



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

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1. IRAQ

- **Syrian conflict looms over Iraq PM's visit to Russia**

Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki heads to Moscow on Monday to boost defense and trade ties, but events in Syria loom large over talks between two states criticized over their support for Damascus.



Maliki's visit, his first to Russia in three and a half years, comes with Baghdad and Moscow accused of helping prop up embattled President Bashar al-Assad during a 19-month uprising which has left more than 31,000 dead.

The two countries have persistently called for a political solution to the conflict, and have avoided explicitly pushing for Assad to give up power as Western and Arab powers have argued for.

"The stance of Iraq calls for finding a political solution to the Syrian crisis, and it is opposed to violence ... for solving the

crisis," Maliki said in a recent television interview, according to AFP.

"Iraq has not intervened in Syria on behalf of the regime's interests, or for the interests of the armed opposition," he continued.

Iraq has pushed its own proposals for ending the conflict by calling for an end to violence by all parties, the holding of new elections and the formation of a transitional government in Syria, with which it shares a 600-kilometre (375-mile) border.

Inspection of Syria-bound Iranian planes
Iraq started asking Syria-bound Iranian planes to land in Baghdad for inspections last week, after promising Washington it would carry out random searches to stop arms getting through to Damascus.

Authorities said they had made their first inspection of an Iranian aircraft on Tuesday afternoon and let it fly on to Syria after finding no weapons, according to Reuters.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari had promised the searches in response to U.S.

concerns Tehran is shipping arms to its ally Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to help him fight an 18-month-old revolt.

Iraq has said it would never allow any arms to pass through its airspace to either side in the conflict.

Moscow, meanwhile, has used its veto power within the U.N. Security Council to block resolutions condemning the Syrian regime's use of force.

"Syria will be on the negotiating table during the PM's visit, they will discuss a way to solve the current conflict there," said Ali al-Haidari, a Baghdad-based security analyst.

"The international community has a problem when it comes to the Syrian opposition, which is made up of a mixture of al-Qaeda and the civilian and liberal opposition," Haidari added. "The question is, who do we deal with? And how?"

Moscow's investments in Iraq
Besides Syria, Maliki will also be keen to solicit Moscow's investment in Iraq's fast-growing energy sector, where Russian energy giants Lukoil and Gazprom are

already major players, and to boost defense ties in a bid to help improve Baghdad's fledgling security forces.

In an interview with state-controlled English-language network Russia Today, Maliki said he would discuss "military cooperation, and efforts to address the equipment needs of the Iraqi army" during his visit.

"Our efforts are focused on anti-air equipment, and equipment related to fighting terror," he added.

Iraq's security forces are regarded by officials as largely capable of maintaining internal order, with violence dramatically lower than during the peak of the country's bloody sectarian war, though regular bombings and shootings still leave hundreds dead every month.

Baghdad's forces are, however, widely seen as unable to secure the country's borders or airspace after U.S. forces withdrew from Iraq at the end of last year.

Iraq currently relies on Washington for the bulk of its security purchases, totaling around \$12 billion in acquisitions of tanks,

helicopters and the planned delivery of F-16 fighter jets.

Russia has pushed for stronger defense ties with Iraq, with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov calling for greater collaboration in security relations during a May 2011 visit to Baghdad.

Maliki's spokesman Ali Mussawi said that the premier would also broach "investment, energy and oil" with his Russian hosts.

Russian energy giants Lukoil and Gazprom have made major investments in Iraq's energy sector, with the former holding exploration and extraction contracts in the south and the latter leading a consortium of companies working at an eastern oil field.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/08/242457.html?PHPSESSID=07lmmt06kcg9qn8p19s3shr3g4>

- **Turkish jets pound PKK targets in northern Iraq**

Turkish warplanes have pounded suspected PKK positions in northern Iraq, a few days after Baghdad announced it

intends to end Ankara's military presence in the country.



According to sources in Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region, the Turkish cross-border strike on Saturday caused no casualties, but inflicted damage on the farmlands of Sidkan region, north of Arbil.

A member of Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) confirmed the attack, saying Turkish jets pounded several targets in the Qandil Mountains of northern Iraq but no PKK members or Turkish civilians were killed in the airstrike.

On Tuesday, Iraq's cabinet called for the abrogation of treaties permitting foreign forces in the country with the aim of ending Turkey's military presence in the north.

Since the 1990s, Turkey has maintained several military bases in autonomous Kurdistan region of north Iraq, where the Kurdistan Workers' Party which has been fighting for an autonomous Kurdish region

inside Turkey since the 1980s, also has bases.

One of Turkey's military bases is located in Bamerni region of Dohuk province, one of the three provinces that make up Iraq's Kurdistan region. Turkey has also three permanent military bases in Kani Massi, Dera Luk and Sirsi, where it deploys troops year-round.

The Ankara-PKK conflict has left over 45,000 people dead.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/07/265447/turkey-pounds-pkk-targets-inside-iraq/>

2. IRAN

- **Iran imposes currency cap to boost rial**

Most money changers refuse to comply with government's demand for a fixed dollar rate to reverse currency collapse.



Iran has imposed a fixed dollar rate in a bid to reverse a collapse of its currency, days after protests erupted over the rial's plunge on the open market.

The order on Saturday came as ordinary Iranians struggled with growing economic problems that caused a big jump in daily prices.

Iranian news agencies reported that the government's new foreign exchange centre, used by importers of some basic goods, was selling US dollars at a rate of 25,970 rials.

"We received an order from the Money Changers' Association [under the control of the Central Bank] telling us to buy the dollar at 25,000 rials and sell at 26,000," one exchange bureau employee told the AFP news agency.

"Nobody is selling at this price and we are not trading," he said on Saturday.

Violent protests

The bureaux in the central Ferdowsi area of Tehran were open for the first time since Wednesday's protests, in which

scuffles broke out between police and stone-throwing individuals.

The state-linked news agencies, as well as Iranian currency-tracking website Mesghal, said the rial was trading in the free market at 28,500, much stronger than levels near 37,500 early in the week.

But dealers in Tehran and Dubai, a major centre for business with Iran, told the Reuters news agency there was almost no trade in the free market because rates indicated by state media were not commonly accepted.

The mass of Iranians obtain hard currency for business and foreign travel, and to protect their savings against inflation which is widely believed to be running above 25 per cent, from the free market.

Money changers in Tehran "tell us not even to call them to ask the price of currency. They say they are not giving rates," a merchant in the capital said by telephone. He declined to be named because of the political sensitivity of the issue.

A message on Mazanex, an Iranian currency-tracking website, read: "Unfortunately we still cannot access rates to cite for the domestic market."

The website of SarafiJalali.com, a Tehran-based money changer, said: "To comply with the policies of the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and to help organise the currency market of Iran, Sarafi Jalali for now will not announce any rates. Subject to permission from the central bank, the announcement of a new rate will be made." It did not elaborate.

Western sanctions

Under pressure from Western economic sanctions against Iran, the rial hit a record low of around 37,500 to the US dollar last Tuesday, losing about a third of its value in 10 days.

The slide prompted anti-government demonstrations near Tehran's Grand Bazaar as police arrested money changers whom authorities accused of speculating against the currency.

Most free market trade of the rial in Tehran and Dubai then ground to a halt

because dealers feared being targeted by police for quoting rates that displeased the government, and because of the huge financial risks of trading such a volatile currency.

