



# WORLD BANK-IMF MEETINGS

2029 | STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE & CONSIDERATIONS

EXPERT INSIGHT



Delivering professional, dedicated, and tested risk management capabilities across the Middle East and Africa.

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## Introduction

The announcement that Abu Dhabi will host the 2029 Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund in October 2029 is a significant strategic win for the UAE.

The meetings are among the most important recurring gatherings in global finance and public policy, bringing together central bankers, finance ministers, development officials, private-sector leaders, media, academia, and civil society to discuss major issues affecting the global economy.

It will also mark the first time the UAE has hosted the meetings since Dubai in 2003.

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## Why This Event Matters

This is not simply another major conference. The IMF and World Bank Annual Meetings sit in a higher category of international engagement because they concentrate political influence, economic decision-making, institutional leadership, sovereign representation, and global media attention in one place.

For Abu Dhabi, hosting the event reinforces its position as a serious venue for international diplomacy, business, finance, and strategic dialogue. For the UAE more broadly, it is a visible vote of confidence in the country's infrastructure, stability, and convening power.

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## Gains to ABU Dhabi

From a city and destination perspective, the gains are likely to be both reputational and commercial. Abu Dhabi has been steadily strengthening its profile as a global events, tourism, and business hub, supported by strong visitor growth, major sporting and cultural events, and continued hospitality expansion.

DCT Abu Dhabi reported 5.9 million hotel guests in 2025 and AED 9.1 billion in hotel revenues, while its 2024 hotel performance report said the emirate had 171 hotel properties with approximately 34,000 rooms.

That matters because an event of this scale supports hotel demand, premium transport demand, conference servicing, aviation throughput, dining, protocol support, media operations, and wider destination visibility.

## Venue and Infrastructure Outlook

While the precise venueing model for 2029 has not yet been publicly detailed, Abu Dhabi already has the type of infrastructure suited to a conference of this profile.

ADNEC is the emirate's principal large-format conference and exhibition asset and is described by Abu Dhabi's official tourism platform as the largest exhibition venue in the Middle East, with 153,678 sqm of indoor and outdoor event space, including a 6,000-seat ICC, exhibition halls, conference halls, and meeting rooms.

It is also positioned about 15 minutes from Zayed International Airport, which materially supports executive movement and delegation logistics.

Air access is also a key enabler. Zayed International Airport is now built around Terminal A, which Abu Dhabi Airports says has the capability to handle up to 45 million passengers per year, and the airport group reported a record 32.5 million passengers in 2025.

That does not remove event pressure, but it does indicate that Abu Dhabi has substantial aviation capacity and a modern international gateway capable of supporting large, multi-delegation flows.

## Hotel Room Allocation & Availability

At this stage, hotel room allocations, official blocks, and delegation allotments have not been publicly announced, which is entirely normal given the event is still years away.

That said, for a conference of this kind, the likely pattern is familiar; premium room inventory closest to the principal venue and primary government, diplomatic, and commercial zones will come under pressure first.

In Abu Dhabi, that would likely place the greatest demand on hotels in and around the ADNEC area, the Corniche, Al Maryah Island, Saadiyat, and other upper-tier business and luxury clusters, with overflow demand spreading more broadly across the emirate.

The principal implication for executives and support teams is simple; availability may still exist, but convenience, privacy, flexibility, and rate discipline usually deteriorate quickly once official room blocks and major delegations start locking in space.

That is a reasonable planning inference based on the scale of the meetings and Abu Dhabi's known hotel capacity, but the exact allocation model is not yet public.

## Executive & High-Profile Attendee Risk

For executives, high-profile persons, family office principals, and official delegations, the risk picture will likely be driven less by conventional crime and more by concentration, predictability, visibility, and access friction.

Events of this profile create dense windows of exposure at airports, hotels, conference venues, roadside arrival points, and hospitality settings. Even in a well-secured city, the main concerns tend to be route congestion, delayed movements, crowding at screening points, unwanted proximity, intrusive media attention, activist visibility, data exposure, over-reliance on hotel security, and itinerary over-disclosure.

The presence of ministers, financial leaders, CEOs, sovereign stakeholders, and senior international delegates also raises the event's profile from a protective-security perspective.

That does not mean a specific elevated threat can be asserted this far out; it means the event will naturally demand a more disciplined approach to journey management, discreet arrivals, secure transport, hotel selection, accreditation handling, communications security, and contingency planning.

For high-profile attendees, the baseline risk is usually not *"can the city host it?"* but rather *"how well can movement, exposure, and disruption be controlled during a highly visible multi-day event?"* That is where travel risk management becomes materially important.

