



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

The Restructuring Procces of Iraq

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1. IRAQ

- **Iraq signs contract for 18 F-16 fighter jets**

Iraq has signed a contract to purchase 18 F-16 multirole fighter jets in line with plans to beef up its air force.



Acting Iraqi Defense Minister Sadun Farhan al-Dulaymi said on Thursday that the deal is part of an initial agreement to purchase 36 of the US-made jets to revamp Iraq's aerial capabilities.

“The United States is still arms supplier number one to Iraq and the Ministry of Defense. We also agreed to buy another 18 F-16 fighter jets and they (the Americans) will speed up the delivery of the first 18 (F-16) fighters as soon as possible. There will also be a demand for the purchase of air defense systems and Apache helicopters,” Dulaymi told reporters.

He also stated that the contract is “no different from the first contract in terms of the technical and financial details. This handover will be finished in 2018.”

Iraq has also concluded military contracts with Russia and the Czech Republic this month as it seeks to build up its air force.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/19/267545/iraq-signs-deal-for-usmade-f16-jets/>

- **Kurdish Official discusses with Canadian Ambassador bilateral relations and the situation of Syrian refugees.**

Baghdad / NINA /-- Head of Kurdistan Regional Government's office Nechirvan Ahmed discussed with Canada's ambassador to Iraq and Jordan, Marc Kozdki bilateral relations and means of enhancing them to serve the interests of both parties.

The Web site of the Kurdistan Regional Government said today : " The two sides discussed mechanism of receiving Syrian refugees as proving shelter and services to them by the Kurdistan Regional Government.

On the other hand Ahmed said during the meeting : "The doors of Kurdistan region is open to Canadian companies and investors.

For his part, Canadian Ambassador expressed his high appreciation of the efforts spent by Kurdistan provincial government in all fields .

http://www.ninanews.com/english/News_Details.asp?ar95_VQ=GEEFFD

- **Hayder Abadi, Japanese Chargé d'Affaires discuss bilateral relations**

Baghdad (NINA) – Chairman of Parliamentarian Financial Committee, Lawmaker Hayder al-Abadi, discussed with the Chargé d'Affaires at the Japanese Embassy in Baghdad the participation of Japanese firms in building Iraq's infra structure and its reconstruction scheme.

A statement issued on Thursday, Oct. 18, by Parliament's Media Bureau said that in their meeting the two discussed the projected draft Law of the Japanese Loan, Parliament intends to enact soon.

In their meeting, both sides affirmed the necessity to develop the relations between Iraq and Japan in all fields.

http://www.ninanews.com/english/News_Details.asp?ar95_VQ=GEEJJK

2. IRAN

- **EU ban on Iranian channels unjustifiable: Lawmaker**

A senior Iranian lawmaker has slammed the recent ban on the broadcast of several Iranian satellite channels in Europe as “unjustifiable”.



In a letter to French Ambassador to Tehran Bruno Foucher, Chairman of Majlis (parliament) National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, Alaeddin Boroujerdi said that the move was the clear violation of international law and regulations by a country which had a background of great civilization and culture.

“Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee strongly urges the French officials to take into consideration the necessity of respecting the principles of freedom and democracy and take immediate action aimed at revising this illogical decision,” the senior lawmaker added.

In a flagrant violation of the freedom of speech, French-based satellite provider Eutelsat SA ordered media services company Arqiva on Monday to stop the broadcast of several Iranian satellite channels including Press TV, al-Alam, Jam-e-Jam 1 and 2, Sahar 1 and 2, Islamic Republic of Iran News Network, Quran TV, and the Arabic-language al-Kawthar following an order by the European Commission.

The decision follows months of jamming of Iranian channels by European satellite companies.

This is while the European Union has denied claims by European satellite companies that it ordered the providers to take Iranian channels off the air saying that the companies have acted on their own accord.

Press TV has contacted the French media regulation authority, Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel (French Broadcasting Regulatory Body) (CSA) for comments regarding the ban. The CSA had said it would provide the network with a response but has so far failed to do so.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/19/267560/eu-ban-on-iran-channels-unjustifiable/>

- **EU wages media war on Tehran by banning channels: Iran embassy**

Iran's Embassy in Ankara has denounced the "unjustifiable and unprofessional" move to impose a ban on the broadcast of Iranian satellite channels in Europe, saying it is in line with the West's media war against the Islamic Republic.



"The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly condemns the decision by the European Union and certain Western companies to stop the satellite broadcast of Iran's TV and radio channels and regards the move in flagrant contradiction to the West's hollow claims about defending freedom of speech and freedom of press," said the embassy in a statement on Thursday.

It added that the ban imposed on Iranian channels exposes the West's dual attitude to freedom of information.

The ban on Iran's television and radio channels indicates the West's concern over the impact of Iranian media, it noted.

Certain Western countries always seek a media monopoly to impose their own views on the world public opinion. The ban on Iranian channels is in line with the soft and media war against the Islamic Republic to oblige the country to comply with the West's unfair and arrogant stance, the statement pointed out.

It emphasized that Iranian television and radio channels have acted in contradiction to the West's news monopoly and have always sought to express different and independent views and disclose the policies of the West and the Israeli regime.

European satellite provider Eutelsat SA has pulled plug on several Iranian satellite channels, including Press TV, al-Alam, Jam-e-Jam 1 and 2, Sahar 1 and 2, Islamic Republic of Iran News Network, Quran TV, and the Arabic-language al-Kawthar following an order by the European Commission.

The company ordered media services company, Arqiva, to take the Iranian satellite channels off one of its Hot Bird frequencies on Monday.

The decision follows months of jamming of Iranian channels by European satellite companies.

This is while the European Union (EU) has denied claims by European satellite companies that it ordered the providers to take Iranian channels off the air, saying that the companies have acted on their own accord.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/19/267527/eu-channels-ban-media-war-against-iran/>

- **Iran designing UAV with 2000-km range**

TEHRAN, Oct. 17 (MNA) -- Iran plans to unveil unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) with a range of 2000 kilometers in the next few years, according to the director of the Iran Aviation Industries Organization.

Manouchehr Manteqi made the remarks during an interview with the Persian service of the Fars News Agency, which was published on Wednesday.

“UAVs are categorized into three specific classes,” Manteqi said, noting that the first class comprises UAVs with a range of up to 200 kilometers and the second class comprises UAVs with

a range of 1000 to 1500 kilometers, which can operate at an altitude of 30,000 feet (9,144 meters) and are capable of flying nonstop for about 15 hours.

“The third class comprises UAVs that can fly at an altitude of up to 50,000 feet (about 15.24 kilometers), can fly nonstop for 20 to 24 hours, and have a range of up to 2000 kilometers,” he added.

“Naturally, when we develop capabilities in the first class, we can prove our capabilities in the second class as well, and then we enter the third class. We currently have some designs and achievements in the second and third classes,” Manteqi explained.

“We can unveil our achievements after various tests are conducted,” he said, adding, “Therefore, we may currently have a product, but it cannot be said that its manufacture has been completed because it is undergoing the testing process.”

Iran’s long-range UAVs will be unveiled in two or three years, Manteqi stated.

<http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1722710>

- **Iran proposes ceasefire in Syria on Eid al-Adha**

TEHRAN, Oct. 17 (MNA) – President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced on Wednesday that Iran has proposed that ceasefire be declared in Syria on Eid al-Adha in attempt to end bloodshed in the country.

Eid al-Adha is an Islamic holiday which starts on the 10th of Dhul Hijjah (October 26) and lasts several days.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran has proposed that ceasefire be declared on Eid al-Adha and none of the sides should break the ceasefire,” Ahmadinejad told a group of journalists in Kuwait where he had taken part in the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD).