If the free market in currencies stays frozen, Iranians may become unable to conduct businesses that involve imports, while foreign travel and study abroad may be curtailed. This could increase discontent with the government's economic management.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has put the blame of the currency collapse on the economic sanctions. But his hardline critics say the fault mostly lies with his government's monetary policies.

The US government has said sanctions relief could quickly occur if Tehran curbed its disputed nuclear programme, which Western countries suspect is cover to develop a nuclear weapons capability.

Iran's leaders, who insist their atomic programme is exclusively peaceful in nature, have vowed never to yield to the pressure.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/10/201210771058611488.html>

- **Tehran bazaar reopens but tensions remain**

Merchants reopen their shops under police supervision as some currency traders refuse to deal at official exchange rate.



Tehran's Grand Bazaar reopened under close police supervision on Saturday, traders said, days after clashes between riot police and crowds protesting against the collapse of the Iranian currency shut down the market.

But tensions still remain over the floundering rial, with money changers refusing to comply with a government order to buy and sell dollars at a fixed rate.

The resumption of trade suggested authorities had succeeded at least

temporarily in containing public discontent over the plunge of the rial, which lost about a third of its value in 10 days.

But it remained unclear whether the government of president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad would be able to stabilise the currency, which has been undermined by policy missteps by Iranian authorities and Western economic sanctions against Iran over its disputed nuclear programme.

"We received an order from the money changers' association, telling us to buy the dollar at 25,000 rials and sell at 26,000," one exchange bureau employee told the AFP news agency. "Nobody is selling at this price and we are not trading."

The new rate would strengthen the currency by about 25 per cent; it plunged this week to around 36,000 on the dollar.

'Business as usual'

On Wednesday, riot police fired tear gas, fought demonstrators and arrested money changers in and around the bazaar, one of the capital's main shopping areas.

Ahmadinejad blames speculators for the rial's slide, which is eating into living standards and destroying jobs in the industrial sector.

But "it is business as usual today," one merchant told Reuters by telephone on Saturday. "Shops are open and we are serving customers. Of course we are also watching the currency rates to see what is going to happen."

Another said: "The dominant thing on every merchant's mind is concern for tomorrow. What really bothers us is the instability of the prices, even more than the high value for the dollar. Merchants need to be able to plan for their business and with instability in currency rates, that is almost impossible."

Ghassem Noodeh Farahani, head of a council of business associations, was quoted by Fars news agency as saying all parts of the bazaar had reopened with security forces present to prevent any interference by "disruptors and agitators."

"The merchants have never wanted to cause disruption and have always been

friends and collaborators of the revolution," he said.

The sanctions, imposed because of Western suspicions that Iran is developing nuclear weapons, have slashed the country's hard currency earnings from oil exports, making it more difficult for the central bank to support the rial.

Pain for ordinary Iranians

Ordinary Iranians have rushed to convert their savings into US dollars to escape the rial's depreciation and avoid high inflation, which the government says is running at about 25 per cent but private economists put much higher.

Although staple foods and basic consumer goods produced domestically are still generally available in Iran, the extreme volatility of the currency and prices has in the past couple of weeks begun to make some foreign products unavailable, Tehran residents told Reuters.

And prices are creeping up. One man told AFP that his weekly grocery bill is up to 3m rials, about twice what he paid at the

beginning of the year. Products like chicken and red meat have become unaffordable luxuries for poorer Iranians.

"When you go to the pharmacy, inexpensive medicine has become a rarity," said Haleh, an ailing woman in her 30s. "The Iranian generics are also expensive, since the pharmacies say the key ingredients are imported with open market rate."

A seller of imported personal computer equipment told Reuters by phone he had halted sales because he could no longer calculate what his products were worth in rials.

In a report to the United Nations General Assembly that was released on Friday, UN chief Ban Ki-moon said the sanctions were having a "significant" effect on Iran's people and also seemed to be harming humanitarian operations in the country.

"Even companies that have obtained the requisite licence to import food and medicine are facing difficulties in finding third-country banks to process the transactions," he said.

But unless Tehran allows more international monitoring of its nuclear energy programme, Iran's economic pain looks unlikely to prompt Western governments to ease the sanctions, and may even encourage them to take further steps.

US senator Robert Menendez, a Democrat from New Jersey and a member of the banking and foreign relations committees, told Reuters this week he was considering how to expand US sanctions against Iran, including a plan to freeze an estimated 30 per cent of its foreign currency reserves held in banks outside the country.

Meanwhile, the European Union has begun discussing the possibility of a broad trade embargo against Iran, moving beyond the energy, business and financial restrictions imposed so far, EU diplomats said.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/10/2012106114251211715.html>

- **Iran denies offering new plan on nuclear impasse**

DUBAI, (Reuters) - Iran denied on Saturday a U.S. media report that it had offered a "nine-step plan" aimed at solving its

stand-off with the West over its disputed nuclear program.

The New York Times reported on Thursday that Iran had proposed a plan to European officials that required the West to lift harsh oil and economic sanctions in return for the eventual suspension of uranium enrichment by Tehran.

It reported Iranian officials tried to gather support for the proposal during a visit last month to the United Nations.

Several rounds of negotiations over the nuclear program between Iran and world powers - the United States, France, Britain, Russia, China and Germany, known collectively as the P5+1 - have failed to secure any breakthroughs.

The powers fear that Iran is trying to develop a nuclear bomb. Tehran says its program is for peaceful purposes.

The Iranian plan described by the New York Times would likely be a non-starter, as the six powers have demanded Tehran halt its 20 percent enrichment of uranium; ship any stockpile out of the country; close down an underground enrichment facility,

Fordow; and permit more intrusive U.N. inspection of its work.

Tehran has refused to meet those demands unless economic sanctions choking its oil exports are lifted first, and denied on Saturday that it had made any new offers to the West to break an impasse that has lasted nearly a decade.

"No new offer outside of the framework of the P5+1 negotiations during the last meeting of the United Nations has been made, and the claims of some American news organizations in this regard are baseless," Mehr news agency on Saturday quoted Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, Saeed Jalili, as saying.

Sanctions have begun to take a serious toll on Iran's economy, with its currency the rial dropping by around a third in value against the dollar in less than two weeks.

The United States Congress is considering expanding American economic sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has not ruled out using force to halt the nuclear program. The United

States, Israel's main ally, says it will not allow Tehran to produce the bomb, but sanctions should be given more time to work before force is considered.

<http://www.asharq-e.com/news.asp?section=1&id=31339>

- **Rafsanjani says he will not run for president**

TEHRAN, Oct. 7 (MNA) – TEHRAN, Oct. 7 (MNA) – Expediency Council Chairman Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani has said that he does not feel ready to run for president in the 2013 election despite the fact that he is not constitutionally barred from contesting the post.

"So far, there is no legal ban, but I am no longer ready for this job," Ayatollah Rafsanjani said in an interview with the Iranian newspaper Arman, which was published on Sunday.

Ayatollah Rafsanjani served as Iran's president for two consecutive terms from 1989 to 1997. Again he ran for president in 2005 but was defeated by the incumbent president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, in the run-off.

During the interview, he stated that even prior to the 2005 presidential election, he repeatedly insisted that he preferred a “young and energetic person” to take the helm and that he would support him, but the situation developed in such a way that “I was forced to stand as a candidate.”

The veteran politician added that he implemented his “plans” during his presidency and there was no need to run for the 2005 election.

He also stated that if a competent person receives a high number of votes and is elected as president next year, he will help him as an advisor.

