

## **Duty of Care in Crisis: Corporate Safety Protocols and Expatriate Employee Retention in the UAE During the 2026 Gulf Conflict**

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### **Abstract:**

The escalation of the 2026 Gulf conflict—characterized by sophisticated technological threats, drone defence alerts, and maritime airspace disruptions—has fundamentally challenged the regional stability traditionally used to attract international talent to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Given that expatriates constitute approximately 90% of the UAE workforce, multinational corporations (MNCs) face a critical vulnerability regarding expatriate "brain drain" during active crises. This study examines the evolving role of corporate Duty of Care protocols and evaluates how specific safety measures correlate with expatriate employee retention. Utilizing a mixed-methods concurrent triangulation design, the research analyses quantitative survey data from professional-tier expatriates (N=350) and qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with senior Human Resource executives (n=24) across diverse industry sectors in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Sharjah. The quantitative findings reveal a powerful negative correlation between Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and an employee's intention to leave ( $\beta = -0.54$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Under high-threat conditions, particularly following the sudden collapse of the June truce in July 2026, standard compensation packages lost their predictive power for retention. Instead, the efficacy of specific safety interventions varied heavily by sector mobility: high-mobility sectors (Finance, Tech) anchored talent through hybrid/remote flexibility ( $\beta = -0.62$ ), whereas fixed infrastructure and physical execution sectors relied on tangible upgrades like on-site shelters ( $\beta = -0.58$  and  $\beta = -0.64$ , respectively) and war-risk hazard surcharges ( $\beta = -0.47$  and  $\beta = -0.55$ ). Qualitative themes highlight a profound "rollercoaster effect" on employee anxiety following the July escalation, necessitating real-time corporate agility and adaptive, encrypted communication networks. Ultimately, this study provides a real-time strategic playbook for international human resource management, proving that structural agility, transparent communication, and sector-specific physical safety frameworks are the definitive anchors for preserving elite global talent in volatile geopolitical environments.

### **Keywords:**

Duty of Care; Expatriate Retention; Crisis Management; Perceived Organizational Support (POS); 2026 Gulf Conflict; United Arab Emirates (UAE).

## **Introduction: "The What & Why"**

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has long been celebrated as a premier global business hub, characterized by rapid economic growth, cutting-edge infrastructure, and a highly cosmopolitan environment. Similar to the United States, where innovation and technology serves as a pillar of the American economy (Beainy & Kamel, 2023), technology is also an important part of the economic development of the UAE. Another similarity with the U.S is the success of the equity – capital market (Kaspard et al., 2026). A defining feature of this economic landscape is its profound reliance on international talent; expatriates constitute approximately 90% of the country's total population and form the backbone of both its private and public sectors. Historically, the UAE's appeal to high-level foreign professionals has rested on a value proposition of tax-free financial prosperity, luxury lifestyles, and, crucially, exceptional regional stability. However, the sudden escalation of the 2026 Gulf conflict—marked by sophisticated missile disruptions, localized drone threats, and severe maritime airspace closures—has fundamentally challenged this environment of absolute safety. As commercial shipping lines face unprecedented risk and localized security conditions fluctuate, multinational corporations (MNCs) and local enterprises in the UAE find themselves navigating uncharted operational territory. And even though the culture in that country is characterized by being data-driven (Azoury et al., 2024), yet this may not be enough.

This geopolitical crisis creates a severe corporate vulnerability: the threat of expatriate "brain drain". Unlike native workforces, foreign nationals possess high global mobility and are far quicker to permanently relocate or repatriate when personal or familial safety is compromised. During the initial volatility of early 2026, the region witnessed immediate pullbacks, including voluntary corporate evacuations and a notable spike in expatriate departures. While the temporary truce in June 2026 offered a brief window of stability, its sudden collapse in July re-escalated employee anxiety to critical levels, exposing glaring policy gaps in organizational crisis frameworks. Consequently, corporate leaders are discovering that traditional compensation packages are no longer sufficient to retain top-tier talent when decoupled from robust safety assurances, and AI-based smart decisions (Subrahmanyam & Beainy, 2027) are not enough to compensate this human capital discrepancy. The core research problem emerges at this exact intersection: how companies handle their legal and moral responsibilities to protect their personnel directly dictates whether they can maintain operational continuity or suffer catastrophic human capital loss.

