



# MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

## GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

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**The Restructuring Procces of Iraq**

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## 1. IRAQ

- **BREAKING NEWS FM demands Saudi Arabia to explanation the execution of 7 Iraqis**

Baghdad (NINA) – The Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed that authorities in Saudi Arabia executed 7 Iraqis sentenced to death, six of them in Rakhma Prison and the seventh in Damam Prison, on charges of drug trafficking.

In a statement issued on Thursday evening, Nov. 15, the Foreign Ministry said that, "At a time we condemn these executions that came when Iraq is getting prepared to ratify agreement on the exchange of prisoners between the two countries. We demand the Saudi Government to explain the reasons that let to suddenly carry out the sentences against such a number; we call on it to put a stop on execution against Iraq prisoners sentenced on similar charges."

[http://www.ninanews.com/english/News\\_Details.asp?ar95\\_VQ=GEIHGF](http://www.ninanews.com/english/News_Details.asp?ar95_VQ=GEIHGF)

- **Zebari renews Iraq's support for peaceful transfer of power in Syria**

Baghdad (NINA) – Foreign Minister, Hoshiyar Zebari affirmed the importance of the Islamic Cooperation Organization's role, considering it a strong base for developing relations of Islamic countries with other countries of the world.

In his speech at the opening ceremony of he 39th Ministerial session of the Islamic Cooperation Organization, being held in Djibouti, he condemned whoever tries to harm Islamic symbols and attack prophets.

Zebari clarified Iraq's stance toward events in Syria, calling for a permanent peaceful solution through peaceful transfer of power, through peaceful mean and according to Syrian will, without foreign military intervention; he expressed Iraq's support to the mission of Al-Akhdar Al-Ibrahimi, the UN envoy to Syria,

A statement issued on Thursday, Nov. 15, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that Zebari touched on the Palestinian issue by expressing support to the Palestinian Representative in

condemning recent Israeli aggression on Gaza and his support to the Palestinian people to regain occupied lands and their legitimate right in establishing their independent state.

In his speech, Zebari call for defending the Moslems of Myanmar and provide protection to them.

Earlier in the day, Zebari arrived in Djibouti, on the head of Iraqi delegation to take part in the 39 Ministerial Meeting of the Islamic Cooperation Organizations.

[http://www.ninanews.com/english/News\\_Details.asp?ar95\\_VQ=GEIHGM](http://www.ninanews.com/english/News_Details.asp?ar95_VQ=GEIHGM)

- **Talabani discusses with Nechirvan Barzani situation in Iraq, Kurdistan**

Baghdad (NINA) – President Jalal Talabani discussed with Prime Minister of Kurdistan Region, Nechirvan Barzani, the situation in Iraq and Kurdistan, as well as in the whole area, in addition to current problems between Baghdad and Kurdistan Region.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) web site reported on Thursday, Nov. 15, that Talabani met in Sulaymaniya with Nechirvan Barzani, stressing in the meeting on the necessity to continue frank dialogue between Baghdad and Erbil toward treating outstanding problems and develop bilateral relations.

The two stressed the importance to develop and coordinate relations between the PUK and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), as well as with other Kurdish forces to preserve gains realized.

The site went on saying that the Region's Prime Minister acquainted the President with the details of his recent visit to Iran.

[http://www.ninanews.com/english/News\\_Details.asp?ar95\\_VQ=GEIHGD](http://www.ninanews.com/english/News_Details.asp?ar95_VQ=GEIHGD)

## 2. IRAN

- **Powers to map Iran strategy, Tehran wants to meet soon**

Major powers will discuss negotiating strategy towards Iran next Wednesday amid signs of a renewed push to resolve the nuclear dispute peacefully after U.S. President Barack Obama's re-election last week.



Obama and Iran's chief nuclear negotiator this week have separately made clear their desire to resume diplomacy that has been deadlocked since a meeting between six world powers and Iran ended without a breakthrough in June.

Obama's Nov. 6 election victory raised hopes of a revival of negotiations after speculation that Israel might strike Iranian nuclear facilities.

European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton will host a meeting of representatives of the six powers in Brussels on Wednesday, as part of efforts to dissuade Iran from its nuclear program, a spokeswoman for Ashton said on Thursday.

"This is part of the ongoing ... consultations to find a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear issue," the spokeswoman said, giving no further detail.

The six powers are the United States, China, Russia, France, Britain and Germany. Western powers suspect Iran is secretly developing the ability to produce nuclear bombs. Tehran denies this, saying its program is entirely peaceful.

Obama told a news conference on Wednesday that reports that emerged before his re-election of impending U.S. talks with Iran were "not true and ... are not true as of today." But he said diplomacy remained his preferred option.

In Tehran, Iran's chief nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili, reaffirmed Iran's "constant readiness" for talks, Iran's English-language state Press TV quoted him as saying in a meeting with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov on Wednesday.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran hopes that the P5+1 group will return to the negotiating table at the earliest (possible time)," its website quoted him as saying.

The six big powers have sought to persuade Iran to scale back its nuclear program through economic sanctions and diplomacy.

They have failed to achieve a breakthrough in three rounds of talks since April.

But neither side has been willing to break them off, in part because of concerns that this could lead to a new war in the Middle East if Israel attacked its arch-foe.

EU and U.S. sanctions have made it harder for Iran to sell and transport its oil, but Tehran has shown no sign of backing down on the nuclear work.

Western diplomats expect the U.N. nuclear agency's next quarterly Iran report, likely to be submitted to member states on Friday, to show the Islamic state further expanding its uranium enrichment capacity.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/15/249824.html?PHPSESSID=h6kms2udjs75n0t4iv0482fr62>

- **Larijani strongly condemns Zionist regime's attacks on Gaza**

Tehran, Nov 16, IRNA – Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani in separate phone conversations with international personalities has strongly condemned Zionist regime's crimes in Gaza.



