# GULF RESEARCH CENTER NEWSLETTER APRIL 2025





# **GRC Events & Activities**

### Central Asia - GCC Think Tank Forum

Strengthening Strategic Partnership Between Central Asia and The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC): From Historical Connections to

> Comprehensive Cooperation Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan April 28-29, 2025





### GRC Events & Activities

Central Asia - GCC Think Tank Forum

GRC Webinar: Preparations for OEWG 3.2 titled "Major Groups Engagement Modalities in The Science-Policy Panel (SPP) on Chemicals, Waste, and Pollution Prevention"

- GRC Publications
- GRC Programs

Gulf Labour Markets, Migration, and Population (GLMM) Programme

Environmental Security and Sustainability Program

- Cultural & Media Program
- GRC Participations
- GRC in the Media



The Gulf Research Center (GRC), in collaboration with the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan (ISRS), organized the first Think Tank Forum between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states and the Central Asian countries, under the theme "Strengthening the Strategic Partnership between the GCC and Central Asian Countries: From Historical Ties to Comprehensive Cooperation," on April 28–29, 2025, in Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan. The forum was organized in preparation for the upcoming GCC-Central Asia Heads of State Summit, scheduled to be held in Samarkand in May.

The forum brought together numerous research centers from both sides, as well as Gulf ambassadors and diplomats accredited to Central Asian countries, along with the participation of the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan, researchers, interested experts, and media representatives. The opening session, held on April 28, 2025, featured remarks from the organizers. Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), delivered a speech welcoming the participants and attendees, highlighting the key areas of cooperation between the two sides in the political, economic, security, and cultural fields. He also expressed his appreciation to the Secretariat General of the GCC and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the GCC member states, acknowledging their efforts to advance relations between the GCC and Central Asian countries across all domains.



The opening session also included speeches by Dr. Eldor Aripov, Former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Director of the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies; Dr. Bahrom Aloev, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan; and Dr. Wejdan Fahad, Head of the Arab and Islamic Organizations Department, Political Affairs Sector at the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).



#### The forum's sessions focused on:

- 1. Political and Security Dialogue
- 2. Economic Cooperation and Investment Opportunities
- 3. Cultural and Humanitarian Cooperation and Development

There was a shared recognition of the need to build on this legacy by expanding collaboration across a range of sectors, including political dialogue, economic integration, energy, and cultural exchange.

A strong focus was placed on enhancing regional and international security cooperation. Delegates expressed a united commitment to jointly address shared threats such as terrorism, extremism, cyber



insecurity, and organized crime, through closer political coordination and intelligence exchange. On the economic front, the Forum underlined the vast potential to increase trade volumes, diversify investment flows, and pursue joint projects in key sectors like infrastructure, agriculture, technology, and logistics. The development of new transport corridors linking Central Asia and the Gulf was highlighted as a strategic priority to enhance both regions' roles in global supply chains.

The participants also prioritized energy cooperation, especially in renewable energy, green hydrogen, and sustainable development. There was strong support for accelerating the green transition and adopting innovative technologies. Equally important was the affirmation of cultural and humanitarian ties, with calls to expand educational and scientific exchanges, promote tourism, and invest in preserving shared cultural heritage. Empowering youth and fostering innovation were identified as central to the long-term partnership.

Looking ahead, participants welcomed the upcoming Second Central Asia–GCC Summit in Samarkand and proposed including in its outcomes a recommendation to formalize the Forum of Analytical Centers as a regular fixture. The creation of a permanent platform for policy dialogue and joint initiatives among think tanks was endorsed, and it was announced that Saudi Arabia will host the next edition of the Forum. The Tashkent gathering thus laid the groundwork for a more structured and forward-looking strategic partnership between Central Asia and the GCC.











### The Founding Conference of the Global South NGO Platform

Baku, Azerbaijan 27-30 April 2025

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Sustainability Research Program Director at the Gulf Research Center participated in the Founding Conference of the Global South NGO Platform, held in Baku, Azerbaijan, from 27-30 April 2025. The meeting gathered NGOs from 116 countries—marking a historic moment for civil society and the international community from the Global South. The meeting covered the new network structure, its vision and goals, and interim preparations as well as coordinated NGO positions in preparation for COP30 scheduled to be held next November in Brazil.

The meeting also addressed strengthening the role of civil society NGOs on climate change and sustainable development issues, particularly in countries of the Global South, including the Middle East and Africa.