Asked to explain why he finally decided to run in the presidential election in 2005, he said that he had predicted that the country would experience the current situation after some years.

Ayatollah Rafsanjani was probably referring to high inflation rate in the country and intensified Western-led sanctions against Iran.

He added that a few years ago, during a meeting of the research committee of the

Assembly of Experts which lasted about two and a half hours, he elaborated on his views about the “future of the country” and that there is a tape of the talks at the secretariat of the assembly.

However, he stated that he does not want to repeat those things to “create a commotion” in the country.

On the reports saying that he had recently held a meeting with former Majlis speaker Hojjatoleslam Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri about the upcoming presidential election, he said, “We always hold meetings. Usually four or five of the friends stay after the Expediency Council meetings, and we have lunch with each other and hold discussions about the country’s issues and their solutions.”

Ayatollah Rafsanjani noted that it was in such a meeting that he suggested that Nateq Nouri runs for the election and Nateq Nouri also asked him to do so.

However, Rafsanjani said that he told Nateq Nouri that he is in a better physical condition to contest the post.

“But it was all talk,” Ayatollah Rafsanjani noted.

Asked whether he held such talks with former reformist president Mohammad Khatami, he said, “After that event (the unrest that followed the 2009 presidential election), such a situation was created that we do not enter such talks with him.”

<http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1714029>

- **93 MPs sign motion to question president**

So far 93 lawmakers have signed a petition to question President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad over his remarks about the foreign exchange market, the Mehr news agency has learnt.

The sharp rise in the value of foreign currencies against the national currency, rial, in recent days has sent shockwaves in commodity prices.

Constitutionally 74 signatures are needed to summon president to Majlis.

Last week the motion was signed by 60 MPs and until the weekend it gathered more signatures, reaching the necessary

threshold to question the president, an MP said on condition of anonymity.

However, the MP told the Mehr News Agency that architects behind the petition seek more than 100 signatures so that if some legislators withdrew their signatures under pressure there would still be enough votes to present the petition to the Majlis Presiding Board.

He said the number of MPs willing to sign the petition is on the rise and one of the reasons behind such a move is the president’s remarks last week about the turmoil in the foreign currency market.

He added the petition may be submitted to the presiding board on Wednesday.

<http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1714445>

- **Iran stresses maintaining territorial integrity of Turkey, Syria**

Ankara, Oct 8, IRNA – Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab and African Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian stressed that maintaining territorial integrity of Turkey and Syria is essential for establishment of peace and tranquility.

Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks in a statement released by Iranian embassy in Ankara following the escalation of tension in Turkey-Syria relations.

On Turkey-Syria border tension, he said the Islamic Republic of Iran invites the two sides to behave in a moderate way and carefully study the issue.

The two sides were also urged to pay attention to the presence of extremist and terrorist armed groups in the region and the enemies' conspiracies.

Amir-Abdollahian further underlined the need for increasing Syria's border control which would lead to strengthening regional security.

<http://old.irna.ir/News/Politic/Iran-stresses-maintaining-territorial-integrity-of-Turkey,-Syria/80360197>

3. SYRIA

- **Car bomb hits police station in Syria capital**

Government says attack on police headquarters killed one police officer, blaming it on "terrorists".



A car bomb has exploded near the police headquarters in the Syrian capital Damascus, killing one officer, the government said.

It blamed Sunday's attack on what it called "terrorists", the term it uses to describe rebels fighting President Bashar al-Assad's regime. The state news agency said the bomb exploded in a vehicle in the car park of the building on Khaled bin al-Walid Avenue in central Damascus.

Witnesses told the AFP news agency the blast was followed by heavy gunfire. This is the latest in a string of bombings against high-profile security installations in the capital.

Earlier, Turkey's military fired numerous artillery rounds into Syria in retaliation after a shell fired from Syria landed in the Turkish border town of Akcakale.

The Syrian shell landed in the grounds of a public building on Sunday and there were no casualties, Abdulhakim Ayhan, the mayor of Akcakale, told reporters.

"Thank God there were no victims. Turkish artillery immediately responded to the shots that came from Syria," Ayhan said hours before explosions hit Damascus.

Turkish media said there was minor damage to the public building, which had been previously evacuated.

It was the second time that Turkey returned fire on Syrian army positions since Syrian shelling killed five civilians in Akcakale on Wednesday.

Al Jazeera's Decrim Gurkan, reporting from Akcakale, said that he heard "six firings" of mortar rounds from Turkish security forces towards Syria, which were followed by a calm.

"At first there was panic but it didnt last too long. The situation is calm here," he said.

"People here on the streets, in the cafes, the parks. We asked them if they were

afraid and they said they got used to it," our correspondent added.

"We see there are some people packing up and leaving the city, especially the ones living near the border area."

"Authorities were thinking about opening schools tomorrow, but after the latest incident, many teachers left this town so the opening of schools is postponed."

Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey's prime minister, warned Syria on Friday that Turkey would not shy away from war if provoked, but a series of mortar bombs fired from Syria have continued to hit Turkey since then.

The exchanges of fire are the most serious cross-border violence in Syria's conflict.

Rebels seize northern town

Meanwhile, Syrian rebels have cemented their control of the country's northern frontier with Turkey, as their bastions in other parts of the country come under heavy shelling.

Opposition fighters reportedly seized the town of Khirbat al-Joz in the northwest province of Idlib after fierce clashes with regime forces.

"The fighting [a day earlier] lasted more than 12 hours and resulted in at least 40 dead among the regular forces, including five officers, and nine [rebel] fighters," the UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Meanwhile, in the province of Damascus, Syrian state television said that government forces had pushed rebels out of two of their strongholds in Damascus province, Qudsaya and Hameh, where activists said that the bodies of 20 men were found.

Also on Sunday, Syrian troops pressed their offensive to retake rebel-held areas in Homs and southern villages on the border with Jordan.

In Aleppo, where fighting has raged since mid-July, the bombardment targeted the embattled district of Sakhur in the east and Kalasseh in the southwest.

Tension with Turkey

On the border with Turkey, regime forces reportedly pounded the town of Tal-Abyad in the northern province of al-Raqqa.

Nearly 80 per cent of towns and villages along the Turkish border are outside the control of Damascus, according to activists.

AFP news agency correspondents have passed through large swathes of territory in the Idlib and Aleppo provinces of northern Syria that have fallen outside government control, with residents managing their own affairs.

That followed heavy bombardments of Syrian military positions near the border since Wednesday, when a shell smashed into a Turkish town killing five civilians and sparking outrage in Ankara and a UN Security Council condemnation.

Turkey had on Friday shelled a Syrian military position south of Tal-Abyad in retaliation after a Syrian shell landed on its territory near the border.

Amid the growing tension between the Damascus and Ankara, Ahmet Davutoglu, the Turkish foreign minister, said on Saturday that Faruq al-Shaara, Syria's vice-president, "is a man of reason" who could replace President Bashar al-Assad as the head of a transition administration to stop the conflict in the country.

Assad replacement

Davutoglu said on the public television channel TRT: "Faruq al-Sharaa is a man of reason and conscience and he has not taken part in the massacres in Syria. Nobody knows the (Syrian) system better than he."

He stressed that the Syrian opposition "is inclined to accept Sharaa" as the future leader of the Syrian administration.

Sharaa, the most visible Sunni Muslim figure in the minority Alawite-led government, is trusted by the regime and was foreign minister for 15 years before becoming vice president in 2006.

