



# LIBRARY LINK

## MIDDLE EAST & CENTRAL ASIA

**Library Link: Middle East & Central Asia** features the latest research on the region. Scroll down for **Sovereign Rating Reports, Working Papers, Books, and Articles**.

What do you think of our new format? We would love to hear from you! Email [Library@IMF.org](mailto:Library@IMF.org) to share your thoughts and feedback. For an optimal reading experience, please use Chrome or Edge to open the articles.

### Contents

SOVEREIGN RATING REPORTS.....	1
WORKING PAPERS.....	2
BOOKS.....	3
ARTICLES.....	3

### SOVEREIGN RATING REPORTS

---

Email [Library@IMF.org](mailto:Library@IMF.org) to request the full reports; we'll send them to you as quickly as possible!

#### Middle East & Central Asia Region

- Fitch: "[Fitch Ratings: Many MENA Oil Importers Remain Vulnerable to Higher Prices](#)" (Jan 24)
- Fitch: "[Fitch Ratings 2022 Outlook: Gulf Cooperation Council Corporates](#)" (Jan 6)
- S&P: "Bulletin: Abu Dhabi Ratings Already Capture The Risks From Unpredictable Gulf Geopolitics" (Jan 18)
- S&P: "GCC Banking Sector Outlook: On The Recovery Path In 2022" (Jan 11)

#### Middle East

- Fitch: "[Fitch Affirms Iraq at 'B-'; Outlook Stable](#)" (Jan 12)
- Moody's: "Government of Lebanon – C: Regular update" (Jan 25)

#### North Africa

- Moody's: "Government of Egypt – B2 Stable: Regular update" (Jan 31)
- Fitch: "[Morocco Rating Report](#)" (Jan 18)
- Moody's: "Government of Morocco - Ba1 negative: Regular Update" (Feb 1)
- Moody's: "Government of Tunisia: Liquidity risks to remain elevated amid still-large budget deficit and limited reform progress" (Jan 7)

## **Gulf Cooperation Council**

- Fitch: "[Fitch Downgrades Kuwait to 'AA-'; Outlook Stable](#)" (Jan 27)
- S&P: "Research Update: Kuwait Ratings Affirmed At 'A+'; Outlook Remains Negative" (Jan 14)
- Fitch: "[Fitch Revises Oman's Outlook to Stable; Affirms at 'BB-'](#)" (Jan 20)
- Moody's: "Banks – Saudi Arabia: Macro profile – Moderate+" (Dec 30)

## **Caucasus and Central Asia**

- S&P: "Research Update: Azerbaijan Ratings Affirmed At 'BB+'; Outlook Stable" (Jan 21)
- Moody's: "Government of Kazakhstan – Baa2 stable: Update following change in political and social risk scores" (Jan 21)
- S&P: "Bulletin: Unrest In Kazakhstan Lifts The Lid On Underlying Institutional Weaknesses" (Jan 6)
- Moody's: "Government of Kyrgyz Republic - B3 stable: Annual credit analysis" (Feb 15)
- Fitch: "[Fitch Ratings Sees Reform Progress, Risks Across Sectors in Uzbekistan](#)" (Jan 7)

## **WORKING PAPERS**

---

### **[Revisiting Labor Market Regulations in the Middle East and North Africa \(Jobs Working Paper No. 64, World Bank\)](#)**

This paper analyzes the key characteristics of labor market regulations in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and benchmarks them against international practices. The main objective is to identify strengths and weaknesses in the regulations and to inform governments about policy options to enhance employment outcomes in the region. This paper finds that the region has generally flexibly hiring rules, but that redundancy regulations are relatively rigid and costly compared to international practices.

### **[Renewable Power Policies in the Arab Gulf States \(Middle East Institute\)](#)**

The Arab Gulf states appear to be following a common template in responding to the global transition toward an energy system in which renewables play an increasingly central role. They are publicizing renewable energy targets, decarbonizing upstream and downstream oil and gas operations, commissioning renewable energy projects, and improving energy efficiency, among other strategies.