Webinar on the Preparations for OEWG 3.2 titled "Major Groups Engagement Modalities in The Science-Policy Panel (SPP) on Chemicals, Waste, and Pollution Prevention"

Organized by the Gulf Research Center Foundation & UN Environment Programme and the Major Groups Facilitating Committee (MGFC)



On 23 April 2025, 14:00 to 16:30 Riyadh time, The Gulf Research Center Foundation together with UN Environment and the Major Groups Facilitating Committee (MGFC) at UNEP co-organized a preparatory webinar for the global major groups and stakeholders on the way to OEWG 3.2 for a Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste, and Pollution.

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Sustainability Research Program Director at the Gulf Research Center delivered opening remarks, welcoming all speakers and attendees, emphasizing the importance of this very timely webinar ahead of the third session of the open-ended working group (OEWG 3.2) and intergovernmental meeting, which will take place in Punta del Este, Uruguay, from 14 to 20 June 2025.

He highlighted that chemicals, waste, and pollution are among the most pressing global environmental challenges of our time, bearing significant health, ecological, economic, and social impacts.

Ms. Gudi Alkemade (of the Netherlands), Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG), bureau of the ad

hoc open-ended working group on a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution, highlighted the importance of this last round of negotiation with the aim to establish the science policy panel. She presented the history and current status of negotiations as well as the hot topics on the table for this final round of negotiations.

Ms. Tessa Goverse, Principal Coordinator, Secretariat of the ad hoc open-ended working group on a sciencepolicy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution emphasized the need for a Science-Policy Panel (SPP) that is scientifically rigorous, independent, and inclusive and that the next round of negotiations will finalize the foundational document and rules of procedures.

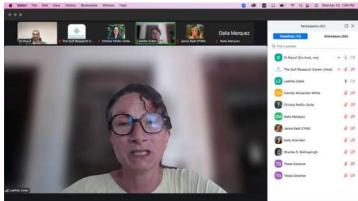
Both the chair and secretariat highlighted that a key to the success of the panel, like other panels and international forums such as UNFCCC, IPBES, UNEP, GEO, has been its strong engagement with major groups stakeholders.



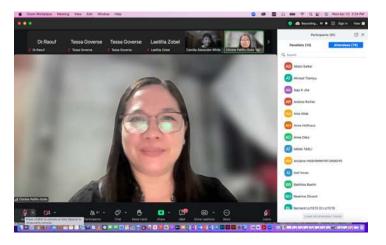
Each of the nine major groups and UNEP regions presented their views on foundational documents, rules and procedures, and engagement modalities of major groups in the panel.



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf (top left), Ms. Gudi Alkemade(top right), Ms. Tessa Goverse (bottom)



Ms. Laetitia Zobel, UNEP Civil Society Unit



Ms. Chinkie Peliño, MGFC Regional Facilitator for Asia Pacific Region

### **GRC** Publications



The Gulf Research Center (GRC) continues to provide in-depth analysis and thought leadership on key regional and global developments. Our latest publications in March cover a wide range of topics, from U.S. foreign policy under Trump's second term to Saudi Arabia's evolving diplomatic role in global affairs. We also explore sustainable development in the Gulf, Russia's repositioning in the Middle East, and Gulf relations with Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

#### Below are some of our most recent works:

### **Commentary & Analyses**



Central Asia and the GCC: From Historical Ties to Strategic Partnership Dr. Abdulaziz Sager & Dr. Eldor Aripov

Central Asia and the GCC: From Historical

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager & Dr. Eldor Aripov

**Ties to Strategic Partnership** 

April 2025

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Gulf Research Center Forging a New Arc: Enhancing GCC–Central Asia Relations in a Shifting Global Order Layia Ali April 2025

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Forging a New Arc: Enhancing GCC– Central Asia Relations in a Shifting Global Order Layla Ali April 2025



Turning East: Redefining the EU-Central Asia Relationship <sup>Hush Barmag</sup> April 2025



Turning East: Redefining the EU-Central Asia Relationship Houda Barroug April 2025



Gull Research Center Realism and Transactionalism: Afghanistan Experiences Neighbors' Embrace

> Emil Avdaliani April 18

RealismandTransactionalism:AfghanistanExperiencesNeighbors'EmbraceEmil AvdalianiApril 2025



Gulf Research Center From Isolation to Engagement: U.S.-Iran Nuclear Talks Resume in Oman

