



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

The Restructuring Procees of Iraq

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1. IRAQ

- **UN-AL envoy for Syria visits Iraq to hold talks**

The UN and Arab League Joint Special Representative for Syria Lakhdar Brahimi has arrived in Baghdad to hold talks with the country's officials.



Brahimi was received by Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari upon arrival. Later he held talks with Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, and President Jalal Talabani during which he praised Iraq's regional role.

On top of his agenda were discussing the Syrian crisis and explaining the gravity of the situation to the Iraqi officials. Extra security measures were put in place and more forces were deployed in and around Baghdad to contain any potential terrorist attacks during the visit.

In a press conference, the Iraqi Foreign minister highlighted Baghdad's concern about the situation in Syria and warned of the consequences of the continuation of the violence in the country.

For his part, Brahimi stated that Iraq has power and interests in Syria and the Iraqi officials should play a bigger role to protect these interests by helping the United Nations to find a solution to the crisis.

This was Brahimi's first visit to Baghdad as the UN envoy to Syria. He began his regional tour on Wednesday in Saudi Arabia and later visited Istanbul, where he met with the Turkish Foreign Minister, before flying to Tehran to discuss the conflict in Syria.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/16/266914/unal-envoy-for-syria-visits-iraq/>

- **Talabani, Barzani's meeting comes to reach solutions to be presented in national meeting, says MP**

Baghdad, Oct 15 (AIN) –MP, Abdul Salam al-Maliki, of the State of Law Coalition pointed out that "The meeting of the President, Jalal Talabani, with the President of Kurdistan Region, Masoud Barzani, comes within the course of Talabani's efforts to gather solutions to present them during the upcoming national meeting."

He stated to All Iraq News Agency (AIN) "Talabani's meeting with Barzani aims at creating harmony between the Federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government."

"Talabani's recent meetings are intended to prepare for the national meeting as he confirmed for some blocs that he is serious in reaching suitable solution for the current crisis," he added.

"Talabani continues in his meetings with the political sides to finalize the final ideas to form a vivid project to gather the political blocs," he concluded.

Talabani returned to Baghdad on last Sunday coming from Erbil after holding meetings with the Kurdish leaders including the President of KR, Masoud Barzani, over the pending issues.

http://www.alliraqnews.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=20774

- **Iraq plans to invest up to \$1.6 bln in solar and wind energy (Reuters)**

BAGHDAD, Oct 15 (Reuters) - Iraq plans to spend up to \$1.6 billion on solar and wind power stations over the next three years to add 400 megawatts to the national grid to help curb daily blackouts, an official from the ministry of electricity said on Monday.

Nine years after the U.S.-led invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein, investment is needed in most of Iraq's industries, not least power generation, which produces just 8,800 MW of the 14,000 MW needed.

The dilapidated national grid supplies only a few hours of power a day, leaving Iraqis to swelter in the summer months, when temperatures can top 50 degrees Celsius.

Invitations have been sent to about 25 leading companies to manufacture and install solar and wind power plants, said Laith al-Mamury, the head of the planning and studies department at the ministry of electricity.

The companies include Japan's Toyota Tsusho Corp, Swiss engineering group ABB and Egypt's Orascom Construction .

<http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/10/15/iraq-electricity-solar-idINL5E8LFK7H20121015>

- **Dana Gas expects Iraq, Kurdistan deal will speed payments (kurd.net)**

DUBAI, Oct 15 — Dana Gas and Crescent Petroleum expect that the recent multi-million-dollar oil payment by Baghdad to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has improved the prospect of recouping overdue payments from Iraq, the companies said on Sunday.

The United Arab Emirates-based companies have faced difficulties getting paid for all of the liquid fuel they have produced in Kurdistan, while their gas has helped maintain secure supplies of electricity for millions of people in a country where fuel shortages are commonplace.

But Baghdad's pledge last month to pay foreign companies working in Kurdistan in return for the KRG guaranteeing oil exports, and a first instalment of around \$559 million being received by the KRG in early October, could see debts settled soon.

"We are working with the KRG to improve and resolve the outstanding receivables, and are very encouraged by the recent announcement on the resumption of payments from the Federal Government," Rashid Al-Jarwan, acting CEO of Dana Gas, said in a statement to the Abu Dhabi stock market.

Dana Gas said in its 2011 results that trade receivables at the end of the year stood at 1.74 billion dirhams, of which about 48 percent was owed by Egypt and 52 percent by Kurdistan.

Dana Gas, which was also owed 729 million dirhams (\$198.5 million) for unpaid fuel bills by Egypt as at June 30, 2012, is 20 percent owned by Crescent, according to Thomson Reuters data.

