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Middle East and North Africa

Japan relies on the Middle East and North Africa region for approximately 90% of its crude oil imports. For global logistics, the region is of critical importance to Japan's economy and energy security. Moreover, with its high population growth rate and expanding youth population, the region holds significant potential for future growth.

At the same time, the Middle East and North Africa region faces a range of destabilizing factors and challenges. In Palestine, since the outbreak of clashes between Israel and the Palestinian militants on October 7, 2023, the humanitarian situation, particularly in the Gaza Strip, has become extremely grave, with repercussions spreading to Lebanon, Syria, and elsewhere in the region. In addition, the escalation of tensions over Iran, along with the ongoing combat in Syria that continues to generate refugees and internally displaced persons, has had a profound impact on the stability of the region as a whole, including neighboring countries. Following the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021, humanitarian needs have also grown both in the country and in neighboring countries. Risks of the spread of violent extremism, including groups like the "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)," continue to exist in many areas. In addition, in recent years, the region has also suffered from large-scale natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods, further raising concerns over deteriorating humanitarian and security conditions.

As a responsible member of the international community, Japan has long contributed to peace and stability in the Middle East and North Africa through ODA and other means. Going forward, Japan will build on the good relationships it has cultivated with countries in the region and actively pursue diplomatic efforts, including through economic assistance and human resource development, aimed at easing tensions and stabilizing the region.

Japan's Efforts

■ Middle East Peace (Assistance to Palestine)

Positioning assistance to Palestine as a key pillar of its policy to contribute to peace in the Middle East, Japan has provided approximately \$2.6 billion in support since the Oslo Accords in 1993. In particular, it has delivered a range of humanitarian assistance to improve the severe

living conditions of socially vulnerable populations in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as well as those affected by conflict in the Gaza Strip.

Since the outbreak of clashes between Israel and Palestinian militants on October 7, 2023, the humanitarian situation, particularly in the Gaza Strip, has severely deteriorated. Japan provides humanitarian assistance in areas such as food and health, including support through international organizations and NGOs. For example, in March 2025, in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Japan decided to provide support for health and nutrition services for children and women in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. In August, Japan also decided to provide food assistance in cooperation with the World Food Programme (WFP) (see also "Featured Project" on page 53). Furthermore, as part of early recovery support, Japan provides assistance through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), including for debris removal, waste management, and the provision of equipment and materials necessary for the recovery of health services, infrastructure, and other areas.

In addition, Japan is engaged in a wide range of initiatives aimed at stabilizing and improving the daily lives of Palestinians, strengthening fiscal capacity, and enhancing administrative quality, in support of the establishment of a future Palestinian state and a viable economy. For example, the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development (CEAPAD) is a regional cooperation framework initiated by Japan in 2013 to support Palestinians' state-building efforts by leveraging the resources and economic development expertise of East Asian countries. In July 2025, on the occasion of the ASEAN-related Foreign Ministers' Meetings, Japan co-chaired the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the CEAPAD, where it issued a Co-Chairs' Joint Statement together with Malaysia and Palestine, and adopted the CEAPAD IV Kuala Lumpur Action Plan, which sets out 15 fields of support that draw on Palestinian needs and on the respective strengths of CEAPAD members.²⁴ Then Foreign Minister Iwaya emphasized the significance of enhancing collaboration through CEAPAD to expand the assistance base and diversify the assistance means for Palestine, in light of the unprecedented difficulties Palestine has been facing, including the situation in Gaza, and the urgent humanitarian needs as well as enormous early-recovery and reconstruction needs that have emerged. He further

²⁴ The participants in the Fourth Ministerial Meeting were Japan, along with 12 other countries and regions (Malaysia, Palestine, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Laos, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam, and Timor-Leste), as well as 2 organizations: the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the Islamic Development Bank.

stated that a key strength of CEAPAD lies in the capacity of East Asian countries, each with diverse experiences, to leverage their respective strengths to cooperate not only in humanitarian assistance but also at every stage of Palestine's reconstruction and development.

In September of the same year, then Foreign Minister Iwaya attended the Ministerial Meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC), ²⁵ where he introduced Japan's distinctive initiatives, including CEAPAD as noted above. As the only Asian member of the AHLC, he expressed Japan's determination to actively support Palestine, aiming to bridge partners across the international community. In addition, then Foreign Minister Iwaya issued a joint statement together with the Foreign Ministers of Belgium, Denmark, France, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, announcing the launch of the "Emergency Coalition for the Financial Sustainability of the Palestinian Authority" to respond to the urgent and unprecedented fiscal crisis confronting Palestine.