> Annah Mosly April 2025

> > 25

From Isolation to Engagement: U.S.-Iran Nuclear Talks Resume in Oman Amnah Mosly April 2025

www.grc.net



Daniel Noboa's Re-Election Harman Algeman Aprol 2025

Daniel Noboa's Re-Election Hannan Alghamdi April 2025

### **GRC** Publications



### **Commentary & Analyses**



Bridging Continents for Better Strategic Alliances at

Sea Houda Barroag April 2025



Beyond the Stalemate: Rethinking EU-GCC Trade Engagement

Houda Barroug March 2025

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Bridging Continents for Better Strategic Alliances at Sea Houda Barroug April 2025

### Beyond the Stalemate: Rethinking EU-GCC Trade Engagement Houda Barroug April 2025



Strategic Alliances: The Gulf States and Africa in a Multilateral World Michael Wilman Warm March 2025

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### Strategic Alliances: The Gulf States and Africa in a Multilateral World Michael William Wilson April 2025

#### **Commentary & Analyses**



As it Grapples with the Way Forward, Europe Can Learn Strategic Lessons From The GCC States

Dr. Christian Koch April 2025

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#### As it Grapples with the Way Forward, Europe Can Learn Strategic Lessons From The GCC States Dr. Christian Koch

April 2025

### **Country Updates and Trade Reports**



Saudi Arabia & United States Trade Relations April 2025 Gulf Research Center



Finland - GCC Relations April 2025



South Korea - GCC Relations April 2025



#### #208 (April 2025)

Syria of the Future: Ambitions and Challenges



### Gulf Labour Markets, Migration, and Population (GLMM) Programme



www.grc.net

### GLMM

The Gulf Labour Markets, Migration, and Population Programme (GLMM) is an international, independent, non-partisan, non-profit programme established in 2010 and is hosted and supported by the Gulf Research Center. The programme provides data, analyses, and recommendations contributing to the improvement of the understanding and management of Gulf labour migration, population, and labour markets, engaging with and respecting the viewpoints of all stakeholders. Visit the website <u>here</u>.

### Data

For fifteen years, GLMM has gathered, analyzed, and published official data related to labour and migration from multiple sources of all six GCC states. The database contains more than 1,000 tables.

### Country tables

Access Bahrain Data here

Access Kuwait Data here

Access Oman Data <u>here</u>

Access Qatar Data here

Access Saudi Arabia Data here

Access UAE Data here

### **GCC regional tables**

GLMM also constructs unique GCC regional tables based exclusively on the official country data. Access them <u>here</u>.

Special Issue of the Asian Pacific Migration Journal: "The Socio-Political Background of Gulf Migration and Labor Policy Reforms"

Nine articles initially presented at the 13th Gulf Research Meeting (GRM) in Cambridge in a workshop entitled "Recent Labour and Migration Reforms and Policies in the Gulf: Impact on Economies and Societies" have been published in the renowned Asian Pacific Migration Journal (APMJ) (impact factor 1,5) Volume 34, Issue 1, March 2025.

- 1. <u>The socio-political background of Gulf migration</u> <u>and labor policy reforms by</u> Françoise De Bel-Air and Nasr M. Shah
- 2. <u>Neoliberal migration states in the Gulf: High-skilled</u> migrants, domestic socio-legal reforms and the centralized migration management in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates by Froilan Malit, Jr. and Yusra AlShanqityi
- 3. <u>The middle-class Pakistanis' experience of</u> <u>everyday integration in Dubai: Beyond the Western-</u> <u>centric approach</u> by Gennaro Errichiello



- Assessing skills gaps in a post-pandemic landscape: Insights from Oman and Kuwait by Nejla Ben Mimoune and Nader Kabbani
- 5. <u>The economic visions of the Gulf states and their</u> approaches to migrants by Justin Alexander
- 6. <u>Reforms or deforms: The rise and decline of the</u> <u>rentier middle class in the United Arab Emirates</u> by Mira Al Hussein
- 7. <u>Migrant labor and citizens in Kuwait: (Mis)managing</u> <u>Kuwaitization and the demographic imbalance</u> by Dalia Abdelnabi
- 8. <u>Migrant worker policies and the spillover effects on</u> <u>educational outcomes and employment aspirations</u> <u>of national children in the Gulf</u> by Bilesha Weeraratne
- 9. <u>Saudization in a "Saudi First" Kingdom</u> by Andrew Leber

### **Upcoming Workshop**

GLMM is organizing a workshop in the framework of the 15th Gulf Research Meeting which will take place in Cambridge, UK from 22-24 July 2025: "Highly Skilled Migrants and the GCC countries Drivers, Perceptions, Policies, and New Dynamics," directed by Dr. Françoise De Bel-Air and Prof. Anju Paul. 55 applications were received from which a total of 20 were selected to be presented at the workshop. Registration to participate as a non-paper presenter is now open on the GRM website which can be found here.