Ahmadinejad said, "No government should also give support to each side so that the two sides resolve their problems through dialogue."

He also advised all countries to help resolve the Syrian crisis through dialogue.

<http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1722727>

- **Ahmadinejad Underlines Asia's Decisive Role in Deciding Future World Order**

TEHRAN (FNA)- Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad stressed the important and decisive role that the Asian countries can play to decide the future world order.

"Asia has been the main cradle for the human civilization and the existing national and material talents and resources in it are unique," Ahmadinejad said in a meeting with the editors in chief of Kuwaiti media.

"Asia is the largest continent of the world with the largest population, but the Asian Cooperation Dialogue gathering definitely does not limit its sphere of discussion to Asia, since the world issues are too intermingled with each other to yield to continental separation," he added.

Ahmadinejad reiterated, "The status quo of the materialist and capitalist world order, which is a continuation of the former slavery and colonialist system, has already faced defeat and failed to provide security, welfare, peace, and sustainable development for the mankind, having reach dead ends today, whose signs are seen in capitalist countries today."

The president reiterated, "The leaders of the capitalist system tried for many years to sow the seeds of discord among nations so that they would have the opportunity to loot the nations' wealth, but today they are at the end of their way."

Pointing out that the world is in need of a new, Just World Order, Ahmadinejad reiterated, "Definitely, the future world order would be based on the fundamentals and the value system that the Asian nations are committed to, including justice, friendship, respecting the human

beings, and equal status of the entire nations before the laws, which are the fundamentals that can solve the problems of the mankind and capable of establishing a more humane and sustainable New World Order."

The president said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran focuses on the ACD in line with harbinger reform in general world order."

Ahmadinejad was in Kuwait to attend the 1st summit of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD).

The two-day ACD summit opened in the Kuwaiti capital on Tuesday. Major Asian countries, including China, Japan, and India, as well as the members of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) attended the summit.

The ACD was formed in June 2002 in Cha-Am, Thailand, where 18 Asian Foreign Ministers met together for the first time. The ACD is a continent-wide forum, the first of its kind in Asia. More specifically, the ACD aims to constitute the missing link in Asia by incorporating every Asian country and building an Asian Community without duplicating other organizations or creating a bloc against others.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9107113492>

3. SYRIA

- **Syrian security forces kill dozens of insurgents in Homs**

The Syrian army has inflicted heavy losses on foreign-sponsored insurgents in the western city of Homs.



Syrian soldiers killed dozens of armed terrorists during an attack on a terrorist hideout in the al-Wae'r neighborhood of the conflict-stricken city, situated about 160 kilometers (99 miles) north of the capital Damascus, on Thursday, the official SANA news agency reported.

The soldiers also seized a wide variety of heavy and light weapons used by the insurgents.

Syrian troops also launched an attack against members of two armed groups in the Bab Houd neighborhood of Homs and killed dozens of insurgents in the fighting.

Syria has been experiencing unrest since March 2011 and many people, including large numbers of security forces, have been killed in the turmoil.

Damascus says outlaws, saboteurs, and armed terrorists are the driving factor behind the unrest and deadly violence, but 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 there are reports that a very large number of the armed militants are foreign nationals.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/19/267513/syrian-troops-kill-insurgents-in-homs/>

- **Foreign Ministry: Evidence of Foreign Countries' Involvement in Supporting Terrorist Groups Increased...**

Syria Hopes UNSC Take Serious Moves to Deter Terrorism

Foreign and Expatriates Ministry on Thursday addressed two identical letters to President of the Security Council and the UN General Secretary about that evidence on involvement of foreign countries, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey, in supporting and arming the terrorist groups in Syria has recently increased, not to mention their contribution to hindering dialogue and peaceful solutions and harming the Syrian state at material and humanitarian levels.

The Ministry said that supporting terrorism and arming the terrorists in Syria became overt that went so far as to urge others to get involved in this track which has been clear in the statements of officials in Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

In line with previous letters addressed by the Syrian Arab Republic to inform you about the terrorist attacks against the Syrian state in all its components backed by some regional and

international powers and countries, it would like to remind you that the continuity of terrorist attacks which claim the lives of many innocent military and civilians and destroy the infrastructure and the archeological and historical treasures on which the Syrian state spent a lot of material and human resources to strengthen its pillars and guarantee its existence.

It has been clear to all that those who are behind targeting Syria are the same countries which stress the importance of devising the appropriate international mechanisms to combat terrorism with all possible means, the Ministry added.

"Evidence on involvement of foreign countries, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey, in supporting and arming the terrorist groups in Syria has recently increased, not to mention their contribution to hindering dialogue and peaceful solutions and harming the Syrian state at material and humanitarian levels," It said.

The Ministry added that supporting terrorism and arming the terrorists in Syria became overt that went so far as to urge others to get involved in this track which has been clear in the statements of officials in Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

The Ministry said that these statements were proved to be true for the BBC reporter in Aleppo city who saw weapons shipments - owned by the Saudi army – diverted to the armed terrorist groups in the city, the piece of news was broadcast by the BBC on October 9th.

The Ministry added that French President Francois Hollande admitted in a statement to the French TV5Monde and France24 TV Channels on Thursday 11th October 2012 the existence of French terrorists in Syria among the ranks of the so-called free army, and the British Foreign Minister William Hague also admitted the intentions of some British extremists to join the fighting in Syria on October 10th, 2012.

The Ministry said that the Turkish government is responsible for harboring and training these terrorists on its territories to send them to Syria across its borders.

The Syrian Arab Republic would like to draw your attention to the statement made by the US Defense Minister, Leon Panetta in a press conference in Brussels on October 10th in this regard as he announced that the US is providing aid to the Syrian opposition, including non-lethal support, adding that he knew that there are countries in the region offering lethal aid but the US efforts aimed at working with the opposition with all possible means to improve its capabilities.

The Ministry added that it might be useful while reviewing the statement of the US Defense Minister to remind of what New York Times Newspaper published one day before his statement about that the Syrian opposition receives aid from the US and its allies to carry out terrorist attacks, indicating that one of the photographed reports depicted a war crime committed by an armed group called "Osod al-Tawhid" as its members deceived one of the war prisoners to carry out a suicide operation with a booby-trapped truck against a government headquarters.

The Ministry pointed out to the frequent news about the involvement of Qatar and Saudi Arabia in dispatching weapons to the Syrian opposition through the Turkish city of Adana, where U.S. Incirlik Air Base lies and this support depends completely on the U.S. agreement and aid. These shipments go to the very extremist groups which are provided with non-lethal aid as it also benefits the newspaper itself.

The Ministry considered that the most dangerous of which is regarding the confirmed information it has on the deal binding some parties of al-Qaeda and Turkish and Saudi parties, stipulating for transferring al-Qaeda fighters to Turkey and then to Syria. Many of these terrorists, the most of whom are from the Yemeni area of Abyan, are currently in Aleppo and Idlib, pointing out to many statements of European officials confirm that terrorist members are fighting now in Syria.

The Ministry stressed that as the Syrian Arab Republic draws world states' attention to the conclusive evidence about some Arab and foreign countries' support to terrorism in Syria, it would point out to the importance of getting out of this clear contradiction represented through some states' support to the international efforts for combating the global terrorism, while they are active in financially and logistically supporting the extremist takfiri groups in Syria.

The Ministry pointed out that Syria emphasizes that this contradiction also applies to some UNSC permanent states which joined the agreement of the Council on condemning the terrorist bombings that took place in Syria during the past months, yet they approve the support provided by Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey to the terrorists and present logistic and technical aid that leads to backing those who are carrying out terrorist operations.