In separate phone calls with a group of his counterparts, the political and parliamentary personalities and other international political officials on Friday, Larijani strongly condemned recent crimes of the Zionist regime of Israel in Gaza, according to Majlis Public Relations and Cultural Affairs General Office.

In a phone call with Anders B. Johnsson, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, described as "shameful and deplorable" the Zionist regime's wide-scale attack from air, sea and the ground on the innocent people of Gaza. "The time is now ripe for the IPU, as the hub of the world parliaments, to show serious reaction in this regard."

Johnsson said in reply: "The Islamic Republic of Iran's concern over Israel's attacks on Gaza is common source of concern by many of the world people and the IPU is soon to issue a statement in this connection to closely follow up the issue."

He noted that an IPU delegation is soon to pay a visit to Gaza.

Meanwhile, in a phone call with Professor Erol Kiliç, Secretary General of Islamic Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), condemned the Zionist regime's crimes and called on the Islamic states to take concrete action in that connection.

Also in phone calls with Lebanese Speaker Nabih Berri, Algerian People's National Assembly Speaker Mohamed al-Arabi Ould Khalifa, Fehmida Mirza, first woman speaker of Pakistan's National Assembly, Syria's parliament speaker, Jihad Laham, Osama Al-nujaifi Speaker of Iraqi Council of Representatives, and Tunisia's National Constituent Assembly (NCA) Speaker Mustapha Ben Jaafar on Friday, Larijani condemned the crimes.

He called on Muslim states to take parliamentary measures to condemn the merciless crimes of the Zionist regime in launching air, ground and sea attacks on Gaza.

<http://old.irna.ir/News/Politic/Larijani-strongly-condemns-Zionist-regime-s-attacks-on-Gaza/80417358>

- **Iran, KRG agree on protocol for expansion of economic cooperation**

Erbil, Nov 16, IRNA – Iran and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) on Friday agreed on a protocol for expansion of mutual economic cooperation.



Signatories to the binding document, which was prepared and agreed upon at the 1st Iran-KRG Economic Cooperation Expansion Session, would be Secretary of Iran-KRG Joint Economic Commission Secretary Kamran Ahmad and Secretary of Iran-Iraq Joint Economic Commission, Kazemi Qomi. Iran's Vice-President for International Affairs Ali Saeedlu and Nechirvan Idris Barzani, the KRG Prime Minister voiced their agreement to provisions of the document at the 1st Iran-KRG Economic Cooperation Expansion Session.

Talking to IRNA here on Friday, Secretary General of Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Mines, Jahanbakhsh Sanjabi Shirazi said the agreement envisions mobilization of common borders, official recognition of Siranband-Baneh border, straight carriage of Iranian goods to Iraq, expansion of cooperation between Iran's Standard Organization and the KRG, setting up joint insurance, forming an arbitration body to settle possible legal and judicial cases, expansion of banking cooperation and legalization of companies' registration.

He said that the Islamic Republic of Iran earned \$6.8 billion out of commercial transactions with Iraq in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year of 1391 (started on March 21).

He noted that 59 percent of the border transactions had been with the KRG and 41 percent with the central and southern part of Iraqi central government in the period.

Sanjabi Shirazi proposed that alike certain neighboring states, a powerful consortium should be formed in the KRG to look into further expansion of export of cargo and the technical and engineering services to Iraq.

<http://old.irna.ir/News/Economic/Iran,-KRG-agree-on-protocol-for-expansion-of-economic-cooperation/80417297>

### 3. SYRIA

- **Turkey urges recognition of Syrian opposition**

Country sees new coalition as legitimate representative of people, while rebels make advances.

The Turkish foreign minister has called on Muslim countries to recognise a new Syrian opposition coalition and said that Turkey has both the will and capacity to defend its borders if violence continues to spill over.

Speaking at an Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC) ministerial meeting in Djibouti on Thursday, Ahmet Davutoglu praised the formation of the Syrian National Coalition as an "important achievement" and said that President Bashar al-Assad's regime was on the verge of collapsing.

"Turkey once again reiterates its recognition of the Syrian National Coalition as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people and calls upon all our brothers in the OIC to do so," he said.

Members of Syria's opposition, including rebel fighters, veteran dissidents and ethnic and religious minorities, forged a coalition on Sunday to try to end the infighting that has hampered their struggle against Assad.

In-depth coverage of escalating violence across Syria

France and some Gulf Arab states have fully recognised the Syrian National Coalition for Opposition and Revolutionary Forces, but the US, Arab League and most European countries have been more cautious.

Turkey, which is housing more than 120,000 Syrian refugees, has led calls for the creation of a buffer zone to protect civilians inside Syria and has grown increasingly frustrated by the lack of international consensus.

Turkey has bolstered the military presence along its 900km border with Syria, fired back in response to mortar shells flying into its territory, and is talking to NATO about the possible deployment of Patriot surface-to-air missiles, a potential prelude to enforcing a no-fly zone.

"We do not want escalation. But everyone should be well aware that Turkey has the capacity and determination to protect its citizens and borders," Davutoglu said.

"Turkey's border security has been jeopardised. Our towns on the border have been targeted by the Syrian army."

Turkish fighter jets patrolled the country's southeastern frontier with Syria for a second day on Thursday, following an air assault this week by Syrian forces on the rebel-held border town of Ras al-Ain.

#### Syrian conflict

In Syria, government fighter jets continued to bombard cities and towns across the country on Thursday.

Air raids have reportedly targeted Jisreen, a village east of Damascus, and Rastan, a city in the province of Homs.

For their part, Syrian rebels took control over the military headquarters in the town of Alboukamal, in Deir Az-zor province, after fierce clashes with regime forces.

Opposition fighters have also reportedly seized a hospital in Aleppo that was used as base for regime forces.

Video uploaded by activists shows rebels celebrating their victory at the Al Kindi medical facility.

"We were victorious with God's help, we liberated the Kindi checkpoint and Kindi hospital," one fighter said.

Separately, a Syrian tribal leader said the Free Syrian Army has seized full control of the border town of Ras al- Ain on Thursday, allowing many refugees to return to their homes after fleeing to Turkey.

