



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

The Restructuring Procees of Iraq

Irak'ın Yeniden Yapılanma Süreci

Energy Security

Enerji Güvenliđi

Economy News

Ekonomi Haberleri

Peace Process

Barış Süreci

Ethnic and Secterian Groups

Etnik ve Mezhepsel Gruplar

Non State Actors

Devlet-dış Aktörler

Relations with the West

Batı'yla İlişkiler



ORSAM

ORTADOĞU STRATEJİK ARAŞTIRMALAR MERKEZİ
CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STRATEGIC STUDIES
مركز الشرق الأوسط للدراسات الاستراتيجية

STRATEJİK BİLGİ YÖNETİMİ
ÖZGÜR DÜŞÜNCE ÜRETİMİ

STRATEGIC INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
AND INDEPENDENT THOUGHT PRODUCTION

MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN
30 OCTOBER 2012
NO: 1479

1. IRAQ.....	2
• Baghdad area hit by more deadly Eid attacks	2
2. IRAN	3
• Leftwing Euro MPs cancel Iran visit.....	3
• Iran able to defend Gulf, ensure its security: Ahmadinejad	6
• Iran offers to help Libya rebuild economy	7
3. SYRIA.....	8
• Blasts rock Damascus amid 'heaviest raids'	8
• Syrian forces kill al-Qaeda leader near Deir al-Zour.....	11
• Foreign Ministry: Some Countries' Disruption of Issuing UNSC Statements Condemning Terrorism in Syria Can Only Be Interpreted as Support for Terrorism.....	12
4. ISRAEL-PALESTINE	14
• Likud approves merger with Yisrael Beitenu.....	14
• African migrants 'denied entry' to Israel	17
• Dozens protest pending closure of BGU department	18
• Ministry: Israel cancels visits to Gaza prisoners	21
5. AFRICA and EGYPT	22
• Egypt's court to hear Mursi's mental health case: report	22
• Egyptians who vote for draft constitution will go to 'hell': Salafi leader	23
6. JORDAN and LEBANON.....	25
• Fierce fighting persists between rival groups in Tripoli	25
7. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA.....	26
• Bahrain policeman dies from protest injuries	26
• Bahraini forces attack protesters near Manama.....	27
• Yemenis rally to slam US assassination drone attacks	28

1. IRAQ

- **Baghdad area hit by more deadly Eid attacks**

Car bomb kills 13 Shia Muslims in north Baghdad hours after twin bombs leave two dead in market outside capital.

Bombings in and around Baghdad have killed at least 15 people, just a day after a wave of attacks during the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha resulted in Iraq's highest death toll this month.



The latest violence on Sunday targeted Shia Muslims, much like the shootings and bombings a day earlier, with the spate of attacks shattering a relative calm despite announcements by authorities that they would boost security during the four-day Eid break which began on Friday.

On Sunday evening, a car bomb exploded in the mostly Shia Muslim district of Kabhumiyyah in northern Baghdad, killing 13 people and wounding 28 as they were outside celebrating Eid, officials said.

Earlier on Sunday, twin bombings near a market southeast of Baghdad also killed at least two people and wounded five others.

Police officials say the simultaneous attacks on Sunday morning took place in Mada'in, located about 20km southeast of the capital, as shoppers started to arrive.

Medics in a nearby hospital confirmed the casualties. All officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to talk to the media.

The blasts followed a string of attacks across the country that killed nearly 40 people and wounded almost 100. Saturday was the deadliest day in nearly six weeks.

The explosions come just a day after a wave of attacks during the Islamic festival of Eid al-Adha resulting in Iraq's highest death toll this month.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/10/2012102812224233980.html>

2. IRAN

- **Leftwing Euro MPs cancel Iran visit**

Delegates nix planned trip after officials in Tehran reject request to meet with two Sakharov Prize winners.

A planned visit to Iran by five European MPs has been called off just before their scheduled departure.



The change in plans was announced on Saturday after Tehran said it would refuse to let them meet a jailed activist lawyer and a filmmaker, just a day after the two were awarded a prestigious European human rights prize.

Iran claimed that the delegation, made up of leftwing and ecologist MEPs, had only itself to blame for placing preconditions on the delegation's visit.

"The five MEPs were about to leave for Tehran when delegation chair [Tarja] Cronberg received a phone call from the Iranian ambassador to the EU, saying they would not be allowed to meet with the two Sakharov Prize winners," jailed lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh and filmmaker Jafar Panahi, a European Parliament source said.

Cronberg was told that it was "impossible to guarantee" a meeting "in so short a time", a statement from the parliament said.

"[She] cancelled the delegation visit, which was considered an opportunity to reopen the dialogue with Iranian parliamentarians and the country's civil society," it added.