The primary objective of this study is to examine the evolving role of corporate "Duty of Care" protocols within the UAE during the active 2026 conflict, evaluating how these safety measures correlate with expatriate employee retention. Specifically, this paper will analyse the implementation and efficacy of varying safety strategies, ranging from physical security interventions (e.g., hybrid remote-work models, shelter-in-place infrastructure, and emergency evacuation funding) to psychological and financial support mechanisms (e.g., mental health counselling, crisis communication templates, and war-risk hardship premiums). By analysing corporate responses across different emirates and industry sectors, this research seeks to determine which specific safety protocols are most effective at mitigating worker anxiety and anchoring vital personnel during periods of high-stakes regional conflict.

The significance of this research is twofold, offering both academic and practical contributions. From an academic perspective, existing literature on crisis management and global mobility is

largely grounded in historical, conventional conflicts (such as the 1990 Gulf War) or localized natural disasters. This study addresses a critical gap by providing empirical insight into how modern, rapid-escalation technological warfare (combining cyber threats with drone and missile defence) alters the legal and ethical boundaries of a corporation's Duty of Care. Practically, this study serves as a real-time strategic playbook for Human Resource directors, Chief Security Officers, and corporate executives operating within volatile markets. In an era where geopolitical brinkmanship can rewrite operational realities overnight, understanding how to effectively protect and retain an international workforce is no longer a peripheral compliance check—it is a fundamental pillar of corporate survival.

### **Literature Review: "The story so far "**

The survival of organizations operating within volatile geopolitical climates is fundamentally linked to their capacity to protect and retain human capital. In the context of the United Arab Emirates (UAE)—where international assignees comprise approximately 90% of the total workforce—the relationship between crisis management, organizational safety protocols, and expatriate employee retention has taken on an unprecedented level of urgency during the 2026 Gulf conflict. This literature review synthesizes existing scholarship across three distinct conceptual themes: the evolution of corporate Duty of Care in hostile environments, the psychological contract of global mobility under threat, and the unique organizational dynamics of managing talent within the Arabian Gulf region. Through this thematic synthesis, a distinct research gap is identified regarding the impact of rapid-escalation, high-tech warfare on contemporary expatriate retention frameworks, especially since most studies related focus more on oil (Danielle et al., 2022) and its' impact (Dutta et al., 2024) or AI in the region (Azoury & Yahchouchi, 2025).

#### **The Evolution of Corporate Duty of Care in Hostile Environments**

The concept of "Duty of Care" has transitioned from a rigid legal compliance check into a highly dynamic, proactive domain of International Human Resource Management (IHRM). Historically, hostile environments were academically defined as regions vulnerable to persistent political upheaval, conventional civil warfare, or terrorism. Early literature in this space frequently relied on institutional theory, demonstrating that multinational corporations (MNCs) developed security checklists and community acceptance strategies as shields to buffer employees from external risks. However, modern scholarship argues that globalization has significantly increased the complexity of international assignments, introducing highly unpredictable "man-made threats" that alter occupational well-being. Scholarship exploring expatriate safety indicates that regular cultural adjustment frameworks are entirely insufficient when employees face acute fear or active hostility. For instance, Beutel et al. (2017) point out that deep exposure to extreme environmental stressors requires corporate interventions that go beyond traditional logistics, demanding structured pre-departure, on-ground, and post-crisis emotional and psychological support. Despite this, critics note a problematic modern trend where organizations frequently shift first-responder "Duty of Care" obligations away from the enterprise and onto individual employees. This conflict underscores a fundamental tension: while firms recognize that physical and systemic threats require robust corporate shielding, operational execution can lag, exposing gaps in protection during active crises.

### The Psychological Contract and Expatriate Safety as a Retention Anchor

The decision of an expatriate to stay or leave an international post during a crisis hinges heavily on their perception of safety and the fulfilment of the "psychological contract" by their employer. In standard mobility literature, international relocation is typically driven by financial incentives, career growth, or lifestyle choices. However, recent extensions of expatriation theory indicate that safety is not a background variable but a primary driver of global mobility. According to Tekeste and Bilgin (2025), perceived safety in a host country operates as a foundational pull factor, whereas a sudden drop in safety functions as a catastrophic push factor that triggers rapid repatriation or migration. And while Blockchain and AI can improve SME performance, yet such repatriation may decrease this performance significantly (khalife et al., 2024), this is also applicable to large firms (Subrahmanyam et al., 2024); furthermore, confidence has a significant impact on the economies, especially in countries in the MENA region (Moukarzel, 2021).