The Ministry said that this contradiction must pose a legitimate query about the stances of some major and regional states in combating terrorism seriously after finding that investing it in a country like Syria a serviceable means to achieve slight political profits...Is it allowed to resort to political hypocrisy and double standards policy in dealing with this plague which caused destruction in different parts of the world?

Syria reiterated its call for the UNSC and its relevant committees to start an immediate investigation in the dangerous information, stressing that it will provide the data available to the UNSC committees specialized with combating terrorism.

At the conclusion of the two letters, Syria expressed hope that the UNSC would seriously move to deter the terrorists and dry up their funding and moral sources and place responsibility on world states regarding terrorism, stressing that the UNSC movement to address this issue would constitute a constructive contribution in boosting security and stability in Syria and the whole Middle East region, as well as maintaining the UN and its member states' credibility.

R. milhem / R. Raslan/ M. Ismael

<http://sana.sy/eng/21/2012/10/18/447815.htm>

- **Children reported killed in Syria air strike**

Syrian fighter jets have blasted Maaret al-Numan town killing at least 44, including 23 children, rescuers say.

Syrian fighter jets have blasted the rebel-held town of Maaret al-Numan, killing at least 44 people, including 23 children, rescue workers said.

Among those who died on Thursday died was a nine-month-old baby.

Rescuers said bombs destroyed two residential buildings and a mosque, where many women and children were taking refuge, in the strategic northwestern town, which was captured by rebels on October 9 in a push to create a buffer zone along the Turkish border.

"We have recovered 44 corpses from under the rubble," one worker told an AFP news agency correspondent at the scene.

In a makeshift field hospital, the correspondent saw at least 32 bodies wrapped in white sheets, including six children and many mutilated corpses, as well as plastic bags marked "body parts".

The correspondent said one child was decapitated while the body of a second, still on his bicycle, was pulled from the rubble.

"At the moment it seems only three people survived the attack, including a two-year-old child," said medic Jaffar Sharhoub.

"He survived in the arms of his dead father."

A resident who spoke to AFP on condition of anonymity said several of those killed had just returned to their homes.

"They thought the danger had passed."

Several fighter jets flew over Maaret al-Numan and the surrounding area throughout Thursday morning.

They made short dives to drop at least 10 bombs on the town and its eastern outskirts, near the besieged Wadi Deif army base which came under heavy bombardment by the rebels.

'Final assault'

In early evening, the rebels launched what they said was a "final assault" on the base, which is a key depot for tanks and fuel supplies.

Hundreds of fighters attacked the base, a frontline AFP correspondent reported. Three tanks were destroyed and at least six soldiers surrendered, rebel officers said.

The base is situated two kilometres from the Damascus-Aleppo highway, of which the rebels control a stretch of several kilometres. That is severely impairing the army's ability to resupply units under fire in the northern metropolis for the past three months.

In the capital, a suicide bomber on a motorcycle blew himself up just 300 metres from the interior ministry without causing any casualties, a security source said.

The bombing came on the eve of arrival of Lakhdar Brahimi, the UN-Arab League envoy, in Damascus to press his call for a ceasefire during the four-day Eid al-Adha Muslim holiday starting on October 26.

Speaking in neighbouring Jordan, Brahimi said he hoped that such a temporary ceasefire could form the basis for a longer lasting truce, warning that the alternative would be disastrous for the whole region.

"If the ceasefire is implemented, we can build on it and make it a real truce as well as the start of a political process that would help the Syrians solve their problems and rebuild their country," Brahimi said in Amman.

"If the Syrian crisis continues, it will not remain inside Syria. It will affect the entire region," he added.

Scepticism over truce

The Algerian diplomat's visit to Syria for talks with Foreign Minister Walid Muallem on Saturday will be his last stop on a tour of countries that play influential roles in the crisis - Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan.

The envoy will also meet with President Bashar al-Assad "very, very soon, but not on Saturday," Brahimi's spokesman, Ahmad Fawzi, told AFP.

Asked whether any optimism was warranted over the Damascus talks, foreign ministry spokesman Jihad Maqdisi said: "Let's see what Brahimi has to say."

Serious doubts have been raised about Brahimi's plan to halt the bloodshed, even temporarily.

"I don't know whether they will all agree at the higher level or not on the ceasefire proposal, but on the ground you have pro- and anti-regime forces that do not respond to any authority," said Rami Abdel Rahman of the UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Damascus said it is ready to discuss with Brahimi his proposal but wanted assurances that countries with influence on the rebels would pressure them to reciprocate.

The exiled opposition said it would welcome any ceasefire but insisted the ball is in the government's court to halt its daily bombardments.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/10/20121018225224351381.html>

- **Envoy urges Syrians to monitor Eid truce**

Lakhdar Brahimi, visiting Jordan, repeats call for ceasefire during Muslim holiday amid reports of blast in Damascus.

The joint UN-Arab League envoy for Syria, currently visiting Jordan, has reiterated his call for a truce, urging the Syrians to monitor the proposed ceasefire themselves.

Lakhdar Brahimi has been touring the region, attempting to shore up international support for a temporary ceasefire to be established during next week's Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha.

"The invitation to the ceasefire, if successful, will allow us to build upon a real truce, holding all fire, and eventually, a political process which will help the Syrians solve their problems and allow them to rebuild the Syria they dream of," Brahimi said after meeting Nasser Judeh, Jordan's foreign minister, on Thursday.

"People are asking me who is going to monitor the ceasefire? My answer to them is no one, I call upon the Syrians to monitor themselves."

- **UN rights chief Navi Pillay defends Brahimi's truce effort**

Speaking to Al Jazeera from Geneva, Switzerland, Navi Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, voiced support for Brahimi's attempt to broker a truce.

She also said war crimes appeared to have been committed by both sides in the 19-month long conflict.



"I have been looking at the facts found by the commission of inquiry," she said.

"They all point to war crimes being committed there, both by the government forces and the rebel forces, and I echo the call of the secretary-general, and now Mr Brahimi, for an immediate stop to the killings; a ceasefire."

Pillay said UN officials were still trying to verify whether or not forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad had used cluster munitions.

"I myself saw video footage of these cluster bombs," she said.

"They are illegal, and international law forbids the use of cluster bombs, particularly on the part of state authorities ... There would certainly be a very serious violation of international humanitarian law, because of how dangerous they are and how indiscriminately they can damage and kill people when they land on the ground and burst."

At least 44 people, including women and children, were killed on Thursday as fighter jets pounded the rebel-held town of Maaret al-Numan, said rescue workers.

They said bombs destroyed two residential buildings and a mosque in the strategic northwestern town, which was captured by rebel fighters on October 9 in a push to create a buffer zone along the Turkish border.

Rebels say they have launched a "final assault" on Wadi Deif army base in northwestern Syria - a key depot for tanks and fuel supplies.

Meanwhile, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said that at least 135 people were killed, including 53 civilians, in violence across the country during the day.

Refugee crisis

The conflict has claimed about 30,000 lives so far, according to the opposition. The UN says about 350,000 people have now fled the violence in Syria and entered the four countries bordering the war-torn nation.

Many more have been displaced within the country's borders.

Iraq has received more than 46,000 refugees, while about 96,000 have entered Lebanon.

More than 100,000 Syrians have sought refuge in Turkey, while nearly 106,000 are living in camps in Jordan, where a school has been set up for Syrian children in the al-Zaatari refugee camp.

Temporary classrooms are better than no classrooms, say the students, but conditions in the school, run by UNICEF, leave a lot to be desired.