Sotoudeh, 47, who is serving an 11-year jail sentence for conspiring against state security, and Panahi, 52, who is under house arrest and has been banned from making films for 20 years, were awarded the 2012 Sakharov Prize on Friday.

'Rejected a precondition'

Kazem Jalali, a prominent lawmaker and head of Iranian parliament's relations with the European Parliament was quoted as saying on the Iranian assembly's website: "Unfortunately, the European Parliament, by putting forward irrational and unusual requests, created obstacles for the trip."

He said it was "neither acceptable nor rational to link the trip to the pretext of awarding prizes to those who have been convicted in a legal court as means for political propaganda."

The European Parliament's "unwise move" led to the cancellation of the delegation's visit to Tehran and it was the parliament that was "responsible for its repercussions", Kazali added.

The ISNA news agency quoted Hossein Sheikholeslam, international affairs adviser to the speaker of parliament, as saying that Iran had "rejected a precondition set by the European parliamentary delegation to meet with two prisoners".

The Young Journalists Club, an affiliate of the state broadcaster, reported similarly on its website: "The Islamic Republic of Iran categorically rejected any pre-conditions. Therefore this visit has been cancelled."

'Shameful' plan for visit

Iran has cracked down on both Sotoudeh and Panahi since the disputed June 2009 presidential election.

Sotoudeh is a leading human rights campaigner known for her work as a lawyer representing opposition activists, while Panahi has been acclaimed at international festivals for his gritty, socially critical movies.

The human rights and democracy prize "is a message of solidarity and recognition to a woman and a man who have not been bowed by fear and intimidation and who have decided to put the fate of their country before their own," Parliament President Martin Schulz said Friday.

Schulz had also warned that the visit would be cancelled if the delegation was unable to meet Sotoudeh and Panahi.

The visit had already aroused controversy inside the parliament, with some MEPs feeling it would be exploited by the Iranian regime.

The leader of the British conservatives had condemned the plan as "shameful" and said it would be used as a "propaganda gift".

The rights award comes on the heels of tough new European Union sanctions against Iran aimed at forcing a breakthrough in talks between global powers and Tehran on its disputed nuclear programme.

After a biting oil embargo took effect in July, EU foreign ministers last week tightened the economic noose by targeting dealings with Iran's banks, shipping and gas imports.

The last visit by a European parliamentary delegation to Iran was in 2007.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/10/2012102832649733817.html>

- **Iran able to defend Gulf, ensure its security: Ahmadinejad**

Iran has the ability and the power to provide security and ensure stability for the Gulf region, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Monday, as the Islamic Republic continues its militarization efforts.



“The Islamic republic of Iran can provide the security for this region through its regional capabilities,” said Ahmadinejad during a ceremony to honor Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari and several other navy officials in Bandar Abbas on Monday.

“This region has enjoyed complete security in all times where there has not been any foreign intervention,” Ahmadinejad said.

“Iran has been the provider of security in the region,” he added, responding to U.S. and regional accusations to Tehran that its nuclear program and involvement in Syria and Lebanon was destabilizing to regional security.

“The security of the Gulf has only been altered in the past when there was foreign intervention,” he said. “However, no foreign [power] will succeed regardless of their motives” he added.

His statements come amid rising tensions between Iran and Israel and speculations of a possible war between the two countries.

Israel have recently said that it is prepared, alone, if necessary, to send warplanes, to destroy Iranian nuclear sites. Iran says it can defend itself and accused Israel of standing behind the bombing of a weapon factory in Sudan.

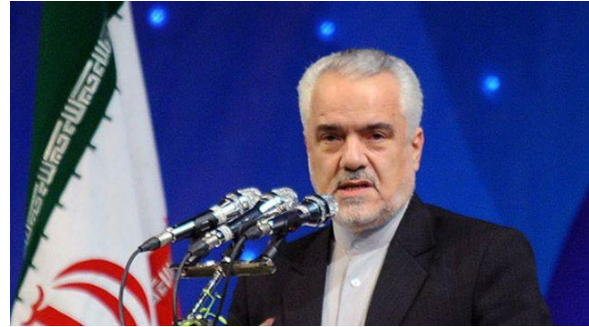
“The Iranian people have never been an aggressor but at the same time history has proven that they can defend themselves very well. If anyone wants to attack the unity of Iran we will deter them,” Ahmadinejad said

Sources close to the Iranian military told Al Arabiya that the country will “soon” announce “an important marine achievement which would enhance its deterrence powers.” No further details were provided.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/30/246591.html?PHPSESSID=4b1mv43rl2idk803b21offt831>

- **Iran offers to help Libya rebuild economy**

The Iranian First Vice President Mohammad-Reza Rahimi has declared the readiness of the Islamic Republic to help Libya rebuild its economic infrastructure.