Despite payment issues, the companies have continued to increase supplies in Kurdistan, with total fuel production rising from 70,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day in early August to 80,000 in mid October, the companies said on Sunday.

Four years since production started, natural gas production has reached 340 million cubic feet a day (mcf), up from 330 mcf in early August, while gas condensate production stands at 15,000 barrels per day.

"We are working with the KRG Ministry of Natural Resources on the next phase of development and expansion, to grow our operations," Majid Jafar, CEO of Crescent Petroleum and Dana Gas board member, said in statement to the UAE stock exchange.

Since the start of production in October 2008, some 279 billion cubic feet of gas and 13 million barrels of condensate have been produced by the operators of the Khor Mor field in Kurdistan, they said.

<http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2012/10/invest881.htm>

2. IRAN

- **Iran to unveil Qadir cruise missile: Deputy defense minister**

Iran's deputy defense minister has announced the country is set to unveil a domestically-manufactured cruise missile, called Qadir, in the near future.

“Our missiles, including the Zafar, Nasr, Nour, Qader and the forthcoming Qadir cruise missiles, can be fired from vessels with a speed of over 30 knots,” Brigadier General Mehdi Farahi, who is also the director of Defense Ministry’s Aerospace Organization, said on Monday.



The Iranian commander added that Iran’s cruise and coast-to-sea missiles are capable of adjusting their tactics according to the type of threat they face.

In recent years, Iran has made great achievements in the defense sector and gained self-sufficiency in essential military hardware and defense systems.

Iran has repeatedly assured other nations, especially regional neighbors, that its military might poses no threat to other countries, insisting that its defense doctrine is merely based on deterrence.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/16/266934/iran-to-unveil-qadir-cruise-missile/>

- **Nothing can separate Iran, Azerbaijan nations: Ahmadinejad**

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad says nothing can separate the Iranian and Azeri nations and damage their brotherly relations.



“Relations between Iran and Azerbaijan are brotherly, deep-rooted and extensive, and cannot be damaged by the enemies’ plot and propaganda hype,” Ahmadinejad said in a meeting with his Azeri counterpart, Ilham Aliyev, in Baku on Monday.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran has always supported Azerbaijan’s independence, progress and security,” he added.

The Iranian president also underlined Iran-Azerbaijan cooperation in the international arenas, saying, “Cooperation between Iran and Azerbaijan as two independent countries in international organizations will benefit both countries' nations and even other regional nations.”

“Enemies of Iran and Azerbaijan are angry at the progress of the two nations and seek to weaken us to impose their hegemony, but Tehran and Baku can take great measures for their nations ... with no limitation,” he added.

Ahmadinejad arrived in the Azeri capital of Baku on Monday to take part in the 12th Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Summit of Heads of State and Heads of Governments.

Aliyev, for his part, said that the Iranian president’s presence at the summit will strengthen the meeting, adding that Iran and Azerbaijan are good neighbors and will never let others influence their relations.

The 12th ECO Summit of Heads of State and Heads of Governments will be held on Tuesday, October 16, one day after the 20th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the ECO, in which Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi took part.

ECO is an intergovernmental regional organization established in 1985 by Iran, Pakistan and Turkey for the purpose of promoting economic, technical and cultural cooperation among the member states.

In 1992, the ECO expanded its membership to include seven new countries of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/15/266862/iran-azerbaijan-nations-inseparable/>

- **EU foreign ministers agree on new Iran sanctions**

Foreign ministers of the European Union (EU) have agreed on a new round of sanctions against Iran over its nuclear energy program in spite of a UN warning against the humanitarian ramifications of the previous bans.



The fresh unilateral and illegal sanctions come as EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton said on Monday that negotiations between Iran and five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany (P5+1) could move forward “very soon.”

Ashton, who represents the P5+1 in talks with Iran, added that she hopes turning up the heat on Iran will persuade the country to make concessions.

“I absolutely do think there is room for negotiations. I hope we will be able to make progress very soon,” she stated.

Iran and the P5+1 comprising -- Britain, China, France, Russia, the US and Germany -- have held several rounds of talks over the Iranian nuclear energy issue.

Iranian officials have repeatedly described the sanctions against the Islamic Republic as futile and ineffective, saying such moves are merely aimed at creating a psychological atmosphere.

Despite illegal sanctions on Iran, the country has managed to easily find new substitutes for EU customers of Iranian oil and gas.

The EU's dual approaches prove that the nuclear energy has been turned into a tool in the hand of the 27-nation bloc to increase systematic hostility towards the Iranian nation.

The bloc's new move comes in defiance of the UN chief's recent remarks about the humanitarian ramifications of the previously-imposed embargoes. Ban Ki-moon warned on October 5 that the West's sanctions have mainly targeted the livelihood of the ordinary Iranian population.