"We're studying in tents in the middle of the desert just like the tents we live in," Asmaa, an eleventh-grade student from the city of Deraa, told Al Jazeera.

"Nothing has changed. We're suffocating here. The scorching heat is roasting us. The toilets are so vile you can't stand using them, and the tap water is boiling."

UNICEF's Simon Ingram says that conditions in the camp will soon improve, and has appealed to international donors to help the agency protect the children, especially as the bitter cold of winter will soon set in.

"It has to be said that things are not perfect ... but a lot has been done in a very short space of time," Ingram told Al Jazeera from Amman, Jordan.

"Just adjacent to that very site, construction is already well advanced on what will be prefabricated buildings to house even more children, as the needs of the camp rise faster than

ever - and that's been the other issue that we've had to contend with, along with our partners from the ministry of education."

Establishing the school inside the camp is a sign that Jordan is preparing for the Syrians to be here for a long time, though many of the 2,400 children enrolled want to return home, where facilities are better and textbooks are more plentiful.

On the ground, meanwhile, fighting continued in Syria, with reports of an explosion in Damascus near an office of the intelligence services.

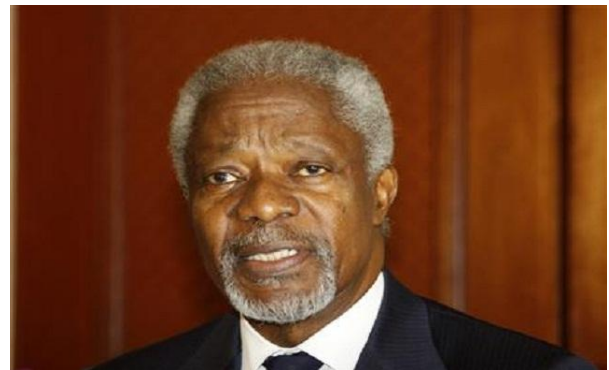
Syrian state television said a motorcycle bomb exploded in the Kafr Souseh neighbourhood, but that no one was injured.

The state-run news agency also said rebel fighters had blown up two oil and gas pipelines near the Iraqi border, while activist video posted on YouTube purported to show an attack on Maraath Horma, in Idlib province, where heavy shelling continues to be reported.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/10/2012101815112360179.html>

- **Iran would accept democratic Syria: Annan**

Former U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan said Thursday that Iran has told him it would accept the fall of Syrian ally Bashar al-Assad if the conflict-torn country holds elections.



Annan, who served until August as the U.N.-Arab League special envoy on Syria, renewed his call for a peaceful solution to the crisis and warned that foreign weapons were only fueling a conflict said to have claimed more than 34,000 lives.

Speaking on a visit to Washington, Annan said that he sensed support for a democratic solution in Syria when he visited Tehran in July and met with three top Iranian officials, including President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

“They all had the same message when I pushed them, that... we accept that Assad may have to go, but the Syrian people should be allowed to decide through elections, even if it's organized under U.N. authority,” Annan said.

“One choice phrase they gave me is that democracy is a solution, democracy is the answer in Syria,” Annan said at the Brookings Institution, a think tank.

Annan said the Iranian leaders did not limit calls for democracy to Syria but also made clear they would push for a similar path in Bahrain, a U.S.-allied monarchy that has put down protests against its Shiite majority.

Iran, which is led by Shiite clerics, is Assad’s main regional ally and has criticized Western and Arab pressure on his regime, led by the Alawite sect.

But Iran has denied U.S. charges that it has shipped arms to Syria.

The United States has said that it is only providing non-lethal support to Syria’s opposition but Sunni Arab powers Saudi Arabia and Qatar have been widely reported to have sent weapons to rebels.

Annan denounced arms shipments, saying that Syria was “almost into a sectarian war” that could spread beyond the region.

“I have said in the past that Syria, unlike Libya, will not implode but is likely to explode, and explode beyond its borders,” Annan said.

“Some governments have made the calculation that the fastest way to end the conflict in Syria is to arm one side or the other to have total victory over the other side,” he said.

“It’s not going to happen. They're only going to get more people killed,” he said.

Annan, who led the United Nations for an often turbulent 10 years starting in 1997, was visiting Washington as he promotes his memoir, “Interventions: A Life in War and Peace.”

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/19/244672.html>

- **Fighters say Syrian warplanes drop cluster bombs; Turkey calls for ceasefire**

Syrian regime warplanes have dropped cluster bombs in sorties against rebels in the northwestern town of Maaret al-Numan, the fighters told AFP on Friday.



The fighters showed an AFP correspondent in the battleground Idlib province town debris from one such cluster bomb and dozens of other bomblets that failed to explode on impact.

On Sunday, Human Rights Watch issued a statement accusing the Syrian air force of using cluster bombs against the rebels and in populated areas across the strife-torn country.

The Syrian army denied the allegations, saying it did not possess such weapons.

Turkey calls for complete ceasefire

On Friday, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu called for all sides involved in the conflict in Syria to observe a ceasefire during the Islamic Eid al-Adha festival next week.

U.N.-Arab League envoy Lakhdar Brahimi is expected in Damascus on Friday to try to broker a brief ceasefire in the war between President Bashar al-Assad and rebels.

Davutoglu says the Syrian government should take the first steps by halting attacks “immediately and without preconditions.”

Syria says it wants a cease-fire but the rebels lack a unified leadership that can agree to it.

Both sides have flouted previous cease-fires after verbally agreeing to them.

Meanwhile, Syria’s air force carried out raids on Friday morning against fighters besieging a major military base in the northwestern province of Idlib, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

“Military aircraft dropped bombs that targeted rebels camped near (the base at) Wadi Deif,” concentrating their firepower on the villages of Talmans and Maashemsha, said the Britain-based monitoring group.

The insurgents have launched what they call a “final assault” against the strategic military camp of Wadi Deif where about 250 soldiers have been holed up for days. The base also houses tanks and fuel.

The battle for the base has killed at least six soldiers, according to the Observatory, which said that the facility has been surrounded by around 2,500 rebel fighters.

To the west of the base, regime warplanes battered a residential area of the rebel-held town of Maaret al-Numan on Thursday, killing at least 49 people, almost half of them children, rescuers told an AFP correspondent at the scene.

The air strikes destroyed two housing complexes and a mosque, where many women and children had been taking refuge, in the strategic northwestern town. Among those killed was a nine-month-old baby.

All of the victims buried under the rubble of the residential buildings had been retrieved, but bodies were still under the rubble of the nearby mosque, according to the rescuers and hospital officials.

Violence across Syria killed 168 people on Thursday -- 70 civilians, 61 soldiers and 37 rebels, said the Observatory, which relies on a network of activists, medics and lawyers for its information.

It says more than 34,000 people have been killed in Syria since the outbreak of an uprising against Assad regime in March last year.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/19/244669.html>

- **Syrian opposition gets training for post-Assad phase**

Many members of the Syrian opposition feel that their revolution is neglected and that the international community, despite its support, has failed to fulfill its promises, amid mere talks of a buffer zone, weapons yet to be delivered and humanitarian aid yet to meet the people's demands.

Western diplomats respond by saying that western countries supporting the revolution are not convinced that supplying the opposition with moderate to heavy weaponry would help resolve the Syrian crisis politically.

U.S. ambassador to Syria, Robert Ford, said that U.S. humanitarian aid has exceeded \$130 million, with \$45 million allocated to training programs for opposition groups. He added that the Assad regime will collapse and the Syrians will have an opportunity to build a democratic society and that the U.S. is willing to help in preparing them for the next stage. Accordingly, it has arranged several rounds of training, focusing on three points: secure communication, first aid, and civil administration in areas of armed conflict.