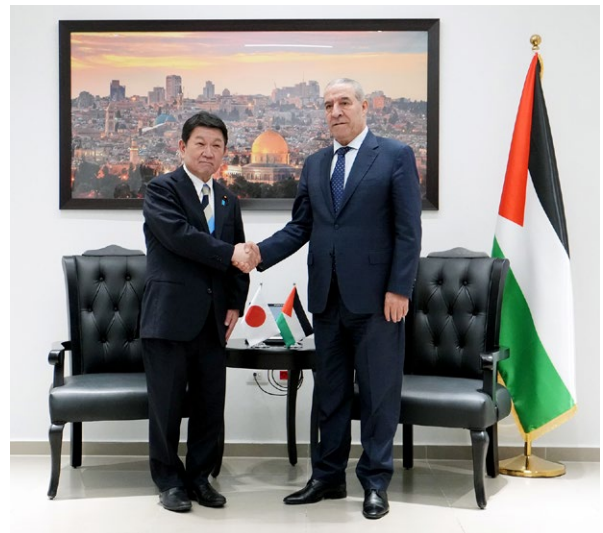
Then Foreign Minister Iwaya attended the Ministerial Meeting in support of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), held in September 2025, where he stated that Japan had been supporting UNRWA as an indispensable pillar in supporting Palestinian refugees, for more than 70 years. He expressed his determination to encourage UNRWA's efforts to improve its governance, and to work in close collaboration with the international community to assist UNRWA's activities and make utmost efforts to support Palestine refugees.



Activities by young people who have completed training in teaching methods for children, in Al Jiftlik Village in Palestine (Photo: a nonprofit organization (NPO) Kokkyo naki Kodomotachi (KnK))

In January 2026, Foreign Minister Motegi visited Palestine and held meetings with Vice President al-Sheikh and Prime Minister Mustafa. Foreign Minister Motegi explained Japan's consistent support for a two-state solution and Japan's position on the rebuilding of

Gaza and supporting Palestinian state-building efforts. Vice President al-Sheikh expressed his gratitude for Japan's longstanding support and commitment to a two-state solution. In his meeting with Prime Minister Mustafa, Foreign Minister Motegi expressed concern over the continuing grave humanitarian situation in Gaza, and stated that Japan would actively engage in international efforts toward Gaza rebuilding through its "efforts to support peace." Foreign Minister Motegi also visited Jalazone Refugee Camp located near Ramallah to comprehend the situation of Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and to observe Japan's support for Palestinian state-building efforts on the ground, where he was briefed on the camp's current situation and challenges and on its cooperation with JICA. Representatives of the camp expressed their appreciation, noting that even amid the difficult situation in the West Bank, Japan's assistance has given them hope.



Meeting between Foreign Minister Motegi and Vice President al-Sheikh of Palestine



Foreign Minister Motegi visiting Jalazone Refugee Camp

²⁵ Established to coordinate the support provided by the international community during the Oslo Accords in 1993. Norway serves as the chair country, with participation from various countries and organizations. It is the only regular meeting where major donors gather to discuss Palestinian support. Japan is the only member country from Asia.

■ Assistance to Syria, Iraq, and Neighboring Countries

Since the outbreak of the Syrian crisis in March 2011, the humanitarian situation in Syria has steadily worsened. Even after the change in the situation in Syria from December 2024 onward, a serious humanitarian situation continues to persist. The number of people in need of assistance is estimated at approximately 16.5 million. In addition, the increase in internally displaced persons and returnees has made securing safe living environments and housing all the more necessary.

In response to this situation, in March 2025, Japan decided to provide support for the health sector in Syria in cooperation with UNICEF, and in August of the same year decided to provide support for the rehabilitation of social infrastructure and related activities in Aleppo and Homs, in cooperation with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

Moreover, Japan supports human resource development and the self-reliance of refugees. In order to develop human resources who will play a leading role in Syria's future reconstruction, Japan accepted a total of 144 Syrian students between FY2017 and December 2025 under the "Japanese Initiative for the future of Syrian Refugees (JISR)" ²⁶ and the Japanese Government (MEXT) Scholarship program.