Contact: Mr. Imco Brouwer: imco.brouwer@grc.net

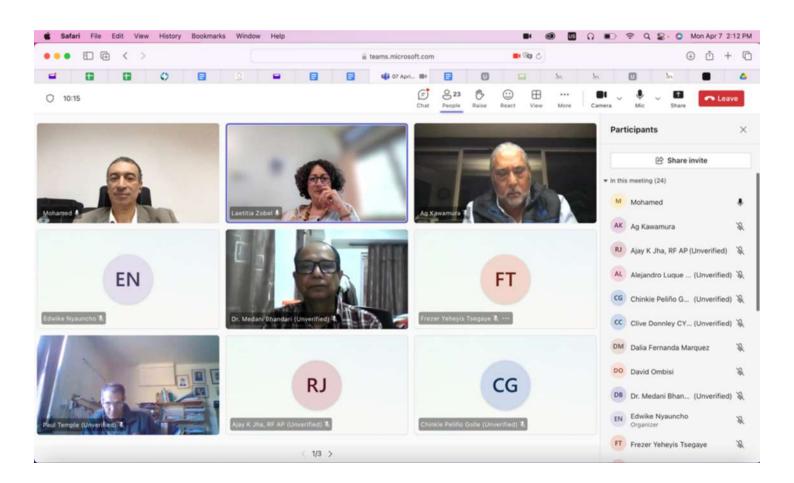
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### **Environmental Security and Sustainability Program**

### 7 April 2025

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Director of the Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program at the Gulf Research Center, chaired the monthly telecall for the UNEP Major Groups Facilitating Committee (MGFC). The call covered major groups activities in the next few months, including following up on Plastic Treaty negotiations, INC5.2, and OEWG 3.2 on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution Prevention, current major groups elections, and upcoming UNEP regional consultations.







### **Cultural & Media Program**







The Cultural and Media Program, in cooperation with the Jordanian Narrative Lab, presented the fourth seminar of the Narrative Lab entitled "Saudi-Jordanian Integration: Radio Integration between Saudi Arabia and Jordan." Watch the full seminar <u>here</u>.

April 22, 2025



The GRC Podcast provided a brief overview of the economic aspects of the period from April 13-19, 2025. Watch it <u>here</u>.

### **Publications**

April 20, 2025



The GRC's Cultural & Media Program published a paper titled "The Influence of Islamic Philosophy on Jewish Religious Thought: A Comparative Anthropological Approach." Access the full paper <u>here.</u>

### **GRC Podcast Activities**

### April 21, 2025





#### April 29, 2025



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), visited the International Institute of Central Asia (IICA) in Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan, on April 29, 2025. During the visit, he met with Ambassador Javlon Vakhabov, Managing Director of the IICA, along with colleagues from the institute. The meeting focused on strengthening institutional cooperation and expanding joint research activities between the GRC and the IICA, with the aim of deepening knowledge and fostering academic exchange between the Gulf region and Central Asia.

#### April 28, 2025



On the sidelines of the GCC-Central Asia Think Tank Forum in Tashkent on April 28, 2025, the Gulf Research Center (GRC) and the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of Uzbekistan (ISRS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen research collaboration and promote deeper regional dialogue. The agreement was signed by Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), and Dr. Eldor Aripov, Former Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Director of the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies (ISRS), on behalf of their respective institutions. April 28, 2025



Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Ms. Ann Måwe, Director of the Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa, and her accompanying delegation on April 28 at the GRC office in Riyadh. The meeting focused on discussing areas of mutual cooperation.

April 22, 2025



On April 22, 2025, at the Gulf Research Center's office in Riyadh, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), and Prof. Saleh Al-Khathlan, Senior Advisor at the GRC, met with Prof. Dr. Rob de Wijk, Director of The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies (HCSS) and Professor at the Institute of Security and Global Affairs at Leiden University, and Dr. Arend Jan Boekestijn, Associate Professor at University College Utrecht. Both sides discussed areas of mutual interest as well as GCC-EU relations.

### April 21, 2025

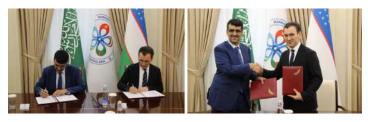


Professor Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan, Senior Advisor at the Gulf Research Center, and Professor Abdulaziz



Al-Aqeel, Senior Advisor at the Gulf Research Center, participated on April 21 in a seminar titled "Relations of the Gulf Cooperation Council with the Republics of Central Asia, and the Foundations of Comprehensive Cooperation" at the headquarters of the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council for the Arab States in Riyadh.