In a message on Monday, Rahimi congratulated Ali Zidan on his election as the Libyan prime minister and announced Tehran’s readiness to transfer its experiences to the North African country.

Rahimi further expressed hope that a new era of political life and national sovereignty would begin in Libya.

On Sunday, Libyan General National Congress (GNC) elected Zidan, one of the long-time opponents of slain dictator Muammar Gaddafi, as the country's new prime minister.

Zidan’s election came a week after the GNC dismissed Mustafa Abushagur as premier following the rejection of his second proposed cabinet line-up to form a “crisis government.”

Libyans rose up against Gaddafi in February 2011 and deposed him in August 2011. He ruled for more than four decades without a legislature.

The country's first peaceful transition of power in decades took place in an official ceremony in Tripoli on August 8 when the assembly took over from Libya's National Transitional Council almost a year after the revolution that toppled Gaddafi.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/30/269483/iran-offers-to-help-libya-rebuild-economy/>

3. SYRIA

- **Blasts rock Damascus amid 'heaviest raids'**

Two deadly blasts hit the Syrian capital, as activists say warplanes launched 60 airstrikes across the country.

Explosions rocked the capital Damascus, as witnesses said that warplanes launched their heaviest air raids yet across Syria.

A blast struck on Monday near a bakery in Jaramana, a southeastern district of Damascus controlled by forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad, killing at least 11 people, including children and women, and injuring scores, according to both activists and state news agency SANA.

A second explosion was reported in al-Hajar al-Aswad neighbourhood.

Activists there said an airstrike by government forces struck a bus and left at least 10 people killed. Meanwhile state TV said it was a "terrorist" car bomb that left an unspecified number of victims.

Lena al-Shami, an activist in Damascus, said: "The regime is trying to cover up the massacre it caused by the shelling on the bus. So they are calling it a car bomb."

Al-Hajar al-Aswad was the scene of intense mid-summer combat between rebels and the army when fighting broke out in several districts of the Syrian capital.

Activists said that warplanes launched 60 airstrikes on Monday, the most intense air raids across the country since the uprising began 19 months ago. The suburbs of the capital Damascus were particularly hard hit.

The violence brought a bloody end to a failed attempt at a four-day ceasefire, during which 500 people were reported dead. At least 80 people were killed on Monday alone, activists said.

'Terribly sorry'

Lakhdar Brahimi, appointed by the Arab League and United Nations as envoy to Syria, had sought to get both the rebels and Assad troops to halt their fighting over the Muslim Eid al-Adha holiday. Instead, government jets and artillery bombarded opposition neighbourhoods and rebels launched attacks on military checkpoints.

Speaking in Moscow alongside Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Brahimi said he was "terribly sorry" that the ceasefire had failed and that the conflict was getting even worse.

He said the UN "is not considering" sending an armed peacekeeping force to Syria, though relevant officials were conducting contingency planning in case the UN Security Council ordered such a mission. That is highly unlikely, with Russia and China - two Council members - opposing any kind of international intervention.

The Syrian army warned late Sunday night that it will strike "remnants of terrorists with an iron fist" after they "repeatedly violated the cease-fire." The regime of Assad often refers to those waging the uprising as "terrorists".

Brahimi's ceasefire was violated almost as soon as it was agreed, and both rebels and government troops initiated firefights since the three-day holiday began at sunset on October 25. He is also due to visit China.

Explosions, mortar attacks and gunfire have been heard throughout Aleppo, the country's second-largest city, where neighbourhoods have been reduced to rubble as a result of the months-long struggle there.

In the northwestern Idlib province, the attacks killed at least 16 people on Sunday, including seven children and five women, an activist group said.

"The ceasefire is practically over. Damascus has been under brutal air raids since day one and hundreds of people have been arrested," Fawaz Tello, an opposition campaigner, told the Reuters news agency.

State news agency SANA said "armed terrorist groups" attacked checkpoints and planted explosive devices in several cities during the Eid holiday.

Journalist 'under arrest'

Rebels have also kidnapped a Lebanese journalist operating in the contested north of the country for making reports the fighters deemed unhelpful to their cause.

In a video released on Sunday, Fida Itani said he was in good health but being held under house arrest by the "Northern Storm Brigade".

The rebel group's Facebook page said Itani's work was "not compatible with the revolution" and that he would be held for "a short time".

A group of Syrian activists and intellectuals condemned the arrest of Itani, saying such the accusation "brings back to memory the pretext the Syrian regime used to detain and torture thousands of Syrians".

The opposition claims at least 32,000 people have been killed since the uprising began in March last year. Hundreds of thousands of people have fled to neighbouring countries.

As winter approaches, life will get worse for displaced families inside Syria and refugees filling up temporary camps in border areas in Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon. Valerie Amos, the UN's chief humanitarian relief officer, has said that up to three million Syrians have been affected by the crisis.