Reports that he had defected in August were denied by Damascus, but some

opposition leaders say he is apparently under house arrest.

Davutoglu said he was convinced that the Syrian vice president was still in Syria.

Turkey, which shares a border of 900 km with Syria and hosts nearly 100,000 Syrian refugees on its territory, openly supports rebels from the Free Syrian Army and has called for Assad's ouster.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/10/2012107141234467828.html>

- **Turkey strikes back after Syrian shell hits border village where five died**

Turkish military again shelled Syrian targets on Sunday in immediate retaliation after a mortar round fired from Syria struck the southeastern Turkish border village of Akcakale, where five civilians were killed last week in a strike that provoked a counter-attack from Turkey, television reports said.



The Dogan news agency reported that Syrian shell hit land near a plant belonging to the Turkish Grain Board, several hundred meters from the center of Akcakale.

There were no immediate reports of casualties in the latest incident.

The first incident caused a spike in tensions between the former allies and renewed fears of a broader conflict. Nearly 80 percent of towns and villages along the Turkish border are outside the control of Damascus, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The Turkish parliament on Thursday gave the government the green light to use military force against Syria if necessary.

The U.N. Security Council on Thursday strongly condemned cross-border attacks by Syria and called for restraint between the two neighbors.

On Saturday, rebels cemented their control of Syria's northern frontier with Turkey after seizing the town of Khirbat al-Joz in the northwest province of Idlib after

a pitched battle with regime troops, the Observatory said.

"The clashes at Khirbat al-Joz... ended when fighters of the rebel brigades took control of the area," said the Britain-based watchdog.

"The fighting lasted more than 12 hours and resulted in at least 40 dead among the regular forces, including five officers, and nine (rebel) fighters," it added.

Nearly 80 percent of towns and villages along the Turkish border are outside the control of Damascus, according to the Observatory.

AFP correspondent have passed through large swathes of territory in the Idlib and Aleppo provinces of northern Syria that have fallen outside government control, with residents running their own affairs.

With tensions between Turkey and Syria spiking, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu urged that Syrian Vice President Faruq al-Shara take the helm in Syria.

“Faruq al-Shara is a man of reason and conscience and he has not taken part in the massacres in Syria. Nobody knows the (Syrian) system better than he,” Davutoglu said on public television channel TRT.

The Turkish minister stressed that the Syrian opposition “is inclined to accept Shara” as a future leader.

Shara, the most visible Sunni Muslim figure in the minority Alawite-led government, is trusted by the regime and was foreign minister for 15 years before becoming vice president in 2006.

Since the uprising against Assad’s rule erupted in March last year, more than 31,000 people have been killed, according to the Observatory.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/07/242366.html?PHPSESSID=07lmto6kcg9qn8p19s3shr3g4>

- **Rebels seize Syrian army outpost at Turkey border: witnesses**

Syrian rebels have seized a government army outpost near the Turkish border province of Hatay and a rebel flag flew over the building on Sunday, while clashes could be heard in the area of a nearby

Syrian village, a Reuters witness and villagers said.



The rebels took control of the three-storey white building, around 1 km (mile) from the border on a hill overlooking the Turkish village of Guvecci on Saturday, and raised the flag of the Free Syrian Army above it, villagers said.

“In the last four days there were heavy clashes going on here. We couldn’t sleep. Yesterday morning, the Syrian army controlled this area. Now it is calmer,” said villager Musa Sasak, 27.

Clashes could be heard on Sunday in the area of the Syrian village of Harapjoz, behind the hill where the military outpost was located. Smoke could be seen rising from the area.

Three mortar bombs fired from Syria landed in areas near Guvecci village on Saturday, prompting a fourth day of retaliatory fire from Turkish forces. The

Syrian mortar rounds hit empty land and there were no casualties.

The exchanges are the most serious cross-border violence in Syria's conflict, which began as pro-democracy protests but has evolved into a civil war with sectarian overtones. They highlight how the crisis could destabilize the region.

Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan warned Syria on Friday that Turkey would not shy away from war if provoked in the wake of artillery fire from Syrian forces which killed five Turkish civilians further east at Akcakale on Wednesday.

NATO member Turkey was once an ally of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad but turned against him after his violent response to an uprising in which, according to the United Nations, more than 30,000 people have died.

Turkey has nearly 100,000 Syrian refugees in camps on its territory, has allowed rebel leaders sanctuary and has led calls for Assad to quit. Its armed forces are far larger than Syria's.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/07/242338.html?PHPSESSID=07lmmt06kcg9qn8p19s3shr3g4>

- **Al-Hameh, Qudssaiya in Damascus Countryside Declared Safe Areas, Terrorists Open Fire on pro-Syrian Army Rally in Aleppo**

Units of the armed forces cleansed al-Hameh and Qudssaiya areas in Damascus countryside of armed terrorist groups, declaring them safe areas.

25 Explosive Devices and 100 kg of C4 Found in Terrorists' Den in al-Hameh, Damascus Countryside

Authorities found scores of explosive devices rigged to be triggered and quantities of the highly explosive C4 material in a house in al-Eyoun neighborhood in al-Hameh.

A military source told SANA reporter that 25 explosive devices were found inside a house which was turned by the terrorist groups into a factory for making bombs.

100 kg of the highly explosive C4 was found inside the house.

A unit of the Armed Forces clashed with an armed terrorist group in the areas of Bour-Said roundabout and al-Dahadeel in Damascus countryside, killing and wounding scores of the terrorists.

An official source told SANA that terrorists Shadi Hanna, Qasem al-Masri, Walid Qashou', Nabeel Naji, Adnan Haroun, Mohammad Nahla and Ayman Jaber were identified among the dead.

Terrorists' Infiltration Attempts from Lebanon into Syria Foiled

The armed forces on Saturday confronted two armed terrorist groups which attempted to infiltrate into Syria from Lebanon in Halat and Adlin sites in Talkalakh countryside in Homs.

SANA reporter quoted a source in the province as saying that the armed forces inflicted heavy losses upon the members of the armed groups while the others fled into the Lebanese lands.

Terrorists and Their DShK-equipped Cars Targetted, Terrorists Shoot Citizens in a Rally in Aleppo

An armed terrorist group led by Mohammad Abdul-Karim Salameh, who is nicknamed al-Mukhtar, opened fire on a rally expressing support to the Syrian Arab Army in Assan area in Aleppo city.

The shooting resulted in wounding two of the citizens participating in the rally.

A unit of the armed forces destroyed two cars equipped with DShK machineguns and killed a number of terrorists near al-Shifaa House in al-Shaar neighborhood.

An army unit killed members of a terrorist group led by Jarad Sharoukh at Hammam al-Baiyada area in Aleppo.

A unit of the armed forces killed a large number of terrorists who attempted to infiltrate into Hanano barrack in Aleppo.

Another unit of the armed forces targeted terrorists' gathering in Karm al-Jabal in al-Arqoub area in Aleppo, killing and wounding a number of them.

In Aleppo city, units of the armed forces destroyed 16 DShK-equipped vehicles and a mortar. The units also killed tens of terrorists including seven members of

Jabhat al-Nusra in qualitative operations near al-Fustuq Souq, al-Isharat area and the Revolutionary Vanguard School in Bustan al-Qaser.

The armed forces units also destroyed two DShK-equipped vehicles in Masakin Hanano neighborhood in Aleppo and killed all terrorists in the vehicles.