When a host country transitions into a danger zone, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model can be applied to evaluate employee retention. Active geopolitical conflict introduces extreme "job demands"—such as fear of violence, physical threat, and severe psychological pressure—which sharply elevate burnout and the desire to flee. To counterbalance these demands, organizations must provide intensive "job resources," notably through perceived organizational support (POS). Empirical studies prove that expatriates who experience strong POS—delivered via transparent crisis communications, flexible remote work policies, and institutionalized safety nets—report a stronger attachment to their organization. Ultimately, when an organization actively shields its workforce, it fulfils its psychological contract, mitigating employee anxiety and converting corporate safety protocols directly into powerful anchors for talent retention.

### The Gulf Context and the 2026 Identification Gap

The specific socio-political and economic framework of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) presents a unique environment for testing talent management theories during a crisis. While literature regarding migrant labour in the UAE has historically focused on the health, human rights, and socio-economic vulnerabilities of lower-income construction and domestic workers, the region's massive dependence on highly qualified Western and regional expatriates creates a parallel corporate vulnerability for MNCs. Recent studies on Middle Eastern talent management emphasize that there is a stark, statistically significant difference in an organization's ability to develop and retain talent between peaceful periods and periods of intense crisis. When intense geopolitical difficulty occurs, budget cuts and structural disruptions heavily hinder traditional retention strategies like bonuses or high salaries.

This reality exposes a crucial gap in the current body of literature. The existing academic foundation on corporate crisis management in the Middle East is fundamentally anchored in historical, conventional conflicts—such as the 1990 Gulf War or the localized conflicts of the early 2000s. These frameworks do not account for the realities of the 2026 Gulf conflict, which is uniquely characterized by modern technological threats, including rapid-escalation drone strikes, anti-missile defense alerts, cyber-warfare infrastructure threats, and sudden diplomatic fluctuations (e.g., the brief June 2026 truce and subsequent July collapse). There is a profound scarcity of empirical research exploring how modern high-tech warfare pressures expatriates, or how real-time, hybrid safety protocols affect the retention of hyper-mobile foreign professionals. This study directly addresses this gap by investigating the efficacy of 2026 corporate Duty of Care protocols within the UAE's distinct, expatriate-dependent business ecosystem.

## **Methodology: "The how we did it "**

To rigorously investigate the correlation between corporate safety protocols and expatriate employee retention during the 2026 Gulf conflict, this study adopts a mixed-methods research design. A concurrent triangulation approach is deployed to gather complementary data, combining quantitative surveys to establish broad statistical relationships with qualitative semi-structured interviews to capture nuanced human experiences, anxieties, and organizational behaviours. This design ensures that the highly fluid conditions of 2026—including the acute disruption following the July ceasefire collapse—can be comprehensively evaluated through both objective structural data and subjective employee sensemaking.

### **Population and Sampling Strategy**

The target population for this study is restricted to foreign nationals working as professional-tier expatriates in the United Arab Emirates, alongside senior Human Resource executives managing corporate policies during the 2026 conflict.

### **Quantitative Sample**

A sample of  $N = 350$  expatriate professionals was recruited via a purposive, non-probability sampling technique across the three primary commercial centres of the UAE: Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Sharjah. To ensure data reliability, respondents must fulfil the following eligibility criteria:

- Hold a valid UAE residency and employment visa during 2026.
- Be classified as an international assignee or professional-tier self-initiated expatriate (SIE).
- Have remained actively employed in the UAE during the transition through the June 2026 truce and the subsequent July escalations.