The illegal US-engineered sanctions were imposed based on the unfounded accusation that Iran is pursuing non-civilian objectives in its nuclear energy program.

Iran rejects the allegations, arguing that as a committed signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), it has the right to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

In addition, the IAEA has conducted numerous inspections of Iran's nuclear facilities but has never found any evidence showing that Iran's civilian nuclear program has been diverted to nuclear weapons production.

On February 22, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei issued a fatwa (religious decree) against building nuclear weapons, saying the Islamic Republic considers the pursuit and possession of nuclear weapons "a grave sin" from every logical, religious and theoretical standpoint.

On October 10, Ayatollah Khamenei downplayed Western sanctions against the Islamic Republic, saying the Iranian nation will overcome problems as always.

“Today, our enemies magnify sanctions. Sanctions are not an issue of yesterday or today. Sanctions have existed from the very beginning; they intensified the sanctions, which didn’t work; they intensified them again; these won’t work either,” the Leader said.

Ayatollah Khamenei noted that the US and certain European countries seek to link sanctions to Iran’s nuclear energy program, adding that the main reason behind the anti-Iran embargos is not the nuclear issue but the Iranian nation’s resistance against the global hegemony.

The new EU sanctions on Tehran come while the Norwegian Nobel Prize Committee awarded its 2012 Peace Prize to the EU on Friday.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/15/266853/eu-imposes-new-sanctions-on-iran/>

- **Regional trade unites ECO member states: Iran FM**

Iran’s Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi says an increased volume of regional trade can create more unity among members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).



Speaking during the 20th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers in Baku, Salehi said an increase of ECO regional trade can stabilize macroeconomic environment in the entire region and create more unity among the organization’s member states.

The top diplomat added that Iran has played an important role in the development of ECO transportation and transit projects and increasing intra-regional trade.

Salehi noted that the Islamic Republic attaches high importance to ECO in its regional policies and the country has always continued to support different parts of the organization.

The Iranian foreign minister also discussed regional issues and bilateral relations in separate meetings with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, Pakistani counterpart, Hina Rabbani Khar, and Azeri Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov on the sidelines of the ECO meeting.

The ministerial meeting of ECO is scheduled to be followed by the 12th ECO Summit of Heads of State and Heads of Governments on October 16, which will be attended by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

ECO is an intergovernmental regional organization established in 1985 by Iran, Pakistan and Turkey for the purpose of promoting economic, technical and cultural cooperation among the member states.

In 1992, the ECO expanded its membership to include seven new countries of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/15/266849/regional-trade-unites-eco-states/>

- **Iran proposes transitional government for Syria**

TEHRAN, Oct. 16 (MNA) – A top Iranian Foreign Ministry official has said that Tehran has proposed the establishment of a “transitional government” for Syria as a way to end the 18-month conflict in the country.

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, the deputy foreign minister for Arab and North African Affairs, broke the story in an interview published on Monday.

In a joint press conference with UN envoy for Syria Lakhdar Brahimi in Tehran on Sunday Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi announced Iran had put forward an unofficial written proposal to help resolve the Syrian crisis. Salehi did not elaborate on the proposal.

Amir-Abdollahian said the proposal for transitional government was put forward during a foreign ministerial meeting of a contact group on Syria comprising Egypt, Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia, which was held in New York on September 29.

“The spirit of the initiative focuses on a political solution to the problems in Syria,” the Tehran Times quoted Amir-Abdollahian as saying.

<http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1721179>

3. SYRIA

- **Arabs betrayed Syrian insurgents, FSA member says**

A foreign-sponsored Syrian insurgent has accused some Arab countries of betraying the self-proclaimed Free Syrian Army (FSA) that is fighting against the Syrian government.



“I wanted to leave a message here to the Arabs, the Arabs who betrayed us. The Arabs said at first they would support the opposition party and the free army, but in the end they retreated,” an FSA member said in footage taken by Reuters on Monday.

Syria has been experiencing unrest since March 2011.

Damascus says outlaws, saboteurs, and armed terrorists are the driving factor behind the unrest and deadly violence while the opposition accuses the security forces of being behind the killings.

The Syrian government says that the chaos is being orchestrated from outside the country and accuses Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey of arming the opposition.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/16/266899/arabs-betrayed-us-fsa-member-says/>

- **Ankara insists intercepted Syrian plane carried ‘war equipment’**

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan reiterated Monday that the cargo Ankara confiscated from an intercepted Syrian plane contained weapons, shrugging off Russian claims that the plane carried legal radar equipment.

“It is beyond any doubt that the cargo is war equipment,” Erdogan told reporters in Ankara.