### **[Kazakhstan Economic Update, Winter 2021/2022: Economic Recovery during Challenging Times \(World Bank\)](#)**

After suffering a pandemic-driven slump in 2020, Kazakhstan's economic recovery is on track, having sustained quarterly growth throughout Q3 2021. Reduced COVID-19 cases and the loosening of mobility restrictions support business activities and maintain the rebound in consumer demand. We project real GDP growth in the 3.5-4.0 percent range in 2022, although the economy will remain below the pre-pandemic baseline path for the entire forecast horizon.

### **[Lebanon Economic Monitor, Fall 2021: The Great Denial \(World Bank\)](#)**

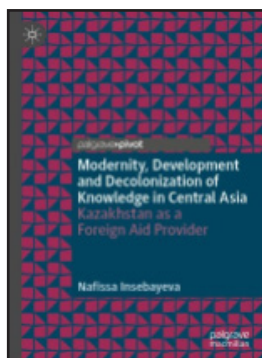
The scale and scope of Lebanon's deliberate depression are leading to the disintegration of key pillars of Lebanon's post-civil war political economy. Monetary and financial turmoil along with surging inflation continue to drive crisis conditions. Public finances improved in 2021 as spending collapsed faster than revenue. Lebanon urgently needs to adopt and implement a credible, comprehensive, equitable reform plan if it is to avoid a complete destruction of its social and economic networks and immediately stop irreversible loss of human capital.

## [Tunisia Economic Monitor, Winter 2021 : Economic Reforms to Navigate Out of the Crisis](#) (World Bank)

The Economic Monitor examines four possible factors behind Tunisia's slow recovery. First, the drop in mobility related to the pandemic may have been more harmful in Tunisia. However, mobility in Tunisia has dropped to a similar extent as other countries and it has now returned to pre-pandemic levels following the acceleration in the vaccination campaign since July. If anything, the mobility drop in Tunisia has resulted in a lower reduction in economic activity than in comparator countries as Algeria and Egypt.

## BOOKS

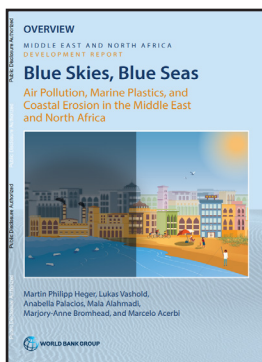
---



### [Modernity, development and the decolonization of knowledge in Central Asia: Kazakhstan as a foreign aid provider](#) by Nafissa Insebayeva

(Please contact [Library@IMF.org](mailto:Library@IMF.org) to request the book)

This book joins the discussion on foreign aid triggered by the rise of multiplicity of emerging donors in international development and explores the transformation of Kazakhstan from a recipient country to a development aid provider.



### [Blue Skies, Blue Seas: Air Pollution, Marine Plastics, and Coastal Erosion in the Middle East and North Africa \(Vol. 2\): Overview](#)

By World Bank

This book shows how virtually all forms of natural capital, but particularly 'blue' natural capital, skies and seas, has been degrading in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region over the last three decades, and focuses on the three challenges of air pollution, marine plastics, and coastal erosion.

## ARTICLES

---

### [Special Issue on the Economics of the Middle East and North Africa](#) (Scottish Journal of Political Economy 69 (1): 1–3)

This special issue brings together five papers on different aspects of the economics of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), a region which is relatively under-researched. These papers are revised versions (or in one case an extension) of papers presented at the fourth workshop, held at Panmure House in Edinburgh, of the Research Initiative on the Economics of the Middle East (<https://rieme.org/>).