In a statement released last week, she called on all parties to stop targeting civilians and said "ordinary women, men and children ... suffer from the indiscriminate use of explosive weapons like cluster munitions".

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/10/201210297331240439.html>

- **Syrian forces kill al-Qaeda leader near Deir al-Zour**

Syrian security forces have killed a local al-Qaeda leader and scores of foreign-sponsored insurgents during heavy clashes near the eastern city of Deir al-Zour, Press TV reports.



The Syrian army carried out a mop-up operation on the outskirts of the city, situated about 420 kilometers (262 miles) northeast of the capital Damascus on Sunday and engaged a group of armed men.

Ammar Nawar al-Hajr, an al-Qaeda leader and insurgent commander, was shot dead along with a number of his comrades in the battle.

Meanwhile, Syrian forces repulsed insurgent attacks on army checkpoints in the suburbs of Damascus. Several insurgents were killed and many more injured in the exchange of fire between gunmen and the Syrian army.

Syria has been experiencing unrest since March 2011.

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 insurgents are foreign nationals.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/29/269327/alqaeda-leader-slain-in-east-syria/>

- **Foreign Ministry: Some Countries' Disruption of Issuing UNSC Statements Condemning Terrorism in Syria Can Only Be Interpreted as Support for Terrorism**

In two identical letters directed to the Chairman of the UN Security Council and UN Secretary General, the Syrian Foreign and Expatriates Ministry on Monday stressed that the failure of the UN Security Council to condemn the bombing which took place in Daf al-Shouk neighborhood has encouraged terrorists to continue committing crimes against the Syrian people.

In the two letters which the Ministry demanded by issued as official Security Council and UN General Assembly documents under counter-terrorism articles, the Ministry said that on Monday October 29, 2012, a car bomb explosion shook a neighborhood in the town of Jarmana south of Damascus, resulting in the death of 11 citizens and injuring over 20, in addition to causing grave material damage to building to surrounding buildings and shops.

The letters said that this bombing took place in a town where Syrian Muslims and Christians of various sects coexist, and that it is one of the devastating bombings that took place in Syria during Eid al-Adha holiday, noting that the Syrian government announced its commitment to the cessation of military operations during this holiday, pointing out that the failure of the UN Security Council to condemn the bombing which took place in Daf al-Shouk neighborhood has encouraged terrorists to continue committing crimes against the Syrian people.

The Foreign and Expatriates Ministry went on to say that the US and some European and western countries disrupted the issuing Security Council statements that condemn the bloody terrorism claiming dozens of lives of women, children and the elderly in Syria, with the last such incident being when the UK, a permanent UNSC member, objected to issuing a statement condemning the bombing carried out by terrorist elements in Daf al-Shouk, a neighborhood in Damascus, which claimed the lives of many martyrs and wounded many others, in addition to destroying tens of houses.

The Ministry said that the disruption of such procedures by countries that claim to combat international terrorism cannot be interpreted as anything other than practical support for terrorism and terrorists, noting that the US, France, Germany and Britain take turns among themselves to disrupt these procedures every time terrorists commit their crimes in Syria under blatant excuses and allegations that clearly indicate the existence of an agenda targeting the Syrian people, their achievements and their civilization, as well as constituting blatant proof of detestable double standards.

The letters said that leader of Al Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri, called upon his followers who are active in Syria to escalate their criminal massacres, in addition to demanding his followers in the Islamic world to go to Syria to participate in Jihad, noting that these statements were made in his televised message broadcast on October 25, 2012.

The Ministry said that the terrorist acts in Daf al-Shouk and the ones targeting Syrian churches, mosques and clergy men are an implantation of al-Zawahiri's instructions, wondering where the UNSC stands on these crimes and why some of its members protect their perpetrators.

The letters said that terrorist organizations, following instructions from their leaders in Riyadh, Doha, Ankara, Istanbul, Paris and other capitals, assassinated Father Fadi Haddad, the pastor of Mar Elias Greek Orthodox Church in Qatana, and detonated a car bomb in front of the Syriac Church in Deir Ezzor, and before that they committed a barbaric terrorist attack on the Umayyad Mosque in Aleppo which caused severe material damage to it, not to mention the terrorist groups' attacks on the first day of Eid al-Adha holiday on a water pumping station in Aleppo,

which damaged five pumps and cut drinking water from all the occupants of the western part of the city.

The Ministry said that all these crimes and others took place when Syrian law-enforcement forces committed accurately to the cessation of operations and didn't respond to many attacks committed by terrorist groups across Syria, adding that Syria updated the UNSC Chairman and UN Secretary-General on daily basis on the violations of the ceasefire in Eid al-Adha committed by armed terrorist groups.