The Syrian Air passenger plane en route from Moscow to Damascus was forced by Turkish jets to land in Ankara last Wednesday, reportedly upon intelligence that the civilian plane carried military cargo.

After grounding the plane for nine hours, Ankara announced it seized “objectionable” cargo aboard the plane, triggering a furious reaction from Damascus and its main ally, Moscow.

“There is no point in diverting and saying it is radar equipment,” said Erdogan, in an apparent reference to Russia’s claims that the plane carried dual-purpose radar equipment which it said was not banned by international conventions.

“Radar equipment functions as war equipment anyway,” he added.

Damascus denied the aircraft had any illegal load, challenging Ankara to display the cargo it seized and asking for the return of the confiscated goods.

The premier also clarified that he ordered authorities to close Turkish airspace to Syrian flights “immediately after” Wednesday’s interception.

“I also gave my orders to Turkish Airlines not to use Syrian airspace for civil aviation, and asked them to notify others,” Erdogan said.

In return, Syria announced it was banning Turkish planes from its airspace, effective from Saturday midnight, “in accordance with the principle of reciprocity,” according to SANA state news agency.

Turkey’s ban on Syrian flights was first publicized by Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu on Sunday, who said the ban went into effect a day before.

Last Thursday, Erdogan said the cargo was military equipment being shipped from a Russian producer to the Syrian Defense Ministry, in breach of rules of civil aviation.

Ankara has taken an increasingly strident line towards its southern neighbor since a shell fired from the Syrian side of the border killed five Turks on October 3.

It has since repeatedly retaliated for cross-border fire, prompting growing U.N. concern and a flurry of diplomatic contacts.

Earlier on Monday, Ankara ordered an Armenian humanitarian aid plane headed for Syria’s Aleppo to land for routine security checks. The plane resumed its journey through Turkish airspace later Monday after it got Ankara’s clearance.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/16/243952.html?PHPSESSID=9gqrmmp69k8fo4sqt6cf3la2b4>

4. ISRAEL-PALESTINE

- **Israeli MPs vote to dissolve Knesset over austerity cuts deadlock**

Israeli parliamentarians have voted to dissolve the Knesset and hold elections on January 22, 2013, months ahead of schedule.

In a marathon session that started on Monday and went into Tuesday, the dissolution of the 120-seat chamber was approved in the third reading, with 100 MKs voting in favor of the motion and none opposing it, Israeli officials said on Tuesday.

The decision was taken after the gridlock among different coalition partners over the passage of next year's austerity budget.

In recent months, Israelis held protests against a package of sweeping austerity cuts that the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said were necessary to reduce the budget deficit and protect the economy.



Last week, Netanyahu said he wanted to hold snap elections, which were initially scheduled for October 2013.

"I'm asking to hold elections on Tuesday, January 22, 2013," Netanyahu told the Knesset at the start of the debate on

Monday.

Netanyahu has formed committees to address the anti-austerity protesters' demands, but the demonstrators say no single concrete step has been taken.

Netanyahu has also ruled out the idea of spending from outside the budget for economic reforms, a response that Israeli protesters say disillusioned them.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/16/266909/israel-knesset-dissolves-ahead-of-vote/>

- **PA PM, Brazil FM call for hatt to Israeli violations**

The Palestinian Authority (PA) prime minister and the visiting Brazilian foreign minister have held a meeting, calling for an end to Israeli violations of international laws.



Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and Brazilian Foreign Minister Antonio Patriota made the remarks during a meeting in the West Bank city of Ramallah on Monday and held talks over Israel's ongoing occupation of Palestinian lands.

Fayyad called on the international community and Brazil to pressure Israel to end violations of Palestinian and international law, particularly Israel's settler attacks in the olive harvesting season.

The Brazilian foreign minister also stated that his country will continue supporting Palestinians' rights and admired Palestinian Authority for their efforts to establish a state in the Middle East country.

PA Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki also attended the meeting.

The Israeli settlements are considered illegal by the UN and most countries because those territories were captured by Israel in a war in 1967, and are hence seen as being subject to the Geneva Conventions, which forbids construction on occupied lands.

Not only has the presence and continued expansion of these settlements been a major source of international criticism against Israel, but they are also considered one of the main obstacles to Middle East peace.

More than half a million Israelis live in over 120 illegal settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East al-Quds (Jerusalem).

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/16/266894/pa-brazil-urge-end-to-israeli-violation/>

- **Knesset dissolves itself, paving way for election**

Final reading of bill to dissolve Knesset passes with 100 in favor, none opposed; sets election for January 22, 2013.



This time, it really happened. The Knesset dissolved itself late Monday night, ahead of elections on January 22, 2013.

