



**ASEAN CHAIR'S STATEMENT
ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE SECOND SPECIAL ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS'
MEETING ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
13 APRIL 2026**

1. The ASEAN Foreign Ministers convened a second Special Meeting on 13 April 2026, via videoconference, to exchange views on the rapidly evolving situation in the Middle East and to address its various implications for ASEAN, including on energy, food security, and safety of ASEAN nationals. The Meeting also sought to follow up on the outcomes of their Special Meeting on 13 March 2026, as well as to discuss the possible ways forward, ahead of the 48th ASEAN Summit in May 2026.
2. The Meeting welcomed the announcement on 8 April 2026 of a temporary ceasefire between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran and expressed hope for its full and effective implementation, and urged both parties to continue down the path of diplomacy and dialogue and redouble efforts in negotiations that will lead to the permanent end of the conflict and lasting peace and stability in the region. In this regard, the Meeting noted that the ceasefire could help ease disruption to maritime and air transport routes and reduce related costs and delays, especially for merchant and non-combatant vessels.
3. The Meeting reaffirmed the obligation of all States to resolve their differences through peaceful means and to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations, in line with international law, including the UN Charter, ASEAN Charter and Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia. The Meeting further reiterated the obligation to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure during armed conflicts, consistent with international law and relevant UN Security Council resolutions.
4. The Meeting underscored the critical importance of ensuring maritime security and freedom of navigation and overflight, especially for merchant, non-combatant vessels and aircraft in accordance with 1982 UNCLOS, minimising disruption to the flow of energy and essential goods, and mitigating its adverse impact on global economic stability. The Meeting also emphasized

the need to ensure the safety of seafarers and ships, in accordance with the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS)

5. The Meeting also discussed the safety and welfare of ASEAN nationals in the affected areas and reaffirmed the shared commitment to provide emergency assistance to ASEAN nationals, particularly during this challenging time, in accordance with existing guidelines. The Meeting acknowledged the assistance and efforts extended by fellow ASEAN Member States in this regard, and underlined the importance of exploring mutually beneficial collaboration with external parties. The Meeting also expressed condolences to fellow ASEAN Member States for the loss of lives of their nationals in the midst of the ongoing conflict and stressed the importance of continued coordination among ASEAN Member States on joint consular efforts to assist ASEAN nationals. The Meeting further expressed deep concern over the humanitarian situation in Lebanon and the escalation of tension which cost the lives of three Indonesian peacekeepers and injured several other peacekeepers from other countries
6. The Meeting discussed the impact of the conflict in the Middle East on global economic activity, particularly on energy markets and maritime and air transport routes, and underscored the importance of maintaining stable, secure, sustainable, and resilient energy supply chains and maritime trade routes, mitigating excessive market volatility and price shocks and minimising disruption to the flow of energy and essential goods, including food and fertilisers, to safeguard economic stability in ASEAN. The Meeting encouraged ASEAN Member States to work closely, including exploring coordinated regional responses where appropriate, to mitigate the impact of the conflict by minimising disruptions to intra-ASEAN trade and inflow of investments, strengthening supply chain connectivity, and ensuring timely reliable, and secure access to essential goods, raw materials, and energy supplies, including through the implementation of relevant and binding ASEAN Agreements and refraining from unnecessary trade restrictions, and where appropriate, expanding such efforts to further enhance regional resilience. The Meeting also highlighted the importance of the ratification of the Second Protocol to Upgrade the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA), which contains provisions on Trade in Humanitarian Crisis Situations
7. The Meeting underscored the importance of strengthening regional energy security and economic resilience and emphasised the value of ASEAN solidarity, economic integration, and coordination in policy, messaging, and

joint efforts to navigate external economic shocks and mitigate their potential impact and spillover effects on regional macroeconomic and financial stability, including on finance sectors, supply chains, the cost of living as well as the lives of peoples across ASEAN. The Meeting highlighted the importance of strengthening regional connectivity, enhancing cooperation on energy preparedness and power integration, and advancing efforts to diversify energy sources, including renewable and alternative energy, as well as prioritising energy supply to fellow ASEAN Member States in times of crisis. The Meeting further emphasised the importance of facilitating trade and investment, strengthening logistics connectivity, and reinforcing supply chain resilience, including through more diversified import sources, alternate shipping and logistics routes, and uninterrupted intra-ASEAN trade and investment flows, to help ensure stable access to affordable essential goods, especially food, food products, and agricultural inputs, across ASEAN. The Meeting also underscored the importance of strengthening ASEAN cooperation to address the effects of crisis on food systems including through the possible expansion of the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR), and utilization of the ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS), and exploring where feasible, joint approaches to securing essential commodities, critical agricultural inputs. The Meeting also discussed a possible regional standby arrangement for food security to facilitate timely coordination of ASEAN Member States during crisis and mitigate the impact on healthcare and pharmaceutical products, in order to strengthen regional preparedness and resilience.