"The Free Syrian Army has completely seized control. The last remnants of the regime were terminated yesterday and they captured weapons that were being used against the revolutionaries," said Sheikh Mohammed Ibrahim.

Dozens of Syrian refugees returned home after clashes in the border town of Ras al-Ain came to an end.

Assad's air force has been bombing Ras al-Ain for days, trying to drive out rebels took control the town last week.

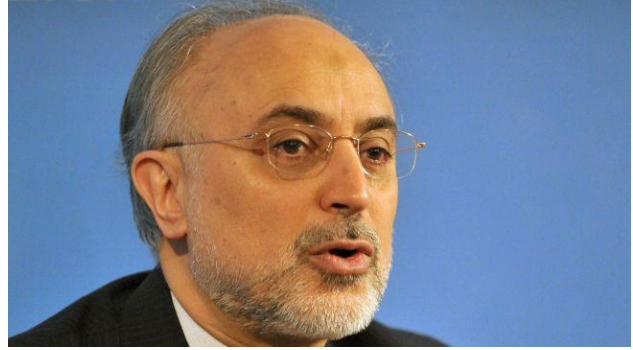
The offensive has caused some of the biggest refugee flow since the Syrian conflict began nearly 20 months ago.

"For two days there seems to have been no problems and we don't hear the sound of planes, so God willing the situation will be calm. We want to go back to our homes because here in Turkey there is no work for us and there's no way for us to survive," Ismet, one of the refugees, said, according to Reuters news agency.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/11/20121115155423712858.html>

- **National dialog only solution to Syria unrest: Iran FM**

Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi has underlined national dialog as the only solution to the termination of the ongoing unrest in Syria.



"The Syria problem can only be settled through dialog between the government and the opposition and the Islamic Republic of Iran hopes that the crisis can be managed through rationality," Salehi said on the sidelines of the ministerial meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in the East African country of Djibouti.

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

Salehi pointed to the next week summit of the Group of Eight Developing Countries (D8) in Pakistan and said a trilateral meeting will be held between the foreign ministers of Iran, Turkey and Egypt on the sidelines of the summit to discuss the Syria situation.

Salehi also said that Iran has presented a written proposition on the settlement of the Syria unrest to Russia, Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the UN special envoy to Syria Lakhdar Brahimi.

He said that the proposition has been welcomed by the officials of these countries but did not provide further details.

Iran has repeatedly underlined national reconciliation and free elections as the gateway to the settlement of the crisis in Syria.

Tehran has also expressed readiness to host talks between the Syrian government and opposition in a bid to end the violence in the Arab nation.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab and African Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said on November 13 that Tehran is to host a one-day meeting between Syrian government and opposition groups next week.

He said that the meeting will bring together representatives of various Syrian ethnicities, political groups, minorities, the opposition, and the state officials.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/11/16/272579/iran-stresses-syria-national-dialog/>

- **Armed Forces Inflict Heavy Losses upon Terrorists in Several Provinces**

A unit of the Armed Forces on Thursday clashed with terrorists in al-Tadamon neighborhood in Damascus, killing many of them and seizing their machineguns and ammunition.



An official source told SANA reporter that a number of terrorists were killed near al-Malki Street and their weapons were also seized.

The source added that the army unit discovered a field hospital near al-Noujoum Cinema and seized large amounts of medical equipments and medicines which the terrorists stole from public and private hospitals and medical centers.

#### Most Dangerous Terrorists Eliminated in Harasta

A unit of the Armed Forces clashed with armed terrorist groups in the neighborhoods and surrounding areas of Harasta city in Damascus Countryside, killing a number of their members.

SANA reporter quoted an official source in the province as saying that a large number of the most dangerous terrorists were eliminated, among them terrorist Murshed Mahmoud al-

Mudallal, head of the so-called 'Coordination of Harasta' in addition to terrorists Rakan al-Mawla, Bashar Dib al-Ejweh and Mustafa Izz-eddin of the so-called 'Fateh al-Islam' brigade.

The source added that terrorists Mohammad al-Masri, Mohammad Dib Hassoun and Nor and Suleiman al-Durrah were also identified among the dead.

Two Citizens Martyred, Three Injured in Explosive Device Blast on Ariha – Saraqeb Road, Idleb

Two citizens were martyred while three others were injured in a blast of an explosive device planted by terrorists on Ariha – Saraqeb road in the countryside of Idleb.

A source in the province told SANA reporter that the terrorist blast caused material damage to a number of passing cars.

The source added that the engineering units dismantled three explosive devices, weighed between 20 to 60 kg, on Idleb – al-Mastoumeh road.

A unit of the Armed Forces destroyed terrorists' hideouts and equipment in al-Tarmeh neighborhood in Harem city in the countryside of Idleb.

SANA reporter quoted a source in the province as saying that the army unit killed a number of terrorists and destroyed a mortar launcher and a catapult used in firing explosive devices and grenades.

The source added that the terrorists used to attack the residents of the neighborhood with missiles and mortars.

A Large Number of Terrorists Killed in Deir Ezzor

Units of the Armed Forces on Thursday killed a large number of terrorists in Deir Ezzor and its countryside.

An official source in the province told SANA reporter that a unit of the Armed Forces targeted a terrorists' gathering in al-Bukamal city, killing a number of them and injuring others.

Another unit of the Armed Forces clashed with an armed terrorist group in al-Aridi neighborhood in Deir Ezzor city, inflicting heavy losses upon its members, the source said.

Terrorist Suleiman al-Mohammad was identified among the dead.

The source added that another unit of the Armed Forces clashed with terrorists in al-Jbeileh neighborhood, killing and wounding a number of terrorists. Terrorist Saleh Mohammad Khedr al-Salloum was identified among the dead.

Armed Forces Continue Clearing Aleppo Neighborhoods of Terrorists

Units of the Armed Forces cleared Aftomachine building and the surrounding building of the mercenary terrorists , killing scores of them.

Other army units continued pursuing the armed terrorist groups in al-Leiramon area in Aleppo.