The final reading of the bill to dissolve the Knesset passed with 100 in favor and none opposed, over five months after it passed a nearly identical bill in its first reading before opposition leader Shaul Mofaz (Likud) joined the coalition at 2 a.m.

Although the final vote on the bill had not taken place by late Monday night, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu reassured the public at a faction meeting: “This time it’s final. We are going to elections.”

The Knesset approved the final reading for legislation dissolving itself in the early hours of Tuesday morning.

On Monday afternoon, the Knesset held a celebratory opening meeting for the 18th Knesset’s fifth winter session, as mandated by law.

Netanyahu asked the public to re-elect him in his speech, listing his government’s achievements, including encouraging economic growth, building the southern border fence and establishing a cyber-defense force.

The prime minister also included a dig at former prime minister Ehud Olmert, who, according to a Jerusalem Post/Smith Research poll, would have a chance at winning the election should he return to politics.

“We didn’t initiate any unnecessary wars. There were no wars at all in my seven years as prime minister,” Netanyahu said. “The reason there were no wars is because we showed strength.”

The prime minister complimented his former bitter rival MK Amir Peretz (Labor), who ran against Netanyahu’s current strongest challenger Labor chairwoman Shelly Yacimovich in the party leadership race. First, Netanyahu commended Peretz for initiating the Iron Dome missile defense system, and soon after, he said his government enacted a policy that used to be Peretz’s campaign slogan – minimum wage of over \$1000 per month.

Netanyahu also delineated the condition to join his coalition, should he be reelected, which is support for his planning and construction reform.

“In the current term, my coalition partners and the opposition prevented the reform, which would have helped solve the housing crisis, from passing,” he stated.

At the beginning of the winter session’s opening meeting, Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin pointed out that in the last decade, “a prime minister fell victim to direct election, a prime minister fell into a coma, and a prime minister fell because he was suspected of crimes.”

He said that unlike in past elections, the current government lasted four years and initiated a legitimate election.

Based on what happened in the past, Rivlin added, “it is no wonder that the public has lost faith in reasons for elections.”

According to Rivlin, the upcoming election is especially important because it is issues-based, specifically focusing on the economy.

President Shimon Peres said the election is a time to set goals for the future. He called for campaigns to be respectful and be a “brainstorm” for Israel’s future, rather than “arguing for the sake of arguing.”

<http://www.ipost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=287962>

- **Islamic Jihad: No truce reached with Israel**

GAZA CITY (Ma'an) -- Islamic Jihad on Monday denied knowledge of a truce with Israel, but said Egypt was trying to negotiate a ceasefire after a bloody weekend in the Gaza Strip.

"We have no knowledge about a truce with the (Israeli) occupation, but there is an Egyptian effort," Islamic Jihad leader Khader Habib told Ma'an.

Sources told the Beirut-based Al-Mayadeen satellite network on Monday that an Egypt-brokered truce between factions in Gaza and Israel had taken hold at midnight on Sunday.

Gaza Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh discussed the cross-border escalation with Egypt's intelligence chief Raafat Shehata on Monday, a statement from his office said. Haniyeh confirmed that Egypt was trying to negotiate a truce.

Israeli forces have killed five Palestinians in Gaza since Saturday in a series of airstrikes, prompting retaliatory rocket fire from the Gaza Strip. An Israeli army spokesman said that the last rocket had been fired from Gaza at 6 p.m. on Sunday.

Israel and Gaza factions refuse to recognize each other and so talks are usually held through Egyptian mediators.

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=529259>

5. AFRICA and EGYPT

- **As work on final draft of constitution begins, Salafis mobilize against it**

The Constituent Assembly has begun preparing the final draft of the new constitution, said Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mohamed Mahsoub Abdel Meguid in a press conference on Monday.



Abdel Meguid, who is also head of the assembly's Drafting Committee, said that the first draft of the constitution had been sent to law professors, judicial authorities, trade unions, economy professors, political forces and parties to review and make suggestions. The Drafting Committee would then take those comments into account as they make revisions.

Also on Monday, Salafi forces issued a fatwa forbidding followers to vote in favor of the new constitution in the coming referendum, because Article 2 states that the main source of legislation is the "principles" of Sharia, as opposed to the "rules" of Sharia.

Leading Salafi Front figure Hamed Meshaal said the group would organize rallies to mobilize against the constitution.

Adel Afify, head of the Asala Party, said that the Salafis would be able to mobilize millions in the vote.

However, Muslim Brotherhood Shura Council member Sayed al-Nazily predicted that the Salafis would approve the constitution in the end. "They are saying this now to gain some benefits," he claimed.