A unit of the army killed scores of the mercenary terrorists in the neighborhoods of Bustan al-Basha and al-Saliheen in Aleppo, destroying their cars and seizing their weapons.

On the other hand, the armed forces carried out 5 qualitative operations against terrorist gatherings near al-Kalaseh Police Hospital, al-Qabaqib Park, Rahim Mosque and the west of Jamal Mosque in Aleppo city.

The operations resulted in killing and wounding scores of terrorists.

Authorities Kill Members of Armed Terrorist Group in Aleppo Countryside

Authorities hunted an armed terrorist group in al-Halabiyeh town in al-Safira in

Aleppo countryside which was attacking the locals and perpetrating acts of killing and kidnapping.

The authorities killed most of the terrorist group's members during the clash, as the bodies of Ragheb Mohammad al-Safadi, the leader of the group, Ahmad Hussein al-Ali, Kheiro Hussein Allami and Kamel al-Alo al-Ibrahim were identified among the dead, according to an official source in the province.

Units of the armed forces also targeted terrorists' gatherings near Urum al-Kubra, the south of Urum al-Sughra and near the National School in Andan town.

The armed forces killed and wounded a large number of terrorists.

Authorities Uncover Tunnel Network in Hama City, Five Explosive Devices Seized in Hama Countryside

In cooperation with locals, the authorities carried out an operation in al-Hamidiye neighborhood in Hama city, eliminating a number of terrorists uncovering a tunnel network they had been using.

An official source said that five terrorists were killed in this operations, including Mohammad Yousfan and Ahmad al-Masri, and that seven other terrorists were arrested.

The authorities also confiscated a large amount of weapons and explosive devices rigged for detonation and destroyed the tunnels which the terrorists were using as supply lines.

The source thanked locals for their cooperation.

Also in Hama province, a unit of the armed forces destroyed a terrorists' hideout in al-Hweiz village in al-Ghab area in Hama countryside.

SANA reporter quoted a source in the province as saying that the armed forces killed all the terrorists in the hideout which they were using as a center to attack the citizens in the area.

The source added that the authorities also seized 5 explosive devices in a terrorists' hideout in al-Baroudiyeh neighborhood in Hama, asserting that the devices weighed between 15 kg and 40 kg .

The source pointed out that the authorities also discovered a tunnel inside the hideout which the armed terrorist groups were using to smuggle weapons, ammunition and terrorists into the city.

Authorities Destroy DShK-equipped Cars in Homs Countryside

The authorities destroyed four DShK-equipped cars and killed a number of terrorists in Jossiyeh and al-Atifiyeh in al-Qussayr countryside in Homs, and confiscated their weapons.

A source at Homs province said that the Armed Forces destroyed 8 DShK-equipped cars and killed the terrorists riding in them in al-Atifyeh town in al-Qseir.

The army also destroyed a DShk-equipped car and a digger, used by terrorists to make tunnels, in al-Salihyeh town.

The military engineering units dismantled several Israeli-made anti-tanks mines planted by armed terrorist groups on al-Mashtal road in al-Qseir arqa in Homs countryside.

In Bab Hood neighborhood in Homs, authorities killed 8 terrorists, destroyed a DShK-equipped car and seized large amounts of grenades, ten of which were Israeli-made.

Two Children Martyred, Three Others Injured in Terrorists' Mortar Shelling on al-Joura Neighborhood in Deir Ezzor

A group of terrorists fired a mortar shell on al-Joura neighborhood in the city of Deir Ezzor killing two children and wounding three others.

Terrorists Killed in Daraa

Authorities clashed with an armed terrorist group that attacked a law-enforcement post in al-Noyima area in Daraa countryside, killing and wounding several terrorists.

Terrorists Ahmad Jamal al-Abboud and Mohammad Yousef al-Mafilani were identified among the dead.

<http://sana.sy/eng/337/2012/10/08/445698.htm>

4. ISRAEL-PALESTINE

• Israel launches deadly air strike on Gaza

At least one killed and number of bystanders injured in attack that targeted two men accused of cross border attacks.



At least one person has died and several people were injured, including children, after an Israeli aircraft fired at two men in the southern Gaza strip, Palestinian hospital officials said on Sunday.

According to the Israeli army, the two men were involved in rocket attacks into Israel.

The two men were riding a motorcycle near the town of Rafah, which borders Egypt's Sinai peninsula, when the attack occurred.

One of them and a bystander were in a critical condition, the officials said.

A number of bystanders were injured included three children, a woman and an elderly man.

The Israeli military said the two men were members of "Global Jihadist" groups based in the Gaza Strip who had for years attacked Israeli civilians and troops and were also involved in weapons manufacturing.

The military named the two men as Talat Jarbi and Mohammed Maqawi.

Palestinian medical sources told the AFP news agency that Talat Halil Jarbi had lost both legs in Sunday's air strike.

Israel and Hamas, which governs Gaza, have mostly observed an unwritten truce since Israel attacked the Gaza strip, where the Israeli military offensive named Operation Cast Lead killed more than 1,400 Palestinians, majority of them civilians, including 400 children.

Thirteen Israelis were also killed, three of them civilians.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/10/2012107232838573238.html>

- **PLO to start legal process against Lieberman incitement**

BETHLEHEM (Ma'an) -- The PLO has appointed a legal committee to begin the process of putting together a lawsuit against Israeli foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman, an official said Sunday.



Nimir Hammad, political adviser to President Abbas, told Ma'an that lawyers will contact Israeli, American and European legal experts to start proceedings against Lieberman for inflammatory remarks made about Abbas, which they say put the president's life at risk.

"The international community should not remain silent before incitement," Hammad added.

Last Tuesday, the Arab League called on UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon and the international Quartet to respond to "threats" by Israel's foreign minister.

Reacting to Abbas' speech at the UN, Lieberman said Abbas was "the biggest obstacle to peace."

"Everyone who heard Abbas' speech understands that he does not intend, and does not want, to be a partner in a peace agreement," Lieberman said.

Israel's defense minister had criticized Lieberman and said his views did not represent policy.

"Lieberman's comments about the Palestinian Authority and its president do not represent Israeli policy, and harm Israeli interests," Barak's office said in a statement.

Lieberman, a former bouncer from Moldova, sparked outrage among Palestinians after calling for Palestinian elections to usher in new leaders in an Aug. 20 letter to US, EU, Russian and UN leaders.

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=526922>

- **Gazans stage soccer protest at Shalit's Barcelona visit**

GAZA CITY (Reuters) -- Palestinians freed from Israeli jails held their own version of the Barcelona-Real Madrid soccer match on Sunday to protest the presence of a former captive Israeli soldier at the actual fixture.



The five-a-side kick-about in Gaza comprised mostly of ex-prisoners protesting at Gilad Shalit's presence in Barcelona. He was abducted by Gaza militants in a cross-border raid in 2006 and held for over five years.

Wearing the shirts of the two Spanish giant clubs, the Palestinians called on hosts Barcelona to deny Shalit access to Sunday night's match. They thought he had been invited by the club, although Barcelona has denied this.

"Soccer is a sport that carries the message of freedom and love but we are against it

when an (Israeli) soldier is invited, because it equates between the victim and the aggressor," said Yasser Saleh, who spent 17 years in Israeli jails.

Shalit was held by his captors in solitary confinement in the Gaza Strip that is ruled by Hamas, until his release last October. He was discharged earlier this year and has been seen at many Israeli sports events.