### **[Competition, Cost Efficiency and Stability of Banks in the MENA Region \(The Quarterly Review of Economics and Finance, December\)](#)**

The objective of this paper is to study the relationship between competition, cost efficiency, and bank stability for a sample of 222 commercial banks operating in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region over the period 1999–2018. The results obtained by the system Generalized Method of Moments (GMM) show that competition positively affects both the cost efficiency and stability of the banks in our sample, where competition is measured by the Panzar-Rosse H-statistic and alternatively by the Lerner index. Moreover, the results reveal the existence of a significant relationship between most bank-specific, macroeconomic and institutional factors and the cost efficiency and stability of banks.

### **[Climate Change, Macroeconomic Sensitivity and the Response of Remittances to the North African Countries: A Panel VAR Analyse \(International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology: 1–14\)](#)**

This article aims to empirically analyse the role of remittances in alleviating the real GDP oscillations induced by the meteorological variability detected by the average annual changes in precipitation and temperature in the North African countries between 1980 and 2016. We use a vector autoregressive model on panel data (PVAR) in order to allow endogenous interactions between the model variables and to circumvent the problem of a small series size by combining the spatial and temporal dimensions. Our results aim to show on the one hand the negative impact of interannual meteorological variability on real GDP per capita.

### **[Trade Impact of Reducing Time and Costs at Borders in the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Region \(Emerging Markets Finance and Trade: 1–18\)](#)**

Trade facilitation, by reducing trade costs and raising the efficiency of moving goods across borders, is integral to international trade. Using novel data on bilateral time and cost measures for trade facilitation in the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program, this study estimates the trade impact of reducing time and costs at border crossing points within CAREC. The gravity model estimations show that reducing time by 10% at the inbound border increases trade among CAREC countries by 1 – 2%.

### **[Analyzing Energy Trade Policy in Central Asia Using the Intercountry Trade Force Approach \(Economic Analysis and Policy 73 \(March\): 441–54\)](#)**

The main purpose of this study is to examine the energy trade pattern of Central Asian economies, which are regarded as significantly rich in natural resources. To this end, the generalized method of moments (GMM) based on the intercountry trade force approach, and data from 2001–2018 are employed. The empirical results confirm the significant impacts of the gravity index, free space of trade, and urbanization level in shaping Central Asia's energy trade patterns. Our main conclusion is that variables have different impacts on the trade directions of imports and exports.

### **[Risk or Opportunity? The Belt and Road Initiative and the Role of Debt in the China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor \(Eurasian Geography and Economics: 1–13\)](#)**

This Research Note provides an empirical contribution to the discussion on the debt implications vis-à-vis the unfolding of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). For this purpose, we analyze the impact of external debt and other relevant factors on the economies of the China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor using panel data over the period 1996–2018. As another key component of this major development strategy, infrastructure is also found to have a positive impact. The results thus foreshadow growing opportunities as the BRI unfolds, albeit with foreseen issues related to debt sustainability, ecological and wellbeing considerations.

## [Central Asia Is a Missing Link in Analyses of Critical Materials for the Global Clean Energy Transition \(One Earth 4 \(12\): 1678–92\)](#)

The energy transition is causing a surge in demand for minerals for clean energy technologies, giving rise to concerns about the sources and security of supplies of critical materials. Although Central Asia was one of the Soviet Union’s main sources of metals and industrial minerals, it has been forgotten in contemporary global critical materials analyses. Here we review the Central Asian mineral resource base and assess its current and potential contributions to global supply chains. We find that the importance of Central Asia lies mainly in the diversity of its mineral base, which includes mineable reserves of most critical materials for clean energy applications.

Previous newsletters can be found on the [Library Link Newsletters page](#).

For questions regarding the content and coverage please contact the [IMF Library](#).

### **COPYRIGHT**

The IMF Library observes U.S. and international copyright laws and is required to comply with its Copyright Clearance Center license agreement; you may not systematically download and store journal articles, reports, or data on your PC or distribute them to others. Additional restrictions on usage may apply.



**LIBRARY**

Corporate Services and Facilities