### April 21, 2025



On behalf of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of GRC, signed an MoU with the International Institute for Central Asia (IICA) in Tashkent, in the presence of Mr. Javlon Vakhabov, Managing Director of the IICA. The MoU aims to deepen research collaboration between the Gulf and Central Asia.

#### April 21, 2025



On April 21, 2025, Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in the GCC-C5 Summit Preparatory Workshop held in Tashkent. The event was jointly organized by the International Institute for Central Asia and the Bourse & Bazaar Foundation. Dr. Sager addressed key aspects of Gulf–Central Asia relations and the opportunities to strengthen them amid rapid international transformations.

April 17, 2025



Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the Gulf Research Center, met with Mrs. Irina Gusacenko, Deputy Head of Mission of the EU Delegation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The meeting featured a discussion on EU-Gulf cooperation and key regional developments.

April 16, 2025



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, participated in the 9th Sulaimani Forum held on April 16–17, 2025, in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq. Organized by the Institute of Regional and International Studies (IRIS) at the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani, the event featured high-level figures including Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani and Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani. Dr. Sager spoke on a panel titled "Iran, Iraq, and the Middle East," moderated by Zeinab Badawi, alongside speakers such as Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Saeed Khatibzadeh and former U.S. official Amb. Barbara Leaf. The session examined shifting political and security dynamics and emerging regional alignments.



#### April 15, 2025



Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the Gulf Research Center, received Ms. Jisu Pyo, Director of the Middle East Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of South Korea, at the Center's office in Riyadh. The meeting included discussions on areas of mutual cooperation.

#### April 15, 2025



Dr. Zaid Alfadeil, Director of the GRC's Cultural and Media Program, participated in the Umrah and Ziyarah Forum in a seminar on Hajj and Umrah as soft power and its activation mechanisms, on April 15, 2025, in Madinah. The closed workshop was moderated by Dr. Abdulrahman Alkheraigi, Communication Advisor at the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, in the presence of Dr. Alhassan Almanakhra, the undersecretary for international cooperation at the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah.

#### April 14, 2025



Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the Gulf Research Center, received Mr. Ayman Ayoub, Head of the Middle East and North Africa Division at the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), along with his accompanying delegation. The two sides discussed areas of mutual cooperation.

#### April 11, 2025



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in a webinar on April 10, 2025, titled "Yemen: What has a decade of military intervention achieved?" organized by Chatham House.

#### April 8, 2025



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), welcomed a delegation from Global Bridges, a non-profit organization committed to promoting international dialogue and understanding across politics, business, academia, and culture. The meeting took place at the GRC's office in Riyadh on April 8, 2025. The delegation was led by Mr. Malte Hohlfeld, Executive Chairman of Global Bridges. Discussions focused on Saudi-German economic relations and current regional developments.



#### April 7, 2025



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Professor David Bach, President of the International Institute for Management Development (IMD), and Dr. Hischam El-Agamy, Executive Director at IMD, at the GRC office in Riyadh on April 7, 2025. The meeting focused on exploring areas of mutual interest and strengthening collaboration in research and academic initiatives. April 7, 2025



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), and the senior members of the GRC, met with H.E. Mr. MORINO Yasunari, Ambassador of Japan to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the GRC office in Riyadh on April 7, 2025. During the meeting, both sides discussed areas of mutual interest and explored opportunities for enhanced cooperation.

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# **GRC in the Media**



GRC media participation can be accessed <u>here</u>, at the GRC official YouTube channel.



وقت الساسة معطاية الحميد

On April 22, 2025, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, participated in the program ("Political Hour with Tarek Al-Hamid") on Al Arabiya FM Radio. The episode discussed the latest regional developments and addressed the following key topics:

- 1. Saudi-Iranian relations following the visit of Saudi Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman to the Islamic Republic of Iran.
- 2. Updates on the Iranian nuclear file.
- 3. The situation in Yemen in light of U.S. strikes against the Houthis.
- 4. Iraq's positioning between the Gulf, the United States, and Iran.
- 5. The visit of the Prime Minister of India to the Kingdom.

Watch the full episode here.



On April 18, 2025, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, participated in the program "On the Border" on Asharq News (Bloomberg). The episode was titled: "Trump and the Prospects for a Solution with Iran."

Watch the full interview here.

On April 17, 2025, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, made an intervention on the program "Out of the Box" aired on Al Arabiya Channel. During the segment, he discussed the visit of Saudi Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Watch the full interview here.



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