The letters noted that as part of the honest efforts to restore security and tranquility across Syria, President Bashar al-Assad issued a general amnesty on October 23, 2012, which is the most comprehensive in Syria's history and benefits thousands of Syrians who were involved in recent events and were released to celebrate Eid al-Adha with their families and friends.

The Foreign Ministry concluded the letters by beseeching the UNSC member states, particularly those who combat terrorism without double standards, as well as all the UN member countries, to condemn terrorism whose perpetrators and their protectors and financiers are seeking to destroy and fragment Syria and eliminate the unity of its people and territories and its civilized and humane role.

<http://sana.sy/eng/21/2012/10/30/449712.htm>

4. ISRAEL-PALESTINE

- **Likud approves merger with Yisrael Beitenu**

Israel's ruling party approves electoral pact with ultranationalist Yisrael Beitenu in bid to garner votes in 2013 poll.

Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's ruling Likud party has



approved an electoral pact with the ultranationalist Yisrael Beitenu.

Opinion polls predict that Monday's move will help the prime minister win elections in January.

Netanyahu had angered many Likud party faithful with his surprise announcement last week of the merger with Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman's party.

Some of Likud's 3,700-member ruling body tried to stall the vote by petitioning for a secret ballot, but the alliance won a quick show of hands after Netanyahu pledged in a speech that the move would "not change Likud" or supplant its leadership.

"I've got news for you, I intend to lead Israel for many years to come," he said to loud applause in a packed Tel Aviv auditorium.

Some in Likud had objected to the merger with Lieberman's faction, citing Yisrael Beitenu's widely-criticised legislative moves questioning the loyalty of Palestinian-Israelis and calls to investigate foreign funding of organisations, a move seen as targeting liberals.

Others worried that the deal, which divides up parliament seats between the parties, could rob them of re-election.

But many in Likud seemed swayed by opinion polls suggesting the new alliance would easily triumph in the January 22 national vote.

Summing up his own decision to back the union, Silvan Shalom, the vice prime minister, said on Israel Radio ahead of the vote: "It's true they didn't consult with us as they should, but now that the train has left the station, the risk of cancelling the deal is greater. The prime minister made a decision and it should be accepted."

Netanyahu ahead

Three surveys published on Sunday and Monday showed Netanyahu's new bloc winning 35 to 43 seats in the 120-member parliament, well ahead of 20 to 23 for left-of-centre Labour, and a dozen to 15 seats for other centrist parties.

The only challenger seen as possibly threatening Netanyahu's lead was ex-prime minister Ehud Olmert, former leader of the centrist Kadima party, who has not yet said whether he will run since his acquittal on most of the corruption charges that forced his 2008 resignation.

A poll published on Monday in the Maariv newspaper showed Olmert winning just 10 parliament seats to 42 for Netanyahu's Likud-Beitenu bloc.

The gap was narrower when Olmert's support was combined with that of other centrists such as former TV news anchor Yair Lapid, running as head of a separate party.

Some pundits see a possible comeback by former foreign minister Tzipi Livni as a potential wild card in the race. Livni quit parliament in March after losing a party leadership race in Kadima to Shaul Mofaz, a former general.

Livni and other centrists have been holding talks with Labour party leader Shelly Yachimovitch on the possibility of forging a broader ticket against Netanyahu.

But most polls predict right-wing and religious parties more closely allied with Netanyahu will win a solid majority in the election.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/10/2012102917587136347.html>

- **African migrants 'denied entry' to Israel**

Human rights groups criticise Israel for the treatment of migrants trying to enter the country from Egypt.

Israel has turned away dozens of African asylum-seekers, mostly Eritreans trying enter the country from Egypt, human rights groups have said.



Human Rights Watch (HRW) and two Israeli NGOs said that "since June, Israeli forces patrolling Israel's newly constructed border fence with Egypt's Sinai region have denied entry to dozens of Africans, mostly Eritreans".

The numbers of rejected asylum seekers from Africa has increased at the Egypt-Israel Sinai border since Israel started the construction of a 250km fence running the length of its border with Egypt. The fence is due for completion by year-end.

A report written by HRW, the Hotline for Migrant Workers and Physicians for Human Rights published on Sunday said Israeli soldiers allegedly denied food and water to migrants, beat them with fists and guns and pushed them across the Israel-Egypt border with long metal poles.

'Infiltration problem'

The report was published just as Interior Minister Eli Yishai wrote a letter calling on Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and the justice ministry to allow for the resumption of arrests of African migrants in Israel.

Yishai, who only mentioned Sudanese migrants in the letter and not Eritreans, who make up the majority of the migrants in Israel, said, "as you know, the problem of infiltration to Israel is one of

the most difficult and complicated problems which Israel has dealt with since the founding of the state, a problem which threatens our identity, character, and future".