Barcelona said they had accepted Shalit's request to attend Sunday's clash between two of the world's most successful outfits. But when Palestinians thought the club had initiated the invitation, they vowed to protest.

To redress the balance, Barcelona invited Mahmoud Sarsak, a former Palestinian soccer player who was released from an Israeli jail in July where he was held for three years without charge, Palestinian sports supremo Jibril Rajoub, and another representative.

"The club did not invite Mr. Shalit to the game, but accepted a request to watch a match during his visit to Barcelona ... In the same manner ... the club has also

accepted the Palestinian embassy's request to extend three invitations to three Palestinian delegates," the club said on its website.

"Barcelona has always wanted to promote peace and harmony in the Middle East."

Sarsak said he would not share the same stadium with Shalit. It was not immediately clear whether the other two attended.

Barcelona and Real Madrid have a huge following among Gaza's 1.6 million population.

In a small protest in front of the Spanish consulate in East Jerusalem, a group of some 30 demonstrators held up placards with the club's insignia daubed in red paint signifying blood, and at least one trampled on a Barcelona shirt.

<http://www.maannnews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=526933>

- **Gazans fire barrage of mortars at Israel after IAF strike**

No injuries are reported as nearly 40 mortar shells hit the Eshkol region, residents told to stay in protected spaces;

IAF strike on Gaza targeting two terrorists in Rafah leaves 10 injured, including three children.

Gazans fired around 40 mortar shells into the Eshkol region of southern Israel Monday morning, less than 24 hours after an IAF airstrike hit the southern Gaza city of Rafah, injuring 10 people.

There were no immediate reports of injuries from the mortar fire Monday morning, although shrapnel lightly damaged one home. Authorities asked residents in the Eshkol region to remain in protected spaces.

On Sunday, the IAF targeted two men it said were involved in previous attacks against Israeli soldiers and civilians, including a June 18 attack along the Sinai border that killed one civilian. The two were allegedly planning further attacks in the Sinai, an IDF statement said.

Along with the two terrorists, the IAF strike injured eight civilians, including three children.

According to the IDF, the strike targeted Talat Khalil Muhammad Jerbi and Abdullah Mohammed Hassan Makawi.

<http://www.jpost.com/Defense/Article.aspx?id=286967>

5. AFRICA and EGYPT

• Daughter of Gaddafi spy chief arrested In Libya

TRIPOLI, (Reuters) - The daughter of Muammar Gaddafi's former spy chief was arrested at a Tripoli hotel for entering Libya illegally, a Supreme Security Committee official said on Sunday.

The official, who declined to be named, said Al-Unood al-Senussi, daughter of Abdullah al-Senussi and niece of Gaddafi's wife Safiah, was detained by the military police on Saturday.

"Al-Unood was arrested at a central Tripoli hotel after she entered Libya from Algeria on a fake Libyan passport," he told Reuters. He said the daughter, 18, was carrying a "large amount" of U.S. dollars, but he did not say how much.

While her father faces charges of "crimes against Libyans" in Tripoli and is also wanted by the International Criminal

Court in the Hague and by France, Al-Unood al-Senussi has not been accused of any crime, except illegally entering Libya, the official said.

Abdullah al-Senussi was arrested seven months ago after arriving with a falsified Malian passport on a flight to the Mauritanian capital, Nouakchott, from Morocco.

He was then handed to Libya by Mauritanian authorities last month, triggering a tussle between Libya, France and the ICC over who should try him.

The ICC has issued a warrant for Senussi accusing him of crimes against humanity, including murder. France wants to try Senussi in connection with a 1989 airliner bombing over Niger in which 54 of its nationals died.

Senussi has also been linked to the 1988 bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland of U.S. passenger plane that killed 270 people. Diplomatic sources have said the United States was keen to question him about that.

<http://www.asharq-e.com/news.asp?section=1&id=31351>

- **Egypt's president defends record of first 100 days**

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt's new Islamist president on Saturday strongly defended his performance in his first 100 days in office, facing down criticism that little has been achieved even as he acknowledged that his administration has not fulfilled all of his promises and that much work lies ahead.

Speaking to a crowd of tens of thousands at a Cairo's largest sports stadium, Mohammed Mursi used his nearly two-hour speech to lay out what he presented as achievements since he took power in late June as Egypt's first freely elected president.

"This nation, these people, this army, the establishment, the president, the children of Egypt — we are all now moving toward one goal: a new Egypt," he said.

Critics say Mursi has not accomplished as much as he could have since winning elections, and accuse the president's Muslim Brotherhood party of mimicking the former regime by going after critics

and stuffing government posts with loyalists.

Saturday's event, which included a military parade as part of a ceremony to mark the anniversary of Egypt's 1973 war with Israel, was also a show of force for the Brotherhood, the Islamist movement that has emerged as the country's most powerful political group since last year's uprising that toppled longtime leader Hosni Mubarak.

Brotherhood supporters packed the stadium's stands and gave the president a raucous welcome. Mursi responded by pumping both fists in the air and waving to the crowd as he was driven around the track upon his arrival.

In his speech, Mursi acknowledged that he has not fully delivered on key promises to fix Egypt's garbage problem, its traffic problems and energy crisis. But he said that many of the basic issues he set out to fix first in his first 100 days in office — which ends Sunday — such as reducing Cairo's notoriously snarled traffic, have shown improvement.

Upon taking office in late June, Mursi inherited a long list of domestic crises, with the country's downturned economy topping the list. The nation's tourism industry, a key source of revenue, has taken a huge hit as a result of the political instability following the uprising, while foreign investment has dwindled.

He promised to overhaul a decades-old subsidies program that weighs heavily on the budget.

Egypt has asked the International Monetary Fund for a \$4.8 billion loan to help bolster the economy, and officials says the IMF has asked Egypt to restructure its subsidies system as one of the prerequisite for the loan.

He also reiterated that he would abide by Islamic banking laws and not accept interest on the loan, telling the cheering crowd that "we'll go hungry before we eat off of interest."

He said that his government cracked down on a "mafia" of officials working in the Petroleum Ministry who were siphoning off millions of dollars in corrupt deals.

In contrast, he said he was still living in a rented apartment on the outskirts of Cairo and asked people to take him to task if he is seen driving around in a new car that is not part of the president's motorcade.

"I say this to you why? Because personally... I said a long time ago I have no rights, but obligations," Mursi said.

Mursi's supporters, and even liberal and secular opponents, have given him credit for politically sidelining the military shortly after taking office by forcing a number of senior generals who had served under Mubarak into retirement after a tumultuous military-led transition and stamping his own authority on the country's executive.

While Mursi sought to highlight his achievements, the Mursi Meter, a website that is tracking the president's first 100 days in office, said that the president has fulfilled five of his 64 promises.

Some of Mursi's critics express frustration with the slow pace of reform, and say they see shadows of the past in his governing style.

"I see his policies as Mubarak's policies, but with an Islamic overture," said Mohamed Abdelaziz, a human rights lawyer. "It is the same economic policy and same language."

He also accused Mursi of abandoning the revolution's goals of freedom, justice and social equality.

"Islamic jihadists are being released from prison ... but at the same time we hear little about the thousands of revolutionaries who were tried under military rule," he said, referring to recent pardons by the president. "Until now there are wounded protesters who cannot even find treatment."