## Travel & Movement Considerations

From a travel-planning perspective, the key issue will be friction rather than capability.

Abu Dhabi has the infrastructure to support major international events, but a conference of this stature typically produces strain at several points; arrival peaks, baggage and meet-and-greet coordination, convoy or executive vehicle access, hotel check-in surges, layered security screening, and tighter road management around principal venues and official hotels.

Delegates moving on public timetables or relying on ad hoc transport are more exposed to delay, confusion, and visibility than those moving on a coordinated plan.

For senior travellers, best practice will almost certainly involve early hotel commitment, controlled airport facilitation, pre-vetted ground transport, conservative movement timings, and clear venue-entry planning.

Any programme that includes side meetings, dinners, bilateral engagements, or site visits will need even tighter scheduling discipline, as the wider event ecosystem often creates more pressure than the conference sessions themselves.

These are standard risk-management observations for major international summits rather than details released by organisers.

## Wider City Impact

For Abu Dhabi, the event is likely to have a multiplier effect beyond the venue itself. Large-scale institutional meetings drive demand not only for rooms and transport, but also for hospitality staffing, protocol capability, event production, media support, private aviation and executive aviation coordination, restaurant demand, and premium service providers.

Just as importantly, they reinforce Abu Dhabi's image as a city capable of hosting complex, politically sensitive, globally watched events. In that sense, the gain is not only short-term revenue; it is also long-term positioning in the competition for international conferences, policy forums, and executive travel.

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## High-Level Outlook

At a high level, the 2029 World Bank Group and IMF Annual Meetings will be an important moment for Abu Dhabi; strategically significant, commercially beneficial, and operationally demanding.

The city is well placed to host such an event, with strong venue infrastructure, a modern airport, and a maturing hospitality sector. However, for executives and high-profile attendees, the principal challenge will not be whether Abu Dhabi can absorb the event, but how effectively they manage exposure, movement, access, and time sensitivity in a dense and highly visible operating environment.

Early planning, disciplined logistics, and proportionate protective measures are likely to be the decisive factors.

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## HOW CAN WE HELP?

**SABRE Risk** is a specialist provider of strategic Security Risk Management and Protective Services, delivering mission-critical support to government agencies, multinational corporations, NGOs, and high-net-worth individuals operating in complex and high-threat environments.

With a proven track record across the Middle East, we are engaged in real-time security operations across the Middle East, providing intelligence-led evacuations, secure movement coordination, and close protection solutions.

### Emergency Evacuation & Crisis Response

In response to the volatile and rapidly evolving security situation, our teams have been activated over the past month or more to execute structured emergency evacuations, including air, land, and cross-border extraction operations. We offer;

- Route reconnaissance and movement security
- Secure transport and convoy planning
- Coordination with embassies and local authorities
- Rapid deployment of in-country assets

### Protective Security Services

We provide tailored protective security solutions aligned with client risk profiles, including;

- Executive protection
- Secure accommodation assessments and relocations
- Embedded security advisors and operational liaisons

## Intelligence & Threat Monitoring

Our 24/7 intelligence analysts delivers actionable intelligence and predictive threat analysis, including;

- Geo-political and civil unrest tracking
- Targeted threat intelligence for client locations
- Secure communication channels and risk briefings

## High-Risk Consultancy & Planning

We offer pre-incident planning and security risk assessments to organizations maintaining a footprint in hostile areas;

- Contingency and business continuity planning
- Cultural and geopolitical advisory
- Travel security planning and movement protocols
- Training in hostile environment awareness and evacuation drills

## Geographical Reach & Experience

Our operational presence and networks extend throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia, with deep situational awareness and ground resources in;

- *UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and the wider Middle East.*

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This event is a number of years away, however, as usual, **SABRE Risk** encourages clients to plan ahead, and engage us early to see how we can be of value.

Contact a member of our team today to find out how **SABRE Risk** can be of support.

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Delivering professional, dedicated, and tested risk management capabilities across the Middle East & Africa.

#### Introduction

A crisis is an event or series of events that significantly disrupts normal business operations and requires immediate, coordinated action to protect people, assets, and organisational integrity.

Such events are typically characterized by time pressure, uncertainty, and elevated risk, often exceeding the scope of routine operational management. Crises may arise from security incidents, armed conflicts, terrorism, operational failures, cyber threats, regulatory issues, or external factors, but their defining feature is the potential to escalate rapidly and impact multiple areas of the organization simultaneously.