It is estimated that more than 60,000 Africans are living in Israel illegally, most of them in run-down neighbourhoods of southern Tel Aviv.

Most are Sudanese and Eritreans who entered from Egypt's Sinai Peninsula.

Rising tensions over the growing number of illegal immigrants exploded in May when a protest in south Tel Aviv turned ugly, with demonstrators smashing African-run shops and property, chanting "Blacks out!"

According to the rights groups' report, the current Israeli policy "is forcing asylum seekers and refugees to remain in Egypt and in deporting others, Israel is putting them at risk of prolonged detention in Egyptian prisons and police stations where they cannot claim asylum."

They also face "forcible return to Eritrea, and serious abuse by traffickers in the Sinai region."

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/10/201210296818369667.html>

- **Dozens protest pending closure of BGU department**

Demonstrators gather in J'lem as council readies to review its decision to shut down Negev school's "left-wing" political program.



Dozens of students and political leaders gathered outside the Council for Higher Education (CHE) in Jerusalem on Tuesday in a demonstration against attempts to close Ben-Gurion University's political science department. The future of the department could be decided later in the day when the council meets to reconsider last month's decision to shut down the program.

"This is political persecution, a witch hunt that is the result of ongoing incitement from extremist right-wing organizations," said Meretz MK Nitzan Horowitz, who attended the protest. "It is particularly shameful that the government is supporting the suppression of academic freedom. This is the first time since the establishment of the State that they are closing a university department - a testimony to the ill will of the current government."

The CHE had come to the decision to close the department after the program had been criticized by the Zionist organization Im Tirzu for being "unbalanced" and teaching only left-wing political approaches. Im Tirtzu had specifically pointed fingers at members of the department's faculty for their political opinions and activities, which it says affects their teaching.

Horowitz also expressed support for the department directly, calling it "exemplary," and touting its "many achievements."

Haim Yaacobi, head of the political science department, told The Jerusalem Post last week that he did not believe the CHE would go through with closing the program, an opinion that most of his staff and faculty share. He explained that he does not think the government could close an academic department over "political interests."

"Closing a department because of political reasons is a very, very dangerous thing to do," he said.

Ben-Gurion University's Prof. Israel David of the industrial engineering and management department, and Prof. Dan Censor of the electrical and computer engineering department have openly criticized the department and its administration over the past month.

Censor published a letter on the Internet over the weekend where he wrote that the new faculty that the department had brought in on the CHE's first suggestions were just "more of the same" and that because of this, no other, more appropriate faculty will want to join the department, according to him.

“In my opinion, it follows that the department must be closed down, and persons transferred to other departments, according to their areas of activity,” he wrote.

“What I don’t want to happen is for the CHE to drag their feet, and maybe say that they’ll close it next year or leave the issue hanging,” David said. “That would be the worst.”

Ronen Shoval, the head of Im Tirtzu, explained he is waiting for the decision in the hope that “the CHE does its job as academic investigator and does not surrender to the campaign of fear and threats that BGU is conducting.”

Shoval further explained that in his opinion, since the department did not make the changes that the CHE demanded at first, he sees no option other than to shut down the program.

“I think it’s very important to have a political science program at BGU just like there is one at every respected university. However, the university refused every opportunity to a solution, lied to the CHE, and tried to trick and manipulate it,” he said.

“At this moment, it needs to close down and be reopened later, when it is ready to incorporate pluralism and academic freedom into its curriculum,” Shoval added.

He also said that he holds Rivka Carmi, the president of Ben-Gurion University, responsible for “tarnishing the name of the institution.”

“She needs to go home. She’s the president, she’s responsible for not taking the CHE seriously. She basically has just been laughing in its face,” he said.

Carmi told the Post she hopes the meeting will result in a solution that both sides agree to, “where the issue of closing the department is off the table for good.”

“Closing the department is not an option. If something like that happens, then this will mark the end of academic freedom and democracy in Israel and will be detrimental to the status of Israeli academia, and Israel in general, in the world,” she said.

Current students of the program are gathering today outside the CHE’s offices in Jerusalem to show their support for Ben-Gurion University.

The department’s administration had told the Post last week that if the decision to close the political science program is not canceled, the university is prepared to take legal action against the CHE.

<http://www.ipost.com/NationalNews/Article.aspx?id=289785>

- **Ministry: Israel cancels visits to Gaza prisoners**

Israel has canceled family visits for prisoners from Gaza, three months after they were resumed, the PA Ministry of Detainee Affairs said Monday.



In July, Israel allowed the first visits to prisoners from Gaza in five years. Visits had been banned since 2007 to pressure Hamas to release Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, who was freed in Oct. 2011.