Throughout the past months, around 300 young men and women from various cities and towns in Syria participated in the training program, in addition to several other organizations. An

organizer said that his institution does not receive direct funds, but is primarily responsible for selecting participants and ensure they are safely transported between various locations in the country. It is also responsible for transporting needed equipment such as cameras, broadcast devices, medical aid and other non-lethal arsenal.

Participants said the training program has been very beneficial but the equipment has been greatly insufficient despite the increase in medical aid which peaceful activists have been enduring its deficiency.

Mahmoud, a young man from Aleppo who chose not to reveal his real name said that the priority of the program during this period is to generate communication between the activists across the country.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/18/244532.html>

4. ISRAEL-PALESTINE

- **Four Israeli military aircraft skim Lebanon skies**

Israeli military aircraft have entered Lebanon's airspace and flown over areas of the country in blatant violation of a UN Security Council resolution.



Two Israeli warplanes crossed into the Lebanese airspace over the border village of Kfar Kila, located about 96 kilometers (59 miles) south of the capital Beirut, at 10:50 p.m. local time (1950 GMT) on Thursday, according to a statement issued by the Lebanese military.

The aircraft flew over several areas of Lebanon before they left the airspace at 12:25 p.m. local time (0925 GMT) while flying over the southern sector of the country.

On Wednesday, an Israeli unmanned aerial vehicle also violated Lebanon's airspace over the southern village of al-Naqoura, which is situated about 91 kilometers (57 miles) south of Beirut,

at 10:00 p.m. local time (1900 GMT) and made surveillance flights over several areas in southern Lebanon.

The remote-controlled aircraft left the airspace at 6:15 a.m. local time (0315 GMT) on Thursday while flying over al-Naqoura village.

Moreover, another Israeli drone entered Lebanon's airspace over the southern village of Rmeish at 9:00 a.m. local time (0600 GMT) on Wednesday and flew over several areas in southern Lebanon.

The aircraft left Lebanese airspace at 10:00 p.m. local time (1900 GMT) while flying over Rmeish village.

The Tel Aviv regime violates Lebanon's airspace on an almost daily basis, claiming the flights serve surveillance purposes.

Lebanon's government, the Hezbollah resistance movement, and the UN Interim Force in Lebanon, known as UNIFIL, have repeatedly condemned the overflights, saying they are in clear violation of UN Resolution 1701 and the country's sovereignty.

UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which brokered a ceasefire in the war of aggression Israel launched against Lebanon in 2006, calls on Israel to respect Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In 2009, Lebanon filed a complaint with the United Nations, presenting over 7,000 documents pertaining to Israeli violations of Lebanese territory.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/19/267510/israeli-regime-violates-lebanon-airspace/>

- **Explosive device damages army vehicle on Gaza border**

GAZA CITY (Ma'an) -- An explosive device damaged an Israeli military vehicle near the border in the central Gaza Strip on Friday morning, witnesses and the army said.



There was also damage to the border fence from the explosion, which took place east of Deir al-Balah, an Israeli military spokeswoman said.

Israeli forces opened fire towards al-Qarara village after the explosion. No injuries have been reported from the explosion or gunfire.

Also on Friday, Israeli gunboats fired at Palestinian fisherman off the northern shore of Gaza, without causing injuries.

An Israeli army spokeswoman said a Palestinian fishing boat had deviated from the designated fishing zone, and failed to respond to calls to return, so forces fired warning shots.

Under Israel's maritime blockade, Palestinians are forbidden from fishing more than three nautical miles from the coast.

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=530322>

- **Center-Left mulls candidates for race against PM**

Olmert and Livni are coordinating decision whether to run in coming elections, are expected to decide within days.

Politicians working on forming a new Center-Left party set Monday as the deadline to determine who should lead it and perhaps serve as the main opposition to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu in January 22's election.



Former prime minister Ehud Olmert will decide by then whether to make a political comeback. He met on Thursday with former IDF chief of staff Lt.-Gen. (res.) Gabi Ashkenazi, whom he would want to present as his candidate for defense minister.

Olmert is coordinating his decision with his successor as Kadima leader, former foreign minister Tzipi Livni, as well as former Kadima council chairman Haim Ramon.

Should Olmert not run, Livni is leaning toward running.

"I have not used the words 'no comment' very often, but this time I will," Livni said at Thursday's Hadassah Women's Zionist Organization convention in the capital when asked about her future.

Whether it is Olmert or Livni heading it, Ramon has said he would want the new party being formed to unite with Yair Lapid's Yesh Atid, but Lapid has repeatedly ruled out such a move.

"As I said a hundred times, I will not say anything about Olmert, because he is a family friend and my views are not objective," Lapid said. "I love the man and his wife and family, but we won't run together. Yesh Atid will run on its own."

While Olmert could run at the head of Kadima, if he decides against a political comeback, Kadima could split into parties led by Livni and current chairman Shaul Mofaz. In a speech to his party's council in Petah Tikva on Thursday night, Mofaz hinted that he could support Olmert and possibly even Livni.

“The media says there is no alternative to Netanyahu, but I totally disagree,” Mofaz said. “There are better, more suitable people than him: Olmert would be better than Netanyahu. Former Mossad chief Meir Dagan would be better than Netanyahu. Gabi Ashkenazi would be better than Netanyahu, and Livni would be better than Netanyahu.”

Mofaz started saying that he would be better than Netanyahu, but was interrupted by someone in the crowd who said it first. The sentiment met with raucous applause and a standing ovation from about 100 council members.

As for how to defeat Netanyahu, Mofaz said, “It won't be easy. We'll have to roll up our sleeves and work hard.”

He added that Kadima would kick off its election campaign on Sunday.

The atmosphere at Kadima headquarters was hopeful.

One council member cited predictions that the party would get fewer than 10 seats in the next Knesset, declaring, “Polls are lies!” Eight of the party's 28 MKs sat in the front row, and the few who spoke made sure to sound optimistic.

“We will form the next government,” Kadima faction chairwoman Dalia Itzik said.

“We will replace this bad government.”

Party MK Ronit Tirosh cheered from the stage, next to a dais where Mofaz and Itzik sat, “We will win!” Netanyahu was not the only target of the barbs at the meeting; the speakers did not hide their dislike of Labor chairwoman Shelly Yacimovich.

Moti Elfariach, a council member who founded Kadima’s Haifa branch, demanded, “What experience does Shelly have? She has a big mouth, but does anyone really think she can be prime minister?” Bat Yam Mayor Shlomo Lahiani referred to what he called Yacimovich’s “extreme socialism that will only increase social gaps.”

The council overwhelmingly approved a decision that Kadima’s MKs made on Sunday to cancel the party primary and establish a selection committee headed by Mofaz to choose the Knesset candidates list.

<http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=288467>

- **US and Israel to launch major military drill**

"Austere Challenge 2012", involving nearly 5,000 troops, will unfold later this month in show of unity aimed at Iran.

The United States and Israel are set to launch a major military exercise in a show of unity aimed at Iran, despite friction between American and Israeli leaders over how to counter Tehran's nuclear ambitions.



The air defence drills, dubbed "Austere Challenge 2012," will unfold later this month and last about three weeks, with 3,500 US troops and 1,000 Israeli forces taking part, officers said on Wednesday.

"This is the largest exercise in the history of the longstanding military relationship between the US and Israel," said Lieutenant General Craig Franklin, 3rd Air Force Commander, who is overseeing the drill along with his Israeli counterpart, Brigadier General Nitzan Nuriel.