As for Iraq, Japan has provided support for the oil and gas sector, the backbone of Iraq's economy, as well as for basic lifeline services such as electricity, water, and sewage, through ODA loans and other measures. In October 2025, the completion ceremony for the "Basrah Refinery Upgrading Project," the largest yen loan project for the Middle East with a loan amount of ¥570 billion, was held with Iraqi Prime Minister Al-Sudani and Ambassador of Japan to Iraq Endo in attendance. Japan also works to strengthen governance, provide support in fields such as health and education, and promote women's empowerment, aimed at supporting the self-reliant development of Iraq as a stable and democratic country (see also "Featured Project" on page 125 for support for disaster reconstruction and education in Iraq).

Jordan is surrounded by countries and areas with unstable security situations, and in recent times in particular, there have been concerns over heightened risks of terrorism and increasing transnational crime associated with the destabilization of the wider Middle East region and the worsening situation in neighboring countries. For this reason, strengthening Jordan's border management has become a pressing challenge. In September 2025, Japan decided to provide Japanese-made mechanical equipment and materials for the



The completed plant under the "Basrah Refinery Upgrading Project" yen loan to Iraq

purpose of security measures to Jordan. Under the Japan-Jordan Partnership Program (JJPP), Japan provides training in human resource development for nationals from neighboring countries, including Iraq, in Jordan, which plays a key role in hosting Iraqi refugees and supporting Iraq's reconstruction. Since the outbreak of the Syrian crisis in 2011, Jordan has received a large number of Syrian refugees. As part of its support for both the Syrian refugees and host communities, Japan provides assistance for stable water supply through water supply facilities. Japan also supports the stabilization of Jordan's economy and public finances, including assistance for the maintenance and management of trunk roads and support for the social sector.

■ Assistance to Yemen

Yemen faces "one of the world's worst humanitarian crises," with approximately 60% of its population in need of some form of humanitarian assistance due to the prolonged conflict. Against this background, since 2015, Japan, as a major donor, has provided a total of approximately over \$470 million in humanitarian aid through international organizations. In 2025, in addition to this humanitarian assistance, Japan also provides

²⁶ This initiative, announced by Japan in May 2016 as part of its Middle East support measures, aims to provide educational opportunities for Syrian youth deprived of schooling due to the crisis. Implemented in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), it targets Syrian youth who have fled to Jordan and Lebanon as refugees.

support through NGOs and offers higher education opportunities and training in Japan aimed at developing human resources for Yemen, including by accepting Yemeni students under the Japanese Government (MEXT) Scholarship program and conducting JICA-led training primarily for Yemeni government officials. In July, Japan decided to provide support for the development of Technical and Vocational Training Centers and for capacity development training, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in addition to food assistance through WFP. Japan also supports improving logistics efficiency at the Port of Aden.

■ Assistance to Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, the humanitarian situation remains dire, due to the Taliban's repressive policies, including increased restrictions on the rights of women and girls, exemplified by the promulgation of the "Law on the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice" in August 2024, which imposes severe restrictions on the conduct of the people of Afghanistan. In coordination with the international community, Japan continues to engage with the Taliban to improve the situation. At the same time, Japan has set out a proactive humanitarian aid policy in the international arena, including the G7, underscoring the importance of restoring stability to Afghanistan.

Specifically, since August 2021, Japan has provided assistance in areas such as health, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), food, agriculture and education. This assistance includes support for the livelihoods of women and youth through UNDP, support for maternal and child health and sexual and reproductive health services, primarily for women, through the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), support for health, sanitation, and other services for children through UNICEF, support to build counter-narcotics capabilities through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and improvements to urban living environments through UN-Habitat. In addition, in response to the catastrophic damage caused by an earthquake that struck eastern Afghanistan in September 2025, Japan provided emergency relief goods such as tents and blankets. Japan also extended an Emergency Grant of \$1 million through international organizations in the fields of food, health and medical care, and WASH.

Since 2001, Japan has offered a wide range of development assistance to Afghanistan in support of its sustainable and self-reliant development, including hosting two ministerial-level meetings (in 2002 and 2012) and providing assistance in fields such as humanitarian relief, health, education, agriculture and rural development, and women's empowerment. Japan will continue to work closely with the international

community and provide support based on a careful assessment of the needs of the Afghan people, while keeping in mind the establishment of a self-reliant economy and the promotion of women's empowerment.

■ Assistance to the North Africa Region

In Egypt, under the leadership of President El-Sisi, education and human resource development are being promoted through introduction of Japanese-style education from pre-primary education to postgraduate studies, while Japan also provides support in a wide range of fields, including transport infrastructure, health, and the improvement of the investment and business environment.