Israel agreed to resume family visits for Gaza prisoners as part of a deal to end a mass month-long hunger strike in Israeli jails. At the time, Minister of Detainee Affairs Issa Qaraqe said visits were resuming on an "experimental basis."

On Monday, the ministry said visits to the 444 prisoners from Gaza had been canceled as the "trial period" had ended.

The ministry said in a statement that Israel had not fulfilled its commitments in the deal to end the hunger strike.

The visits allowed since July had been limited, the ministry said, adding that children had not been allowed to visit their jailed relatives and visitors were not allowed to bring personal items to prisoners.

A prisoner representative in Nafha jail, Alaa Abu Jazer, denounced Israel's decision to cancel family visits and described the move as "provocative."

Since 2007, the International Committee of the Red Cross had called for the resumption of family visits and it welcomed the first visits in July.

"This is a first step and we hope that visits by residents of Gaza will resume in full," said Juan Pedro Schaerer, the head of the local ICRC delegation, in July.

"We have repeatedly called for the resumption of family visits, which are a lifeline for detainees and their families. Under international humanitarian law, Israeli authorities have an obligation to allow the detainees to receive family visits."

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=532462>

5. AFRICA and EGYPT

- **Egypt's court to hear Mursi's mental health case: report**

A lawsuit demanding verification of President Mohammed Mursi's mental health will be heard by a Cairo court on Tuesday, an Egyptian daily reported.



Egypt's State Council Administrative Court will hear the case, filed by lawyer Hatem Fathi Farhat, who demanded that Mursi undergo a medical examination to determine if the medications he takes affect his mental state, Egypt's Independent reported.

Privately owned al-Fajr newspaper reported on June 13 that Mursi had undergone surgery to remove a brain tumor in 2008 and has suffered from epileptic seizures ever since.

The report was denied by Mursi's campaign at the time, then later it stated that the tumor was located in the membrane lining of Mursi's skull, not in the brain, and the surgery revealed it to be benign, the newspaper report said.

Farhat mentioned in the lawsuit that in order for Mursi to serve as president, he must keep a vigilant state of mind and protect his reputation.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/30/246669.html?PHPSESSID=4b1mv43rl2idk803b21offt831>

- **Egyptians who vote for draft constitution will go to 'hell:' Salafi leader**

Egyptians who vote for a draft constitution that does not establish "shariah rulings" as the country's main jurisprudence will go "to hell," a Salafi political leader has said.



Adel Afifi, the founder and president of Al-Asala political party, wrote on his Facebook account: "Support God and reject the constitution." He added that those who will accept the draft constitution will be "apostates," "committing a sin" and "casting themselves into hell."

The approval of a constitution that "rebuffs God's law is prohibited and is a clear sin," Afifi added, according to Egypt's news website Masrawy.com.

The draft constitution leaves unchanged Article 2 of the 1971 constitution stating, "Islam is the religion of the State, Arabic is its official language and the principles of Islamic Shariah form the main source of legislation."

Salafis and Islamic hardliners demand that the expression “the principles of Islamic shariah” be replaced by “rulings of shariah.”

Salafis in Egypt are planning a protest in Tahrir Square on Friday to “support Sharia” and to call for a constitution in which its “articles do not violate God’s law.” The Muslim Brotherhood movement said it will not take part in the protest.

The phrasing of Article 2 ignited debates over the role of religion in the country’s affairs and those in charge of interpreting it.

The current draft seems unsatisfying not only to ultra conservatives Salafis, but for secularists and human rights activists too, as it is accused of seeking to place limits on religious freedoms and women’s rights.

The constitution panel members have said they are expected to finish writing the draft charter as early as next month. The new constitution then will have to be put to a public referendum within 30 days.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/30/246592.html?PHPSESSID=4b1mv43rl2idk803b21offt831>

6. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Fierce fighting persists between rival groups in Tripoli**

The conflict between two Lebanese rival groups in the northern Lebanese port city of Tripoli rages on unabated, Press TV reports.

Tripoli's two rivaling districts of Jabal Mohsen and pro-Saudi Arabian Bab al Tabbaneh are separated based on their opposition or support for the Syrian government.

Meanwhile, the intensification of the fighting between Syrian army forces and foreign-backed insurgents inside volatile Syria fans the flames of unrest between the two groups in Tripoli.

Lebanese spectators, however, believe that the ongoing conflict between the two rivals is in the best interest of March 14th alliance and the party tries to create rift between the fighting groups in order to implement its own political agendas.

The high level of unemployment in the country and the impoverishment of northern Lebanon has played in to the hands of certain parties to mobilize the people.

Following last week bomb attack in the country's capital Beirut, which targeted Lebanese security intelligence Bureau chief Wissam al Hassan, resident's of Jabal Mohsen and Bab el Tabbaneh engaged in conflict, leaving 11 people killed and 20 more injured.