"This exercise will improve the cooperative missile defence of Israel and will promote regional stability and help ensure a military edge," Franklin told reporters in a teleconference.

But the drill is about more than missile defenses.

The elaborate exercise takes place at a politically charged moment, amid speculation about a possible Israeli pre-emptive attack on Iran, a hotly contested US presidential election weeks away and parliamentary polls expected in Israel within a few months.

'Strong message'

The drill's "scenario is to deal with threats from all fronts", Nuriel, the Israeli commander, told the same phone conference.

"Anybody can get any type of message he wants from this exercise. The fact we are practicing together and working together is a strong message by itself."

In a report this year to congress, the Pentagon warned that Iran's missiles could hit Israel and Eastern European countries, including an extended-range version of the Shahab-3 and a medium-range ballistic missile with a range of 2,000km.

The missile threat, combined with the crisis over Iran's disputed nuclear program, prompted Israeli authorities in August to test a SMS public alert system designed to warn the population of an imminent attack.

In the works for two years, the joint exercise originally was scheduled for April but was postponed at Israel's request, without an official explanation.

'Red lines'

The drill highlights US-Israeli co-operation just as President Barack Obama seeks to deflect criticism from his Republican rival Mitt Romney, who has accused him of neglecting America's ally and rebuffing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Obama and Netanyahu disagree over the urgency of the perceived threat posed by Iran, with the US president favoring more time for diplomacy and international sanctions to rein in Tehran's uranium enrichment work.

Netanyahu has publicly aired his differences with the Obama administration over the Iran issue, scolding Washington for failing to set its own "red lines" that would trigger military action against Tehran.

The West believes Iran is secretly pursuing plans to develop a nuclear weapons capability, but Tehran insists its program is designed purely for peaceful purposes to generate electricity.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/10/201210188618383948.html>

5. AFRICA and EGYPT

- **Dozens descend on Tahrir for anti-Brotherhood protest**

Dozens began arriving in Tahrir Square Friday morning to protest against the Muslim Brotherhood.

Liberals, leftist and revolutionary figures are calling the day of protests "Egypt for all Egyptians."



Members of the Constitution Party have set up a stage in the square with a banner reading, “No to the hegemony of the Constituent Assembly.”

Other banners in the square read, “We want the constitution to be for all Egyptians,” and “From Tahrir we say ‘No’ to the constitution tailors.”

Ambulances have lined up at the entrances to the square in anticipation of any emergency events, but traffic has so far continued to flow smoothly in and out of the square.

The protesters’ demands include the dissolution of the Muslim Brotherhood-dominated Constituent Assembly, the rejection of the final draft of the new constitution, the establishment of a minimum and maximum wage, an end to high prices, the retrial of the acquitted killers of the martyrs of the revolution, the recovery of funds smuggled abroad by former regime officials, and the elimination of corruption in state institutions.

Seven marches are planned from different locations in the greater Cairo area to Tahrir Square throughout the day, in addition to demonstrations in several governorates where clashes that took place last Friday between leftist and Brotherhood forces during a day of protests criticizing President Mohamed Morsy’s first 100 days in office.

Participants in today’s marches call for an apology from the Muslim Brotherhood for last week’s clashes.

Thirty parties and political movements announced participation in today’s protests, including the Constitution Party, the Egyptian Social Democratic Party, the Popular Socialist Alliance, the Revolutionary Youth Union, the April 6 Youth Movement and the Kefaya Movement.

Amr Moussa and Hamdeen Sabbahi both stated that they would be marching today.

The National Association for Change announced participation as well, and called on participants not to respond to any provocation, so as to keep the protests peaceful.

The April 6 Youth Movement has called for a consensual constitution. The movement demanded an apology from the Muslim Brotherhood and called on Morsy to hold the group responsible for Friday 12 October clashes.

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/dozens-descend-tahrir-anti-brotherhood-protest>

- **Libyan army to head to Bani Walid after clashes**

Libya's army is heading towards the former Qaddafi stronghold of Bani Walid hoping to impose order in the town after deadly clashes there, the chief of staff said on Thursday.



At least 10 people were killed and dozens wounded as Libyan militias linked to the army shelled Bani Walid and faced counter-attacks on Wednesday.

Many of those in the militias were from the rival town of Misrata, which has been enraged by the death of rebel fighter Omran Shaban after two months in detention in Bani Walid. Shaban, from Misrata, was the man who found Muammar Gaddafi hiding in a drain pipe in Sirte on Oct. 20, 2011.

Libya's ruling national congress had ordered the defense and interior ministries to find those who abducted Shaban and were suspected of torturing him to death. It also gave Bani Walid a deadline to hand them over.

Elders have tried to negotiate a solution as militias have taken up position around the town, at times clashing with local fighters. Leaders hope the army will be able to enter Bani Walid peacefully, following an agreement brokered with locals allowing their arrival.

“The (army) force is ready to enter Bani Walid and we expect this force will enter peacefully,” army chief of staff Yusef al-Mangoush told reporters. “The army is going to take control of the security situation.”

There had been talk congress president Mohammed Magarief would also head to Bani Walid to facilitate the army's entry but a congress spokesman said the visit had been cancelled.

A spokesman for Bani Walid's fighters said the town was still being shelled, raising questions as to how the military would enter. “Shops are closed, there is shortage of food, fuel,” Colonel Salem al-Wa'er said.

Tensions between Misrata and Bani Walid underscore the challenge Libya's new rulers face in reconciling groups with long-running grievances.

While Misrata spent weeks under siege by Gaddafi forces in last year's war, Bani Walid, 140 km (90 miles) away, was one of those that remained loyal to Gaddafi longest. The town of around 70,000 remains isolated from the rest of Libya and former rebels say it still harbors pockets of support for the old government.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/18/244575.html>

- **Secular politician killed in southern Tunisia clashes**

Clashes between Islamists and secular opponents in the southern Tunisian town of Tataouine on Thursday left a secular politician dead, a local official and resident said.



The violence broke out during a march organized by a group of Islamists close to the Ennahda party, which leads Tunisia's Islamist government. Protesters chanted slogans against the secular

Nida Touns party, accusing it of being close to ousted leader Zine ElAbidine Ben Ali, a resident said.

The Islamist group, the Association for the Protection of the Revolution, was passing the building of the local Agricultural Union which is headed by the local representative of Nida Touns, when the clashes began.

“The coordinator of Nida Touns in Tataouine, Lofi Nakd, was killed after he was attacked,” Nida Touns official Khemais Ksila told Reuters by phone. A resident who gave his name as Samil Smida said knives and stones were used in the violence.

“The clashes broke out between Islamists and some people from Nida Touns,” he said. “The Islamists were chanting slogans against Nida Touns, calling them liars, telling them to leave. Those inside reacted, throwing stones and it all began.”

The state-run TAP news agency said nine people were injured.

A leader of the secular al-Joumhouri party, Iyed Dahmhani, called on the interior minister to resign after the events.

Tunisia, where an uprising against secular strongman Ben Ali was the first of last year’s “Arab Spring” revolts, is now ruled by an Islamist-led government that has promised not to impose strict religious rules and to respect women's rights.

Liberals say Islamist policies threaten human rights in a country once seen as a beacon of Arab secularism.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/18/244572.html>

- **New Egypt envoy says his new Islamist government wants peace with Israel**

Egypt's new ambassador to Israel formally assumed his post Wednesday, saying his country's new Islamist government remains committed to peace with the Jewish state.