A unit of the Armed Forces destroyed an ammo warehouse and a vehicle equipped with a machinegun near al-Eido agency in al-Sheikh Lutfi area in al-Marjeh in Aleppo, killing a number of terrorists.

Terrorist Abdul-Ghani al-Shaghel, a leader of an armed terrorist group and terrorist Abu Sharhabil, of Sudanese nationality, were identified among the dead.

Armed Forces Dismantle 3 Explosive Devices, Kill 4 Terrorists in Hama

A unit of the Armed Forces on Wednesday foiled an armed terrorist group's attempt to plant three explosive devices near Tarablus roundabout in Hama city.

An official source told SANA reporter that the army unit foiled an attempt by an armed terrorist group to plant the explosive devices, killed four of its members and injured 6 others.

The Armed Forces also seized the terrorists' munitions and dismantled the explosive devices, the source added.

#### Terrorists Killed, Their Hideouts Destroyed in Homs

The Armed Forces clashed with an armed terrorist group that attempted to attack law-enforcement forces and residents in al-Waer neighborhood in Homs city, killing and injuring many of its members.

Terrorist Abdul-Rahman Abu al-Rous was identified among the dead.

A source in the province told SANA reporter that the Armed Forces destroyed a number of terrorist hideouts with all terrorists inside of them near the Teachers' Union and Farmers Association in al-Rastan city.

in Busra al-Sham in Daraa, authorities confronted an armed terrorist group's attack on security posts and command and eliminated 6 terrorists and wounded 5 other.

#### Armed Forces Eliminate Tens of Terrorists in Aleppo Countryside

The Armed Forces destroyed a number of terrorist hideouts and sites and killed tens of terrorists in Aleppo countryside.

An official source told SANA reporter in Aleppo that a unit of the Armed Forces destroyed two terrorist sites in Handarat and a terrorist hideout near the Justice Palace in al-Bab city, causing the killing of tens of terrorists.

In Maskana area, the Armed Forces targeted a terrorist site and four vehicles used to transfer terrorists and their weapons and munitions.

In Deir Hafer, Manbej and Jeb Absheh, the Armed Forces targeted terrorist sites and killed tens of terrorists and destroyed twelve vehicles used to transfer weapons and munitions.

In Kabtan al-Jabal, a unit of the Armed Forces targeted a terrorist site and killed all its terrorists and destroyed three vehicles and two DShK-equipped vehicles.

Five vehicles were also destroyed in Kafar Hamra, in addition to destroying sites of armed terrorist groups' leaders in Kaafar Naha.

In the city of Aleppo, a unit of the Armed Forces destroyed four vehicles used to transfer weapons and munitions outside Saad Allah al-Jaberi School and al-Kindi Hospital in Qadi Askar area.

A unit of the Armed Forces confronted an attack on a military site northern Dawar al-Jandoul area and destroyed seven vehicles loaded with weapons and munitions and eliminated a large number of terrorists.

#### Armed Forces Eliminate Armed Terrorist Group in Damascus Countryside

A unit of the Armed Forces clashed with an armed terrorist group in Hajira town in Damascus countryside and eliminated its members.

An official source told SANA reporter that the leader of the so-called "Freemen of the Golan" group was killed during clashes.

The source added that a vehicle used to transfer weapons and munitions was destroyed.

<http://sana.sy/eng/337/2012/11/16/452584.htm>

## 4. ISRAEL-PALESTINE

- **'Ceasefire' collapses as Egypt PM visits Gaza**

Explosions reported after Israeli military offers conditional halt to strikes during Hesham Qandil's solidarity meeting.

A ceasefire that Israel declared for a visit by Egypt's prime minister to the Gaza Strip collapsed after Palestinians continued cross-border rocket attacks and Israel launched air strikes in the enclave.

Rockets fired from Gaza hit several sites in southern Israel shortly after Egyptian Prime Minister Hesham Qandil arrived on Friday.

The Israeli air force responded with an attack on the house of Hamas's commander for southern Gaza, and a Palestinian was killed in a separate air strike near Gaza City.

"Hamas does not respect the Egyptian prime minister's visit to Gaza and violates the temporary ceasefire that Israel agreed to during the visit," Ofir Gendelman, a spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, wrote on Twitter.

Israel had announced it would suspend military operations in Gaza during Qandil's three-hour visit with head of the government in Gaza, Ismail Haniyeh, so long as Hamas also halted all fire.

"There have been 130 strikes overnight until now," Hamas interior ministry spokesman Islam Shahwan said.

The Israeli army said it had carried out 466 air strikes since it launched "Operation Pillar of Defence" on Wednesday afternoon with the targeted killing of Hamas commander Ahmed Jabari.

The army added that 11 rockets had been fired from Gaza at Israel overnight, increasing the total to 280 rockets since Wednesday afternoon. The Israeli air defence system Iron Dome intercepted 131 of those.

Two rockets from Gaza crashed near Tel Aviv on Thursday in the first such attack on Israel's commercial capital in 20 years.

One fell into the Mediterranean Sea and the other in an uninhabited part of one of the Tel Aviv suburbs south of the city.

Two days of Israeli air strikes have killed 18 Palestinians, including seven militants and 11 civilians, among them six children and a pregnant woman.

A Hamas rocket killed three Israelis in the town of Kiryat Malachi on Thursday morning.

Reporting from Gaza, Nadim Baba said the Interior Ministry was totally destroyed in an Israeli airstrike.

Egypt condemnation

The Gaza conflagration has stoked the flames of a Middle East ablaze with two years of Arab popular revolution and a civil war in Syria that threatens to spread farther afield.

Israeli warplanes bombed targets in and around Gaza City, rattling tall buildings. In a hint of escalation, the spokesman for Israel's military said it had received the green light to call in up to 30,000 reserve troops. Around 16,000 have reportedly been activated already.

Al Jazeera's Nisreen El-Shamayleh, reporting from Jerusalem, said, "It doesn't mean that there will be [a ground operation] but it means Israel is taking all the precautions and being prepared for any necessary move it needs to make."