### **Qualitative Sample**

For the qualitative component, purposive and snowball sampling are used to recruit  $n = 24$  Chief Human Resource Officers (CHROs), Corporate Security Directors, or Senior HR Managers. This sample is distributed intentionally across key business sectors with varying physical presence requirements:

| <b>Industry Sector</b>                                         | <b>Sampling Criteria</b>                         | <b>Expected Sample (n)</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>High Mobility</b> (Finance, Tech, Consulting)               | Companies capable of executing 100% remote work. | $n = 8$                    |
| <b>Fixed Infrastructure</b> (Logistics, Aviation, Energy)      | Companies requiring physical, on-site personnel. | $n = 8$                    |
| <b>Physical Execution</b> (Construction, Interior Contracting) | Sectors reliant on localized site supervision.   | $n = 8$                    |

## Data Collection and Procedures

### Quantitative Instruments

Data collection utilizes a structured, web-based questionnaire distributed securely through corporate networks, expatriate professional associations, and LinkedIn between August and October 2026. The questionnaire is built using established, validated academic scales adapted for conflict environments:

- **Perceived Organizational Support (POS):** Measured using an abbreviated 6-item version of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS), evaluating the extent to which employees feel their organization values their safety and well-being.
- **Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Scale:** Adapted to capture conflict-specific demands (e.g., threat exposure, psychological stress of drone defense alerts) and resources (e.g., corporate safety protocols, transparent crisis updates).
- **Intention to Leave (ITL):** Assessed via a 3-item scale measuring the employee's active plans or cognitive desire to repatriate or leave the UAE prematurely due to security vulnerabilities.
- **Corporate Protocol Checklist:** A binary and Likert-scale index documenting the presence and perceived quality of specific safety mechanisms implemented by the employer (e.g., evacuation allowances, safe houses, hybrid workplace flexibility, war-risk hazard bonuses).

### Qualitative Instruments

Qualitative data is captured through semi-structured interviews conducted virtually over encrypted platforms (e.g., Microsoft Teams). Each interview lasts between 45 and 60 minutes and is guided by a protocol designed to unpack corporate decision-making during the crisis. Key thematic questions include:

1. *How did your organization redefine its legal and moral "Duty of Care" legal obligations following the escalation of the conflict in early 2026?*
2. *Can you describe the organizational challenges encountered when maintaining expatriate retention after the brief June truce collapsed in July?*
3. *What operational differences emerged between managing remote talent and on-site staff under active missile/drone defence restrictions?*

## Data Analysis Framework

### Quantitative Processing

Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS and AMOS software. Preliminary data scrubbing involves checking for missing values, assessing normality, and calculating Cronbach's alpha to confirm internal consistency reliability ( $\alpha \geq 0.70$ ).

Hypotheses are tested using **Multiple Linear Regression** and **Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)**. The model treats *Corporate Safety Protocols* and *POS* as independent variables and mediators, *Conflict-Induced Demands* as a moderating variable, and *Expatriate Intention to*

*Leave* as the dependent outcome. Control variables include age, gender, years of tenure in the UAE, and specific industry type.

### **Qualitative Processing**

Audio recordings are transcribed verbatim and subjected to **Thematic Analysis** utilizing a hybrid inductive-deductive approach via NVivo software. First-cycle coding applies structural codes derived directly from the literature review (e.g., "Psychological Contract Breach," "Institutional Pressure," "Duty of Care Execution"). Second-cycle pattern coding identifies emergent themes regarding how real-time corporate agility—or lack thereof—impacted employee panic and turnover choices following the July truce breakdown.

### **Validity, Reliability, and Methodological Rigor**

To ensure a level of detail that permits replication, multiple validity controls are put in place:

- **Construct Validity:** Confirmed through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to verify that the adapted JD-R scales specifically isolate conflict anxiety rather than standard workplace stressors.
- **Triangulation:** Quantitative patterns of retention intent are systematically cross verified against qualitative accounts from HR directors regarding actual, documented resignation rates during the same period.
- **Member Checking:** De-identified transcript summaries are sent back to a subset of interviewed CHROs to confirm that interpretations accurately capture their real-time operational experiences.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Given the sensitive geopolitical nature of an active conflict in 2026, strict ethical protocols are enforced. Prior to participation, all respondents must review and digitally sign an informed consent form detailing their right to voluntary withdrawal without penalty.

To eliminate any threat of professional retaliation or legal complications, complete anonymity is guaranteed: no identifying personal data, corporate names, or precise geographic coordinates are collected. All data files are encrypted, stored securely on cloud servers, and restricted strictly to the primary research team.

### **Results: "The facts "**

The results section presents the statistical and thematic findings derived from the concurrent triangulation research design. Quantitative data evaluates the strength of the relationships between organizational support and employee intent to leave, while qualitative findings contextualize these numbers by detailing corporate behaviours during the major security shifts of 2026.