Israel and Egypt signed a historic peace agreement in 1979 that has since been the bedrock of relations between the countries, but ties have grown tense since longtime Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak -- a steadfast supporter of the treaty -- was ousted in a popular uprising last year and Islamist Mohammed Mursi was elected his successor in June.

Presenting his credentials Wednesday, Ambassador Atef Salem al-Ahl told Israeli President Shimon Peres that Egypt is "committed to all the agreements we signed with Israel and we are also committed to the peace treaty with Israel."

Jordan's new ambassador to Israel, Walid Obeidat, also on Wednesday officially took up his post, which had been vacant for two years despite diplomatic relations between the countries since 1994.

Egypt and Jordan are the only two Arab countries to have peace treaties with Israel. The agreements are widely unpopular in both Arab countries because of Israel's policies towards the Palestinians. A large part of the Jordanian population is of Palestinian origin.

Egypt's new president, who hails from the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood, has been cooler toward Israel than Mubarak's autocratic regime was. But the Brotherhood repeatedly has said it will abide by the peace accord but has called for changes in the limits on troop numbers in the Sinai Peninsula, saying they impinge on Egyptian sovereignty.

The ties have been further strained by the deteriorating security situation in Sinai, where there has been a sharp increase in militant attacks on targets both in Egypt and across the border in

Israel. The Jewish state has allowed Egypt to temporarily strengthen its forces in the Sinai to fight Islamist militants, but has opposed formalizing any changes to the treaty.

Tensions were further exacerbated last year when Egyptian protesters ransacked offices of the Israeli Embassy in Cairo, dumping Hebrew-language documents out of a window and trapping six Israeli staff inside for several hours. The protests were in response to the killing of six Egyptian police officers near the border by Israeli forces, who were chasing militants who killed eight Israelis in a cross-border attack.

Another complication came last week when the Muslim Brotherhood's supreme leader, Mohammed Badie, called on Muslims worldwide to defend Jerusalem, saying "Zionists only know the way of force." He said that Jews were spreading "corruption" and had slaughtered Muslims and desecrated holy sites. Mursi made no public comments about Badie's remarks.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/18/244543.html>

6. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Hezbollah can't hide crimes in Syria:
Hariri**

BEIRUT: Former Prime Minister Saad Hariri accused Hezbollah Thursday of fighting alongside Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces against rebels, saying the party can no longer hide its "crimes" in Syria.



The head of the Future Movement also strongly denied Hezbollah's charges that his party was involved in the 19-month-old bloody conflict in Syria.

"The Lebanese – Shiites, Sunnis and Christians – know very well, even from the mouths of Hezbollah leaders, the nature of [the party's] involvement in what it alleged to be 'a jihadi duty' alongside the regime of killings, repression, crackdown and subjugation facing the Syrian people," Hariri said in a statement released by his media office.

“There is no longer anything that can help to cover up this clear crime committed by Hezbollah first against Lebanon then Syria, especially as it is fully aware that the days of its ally in Damascus are numbered,” he added.

Hariri was apparently responding to Hezbollah’s deputy leader Sheikh Naim Qassem, who has accused the Future Movement of intervening in the Syrian conflict by sending money and arms to anti-regime rebels fighting to oust the Assad regime.

The accusation has been denied by Future MPs.

Hariri also rejected accusations by Hezbollah MPs and several media outlets that Future MP Oqab Saqr was involved in the Syrian conflict by aiding Syrian opposition groups. “MP Oqab Saqr has been assigned by [former] Prime Minister Saad Hariri to follow up the situation in Syria and coordinate with Syrian opposition political parties, concerning the Future Movement’s media and political support for the Syrian people in facing the killing machine directed by the criminal Syrian regime and its regional allies,” the statement said. It added that Saqr, who has been living out of Lebanon for more than a year, was tasked with ensuring humanitarian assistance to the victims of the war in Syria, including the wounded, the homeless and the orphans.

Saqr was also tasked with making contacts with Turkish authorities as part of efforts to secure the release of Lebanese held in Syria, in addition to helping some Lebanese journalists there, the statement said.

It lashed out at the Lebanese government’s dissociation policy on Syria.

“It is up to the Lebanese people to judge the Lebanese government that has distanced itself from the blood of the Syrian people after it was formed by Hezbollah, which controls its decision-making,” the statement said.

It added that while the government has adhered to a dissociation policy, “Hezbollah has upheld the jihad duty against the Syrian people.”

Syrian opposition forces have repeatedly accused Hezbollah of supporting the regime forces in their crackdown against rebels. According to rebels, members of Hezbollah have died in Syria’s clashes before being returned to Lebanon for burial. The party, however, has denied such accusations.

Meanwhile, U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said that Hezbollah’s launching of a reconnaissance drone into Israel’s airspace was a violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701 that could lead to threatening Lebanon’s stability.

In a report on the implementation of Resolution 1559 on Lebanon, Ban said Hezbollah’s alleged involvement in the Syrian conflict threatened Lebanon’s stability. He also voiced his concerns over the repercussions of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon, praising the stances of Sleiman and Prime Minister Najib Mikati with regard to the government’s dissociation policy on Syria.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Politics/2012/Oct-19/191972-hezbollah-cant-hide-crimes-in-syria-hariri.ashx#axzz29k3BrXGC>

- **Ban Ki-moon says Hezbollah drone launch ‘reckless’ and threatens Lebanon stability**

U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon is calling Hezbollah’s drone launch into Israeli airspace a “reckless provocation.”

In a report given Thursday to the Security Council, Ban also criticized Israel. He said its use of drones and fighter jets in Lebanese territory violates Lebanon’s sovereignty.



The U.N. chief said he has told Lebanon’s leaders that militias like Hezbollah pose serious risks “to the stability of the country and the region.” He called on Hezbollah to disarm, according to The Associated Press.

Ban said the drone launched by Hezbollah earlier this month was “a reckless provocation that could lead to a dangerous escalation threatening Lebanon’s stability.” Israeli forces intercepted the drone.

In 2004, the Security Council passed Resolution 1559 which called for the removal of foreign forces from Lebanon, the disarmament of non-government militias, and the holding of free elections.

Ban singled out Hezbollah for its noncompliance with the resolution, calling its militia “the most significant and most heavily armed Lebanese militia in the country, reaching almost the capacities of a regular army.”

Ban also condemned Hezbollah’s insistence upon upgrading its military capabilities for “defensive purposes against Israel,” as “blatant defiance of resolution 1559.”

Lebanon has been destabilized by Syria’s civil war, with cross-border clashes and shelling, arms smuggling, and assassination attempts, Ban said. He added that he was concerned about reports of Hezbollah's activities in Syria.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/18/244592.html>

- **Moroccan King visits Syrian refugee camp in Jordan**

Moroccan King Mohammed VI on Thursday toured a field hospital treating Syrian refugees in northern Jordan -- the first Arab head of state to visit the desert compound.



On the second day of his trip to Jordan, where he held talks with King Abdullah II, Mohammed VI inspected a Moroccan field hospital in the Zaatari camp, which houses around 36,000 Syrian refugees.

“Long live Morocco,” chanted a group of refugees as they greeted Mohammed VI, who shook hands with some of them before ending his 20-minute tour amid tight security, according to AFP.

After his 20-vehicle motorcade left the camp, around 100 Syrians gathered, chanting: “The people want to arm the Free Syrian Army, regime forces are traitors.”

Earlier in Amman, Mohammed VI and King Abdullah II discussed the Syrian crisis, a palace statement said.

“King Abdullah warned against the dangerous repercussions for the entire region,” it added.

He called on “the international community to keep helping Jordan to provide services for more than 200,000 Syrian refugees in the kingdom.”