8. The Meeting emphasised the importance of ensuring financial resilience in responding to external shocks and encouraged closer coordination with international financial institutions to support ASEAN Member States in addressing emerging threats to the stability of financial systems. In this regard, the Meeting highlighted the need to ensure the continued availability of trade finance, strengthen robust insurance schemes, and unimpeded trade flows, particularly in times of heightened uncertainty.
9. The Meeting called for making full use of existing ASEAN mechanisms and frameworks to enhance coordination, consultation, timely information sharing, regular monitoring and early warning, as well as cooperation among ASEAN Member States and emphasised that ASEAN already possesses practical mechanisms and initiatives that can be further mobilised and strengthened to enhance regional energy resilience, including the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Petroleum Security (APSA), the ASEAN Power Grid (APG)

Enhanced Memorandum of Understanding, and the Trans-ASEAN Gas Pipeline (TAGP), as well as cooperation with relevant sectoral bodies and industry stakeholders. The meeting welcomed the completion of the signing of APSA and underscored the importance of its early entry into force and operational readiness, including through the expeditious completion of domestic ratification processes, and enhanced preparatory coordination for its effective implementation.

10. The Meeting also underscored the need to enhance ASEAN's overall economic resilience by deepening economic integration, investing in resilient infrastructure to accelerate energy transition and diversification, including renewable energy, and reinforcing institutional mechanisms to ensure sustained regional stability, connectivity and preparedness against future global shocks.
11. The Meeting committed to intensify synergy and coordination among relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies, including those responsible for economic, finance, transport, food and agriculture, and energy cooperation, in order to strengthen regional preparedness and resilience. The Meeting also stressed the importance of deeper coordination and cooperation under the ASEAN Economic Community, in sustaining ASEAN's role as a reliable hub for trade, investment, and production networks amid evolving global challenges, as well as closer coordination between ASEAN Foreign and Economic Ministers, through the convening of a Joint AEM-AMM Meeting, to promote a more cohesive and timely response to crises, and in this regard, welcomed the issuance of the Joint Statement of the ASEAN Economic Ministers on Strengthening ASEAN's Economic Resilience in Response to Recent Global Economic and Geopolitical Developments. The Meeting likewise underscored the urgency of convening a meeting among ASEAN Energy Ministers.
12. The Meeting also reiterated the importance of cross-pillar cooperation among the ASEAN Political-Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community, and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community in order to effectively address the evolving geo-political and geo-economic challenges. The Meeting also agreed to enhance engagement with external partners through existing ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the ASEAN Plus Three and East Asia Summit, to promote coordination, information sharing, and collective efforts in responding to the evolving challenges and their possible adverse impacts on the region.

13. The Meeting tasked the Senior Officials in coordination with relevant bodies across the three ASEAN Community pillars, to prepare for the consideration of the ASEAN Coordinating Council (ACC), coordinated and immediate actions to ensure regional resilience in response to the implications of the situation in the Middle East, for the consideration of the ASEAN Leaders at the 48th ASEAN Summit in May 2026. In this regard, the Meeting noted the proposals and elements shared by ASEAN Member States, including on strengthening supply chain resilience, energy security and preparedness, food security, regional consultation and information sharing, and stronger institutional follow-up, which can be incorporated into a Leaders Statement on a unified ASEAN response to address the impact of the crisis in the Middle East. The Meeting also explored a possible ASEAN Foreign Ministers' crisis communication protocol that may be convened as needed to enable timely consultations, information-sharing, and policy coordination during major crises affecting the region.

14. The Meeting underscored the importance of maintaining regional peace, stability and prosperity, upholding international law, and promoting dialogue and diplomacy as the primary means of reducing tensions and addressing conflicts. The ASEAN Foreign Ministers agreed to continue monitoring the situation in the Middle East and to coordinate to identify implications and anticipate further impacts on ASEAN.

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