Union is interested in terms of its quality as a global actor. Therefore, the importance of Israel's red lines is highlighted, both regionally and globally. These are inflection points, of particular value in the current political context. The global effects of breaking Israel's red lines concern Middle Eastern states mainly, but they also affect the general level by involving other players such as the United States, China and the Russian Federation. Hence, in the current context, actions from both Israel and other states that offer red lines a certain level of flexibility, which translates among others into instability and uncertainty.

CONCLUSIONS

Contemporary society is characterized by volatility and unpredictability, while providing new definitions of concepts of defense, resilience and cooperation, thus capturing the development of a new global security culture. Accordingly, the current international order presents regional and global players with different approaches and values. In such context, the Middle East region acquires multiple valences both

³⁰ United Nations. (2025, 25 September). *France Leads Wave of New Recognitions of Palestine at UN Summit - Member States Rally to Salvage Two-State Solution*. UNISPAL available at <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ga-meeting-coverage-22sep25/>, accessed on 14.08.2026.

³¹ Al Jazeera. (2025, 25 July). *US, Israel condemn France's move to recognise Palestinian state*, available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/7/25/us-israel-condemn-frances-move-to-recognise-palestinian-state>, accessed on 14.08.2026.

³² Avram Ș. (2025, 28 July). *IDF nu dă niciun centimetru înapoi. Netanyahu: Ofensiva din Gaza nu se va termina până la eliminarea definitivă a Hamas și eliberarea tuturor ostaticilor*, DefenseRomania, available at https://www.defenseromania.ro/idf-nu-da-niciun-centimetru-inapoi-netanyahu-ofensiva-din-gaza-nu-se-va-termina-pana-la-eliminarea-definitiva-a-hamas-si-eliberarea-tuturor-ostaticilor_634779.html, accessed on 14.08.2026.

geopolitically and geo-strategically. In this mosaic of changes, the red lines of Israel are noted, a complex concept, with particular importance in the light of current events.

In this respect, the paper presented in the introduction, an overview of the region, from a geopolitical and geostrategic perspective, emphasizing from this vision the red lines of Israel. Four of these were then analyzed, capturing particular elements that lead to a broad understanding of the recent situation and the effects they have and/or may have on a global scale. Also, the current circumstances in relation to the red lines were explored, in order to refer to the position of Israel. The methodological basis of the paper captures the use of scientific documentation, statements provided by heads of states and bibliographic research for an analysis of the region where the state of Israel is located, from a geopolitical point of view, continuing with the definition of the concept of “red lines” and their highlighting in the case of that state. By these methods it was facilitated to study the theme and the observed conclusions. Finally, the topic is essential for the interpretation of events and ways of managing crises and conflicts by the state of Israel.



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