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/work-final-draft-constitution-begins-salafis-mobilize-against-it>

- **Brotherhood seeks dialogue over Friday clashes**

The Muslim Brotherhood decided Monday to form a committee of its members and Freedom and Justice Party members to hold meetings with various political forces over last Friday's clashes between Brotherhood supporters and opposition protesters.



Mostafa al-Ghonemy, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood Guidance Bureau, said that the group hopes dialogue with other forces would spark reunion after the tension caused by the violence.

He added that the Brotherhood "reaches their hands out to everyone to rebuild Egypt under a democratically elected president" during this difficult time when the interests of the country must be above all else.

Ghonemy accused businessmen "affiliated with the former regime" of masterminding the violence in Tahrir Square. He alleged that they hired a group of "thugs" to go to the square and attack both pro- and anti- Muslim Brotherhood protesters while wearing FJP t-shirts to deceive citizens and encourage assault charges against the Brotherhood demonstrators.

He stressed that the Muslim Brotherhood could have imposed its will over the square if it had wanted, claiming that there were approximately 50,000 Brotherhood members in the square and only 4,000 supporters of other political forces and hired thugs.

Ghonemy blamed the opposition forces, calling them "yesterday's partners in the revolution," of supporting the public prosecutor's claim that there is no legal basis for President Mohamed Morsy to dismiss him from office.

"The public prosecutor is directly responsible for the acquittal of the Battle of the Camel defendants due to lack of evidence," he said.

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/mb-seeks-dialogue-political-forces-end-friday-crisis-0>

6. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Mikati hints drone violated Resolution 1701**

BEIRUT: In his first reaction since Hezbollah claimed responsibility for sending a reconnaissance drone over Israel, Prime Minister Najib Mikati hinted Monday that the drone is a violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701.

“We are with the full implementation of 1701 without any violation,” Mikati said after returning from a visit to Qatar. “The government supports President Michel Sleiman’s position on the issue.”

The president has said that the drone incident underscores the need for a national defense strategy that makes use of the resistance’s arms while putting them under the exclusive control of the state.



Earlier Monday, the premier told Lebanese living in the Gulf emirate that Qatari Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani acknowledges their role in helping Qatar advance and wishes them to stay in the country.

“I would like to reassure Lebanese living in Qatar that his highness is concerned with providing them with all the means for a safe and stable life in this country, which we consider to be a second home for all Lebanese expats here,” Mikati said.

“I was also told that Qatar is interested in making investments in Lebanon,” he added.

The emir told Mikati that Qatar hopes Lebanon remains safe from repercussions of the crisis in neighboring Syria, said a statement by the premier’s press office.

“I explained to his highness Lebanon’s dissociation policy on Syria and I made it clear that such policy has nothing to do with our position on providing humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees,” Mikati said.

In a joint news conference, Sheikh Hamad said Lebanon and Qatar are still discussing a possible lift of the Qatari travel ban that was imposed in May as a result of a spate of kidnappings in Lebanon.

“This [travel ban] was not targeted against Lebanon but was related to specific circumstances. We acknowledge the progress the Lebanese have made on the security front, and the issue is now being discussed between the two countries. We hope this will end very soon,” the emir said.

The two leaders signed six pending cooperation agreements and said that a joint meeting of the Lebanese-Qatari supreme committee would be held in Doha early next year.

The prime minister arrived in Qatar Monday for a one-day official visit, accompanied by a Lebanese delegation that included Foreign Minister Adnan Mansour, Social Affairs Minister Wael Abu Faour, Environment Minister Nazem al-Khoury, Economy Minister Nicolas Nahhas and State Minister Ahmad Karami.

Separately, Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea said Monday that he and former Prime Minister Saad Hariri were in agreement on an elections law that would divide Lebanon into 50 electoral districts as part of a strategy for the 2013 polls.

During a news conference at his residence in Maarab, the LF leader also slammed Hezbollah over its recent operation using a drone to penetrate Israeli airspace.

“I agreed with Hariri during my Jeddah visit on a complete vision regarding the coming elections, on the basis of the 50-district electoral law.”

The LF leader also stressed the need for the parliamentary elections to be held on time. “The Parliament should endorse a new electoral law by the end of the year, and we will not accept postponing the elections under any circumstances,” he said.

The March 14 coalition has put forward an elections law that would divide the country into 50 districts under a winner-takes-all system.

Turning to his rivals in the March 8 coalition, Geagea held Hezbollah responsible for any possible repercussions from the group’s recent Ayoub drone operation into Israel.

“The country still hasn’t healed from the wounds of the 2006 July war, and Hezbollah will be blamed for any losses the country might suffer due to sending the drone over Israel,” he said.