Egypt's new Islamist president, Mohamed Mursi, viewed by Hamas as a protector, led a chorus of denunciation of the Israeli strikes by allies of the Palestinians.

An Egyptian government source said officials accompanying Qandil would explore the possibility of brokering a ceasefire.

Mursi faces domestic pressure to act tough. But Egypt gets \$1.3bn a year in US military aid and looks to Washington for help with its ailing economy, constraining Mursi despite his need to show Egyptians that his policies differ from those of his US-backed predecessor, Hosni Mubarak.

Speaking from Gaza, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh urged Egypt to do more to help the Palestinians.

"We call upon the brothers in Egypt to take the measures that will deter this enemy," the Hamas prime minister said.

The resurgent conflict will be the biggest test yet of Mursi's commitment to Egypt's 1979 peace treaty with Israel, which the West views as the bedrock of Middle East peace.

Cairo recalled its ambassador from Israel on Wednesday. Israel's ambassador left Cairo on what was called a routine home visit. Israel said its embassy would remain open.

The Muslim Brotherhood, which brought Mursi to power in an election after the downfall of Mubarak, has called for a "Day of Rage" in Arab capitals on Friday.

The Brotherhood is seen as the spiritual mentor of Hamas.

## Diplomatic developments

UN diplomats said Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon would head to Israel and Egypt next week to try to mediate a ceasefire, although they gave no further details.

The United States has asked countries that have contact with Hamas to urge the Islamist movement to stop its recent rocket attacks from Gaza, a White House adviser said.

## Gaza hospitals struggle to cope

"We've ... urged those that have a degree of influence with Hamas, such as Turkey and Egypt and some of our European partners, to use that influence to urge Hamas to de-escalate," Ben Rhodes, deputy national security adviser, said in a conference call with reporters.

US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta said in an interview with Voice of America: "I understand the reasons Israel is doing what they're doing. They've been the target of missiles coming in from Gaza."

He added, "Our hope is that in striking back that they can minimise the civilian deaths that are likely to occur."

French President Francois Hollande began talks with the Israeli PM and other world leaders in an attempt to avert an escalation of violence in the Gaza Strip, Prime Minister Jean-Francois Ayrault said.

British Prime Minister David Cameron spoke to Netanyahu too, saying Hamas bore the principal responsibility for the crisis.

Israel's sworn enemy Iran, which has backed Hamas, condemned the Israeli offensive as "organised terrorism".

Lebanon's Iranian-backed Shia group Hezbollah, which has its own rockets aimed at Israel, denounced strikes on Gaza as "criminal aggression", but held its fire.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/11/201211166273719642.html>

- **Rockets aim at Tel Aviv as conflict escalates**

Defence minister calls up 30,000 reservists after three are killed in Israel, as toll on Palestinian side rises to 19.

Tension is rising across the Middle East as Israel and Hamas, the Palestinian group which controls the Gaza Strip, continue to exchange fire amid the worst outbreak of violence since the Israeli assault on the territory nearly four years ago.

As the death toll in Gaza reached 19, three Israelis were killed in the southern town of Kiryat Malachi on Thursday after a rocket fired from Gaza hit an apartment building.

Israeli sources said two rockets hit the Tel Aviv area - one landed in the sea while another missile landed in an uninhabited area of Israel's commercial centre.

Air raid sirens sent residents running for shelter in Tel Aviv, a Mediterranean city that has not been hit by a rocket since the 1991 Gulf War.

Islamic Jihad, another Gaza-based Palestinian group, said that it had fired one of the rockets that hit Tel Aviv.

Late on Thursday, Israel began moving troops towards the Gaza Strip and Ehud Barak, the Israeli defence minister, authorised the call-up of 30,000 reservists for a possible ground operations.

At least a dozen lorries carrying tanks and armoured vehicles were seen moving towards the border area, while buses ferried soldiers.

While southern Israeli areas near Gaza have long coped with rocket fire, the attacks on the Tel Aviv area illustrated the significant capabilities that Hamas has developed.

Palestinian fighters had previously hit Rishon Letzion before but never reached Tel Aviv, which is only 70km north of the Gaza Strip.

'Savage aggression'

At least 19 Palestinians, including two children, have been killed and more than 150 others wounded as of Thursday in fighting which began with an aerial attack that killed Ahmad Jabari, the Hamas military commander who was accused by Israel of overseeing attacks against civilians.

Thursday's deadly rocket fire on Kiryat Malachi was claimed by Jabari's group, the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, in a statement on its website. Jabari's funeral took place in Gaza on Thursday.

"It is important to understand one simple point: there is no moral symmetry between the terrorists in Gaza and Israel," Binyamin Netanyahu, Israeli prime minister, said on Thursday

"They are committing double war crimes," he said. "They fire at Israeli civilians and hide behind Palestinian civilians."

Netanyahu referred to the Israeli attacks on Gaza as "surgical".

Rockets and mortars

On the second day of an assault that Israel said might last many days, its fighter jets bombed targets in and around Gaza City late into the night.

Israel-Gaza conflict intensifies

Israeli authorities said more than 250 rockets and mortars were fired by Hamas and other armed groups from Gaza as of Thursday afternoon, and that its Iron Dome interceptor missile system had shot down dozens of the projectiles.

On either side of the frontier, people fled streets for cover.

Israeli Channel 2 TV showed panicked Tel Aviv residents running for cover and lying down on the ground after the air-raid sirens began sounding.

The armed wing of Islamic Jihad announced on Thursday it had fired an Iranian-built rocket at Tel Aviv.

"The Quds Brigades hit the occupied city of Tel Rabea [Tel Aviv] with a Fajr-5 rocket causing a large explosion to shake the city," the group said in a brief statement, shortly after an AFP correspondent reported seeing a rocket land in the water south of the sprawling coastal city. "What comes next will be greater," it added.

In a separate statement, posted on Islamic Jihad's website, Abu Ahmed, Islamic Jihad spokesperson, pledged that Israel would experience "further surprises so long as the aggression against the Palestinian people continues".