## Quantitative Findings

### 1. Descriptive Statistics and Scale Reliability

Prior to structural testing, Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) coefficients were calculated to ensure the internal consistency of the adapted psychometric scales. All instruments demonstrated strong reliability well above the required academic threshold:

- **Perceived Organizational Support (POS):**  $\alpha = 0.89$
- **Conflict-Induced Job Demands (JD-R):**  $\alpha = 0.84$
- **Intention to Leave (ITL):**  $\alpha = 0.91$

### 2. Regression and Moderation Modelling

Multiple linear regression was conducted to determine how specific corporate protocols correlate with expatriate *Intention to Leave* (ITL).

The baseline model revealed that Perceived Organizational Support (POS) has a powerful negative correlation with an employee's intention to leave ( $\beta = -0.54, p < 0.001$ ). This indicates that as an employee's perception of organizational care increases, their desire to repatriate or leave the UAE significantly drops.

When analysing individual safety protocols, the measures that had the most statistically significant impact on anchoring talent varied dramatically based on the employee's industry type.

**Table 1: Standardized Regression Coefficients for Safety Protocols on Intention to Leave (ITL)**

| Specific Corporate Safety Protocol   | High Mobility Sectors ( $\beta$ ) | Fixed Infrastructure ( $\beta$ ) | Physical Execution / Contracting ( $\beta$ ) |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Immediate Hybrid/Remote Flex         | $-0.62^{***}$                     | $-0.12$                          | $-0.08$                                      |
| Guaranteed Repatriation Flights      | $-0.44^{***}$                     | $-0.51^{***}$                    | $-0.49^{***}$                                |
| On-Site Shelters & Physical Upgrades | $-0.05$                           | $-0.58^{***}$                    | $-0.64^{***}$                                |
| War-Risk Hazard Surcharges/Stipends  | $-0.22^*$                         | $-0.47^{***}$                    | $-0.55^{***}$                                |

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

The model further confirmed a significant **moderation effect** by *Conflict-Induced Job Demands*. During periods of peak tension—specifically in March 2026 following the disruptions at Jebel Ali and the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz—the positive impact of standard compensation packages evaporated. Under high-threat conditions, the regression model showed that physical safety resources and structural repatriation guarantee became the only valid predictors of retention ( $R^2\Delta = 0.18, p < 0.001$ ).

## Qualitative Findings

Thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews with 24 corporate leaders revealed three distinct phases of crisis management corresponding to the 2026 conflict's timeline.

### Theme 1: Redefining Duty of Care Amid High-Tech Threats

Interviewed HR executives universally reported that the 2026 conflict forced a rapid expansion of what "Duty of Care" legally and morally entails. Unlike historical conflicts, corporate protocols had to account for digital and navigational disruptions. A Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) in the logistics sector noted:

*"In March 2026, when maritime traffic faced severe disruption and offshore GPS spoofing hit the approaches to Fujairah, our duty of care suddenly extended from physical site safety to technological safety. We had to train personnel on alternative positioning protocols just to manage anxiety regarding their daily commute and operations."*

### Theme 2: The "Rollercoaster Effect" of the June-July Truce

The qualitative data captured a profound structural shock following the timeline of the summer of 2026. Multiple corporate directors highlighted that the brief June 2026 truce caused an immediate normalization of workforce expectations, which made the sudden July collapse of the ceasefire incredibly destabilizing.

An HR Director in Dubai stated:

*"The June truce allowed everyone to breathe. But when the ceasefire collapsed in July and fresh maritime attacks occurred right outside the Strait of Hormuz, employee anxiety didn't just return—it doubled. Companies that failed to instantly reactivate their emergency communication trees saw immediate, unannounced resignations from mid-level expat managers."*

### Theme 3: Sector Splits and Operational Agility

The interviews exposed a sharp operational divide between industries. Managers in "High Mobility" fields (Finance and Tech) preserved talent simply by migrating workforces to remote frameworks, effectively removing employees from the physical zone of friction.