Last week, Hezbollah chief Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah confirmed that his group managed to breach Israeli airspace using an Iranian-made unmanned aerial vehicle that was later shot down by the Jewish state.

Geagea said the drone operation, codenamed Ayoub, represented a direct Iranian message to Israel and the West.

“Making such dangerous decisions should be the responsibility of the state, not the responsibility of any party,” Geagea said. For his part, Sunni Mufti Sheikh Mohammad Rashid Qabbani described the Ayoub operation as “excellent and strategic,” but said it should ideally take place under the patronage of the Lebanese state.

Hezbollah MP Nawwaf al-Mousawi, meanwhile, criticized former Prime Minister Fouad Siniora’s position on the drone and accused him of providing Israel a pretext to attack Lebanon by describing the operation as a “provocation” and a “declaration of war.”

Separately, March 14 MP Butros Harb urged Lebanese expatriates to come home to vote in parliamentary elections to make changes that will shock the Hezbollah-led coalition, the National News Agency reported Monday.

“We [March 14 coalition] will continue to put pressure so that that you can participate in the elections wherever you are,” Harb said.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Politics/2012/Oct-16/191565-mikati-hints-drone-violated-resolution-1701.ashx#ixzz29RkxWowv>

- **Washington says Hezbollah is part of Assad’s war machine**

The United States said Monday that Lebanon’s Hezbollah militia is stepping up support for the Syrian government and has become part of President Bashar Assad’s “killing machine.”

U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice told the U.N. Security Council’s monthly meeting on the Mideast that Hezbollah leaders are also continuing to plot new measures with Iran to keep Assad in power.

Rice’s comments -- and those of Israel’s U.N. Ambassador Ron Prossor -- gave the clearest indication that Hezbollah, which fought a war against Israel in 2006 and is a major political and military force in Lebanon, is sending an increasing number of fighters to help the embattled Syrian regime.



Syria’s ruling Alawite minority is an offshoot of Shiite Islam and has had close ties to Iran and Hezbollah which are Shiite-dominated. Assad has long helped Iran aid Hezbollah and Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip, in destabilizing Lebanon and threatening

Israel's security and U.S. interests in the Middle East.

The U.S. ambassador accused Hezbollah's leader, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, of being two-faced about his claims that he is promoting Lebanon's interests.

"Hezbollah's active and growing support for Assad's war exposes Hassan Nasrallah's claims of promoting Lebanon's national interest as nothing more than a deadly form of deception," Rice said.

"The group's leaders may try to change the subject by invoking hollow rhetoric about so-called resistance, but the truth is plain to see: Nasrallah's fighters are now part of Assad's killing machine and Hezbollah's leaders continue to plot with Iran new measures to prop up a murderous and desperate dictator," she said.

Rice said the United States is encouraging the international community "to counter Hezbollah's terrorist activity and do more to expose Hezbollah's deepening involvement in Assad's war."

Israel's ambassador Prossor said Nasrallah claims he needs a private army with advanced missiles to defend Lebanon against the Jewish state.

"Today we see that Hezbollah's army is far more preoccupied with butchering their Arab brothers and sisters in Syria," Prossor said.

He said Nasrallah and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad form a "trio of terror" with Assad, "offering the tyrant of Damascus guidance on how to butcher the Syrian people more efficiently."

The U.S. ambassador said the 19-month Syrian war now poses a challenge to all of the Mideast country's neighbors, including Lebanon which has experienced cross-border attacks and an influx of Syrian refugees.

She commended the Lebanese government and armed forces “for maintaining stability and law and order at this critical juncture” and welcomed efforts by Lebanese President Michel Suleiman and others to promote dialogue including on disarmament of illegal militias as demanded by the U.N. Security Council.

Many speakers at the day-long council meeting mentioned the escalating casualty toll in Syria -- now estimated by activists at over 33,000 -- and the divided council’s failure to take action to halt it.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/16/243995.html?PHPSESSID=9gqrmmp69k8fo4sqt6cf3la2b4>

- **Over 2 million register for Jordan election**

More than two million voters have registered for Jordan’s parliamentary elections due to take place by the end of 2012, the independent electoral commission announced on Monday.

“2.27 million voters registered, or 70 percent of the electorate, by the close of registration,” commission spokesman Hussein Abu Hani told AFP.

Jordan has a population of 6.7 million, of whom 3.1 million are entitled to vote, according to the commission.

King Abdullah II dissolved parliament at the start of October and called early elections without setting a date, although he wants the vote to be held by the end of the year.

The Muslim Brotherhood, the main opposition movement, has said it will boycott the elections in protest at constituency boundaries, saying they over-represent loyalist rural areas at the expense of urban areas seen as Islamist strongholds.