Preceding Mursi's speech was a military parade that included soldiers parachuting out of helicopters to mark the 39th anniversary of Egypt's Oct. 6 1973 war with Israel.

Mursi's predecessor, Mubarak, had earned nationwide fame as commander of the air force during the war. More than a dozen protesters rallied Saturday outside Tora prison in support of the ousted leader, calling him a war hero. He is

servicing a life sentence for failing to stop the killings of protesters during the revolt against him.

<http://www.asharq-e.com/news.asp?section=1&id=31340>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

• Kuwaiti Emir dissolves parliament

Following cabinet request, Emir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah issues decree to annul 2009 court-reinstated parliament.



Kuwait's Emir has issued a decree dissolving the 2009 parliament, just over three months since it was reinstated by the constitutional court.

"An emiri decree was issued to dissolve the 2009 parliament," said state-run Kuwait television on Sunday.

The dissolution of the assembly has been a main demand of the opposition and the action paves the way for snap polls.

The Emir, Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, had been widely expected to take the step following a cabinet request to dissolve the assembly.

The 2009 pro-government assembly was dissolved in December following protests amid allegations of corruption against some of its members and former prime minister Sheikh Nasser Mohammad al-Ahmad Al-Sabah who also quit.

The opposition scored a massive victory in the February legislative polls but four months later the constitutional court nullified the election, scrapped parliament and reinstated the 2009 assembly.

The cabinet of the oil-rich Gulf state recommended on Wednesday that the parliament be dissolved.

Under Kuwait's constitution, fresh general elections must be held within 60 days or before December 7.

The forthcoming polls will be the second this year and the fifth since June 2006.

Turmoil

The dissolution comes less than two weeks after the constitutional court rejected a challenge by the government against the electoral constituency law and ruled that the legislation was in line with the constitution.

The law, which divides the oil-rich Gulf state into five electoral districts, was passed by parliament in 2006 following popular rallies demanding reform of the electoral process.

The cabinet said the decision to dissolve parliament was based on the fact that the assembly failed to hold any meeting after it was revived despite being invited to meet on July 31 and August 7.

The reinstated parliament was boycotted by the opposition on the grounds that at least 13 pro-government MPs in the 50-member house faced allegations of receiving bribes.

The turmoil has also held up investment projects and economic reforms.

OPEC member Kuwait has been rocked by a series of political crises since 2006

during which the government resigned nine times.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/10/2012107105641755264.html>

- **Yemen 'foils al-Qaeda plan to bomb air base'**

Car bomb discovered near al-Anad air base in southern province of Lahj used by US troops to train local forces.



Security officials in Yemen have foiled a plan by fighters linked to al-Qaeda to bomb an air base used by US soldiers in the southern province of Lahj to train local forces in combating terrorism, officials have said.

A military official disclosing information on condition of anonymity said a car packed with explosives was discovered on Saturday in a wooded area near the gate of al-Anad air base.

He added that it had apparently been "smuggled in several days ago".

"We foiled an attack by a car packed with explosives that managed to breach several security checkpoints leading into the air base.

"The attack was to be implemented today (Saturday)" and "Americans on the base were the target of the attack," he added.

Lahj governor Ahmed Abdallah al-Majidi was quoted on the ministry website "The military police defeated an afternoon attack on the al-Anad base."

"The vehicle belongs to al-Qaeda," Majidi said, adding that its seizure led to the discovery of a "large quantity of explosives, gas cylinders and anti-tank rockets and clothes for female drivers".

He did not explain why the attackers failed to detonate the explosives immediately after the car was smuggled into the base.

Last year, al-Qaeda overran most of southern Yemen's Abyan province seizing its capital Zinjibar and several other towns due to the weakening of the central

government control by an Arab Spring-inspired uprising.

After almost nine months of continued protests, Ali Abdullah Saleh quit as president last November as part of a deal initiated by Gulf countries.

On May 12 this year, under orders from Saleh's successor, Abdrabuh Mansur Hadi, the army launched a massive offensive to recapture territory lost to the rebel fighters.

Western diplomats at the time said the US experts were assisting the army in their battle to destroy al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, considered by Washington to be the deadliest and most active.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/10/2012106225634221730.html>

Protesters clash with police in Bahrain

Police use water cannon and tear gas to disperse mainly Shia protesters after memorial for man who died in jail.

Protesters have clashed with police in the Bahraini capital, Manama, after their march was stopped from proceeding towards Pearl roundabout, the focus of

the mass protests that began in February last year.



Police used water cannon and tear gas to disperse hundreds of protesters on Friday after a memorial for a Shia man jailed over last year's pro-democracy uprising, witnesses have said.

The interior ministry said on Twitter that a "group of terrorists" attacked police with Molotov cocktails and blocked streets, prompting police to take "legal measures" in response.

Witnesses said riot police, who were heavily deployed in the area, used tear gas, water cannon, sound bombs and buckshot to disperse the demonstrators.

Bahrain's Information Authority said Mohammed Ali Ahmed Mushaima, 23, had been in hospital since August and died of complications from sickle cell disease.

Opposition activists said the authorities caused his death by denying him proper treatment. His funeral was held on Tuesday.

Mushaima was jailed for seven years in March 2011 for "vandalism, rioting, assaulting a police officer and resisting arrest".

The protesters, mainly from the Shia majority, have been demanding a bigger role for elected representatives and less power for the ruling al-Khalifa family, who are Sunni Muslims.

Despite a crackdown on the protests last year, that included two months of martial law, clashes between police and protesters occur almost daily in Bahrain, where the US Fifth Fleet is based.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/10/201210615642288370.html>

- **Tribal leader urges Yemeni factions to talk**

SANAA, Yemen (AP) — The leader of Yemen's largest and most powerful tribe has urged Yemen's factions, including al-Qaida, to renounce violence and open a dialogue.

The alternative, he said, is armed conflict.

Sheik Sadeq al-Ahmar, leader of Hashid tribal confederation, told the first meeting of the alliance of Yemen's tribes Saturday that the Hawthi Shiite Muslims in the north, the armed secessionists in the south and al-Qaida must reject violence and join in the political process, without preconditions.

He said all of Yemen's political parties, tribes and civil society groups should take part in a national dialogue next month.

"The road to solving problems is to leave arms behind and resort to dialogue," he said, "so that the Yemeni people will not be forced to resort to the logic of blood."

<http://www.asharq-e.com/news.asp?section=1&id=31342>

- **Anti-regime protesters rally in Saudi Arabia's Qatif region**

Tens of thousands of Saudi protesters have held a massive anti-regime rally in the Qatif region of Saudi Arabia's oil-rich Eastern Province, Press TV reports.



Chanting slogans against the Saudi authorities, the demonstrators turned out in Qatif late on Sunday to condemn the regime's suppression of dissent.

Late last month, Saudi forces killed three people and wounded several others while searching for an activist wanted by the regime.

The kingdom's oil-rich Eastern Province has been rocked by anti-regime protests since last year.

Since February 2011, protesters have held demonstrations on an almost regular basis in Saudi Arabia, mainly in Qatif and Awamiyah in Eastern Province, primarily calling for the release of all political prisoners, freedom of expression and assembly, as well as an end to widespread discrimination.

However, the demonstrations have turned into protests against the repressive Al Saud regime, especially since November

2011, when Saudi security forces killed five protesters and injured many others in the province.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/08/265512/antiregime-rally-held-in-saudi-arabia/>

- **Al Khalifa regime releases jailed Bahraini medic**

A Bahraini doctor, who was sentenced to jail for treating protesters during anti-regime demonstrations in the Persian Gulf state, has been released, his lawyers say.