"The enemy began the battle but the resistance will determine how the battle will end," he said.

#### Egyptian delegation

The sudden conflict pours oil on the fire of a Middle East already tense with two years of revolution and an out-of-control civil war in Syria.

Egypt recalled its ambassador to Israel on Wednesday, summoned the Israeli ambassador to Cairo in protest over the assault and ordered its representative at the UN to call for an emergency Security Council meeting.

Mohamed Morsi, the Egyptian president, spoke to US President Barack Obama and Ban Ki-moon, the UN secretary-general, over the phone and discussed the Gaza escalation with them.

Taher Nuno, Hamas government spokesperson, said that Egypt would send a delegation headed by Hisham Qandil, the Egyptian prime minister, to Gaza on Friday. Israel announced it would cease military activity during Qandil's visit.

Spokesman Mark Regev defends Israeli attacks

Israel warned Hamas that all its men were in its sights and faced censure from influential Arab countries - with the Arab League announcing it would hold an emergency meeting on Saturday.

Mark Regev, spokesperson for Netanyahu's office, told Al Jazeera that Israel will "continue to hit the Hamas military machine, to hit their command and control, to hit their arsenal where they store their weapons".

"Unfortunately, today the Israeli population of southern Israel is on the receiving end of these barrages," he said.

"We have had three people killed. Children, instead of going to school, are stuck in bomb shelters.

"They must understand that they cannot hit Israeli civilians with impunity."

The US has condemned Hamas, long shunned by the West as an obstacle to peace. "There is no justification for the violence that Hamas and other terrorist organisations are employing against the people of Israel," Mark Toner, deputy State Department spokesman, said.

The UN Security Council held an emergency meeting late on Wednesday, but took no action.

In France, Laurent Fabius, foreign minister, said: "It would be a catastrophe if there is an escalation in the region."

"Israel has the right to security but it won't achieve it through violence," he said. "The Palestinians also have the right to a state."

The Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades issued a communique on Wednesday saying Israel had "opened the gates of hell on itself". Fawzi Barhum, the Hamas spokesman, said Jabari's killing was tantamount to a "declaration of war".

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/11/20121115135540965773.html>

- **Israel accuses Hamas of not respecting lull as Egypt's PM visits**

Hamas militants are not respecting a temporary lull in the fighting around Gaza which was agreed to by Israel on Friday for the duration of a brief visit by the Egyptian prime minister, an Israeli official said.



"Hamas does not respect the Egyptian PM's visit to Gaza and violates the temporary cease fire that Israel agreed to during the visit," said Ofir Gendelman, spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Egypt's Prime Minister Hisham Kandil arrived in Gaza Strip Friday for a three-day visit and in an unprecedented display of solidarity with Hamas militants embroiled in a new escalation of conflict with Israel.

"Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has agreed to an Egyptian request to cease all offensive operations in Gaza during the visit of the Egyptian prime minister there this morning, which is supposed to last for about three hours," another senior Israeli official said.

“In the answer that has been forwarded to Egyptians, we’ve said that the Israel Defense Forces will cease fire on the condition that there won’t be fire from Gaza into Israel during that period,” the official added.

However, during Kandil’s visit a Palestinian security source reported of an Israeli strike hitting north Gaza.

Al Arabiya correspondent also said that an Israeli airstrike has targeted home of Hamas military leader, Mohammed Abu Sahamala, despite the brief ceasefire.

Israeli war planes carried out multiple new air strikes on Gaza Strip, including several hits on Gaza City on Friday morning, AFP reporters and Hamas security sources said.

“There have been 130 strikes overnight until now,” Hamas interior ministry spokesman Islam Shahwan said, citing “tens of strikes” across Gaza on Friday morning, as AFP correspondents in Gaza City reported multiple raids.

Shahwan said the strikes destroyed a building belonging to the interior ministry and used for administrative issues like passport renewals in the Gaza City neighborhood of Tel al-Hawa.

Al Arabiya correspondent reported that home of military Hamas leader, Mohammad al-Sinwar, was pounded. However, Sinwar and his family were not at home during the Israeli strike.

Eyewitnesses said training positions used by various Palestinian militant groups had also been hit in the latest round of strikes.

Hamas emergency services spokesman Adham Abu Selmiya said the toll now stood at 19 Palestinians, several of them children, with a further 235 people injured.

The Israeli army said it had carried out 466 air strikes since it launched “Operation Pillar of Defense” on Wednesday afternoon with the targeted killing of Hamas commander Ahmed Jaabari.

The army confirmed that “strikes are continuing,” adding that 11 Palestinian rockets had been fired from Gaza at Israel overnight.

A total of 280 rockets have been fired at the Jewish state from Gaza since Wednesday afternoon, the military added. Three Israelis were killed on Thursday.

The Israeli air defense system Iron Dome intercepted 131 of those, a military spokesperson said.

Israel and Hamas had largely observed an informal truce since Israel’s devastating incursion into Gaza four years ago, but rocket fire and Israeli airstrikes on militant operations didn’t halt entirely.

The latest flare-up exploded into major violence Wednesday when Israel assassinated Hamas’ military chief, following up with a punishing air assault meant to cripple the militants’ ability to terrorize Israel with rockets.

Netanyahu said the army was hitting Hamas hard with what he called surgical strikes, and warned of a “significant widening” of the Gaza operation. Israel will “continue to take whatever action is necessary to defend our people,” said Netanyahu, who is up for re-election in January.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/16/249907.html?PHPSESSID=h6kms2udjs75n0t4iv0482fr62>

- **Dozens of rockets hit South, as Egyptian PM visits Gaza**

Israel had agreed to cease strikes on terror targets in Gaza during Hesham Kandil's visit, but rocket fire continues; Hamas claims IAF response kills 2; Hamas PM Haniyeh comes out of hiding, publicly greets Egyptian PM.



Dozens of rockets rained down on the South on Friday morning as Egyptian Prime Minister Hesham Kandil visited the territory.