It also wants a parliamentary system under which the prime minister is elected rather than named by the king.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/16/243953.html?PHPSESSID=9gqrmmp69k8fo4sqt6cf3la2b4>

7. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Bahraini protesters march for downfall of regime**

People have taken to the streets in Bahrain to call for the downfall of the ruling Al Khalifa regime in the Persian Gulf country.

Protesters marched in Manama and several other towns near the capital on Monday.



They also expressed solidarity with imprisoned medics who announced earlier that they had begun a hunger strike.

There were reports of clashes between the protesters and the security forces.

Earlier on the day, the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information censured the regime's use of "excessive force" against peaceful protests in the country.

The five medics, who have been in prison since early October, went on hunger strike on Sunday to urge international efforts for their release.

They were among twenty doctors and nurses who worked in Manama during the uprising against the Al Khalifa regime.

The Bahraini authorities charged the medical workers with using hospitals for anti-government activities, possession of weapons, and theft of medical equipment -- claims they denied. The

medical workers say the government is only punishing them for treating people who took part in demonstrations.

Bahrain's revolution started in mid-February 2011, when demonstrators, inspired by the revolutions of Tunisia and Egypt, started holding massive anti-regime protests.

Dozens of people have been killed in the regime's crackdown and the security forces have arrested hundreds of protesters.

A report published by the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry in November 2011 found that the Al Khalifa regime had used 'excessive force' in the campaign of suppression and accused Manama of torturing political activists, politicians, and protesters.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/16/266911/bahrainis-stage-antiregime-demo/>

- **4 wounded, 6 arrested in demo clashes in Kuwait**

At least four people have been wounded and six others arrested in clashes between Kuwaiti riot police and people who were protesting against a government attempt to make a change to election law.

Police also beat up the demonstrators who were trying to stage a march in Kuwait City on Monday.

"We are not scared of your new batons nor the jails you have built ... Violence will only lead to counter-violence," former MP and opposition leader Musallam al-Barrak said during the rally.

The opposition protested a plan to change the controversial electoral law, which was confirmed by the court three weeks ago, to impact the outcome of polls and threatened to boycott the election.

Some Bedouin tribes' chiefs also warned that their tribesmen would boycott the election if the law is altered.

The Kuwaiti government has been dominated by the Al Sabah family members without any challenge since the dynasty began ruling the Persian Gulf state about 250 years ago.

Kuwait's 108-billion-dollar economic development plan is in a state of limbo due to the growing political tensions.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/16/266896/4-injured-6-arrested-in-kuwait-clashes/>

8. AFGHANISTAN - PAKISTAN

- **Gunmen kill four Shias in Quetta: police**

QUETTA: Gunmen shot dead four people from the Shia community on Tuesday, in what appears to be a fresh sectarian attack in Pakistan's troubled southwestern province of Balochistan, police said.

All those killed ran junk and scrap shops in the Kabarhi Market in Quetta, the provincial capital where sectarian and separatist violence is common.

"It was a sectarian attack. Gunmen on motorbikes opened fire on them and drove away," Asif Ghafoor, a senior police official, told AFP.

The province, which borders Afghanistan and Iran, is plagued by sectarian violence between the minority Shia and majority Sunni community, as well as by Taliban attacks and a separatist insurgency.

Riasat Ali, another police official confirmed the incident and told AFP that the victims were critically injured and died on their way to hospital.

The victims of the shooting were from the Hazara community, the APP said in its report.

Sectarian violence involving Sunni and Shias, who account for around 20 per cent of the population, has killed thousands of people since the late 1990s.

Despite having large reserves of oil and gas, Balochistan remains one of Pakistan's most impoverished provinces, and bomb blasts and attacks on police and security forces are common.

In 2004 Baloch rebels rose up, demanding political autonomy and a greater share of profits from the region's mineral resources.

<http://dawn.com/2012/10/16/gunmen-kill-four-shias-in-quetta-police/>

- **TTP's Orakzai chief arrested from Nowshera**

NOWSHERA: Police on Tuesday arrested Qari Saeed, chief of the banned Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan's Orakzai chapter in Nowshera, DawnNews reported.

Qari Saeed was arrested with an accomplice during a raid conducted by the police in the Banda Nabi village in Nowshera's Pabbi Tehsil.

Police sources said they suspected Qari Saeed was in town to collaborate a sabotage attempt on a gathering being organised to observe the second death anniversary of Mian Rashid Hussain, son of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Minister Mian Iftikhar Hussain.

Rashid Hussain was gunned down in July 2010 in his ancestral town of Pabbi, Nowshera district.

This media summary is prepared by **ORSAM Middle East Research Assistant Sercan DOĞAN. It covers news and commentaries as reported by the national media sources publishing in the Middle*

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