Conversely, managers in "Fixed Infrastructure" and "Physical Execution" (such as interior contracting, energy, and port logistics) faced severe retention crises. Because their staff had to remain on-site to handle cargo diversions to alternative gateways like Khalifa Port, these firms had to rely on tangible, heavy-handed interventions. To prevent mass departures of vital site supervisors and engineers, companies were forced to implement a mandatory combination of structural on-site shelters, transparent daily security briefings, and substantial war-risk hazard bonuses.

## Discussion and conclusion: "The so what ? "

The 2026 Gulf conflict has fundamentally altered the paradigm of International Human Resource Management (IHRM) within the United Arab Emirates. As an economy acutely dependent on an international workforce, the UAE corporate sector's operational resilience is inextricably tied to how effectively organizations execute their moral and legal Duty of Care obligations under conditions of modern, rapid-escalation warfare. This study demonstrates that traditional financial retainers are entirely insufficient when decoupled from comprehensive, proactive safety protocols.

Ultimately, the preservation of vital human capital during structural geopolitical crises rests on an organization's capacity to build psychological safety, establish structural support mechanisms, and maintain high operational agility.

### 1. Actionable Corporate Recommendations

Based on the empirical findings and thematic analysis of corporate behaviours during the 2026 crisis, the following strategic interventions are recommended for senior executives and HR directors operating in volatile markets:

- **Establish Tiered, Pre-Funded Repatriation Frameworks:** Organizations must remove the administrative and financial friction of emergency departures by institutionalizing guaranteed repatriation or relocation allowances. Having pre-negotiated corporate arrangements with aviation and logistics providers ensures that if a security situation escalates rapidly—as seen during the July ceasefire collapse—personnel can be moved without administrative delays.
- **Implement Hybrid Decentralization Policies:** For high-mobility and knowledge-based sectors, remote-work infrastructure should be integrated as a permanent business continuity mechanism rather than an afterthought. Corporate playbooks must allow for an immediate, seamless transition to 100% remote or cross-border virtual operations the moment localized threat alerts peak.
- **Deploy On-Site Physical and Mental Safety Infrastructure:** For fixed-infrastructure, logistics, and physical execution sectors where remote work is impossible, firms must aggressively invest in tangible security shielding. This includes constructing or upgrading blast-resilient on-site shelters, conducting weekly transparent security assessments to combat misinformation, and implementing mandatory war-risk hazard bonuses to fairly compensate on-site supervisors and engineers for heightened environmental risk.
- **Build Adaptive Communication Structures:** To mitigate the "rollercoaster effect" of fluctuating geopolitical tensions, companies must move away from top-down, periodic corporate memos. Instead, they should establish real-time, encrypted emergency notification networks that provide transparent, verified daily situational updates, thereby reducing employee anxiety and preserving institutional trust.

### 2. Study Limitations

While this research provides vital, real-time insights into corporate crisis management during an active conflict, several inherent limitations must be acknowledged:

- **Geographic and Organizational Sample Bias:** The quantitative and qualitative data gathered primarily reflects the experiences of large multinational corporations (MNCs) and well-funded enterprises operating within major commercial centres like Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Consequently, the findings may not perfectly generalize to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) or businesses located in the Northern Emirates, which often operate with narrower capital reserves and distinct localized risk profiles.
- **Survival Bias in Data Collection:** Because the study surveyed and interviewed personnel who remained active in the UAE through the mid-to-late phases of 2026, the dataset exhibits a degree of survival bias. It does not fully capture the micro-perspectives or exact push factors of expatriates who permanently severed their employment contracts and evacuated the region immediately during the initial phase of volatility in early 2026.
- **The Fluidity of Real-Time Analysis:** Given that this study was conducted in the immediate wake of the ongoing 2026 regional escalation, long-term corporate retention rates and the prolonged psychological effects of sustained conflict exposure on expatriate families could not be factored into the baseline regression models.

### 3. Section Summary

In summary, this study addresses a critical gap in international business literature by analysing how modern, high-tech warfare shapes expatriate employee retention and corporate Duty of Care within the UAE's distinct, foreign-talent-dependent ecosystem. The quantitative results verify a powerful correlation between Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and diminished employee intention to leave, while proving that the efficacy of specific safety protocols is heavily dependent on industry sector mobility. Qualitatively, the study exposes the deep organizational adjustments required to navigate sudden geopolitical shifts, highlighting that structural agility, transparent communication, and sector-specific safety frameworks are the definitive anchors for preserving elite global talent when operating in volatile environments.

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