Israel had agreed to cease strikes on terror targets in the Strip during Kandil's approximately three hour visit.

Hamas sources said that the IDF responded to the rocket fire with an airstrike in the northern Gaza Strip in which two Palestinians were killed. In addition, a Hamas source said that the IAF attacked the house of Hamas's commander for southern Gaza.

Ofir Gendelman, a spokesman for Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu wrote on his Twitter account that, "Hamas does not respect the Egyptian PM's visit to Gaza and violates the temporary cease fire that Israel agreed to during the visit."

Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, who has been in hiding since the targeted killing of Hamas military chief Ahmed Jabari on Wednesday, publicly welcomed Kandil on Friday and accompanied him on a visit to a hospital in Gaza.

The home of Haniyeh was bombed by the Israel Air Force overnight Thursday, though the Hamas leader was not home during the strike.

Haniyeh addressed crowds, vowing defiance in the face of the Israeli operation in Gaza and praising Egypt for Kandil's visit, which he called "a message to the occupation."

Kandil also addressed the crowd, saying that Egypt would do all in its power to bring a ceasefire. He called on Palestinians to show restraint.

Kandil's visit marked the first time an Egyptian prime minister visited the Gaza Strip.

Kandil's visit to Gaza is seen in the context of Egypt's efforts to achieve a cease-fire between Hamas and Israel.

The visit came as some Hamas officials in the Gaza Strip expressed disappointment over Egypt's "mild response to the Israeli aggression."

The officials said that they were expecting Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi to take a tougher stance toward the conflict.

Khaled Abu Toameh and Joanna Paraszczuk contributed to this report

<http://www.jpost.com/Defense/Article.aspx?id=292147>

## 5. AFRICA and EGYPT

- **Violence in Israel challenges U.S.-Egypt ties**

The Obama administration struggled Thursday to deal with the biggest flare-up in Israeli-Palestinian violence in years, unable to call on its old ally, former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, to negotiate an end to rocket attacks on the Jewish state.



Instead, the administration relied on Egypt's untested Islamist President Mohammed Mursi, who - like the Gaza Strip's rulers, Hamas - is a member of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The challenge illustrates America's weakened influence since last year's Arab Spring as popular Islamist political movements have replaced pro-U.S., secular strongmen throughout the region over the last two years. The shift has shaken the foundations of American security strategy in the Middle East and is having its greatest effect in Egypt, the Arab world's most populous and influential country. There, the United States long partnered with Mubarak and his circle of top generals in mediation efforts between Israel and the Palestinians but now faces far trickier diplomacy with Mursi.

President Barack Obama spoke with Mursi on Wednesday, but they came out of the discussion with diverging messages. A White House statement credited Egypt's "central role in preserving regional security" while stressing that Obama condemned Hamas' rocket fire from Gaza into Israel and backed the Jewish state's right to self-defense. Obama also spoke with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, urging him to avoid civilian casualties while placing responsibility clearly on Hamas to stop its attacks.

But Mursi, speaking Thursday in Cairo, provided a far different account of his conversation with Obama. He said he told Obama that Israel's offensive must stop and should not be repeated and that the leaders "agreed that Egypt and the United States will work together to prevent any escalation or the continuation of the aggression," according to a presidential statement. By "aggression," Mursi meant Israel's military action. Later he even more explicitly denounced Israel's "unacceptable aggression" and sent his prime minister to Gaza in a show of support for Hamas' rulers.

Mursi, who entered office in June, belongs to the Muslim Brotherhood party. Hamas is the Brotherhood's Palestinian chapter and has long been branded a terrorist organization by the United States, meaning American officials have no contacts with the group's members and must work through intermediaries like Egypt, Turkey and European countries to send it messages.

"There is a very clear path here to ending the violence and that's for the rocket attacks to stop, so we would hope that that's a message that would be delivered," State Department spokesman

Mark Toner said, referring to the planned visit to Gaza on Friday by Egyptian Prime Minister Hesham Kandil.

Responding to a barrage of missiles from the Gaza Strip, Israel's offensive began Wednesday with sorties that killed Hamas' military commander and destroyed dozens of rocket launchers. But Palestinian militants launched nearly 150 more rockets at Israel on Thursday, killing three people and firing into the Tel Aviv area for the first time since Saddam Hussein's Scud missiles struck Israel's largest city in the 1991 Gulf War.

Late in the day, Israel signaled a ground operation may be imminent as forces moved toward the border area with Gaza, raising the likelihood of a wider conflict following two days in which 15 Palestinians were killed.

Obama was to speak with both Mursi and Netanyahu again Thursday, a U.S. official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak publicly on the matter. The president was likely to stress similar points, with White House press secretary Jay Carney repeating the administration's assertion Thursday that there is no justification for missile strikes against Israel.

"The onus here is clearly on Hamas," Toner said. "This is a situation that they've created by firing rockets at innocent Israeli civilians."

The violence in Gaza and Israel adds to the instability plaguing the Middle East and North Africa. Syria is stuck in a civil war that has killed more than 36,000 people since March 2011, according to activists. Libya is awash with militants a year after Muammar Qaddafi's demise, a danger illustrated by the Sept. 11 terrorist attack in Benghazi that killed a U.S. ambassador and three other Americans. Northern Mali has been seized by al-Qaeda-linked rebels. Lebanese politics are in disarray. Popular discontent persists in places from Jordan to Bahrain. And Iran's continued international meddling and nuclear program has the U.S., Israel and Arab countries alike on alert.

In previous times of upheaval, Washington could count on a strong ally in Cairo. Despite his abysmal democracy and human rights record, Mubarak played a key role over his three-decade autocracy in promoting Arab-Israeli peace and helping the U.S. fight al-Qaeda and contain the influence of Iran. U.S.-Egyptian cooperation has waned on all fronts since Mubarak's February ouster, but Toner said Thursday that Egypt will uphold the 1979 Camp David Accords with the Jewish state.