In August 2025, Japan decided to provide support for the construction of a diving support vessel to carry out the surveys and maintenance work necessary for formulating an expansion plan for the Suez Canal, and rescue operations in the event of grounding accidents. In September of the same year, it decided to extend a fourth yen loan, following previous yen loans, to advance the development of the Greater Cairo Metro Line No. 4. Furthermore, in November, the Grand Egyptian Museum formally opened, which Japan had supported through construction, artifact conservation and restoration, and operations and exhibitions.

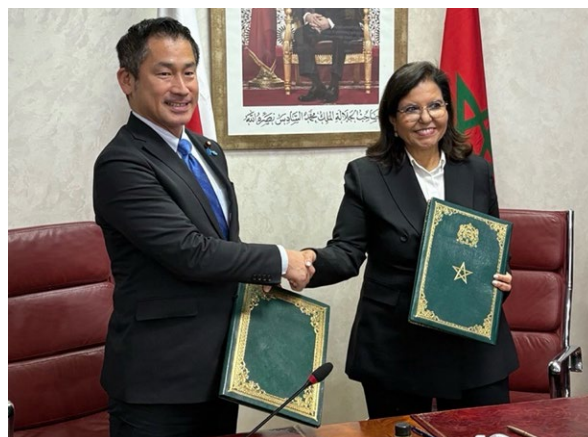


State Minister for Foreign Affairs Kunimitsu (left), attending the official opening ceremony of the Grand Egyptian Museum as a special envoy of the Prime Minister, in November 2025

Tunisia is experiencing a severe nationwide water shortage due to climate change. The government has designated addressing water scarcity and adapting to drought as key national strategies. Taking these circumstances and others into account, Japan has been supporting Tunisia's social and economic infrastructure development in fields such as water and electricity.

In Morocco, where catch volumes and the number of fishing vessels are increasing and distribution channels

are becoming more diverse, issues such as the hygienic management of marine products and the strengthening of fishing port functions have become pressing challenges. In January 2025, Japan decided to provide support for the expansion of the facilities and equipment of the Souira K'dima fishing port in Morocco.



Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Onishi visiting Morocco in December 2025 and signing and exchanging notes concerning Japan's grant aid for "The Project for the Development of the New Generation Fishing Port at Souira K'dima" (additional grant)



Bringing School Support to the Kurdistan Region through Japanese Partnership

Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects (March 2024 – October 2025)

Project of reconstruction of school buildings destroyed by the earthquake and improvement of the quality of education in Erbil

📍 Iraq



Iraq's social infrastructure has suffered extensive damage due to years of war, economic sanctions, and the invasion of "the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)." The effects have also been felt across the educational environment: nationwide, fewer than 70% of students complete primary and secondary school, while the unemployment rate among young people aged 15 to 29 stands at approximately 30%. Disrupted education and high unemployment rates have increased the social and economic vulnerability of young people and have negatively affected the country's development. Furthermore, the earthquake that struck southeastern Türkiye in February 2023 caused significant damage to northern Iraq.

Under this project, implemented in cooperation with certified NPO IVY, the only school in Duztapa Village in Erbil Governorate which had been destroyed by the earthquake, was rebuilt. The new school building was constructed with a durable reinforced concrete structure, and the number of classrooms was expanded to accommodate high school students in addition to the primary and secondary school students who had been enrolled previously. As a result, the first high school in the village was established. The project also provided training to teachers from eight schools in

the governorate, incorporating Japanese-style teaching methods such as class meetings (gakkyu-kai), special activities (tokubetsu katsudo), and moral education (dotoku), to strengthen their instructional skills and foster students' initiative and participation. The principal of Duztapa School says, "students are now able to attend school safely and securely, and their academic performance has improved." Students also shared "we are now able to share ideas in class, work together to solve problems, and participate more actively in lessons."

In addition, at this school, the initiative continues to deliver multifaceted support that draws on Japanese practices. The efforts include deepening partnership with Japanese companies operating in Iraq by inviting their representatives to the completion ceremony and classroom visits, donating books and establishing a school library, and arranging student field visits to Japanese companies. These exchanges with Japanese companies, together with Japanese-style education that encourages student initiative, have not only enhanced students' motivation to learn but have also contributed to a growing sense of affinity toward Japan in Iraq.



Parents and representatives of a Japanese company observing a class held in the elementary school library (Photo: Certified NPO IVY)



Students learning about construction machinery from an operator during a visit to a Japanese company (Photo: Certified NPO IVY)