The lawyers said that the medic, Mahmoud Asghar, was freed on Sunday for time served before his conviction.

The release came just five days after he was sentenced with five colleagues over last year's anti-government protests.

The six medics were jailed on Tuesday, a day after their convictions were upheld by Bahrain's Court of Cassation, the country's highest court. They were among twenty

doctors and nurses who worked in Manama during the uprising against the Al Khalifa regime.

The Bahraini authorities charged the medical workers with using hospitals for anti-government activities, possession of weapons, and theft of medical equipment -- claims they denied. The medical workers say the government is only punishing them for treating people who took part in demonstrations.

Since mid-February, anti-government protesters have been staging regular demonstrations in the streets of Bahrain, calling for the Al Khalifa royal family to relinquish power.

On March 14, troops from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were deployed to the country to assist the Bahraini government in its crackdown on the peaceful protesters.

According to local sources, scores of people have been killed and hundreds arrested in the crackdown in Bahrain.

Physicians for Human Rights say doctors and nurses have been detained, tortured,

and even disappeared because they have "evidence of atrocities committed by the authorities, security forces, and riot police" in the crackdown on anti-government protesters.

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

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/08/265495/jailed-bahraini-doctor-released/>

7. AFGHANISTAN - PAKISTAN

- **Pakistani authorities halt anti-drone protest**

Convoy led by cricketer-turned-politician is turned back en route to South Waziristan.

Pakistani authorities have stopped a protest over US drone strikes led by cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan from entering the troubled region of South Waziristan, prompting allegations the government is ambivalent about US actions.

Khan, who started the protest on Saturday, blames the government for allowing the US to operate in the country and had planned to lead the march from the capital Islamabad into South Waziristan, a tribal area frequently hit by the drone strikes.

But authorities on Sunday blocked the protesters' path with shipping containers on the highway. After several delays the army told protesters it was unsafe to be on the road after dark and they turned back.

Pakistan's military and the civilian government publicly complain that the strikes - aimed at remnants of al-Qaeda and the Taliban - infringe the country's sovereignty and cause civilian casualties. Yet the government has done little to stop them.

"The drones are inhumane," Khan, wearing a white turban, said as he stood on a vehicle in the town of Tank, surrounded by thousands of protesters.

"Are these people not humans? These humans have names. Drone attacks are a violation of human rights," he said.

Pressure on the US

About 30 Americans travelled to Pakistan to take part in the protest and apologise for the strikes to men and women who had been maimed or lost family members.

"We have to put pressure on the United States government," said Billy Kelly, a 69-year-old Vietnam veteran from New York.

The United States says the strikes have killed top Taliban and al-Qaeda commanders and civilian casualties are minimal. But it refuses to say how targets are selected or how the military determines whether the dead were fighters or civilians.

The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, which tracks drone strikes, said between 1,232 and 1,366 people had been killed since the strikes began in 2004. Between 474 and 884 were believed to be civilians, it said.

A recent report, Living Under Drones, said that large swathes of Pakistan's tribal areas were terrorized by the drones.

Civilians were scared to go to school or work in case they were targeted, the report by Stanford and New York Universities said.

Getting accurate data on casualties and the effects of drones is extremely difficult since the government allows few foreigners into the tribal areas and the Taliban often seals off the sites of strikes. Drones also often attack people arriving at the site of the strike.

'Pro forma protests'

The march highlighted the way that drones complicate the Pakistani government's already uneasy relationship with the US. Americans often justify the strikes by saying Pakistan is unable or unwilling to crush the insurgency.

"The government is making pro forma protests but Imran has shown the world he will do something," said Shamsad Ahmed Khan, a former foreign secretary. He noted the government declared a

national day of protests over a blasphemous film last month, but it had never called for such a protest over the drone strikes.

Some Pakistanis, however, questioned why the marchers were not talking about atrocities by the Taliban or the Pakistani army, both of which have killed far more people than the drone strikes.

Columnist Saroop Ijaz said that the Taliban frequently and deliberately target civilians by bombing hospitals, schools, funerals and shrines.

"Drone attacks began and continue because of the ideology of murder and not the other way around," he wrote in the Express Tribune.

The Taliban denounced the march as political theatre ahead of next year's elections and condemned Khan and his party as "secular and liberal".

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2012/10/2012107141138951980.html>

- **US defense chief blasts Karzai over troop deaths**

LIMA, (AFP) - US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta has voiced frustration with Afghan President Hamid Karzai preferring to "criticize" American troops, rather than acknowledging the sacrifices they have made.

Panetta, who arrived in Peru late Friday to begin a Latin American tour, told reporters aboard the military plane taking him to Lima that Karzai should remember that more than 2,000 US troops have died in Afghanistan.

The angry riposte came after Karzai said on Thursday that the United States was failing to go after militants based in Pakistan, another charge that Panetta chose to hit back at.

Speaking at a press conference in Kabul, Karzai accused the United States of playing a "double game" by fighting a war against Afghan insurgents rather than their backers in Pakistan where, in Karzai's words, "terrorism is financed and manufactured."

The Afghan president also lamented what he described as NATO's refusal to supply

Afghanistan with modern weapons necessary to fight its enemies.

But a visibly displeased US defense secretary suggested the Afghan president had focused on the wrong things.

"We have made progress in Afghanistan because there are men and women in uniform who are willing to fight and die for Afghanistan's sovereignty and their right to govern and secure themselves," Panetta said.

"We've lost over 2,000 US men and women, ISAF has lost forces there and the Afghans have lost a large number of their forces in battle.

"Those lives were lost fighting the right enemy, not the wrong enemy. And I think it would be helpful if the president, every once in a while, expressed his thanks for the sacrifices that have been made by those who have fought and died for Afghanistan rather than criticize."

The outburst was rare for Panetta and the remarks came as relations between the United States and Afghanistan are under strain in the wake of several deadly and

high-profile attacks on US troops by their local comrades.

In Afghanistan, the United States has also seen its image tarnished among ordinary Afghans this year by the burning of Korans at a military base, the abuse of corpses and a massacre of civilians by a rogue American soldier.

An unprecedented number of Afghan security personnel have turned their weapons against their allies, killing at least 51 NATO soldiers this year.

Despite this, many Afghans, particularly in the cities, fear the departure of the Western troops in 2014 from a country where the government of Karzai is widely seen as corrupt and dependent on foreign support.

In Lima, Panetta will meet President Ollanta Humala and Defense Minister Pedro Cateriano, Pentagon press secretary George Little told reporters.

"This trip will reaffirm the department's commitment to strengthening partnership around the world, particularly in Latin America and Europe," said Little.

The United States has provided Peru with surveillance planes to disrupt drug traffickers and help tackle remnants of the Shining Path guerrilla group. Washington gave Lima \$659 million in associated aid between 2006 and 2011.

A senior US defense official said Panetta would offer further help to Peru under the Ministry of Defense Advisers program, a scheme currently being used in Afghanistan.

"What MODA does is that it embeds technical experts within the MOD for one or two years and they can provide technical advice," the official said.

Panetta will be in Uruguay on Sunday, the Pentagon said, and he will take part in the 10th Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas at the Punta del Este resort, before traveling to Brussels on Monday.

<http://www.asharq-e.com/news.asp?section=1&id=31332>

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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