"We believe the government of Egypt remains committed to its peace treaty with Israel," he said.

Still, Mursi's public comments thus far have inspired little confidence. U.S. officials say they've been confused by Mursi's messaging but remain hopeful that his government will impress upon Gaza's militant leaders the need for a cease-fire. His comments were less inflammatory, however, than the head of the Muslim Brotherhood, Mohammed Badie, who referred to Israel as "the project of the devil" in a speech Thursday in Sudan.

Mursi, Egypt's first freely-elected president, is in a tight spot of his own. Opponents at home want him to take a stronger stand against Israel, but many in the establishment fear greater friction with the U.S., which provides Egypt with \$1.5 billion in aid each year. That money is dependent on Egypt upholding its peace deal with Israel, one of the Obama administration's key remaining elements of leverage in a changing Middle East.

The Senate late Thursday approved a resolution expressing "vigorous support and unwavering commitment to the welfare, security and survival of the state of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state with secure borders." The non-binding measure, approved by voice vote, also recognizes Israel's "right to act in self-defense to protect its citizens against acts of terrorism."

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/16/249910.html?PHPSESSID=h6kms2udjs75n0t4iv0482fr62>

- **Mursi is 'illegitimate' for failing to impose Shariah: Egyptian Salafi**

An Egyptian Salafi preacher has hit out at Egypt's President Mohammed Mursi, labeling him an "illegitimate" leader for failing to enforce Islamic laws on the country since he took office.



Ahmad Ashoush, in an interview with Al Arabiya, said Mursi was brought to power according to a man-made constitution that is unrecognized by his Salafi and Jihadist fellows who, he said, only believe in laws set by God through religion.

Ashoush, however, did not call on Mursi's ouster but instead urged the enforcement of God's law.

"Having failed to enforce God's law, Mursi is like all his predecessors," he said.

Ashoush explained that Mursi's "illegitimacy" had nothing to do with his credentials but with the way he was elected.

"Mursi was elected not on the basis of Islamic Shariah [Islamic laws] but on a man-man constitution which we [Salafis] do not believe in.

"Under whatever circumstances, Mursi, the Muslim Brotherhood's presidential candidate, should not accept to rule according to civil laws that allow alcohol, adultery and gambling.

"We have no problem with Mursi but with the existing constitution and laws ... Musri is required to take a clear position towards man-made laws that allow haram," Ashoush said.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/15/249828.html?PHPSESSID=h6kms2udjs75n0t4iv0482fr62>

## 6. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Jordan vows 'iron fist' response to unrest**

Authorities warn of heavy crackdown on riots after attack on police during protests over fuel price rises.

Jordanian authorities have threatened to crack down on those who incite violence during protests with an "iron fist", while opposition groups pledge to continue demonstrations in the kingdom.



The protests, which erupted on Tuesday across the country in response to the government's raising fuel and gas prices, are the largest and most sustained to hit the country since the start of uprisings in the region nearly two years ago.

"We will hit with an iron fist those who violated the law by stirring unrest," Hussein Majali, Jordan's police chief, said on Thursday.

Armed men taking advantage of street chaos caused by the protests, fired on two police stations late on Wednesday, wounding 17 people, including 13 police officers, officials said. One of the assailants was killed in the ensuing firefight.

Assailants stormed a police station in Irbid, in the country's far north, and fired on officers there on Wednesday night.

Another police station came under attack in the northern Amman suburb of Shafa Badran, where automatic weapons were used.

In Salt, northwest of capital Amman, protesters set fire to a civil affairs office.

The scene was less deadly in Amman itself on Wednesday night, although up to 1,000 people had spilled onto the streets.

Hundreds of young men gathered at a usually busy road junction in the capital, facing off with riot police, who shot tear gas as tensions rose.

The unrest was not confined to the country's north, as about 2,000 protesters in the city of Karak, about 140km south of Amman, shouted: "Down, down with you, Abdullah," and "Get out and leave us alone" as they marched through the town on Wednesday, shattering shop windows, witnesses and police said.

#### Bulding deficit

The violence started on Tuesday night after news spread of the price increases, under which the cost of household gas will rise by 53 per cent and petrol around 12 per cent.

The measure aims to rein in a bulging budget deficit and secure a \$2bn loan from the International Monetary Fund.

Minutes after state television announced the price rises, several thousand Jordanians poured into the streets.

The hikes, followed by an 11 per cent increase in public transport fares, drew sharp condemnation from the opposition, which warned of civil disobedience in the run-up to January general elections.

"The street is seething with anger and an explosion is coming," said Zaki Bani Irsheid, the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Jordan's most powerful opposition group.

"We want to create a Jordanian Spring with a local flavour - meaning reforms in the system while keeping our protests peaceful."

## Tuesday's violence

In Amman, around 500 demonstrators clashed on Tuesday with anti-riot police and hurled stones at them after they were prevented from holding a sit-in near the interior ministry on Gamal Abdel Nasser Circle.

They set tyres and garbage containers ablaze and tried to block the main road between there and nearby Firas Circle in Jabal Hussein neighbourhood, but police prevented them and fired tear gas, an AFP journalist reported.

Violent demonstrations broke out earlier this week across all 12 of Jordan's governorates, police said.

Protesters burned tyres to block traffic, torched police and private cars and at least 20 government offices, including court buildings. Police said at least 120 people have been arrested nationwide.

In the northwestern city of Salt, tens of protesters unsuccessfully tried to storm the residence of Jordanian Prime Minister Abdullah Nsur, while in the southern city of Maan, demonstrators fired in the air to force riot police out of town, wounding one officer, police said in a statement.

Protesters have demanded the resignation of Nsur and his 36-day-old government. Police used tear gas and water cannons to break up the protest outside his home in Salt on Tuesday night.

Jordan has been hit by frequent, but small, anti-government protests over the past 23 months, but these demonstrations have squarely shifted the focus from the government to the king.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/11/2012111521951917713.html>

*\*This media summary is prepared by **ORSAM Middle East Research Assistant Sercan DOĐAN**. 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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