For senior leadership, a crisis presents a test of decision-making, governance, and organisational resilience. Without a structured framework, even well-resourced organizations can experience delayed responses, fragmented communication, and unnecessary escalation of impact.

#### Executive Summary: Defining a Crisis

A situation should be treated as a crisis when it:

- Presents a credible threat to life, safety, or wellbeing.
- Disrupts or has the potential to disrupt critical business operations.
- Exposes the organization to significant reputational, legal, or financial risk.
- Requires immediate decision-making beyond standard operating procedures.

Crises are dynamic and often evolve quickly. Early actions taken, or not taken, can significantly influence the scale and duration of impact. An effective organizational response is therefore built on a structured and disciplined approach, enabling leadership to:

- Act decisively in the initial stages.
- Maintain strategic oversight and control.
- Ensure continuity of critical functions.

#### Framework for Crisis Handling

To manage risk effectively, organisations should adopt a three-phase approach:

- **Crisis Response** – Immediate actions to contain and stabilise the situation.
- **Crisis Management** – Strategic leadership, coordination, and communication.
- **Business Continuity** – Sustaining and restoring critical operations.

#### How Can SABRE Risk Help?

SABRE Risk provides end-to-end crisis preparedness and response capability, enabling organisations to respond decisively, maintain control, and protect critical operations under pressure.

Our approach is practical, scalable, and aligned to your risk profile, ensuring that plans are not only compliant, but operationally effective when it matters most.



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#### Our Support Includes

##### → Crisis Management Plan (CMP) Development

Structured, organisation-specific plans defining roles, responsibilities, escalation protocols, and decision-making frameworks.

##### → Crisis Response Procedures

Clear, actionable guidance for immediate incident response, ensuring rapid stabilisation and protection of people and assets.

##### → Business Continuity Planning (BCP)

Identification of critical functions, recovery priorities, and continuity strategies to sustain operations during disruption.

##### → Roles & Responsibilities Framework

Defined Crisis Management Teams (CMT), functional leads, and reporting lines to ensure clarity under pressure.

##### → Scenario-Based Planning

Tailored scenarios relevant to your operating environment, supporting preparedness for credible threats and disruptions.

##### → Training & Exercises

Executive briefings, tabletop exercises, and simulations to validate plans and strengthen leadership decision-making.

##### → Advisory & Ongoing Support

Continuous refinement of plans, threat-informed updates, and access to specialist guidance as your risk landscape evolves.

#### Summary

Recent events across the GCC demonstrate that crises can arise rapidly and with significant impact. In today's environment, preparedness is not optional, it is a core component of effective governance and resilience. Organisations that adopt a structured approach, Crisis Response, Crisis Management, and Business Continuity, are better positioned to act decisively, maintain control, and protect critical operations.

#### Contact SABRE Risk

If you would like to find out how SABRE Risk can support you, and your organisation, contact a member of the team today to find out more, our team treats every enquiry with confidentiality and professionalism.

[operations@sabre-risk.com](mailto:operations@sabre-risk.com) & [www.sabre-risk.com](http://www.sabre-risk.com)



## Executive Travel Planning Checklist

- Confirm the principals full programme early, including conference attendance, bilateral meetings, dinners, media activity, and any private movements.
- Secure hotel accommodation as early as possible, prioritising vetted properties with strong access control, suitable room locations, controlled arrival areas, and manageable proximity to the main venue.
- Coordinate airport facilitation in advance, including meet-and-assist, immigration handling, baggage support, and vehicle access procedures.
- Use pre-vetted secure ground transportation with professional drivers briefed on routes, contingencies, vehicle positioning, and venue procedures.
- Conduct a venue and hotel risk assessment, focusing on entrances, screening points, choke points, emergency exits, medical support, holding areas, and secure meeting locations.
- Build a detailed movement plan covering primary and secondary routes, timing buffers, alternative departure options, and disruption contingencies.
- Limit unnecessary exposure by reducing public itinerary disclosure, minimising predictable routines, and controlling who has access to the executive's schedule.
- Confirm accreditation, access permissions, and identity requirements early to avoid delays or exposure at screening and registration points.
- Prepare a communications plan covering key contacts, escalation procedures, emergency communications, and backup methods in case of disruption.
- Review local medical arrangements, nearest suitable hospitals, ambulance procedures, and any executive-specific medical requirements.

- Brief the principal and support staff on local sensitivities, event dynamics, media presence, public interactions, and practical behavioural guidance.
- Monitor the operating environment throughout the visit, including traffic conditions, event schedule changes, protest potential, security posture shifts, and aviation or access disruption.

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