Although the violence in Tripoli is linked to the current crisis in Syria, some people in the city blame the Lebanese government for the continuation of the fighting.

Tripoli has been the scene of such clashes between the two groups over the past months. Several people have been killed and injured in the clashes and the fighting has forced residents to leave the volatile neighborhoods.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/30/269481/tripoli-rival-groups-continue-clashes/>

7. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Bahrain policeman dies from protest injuries**

After suffering burns in April "terrorist act", officer passes away in hospital abroad one week following another death.

A Bahraini policeman has died from burns sustained in an April incident authorities described as a "terrorist act", the state news agency BNA said.



BNA quoted a police director late on Thursday as saying the officer had died of "serious burns sustained as a result of a terrorist incident in the area of Karzakan on April 22, 2012".

It said the man died abroad, where he was undergoing treatment, but gave no further details.

On October 19, a 19-year-old policeman also died from injuries sustained when a home-made bomb exploded during clashes with protesters in the Shia village of Akar.

Authorities say two policemen have been killed this month alone.

Thirty-five people were killed in an uprising against the minority Sunni-led government, led by the country's Shia Muslim majority early in 2011, including five security personnel.

The opposition says more than 45 other people have died in political violence since martial law ended in June 2011, a figure disputed by the government.

According to the International Federation for Human Rights, a total of 80 people have been killed in Bahrain since the violence began. More than 1,500 policemen have also been wounded.

Regular unrest and demonstrations have shaken Bahrain since it crushed popular protests last year, and the kingdom has come under strong criticism from international rights groups over the deadly crackdown.

Shia complain of discrimination in the electoral system, jobs, housing and education and say they are mistreated by government departments, the police and the army.

Bahrain is a base for the US Fifth Fleet, which patrols oil shipping lanes in the Gulf region.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/10/2012102721925178759.html>

- **Bahraini forces attack protesters near Manama**

Saudi-backed Bahraini forces have attacked anti-regime protesters near the capital, Manama as demonstrations against the Al Khalifa regime continue across the troubled state.



The security forces used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse the protesters on Monday.

Clashes broke out after angry protesters spilled out into the streets, showing solidarity with political prisoners Bahraini security forces and demanding their immediate release.

Anti-regime demonstrations continue in Bahrain despite a heavy-handed crackdown backed by Saudi Arabia.

Bahraini protesters have been holding the demonstrations since February 2011 and they hold King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa responsible for the death of demonstrators during the uprising.

The Bahraini government promptly launched a brutal crackdown on the peaceful protests and called in Saudi-led Arab forces from neighboring Persian Gulf states to help crack down on the demonstrations.

The protesters say they will continue holding street demonstrations until their demand for the establishment of a democratically elected government is met.

The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) has stated that the Manama regime has failed to make good on a promise to implement political reforms in the country.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/30/269490/bahraini-forces-attack-protesters/>

- **Yemenis rally to slam US assassination drone attacks**

People have taken to the streets in Yemen's northern Sa'ada Province to denounce the US assassination drone attacks in their country.



The Yemeni demonstrators on Sunday called on their government to sever its ties with Washington.

The protesters chanted anti-US slogans, condemning the most recent drone attacks which killed three people in Wadi al-Abu Jabara, in the province of Sa'ada earlier in the day.

“The US crime in Wadi al-Abu Jabara is a prelude to American strikes in new areas encouraged by the silence, and complicity of the so-called reconciliation government,” one of the protesters said.

The three victims were killed after a US drone hit three separate targets in Wadi al-Abu Jabara, some 250 kilometers north of Sa'ada.

After the attacks, people of Sa'ada released several statements denouncing the presence of US unmanned planes which have been flying over their country in recent weeks.

Earlier in the week, rockets fired from a US drone killed at least seven people near the southern Yemeni city of Jaar in Abyan Province.

Washington uses its assassination drones in countries including Yemen, Pakistan, etc., claiming that they target the terrorists while the attacks have mostly led to massive civilian casualties.

The United Nations has censured the US drone attacks as targeted killings, stressing that they flout international law.

According to a recent report by Yemen's National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms, over 300 people have been killed in the US drone attacks carried out in the southern regions of the country since the beginning of the year.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/30/269460/yemenis-protest-us-drone-attacks/>

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.*

Bu bülten **ORSAM Ortadoğu Uzman Yardımcısı Sercan DOĞAN tarafından hazırlanmaktadır. Bülten Ortadoğu ülkelerinin yerel haber kaynaklarından derlenmektedir. Belirtilen görüşler bölge ülkelerinin haber kaynaklarına ve ismi geçen yazarlara ait olup ORSAM'ın görüşünü yansıtmamaktadır.*