Jordan has said it was planning to set up a new refugee camp west of the capital Amman if the influx of Syrians fleeing to the kingdom keeps growing.

Syria’s uprising, which began in March 2011, has killed more than 33,000 people, according to activists. The violence has displaced more than one million Syrians inside the country, and also triggered an exodus of people from the country.

Figures released by the U.N. humanitarian office last week indicate more than 340,000 people have fled across Syria's borders, mainly seeking refuge in neighboring nations. The largest number -- more than 100,000 -- have found refuge in Jordan. OCHA expects the total number of Syrian refugees to reach 710,000 by the end of the year.

King Mohammed VI began a tour of Gulf Arab states Tuesday, as the north African nation struggles with a financing crunch and what the IMF projects may be its second-biggest budget deficit in at least six years.

The monarch's four-nation tour includes Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. The trip comes a year after Morocco signed an accord with the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) that provides \$5 billion in funding over five years for development projects.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/18/244557.html>

7. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Car bomb attack on Yemeni army base kills 21**

At least 21 people have been killed in a car bomb attack at a military base in southern Yemen.

The bombing was carried out in the coastal town of Shuqra in Abyan province on Friday.



A Yemeni military official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said suspected al-Qaeda militants first attacked the base with a car rigged with explosives. Moments later, more militants attacked the base from the sea and intense clashes broke out.

Ten Yemeni soldiers and 11 al-Qaeda militants were killed in the battle. Another 15 government troops were also injured in the fighting.

Over the past months, al-Qaeda has expanded its presence in Yemen and carried out a spate of deadly attacks against Yemeni security forces.

In May, the Yemeni military launched an all-out offensive and retook a string of towns in Abyan, where al-Qaeda loyalists had established themselves.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/19/267531/21-killed-in-yemen-army-base-attack/>

- **US drone kills al-Qaeda suspects in Yemen**

Bombing near southern city of Jaar kills seven suspects, including the group's local leader, according to officials.

A drone strike near the southern Yemeni city of Jaar has killed at least seven al-Qaeda suspects, including a local leader, according to local officials.



"A drone, likely American, fired several rockets at a group of al-Qaeda members northwest of Jaar, killing all of them," one official told the AFP news agency on Thursday.

The United States is the only country that operates drones in the region.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said "several bodies" had been identified, including one belonging to Nader al-Shadadi, al-Qaeda's leader in Jaar, a city in Abyan province.

According to the official, al-Qaeda fighters have been trying to position themselves near Yemen's main southern cities to carry out operations against the army and the Popular Resistance Committees, local pro-army militias.

Witnesses said, meanwhile, that hundreds of Jaar's residents, both men and women, gathered in front of the headquarters of the Resistance Committees in the city and fired into the air to celebrate Shadadi's death.

'Great harm'

One resident told the AFP that Shadadi, a Jaar resident himself, "had brought great harm to our city and he is responsible for all the devastation and the war" in the area.

In May, the army launched an all-out offensive against al-Qaeda in Abyan, forcing them to retreat from major strongholds including Jaar and Abyan's capital Zinjibar. The campaign was backed by US drones which in recent months have been deployed in strikes against al-Qaeda targets in the south and east of the country.

Thursday's strike was the second such drone attack this month.

On October 4, a drone blasted two cars carrying suspected al-Qaeda gunmen in the southern province of Shabwa, killing five of them.

The group took advantage of the weakness of Yemen's central government in an uprising last year against now ousted president Ali Abdullah Saleh, seizing large swathes of territory across the south. But after the month-long offensive, most fighters fled to the more lawless desert regions of the east.

Though weakened, the fighters still launch hit-and-run attacks on government and civilian targets throughout the country.

They are also increasingly targeting members of the local militias that fought to remove them from towns and cities in the south.

On Tuesday, al-Qaeda fighters, one of them a suicide bomber, killed six members of the Resistance Committees and wounded eight others in an attack on a checkpoint in the country's south.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/10/20121018104026858472.html>

- **Qaeda car bombing kills nine Yemeni soldiers: military**

Al-Qaeda militants set off an explosives-laden car inside an army base in southern Yemen at dawn on Friday, killing at least nine soldiers, military officials said.



The militants drove through several checkpoints before entering the base of the Yemeni army's 115th brigade in Abyan province, where a drone raid killed at least seven Al-Qaeda members the day before, one official told AFP.

“Four members of Al-Qaeda with explosive belts... travelling in a military vehicle managed to pass through several army checkpoints to reach the camp” at Shaqra, 35 kilometers (22 miles) from the Abyan capital Zinjibar, another said.

“Two soldiers were killed at the entrance of the base by the assailants who then continued their journey to the camp where three of the four occupants got out of their vehicle, while the driver blew himself up, killing seven soldiers,” said the official.

The army killed two of the militants who got out of the vehicle, while the other assailant managed to escape on foot, according to the officials, who added that a search was launched.

The attack came 24 hours after rockets fired from a drone near the southern city of Jaar killed at least seven suspected members of the terror network, including a local leader, an official in the restive region said.

Officials say Al-Qaeda militants have been trying to position themselves near Yemen's main southern cities to carry out operations against the army and the Popular Resistance Committees, local pro-army militias.

In May, the army launched an all out offensive against Al-Qaeda in Abyan province, forcing them to retreat from major strongholds including Jaar and Abyan's capital Zinjibar.

The campaign was backed by U.S. drones which in recent months have been deployed in strikes against Al-Qaeda targets in the south and east of the country.

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But after the month-long offensive, most militants fled to the more lawless desert regions of the east.

Though weakened, the militants still launch hit-and-run attacks on government and civilian targets throughout the country.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/19/244665.html>

8. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN – INDIA

- **India's CCS clears Rs 8,000 crore missile purchase for Armed Forces**

New Delhi, Oct 19, IRNA -- Proposals worth over Rs 8,000 crore for procuring around 10,000 'Invar' missiles from Russia for the Army's T-90 tanks and over 200 air-launched versions of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles for the IAF were cleared on Thursday by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS).

The decision for purchasing these missiles for the two services was taken at the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) held under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

The IAF proposal worth over Rs 6,000 crore to buy BrahMos missiles for the IAF involves sanctioning of funds for the integration and testing of the BrahMos missile on Russian-origin Su-30MKI of the IAF, pti reported quoting sources as saying.

As per plans, the first test of the air-launched version of the supersonic cruise missile, developed jointly by India and Russia, is to be conducted by December-end.

Two Su-30MKI of the IAF would also be modified by the HAL at its Nashik facility where they will also be integrated with the aerial launcher developed by the BrahMos.

The BrahMos missiles integrated on the Su-30s will help the IAF achieve the capability to deliver a deadly blow to enemy formations from stand-off ranges of around 300 km without getting close to them.

Under the proposal to procure Invar missiles for the T-90 tank fleet of the Army, 10,000 Invar missiles would be brought from Russian manufacturers and there will be an agreement for license-producing 15,000 missiles by the Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) under Transfer of Technology (ToT).



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AND INDEPENDENT THOUGHT PRODUCTION

In a letter to the Prime Minister in March, former Army Chief Gen V K Singh had pointed out that only 3-4 days of tank ammunition was left with some of the units while highlighting the shortages faced by his force.

Invar is a weapon fired from the gun barrel of T-90, over 1,600 of which would be inducted into the Armed Forces in the next few years.

<http://old.irna.ir/News/Politic/India%E2%80%99s-CCS-clears-Rs-8,000-crore-missile-purchase-for-Armed-Forces/80377119>

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 Eastern countries. The views expressed are not those of ORSAM and their inclusion does not imply factual accuracy.*

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