



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

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1. IRAQ

- **Kurdistani MP: the current government is a government of political crisis.**

BAGHDAD / NINA / MP, of the Kurdistan coalition, Hassan Jihad described the current government as a government of political crisis, not a government of national partnership, considering the remarks of MP, of the state of law, Sami al-Askari illogical and unrealistic.

He said in a statement to / NINA / "that some political forces want to bear all political problems on the Kurdistan region, considering this as matter of escaping from the political reality and the accumulated problems."

He added that "within one week three major problems occurred in Baghdad, the central bank, and the abolition of the ration card and then return for this resolution, and Russian arms deal."

The MP Sami al-Askari in State of Law coalition led by Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki accused, in a press statement, the Kurdish leadership to "play" on the subject of differences of Sunni-Shiite ", describing the talk about Shiite- Kurdish coalition" lie ", stressing that" the Kurds did not cut their relations with Israel,".

For his part, President Jalal Talabani called on the National Alliance to clarify its position from Askari's statements.

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

- **MP: Exchanging tense statements is strange and dangerous.**

BAGHDAD / NINA / MP, of the Iraqiya coalition, Etab al-Duri considered the exchange of tension statements between the State of Law coalition and the Kurdish leaders "very strange and dangerous."

She said in a statement to the National Iraqi News Agency / NINA /: "The exchange of accusations and media statements between Arab and Kurdish politicians exceeded reasonable limits and reached a dead end,"

She called Elders and wise men from both sides to "immediate intervene to avoid the consequences and put the foundations to resolve problems and take the political process and the country to safety."

She demanded political to get away from language of media escalation for the sake of Iraq and Iraqis, calling to "urgent appointment to the forthcoming national meeting to be held as soon as possible, to eliminate most of the problems between politicians."

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

- **Maliki warns Peshmerga from approaching to the armed forces.**

BAGHDAD / NINA / The Office of the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces warned the Kurdistan Regional Guard / Peshmerga / to approach the armed forces.

The semi-official Al-Iraqiya Channel said "The Office of the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces has warned the Kurdistan Regional Guard forces of relocating or approaching from the armed forces."

It is mentioned that clashes had been erupted two days ago in the district of Tuz northeast of Tikrit, between a force of the Tigris Operations Command and the Kurdish security forces, killed and wounded 18 policemen, mostly from the Tigris operations.

The head of the Kurdistan region, Massoud Barzani, said earlier that the formation of the Tigris Operations Command is an important reason for the instability and does not serve the application of Article 140 of the Constitution, adding that Tigris operations command was founded in the intentions and goals against the Kurds and coexistence in the disputed areas.

While Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki stressed that "the movement of the army must be free on every inch of the land of Iraq, and provinces or territory have no right to object", describing the movement of the Peshmerga in the disputed areas as "legal and a constitutional violation."

Maliki said that the formation of the Tigris Operations Command "is not aimed at a component or a province or national but it is administrative and regulatory action within the constitutional powers."

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

- **Dabbagh denies reports on his resignation**

Baghdad (NINA) – Official Spokesman for the Government, Ali al-Dabbagh, denied reports on his intention to resign his post in the coming days.

Source at Dabbagh's Office said on Sunday, Nov. 18, that Dabbagh did not take part in any corruptive operation while he accompanied the political delegation to Russia, aimed to conclude armament deal, and what some media outlets have reported are not true and he is staying in his post.

Some media outlet reported that Prime Minister, Nuri al-Maliki, asked the Government's Spokesman, Ali al-Dabbagh, to submit his resignation, because of being accused of receiving bribe to help conclude the Russian armament deal, to avoid political crisis as a result.

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

2. IRAN

- **Iran warns against arming Syrian rebels**

Iran has warned against sending weapons to Syrian rebels, saying it will threaten regional stability and increase the "risk of terrorism."

The Iranian Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Salehi said in a speech in Tehran on Sunday, as talks between Syrian officials and opposition groups tolerated by President Bashar al-Assad were taking place, that "some countries envisage arming the opposition with heavy and semi-heavy weaponry."

Salehi said such arms deliveries would set a "dangerous precedent" and constitute "a clear interference in the affairs of an independent country."

No National Coalition representatives were invited to the Iran talks.

His speech comes as EU foreign ministers will meet in Brussels on Monday to discuss the lifting of the arms embargo on arms deliveries to Syria.

Russia has also warned in the past that providing the coalition with weapons would be a "gross violation" of international law.

France has publicly said it favours sending "defensive" weapons to the Syrian opposition, after recognising the new Syrian National coalition by deciding to host an ambassador in Paris.

Syria has criticised the French decision as "hostile" as al-Asad forces continued their strikes on southern districts of the capital and across the country.

France on Saturday invited the group to send an envoy to Paris, after President Francois Hollande met National Coalition leader Ahmed Moaz al-Khatib.

The post of National Coalition envoy to France is to be filled by academic Monzer Makhous, although it was unclear if this would happen before a planned provisional government is formed.

"France is acting like a hostile nation," said the Syrian National Reconciliation Minister, Ali Haidar to the AFP news agency, while in Tehran.

"It's as if it wants to go back to the time of the occupation," he added of the French mandate in Syria after World War I.

The opposition coalition, formed in Doha on November 11, is committed to building a transitional government composed of representatives of all ethnic and religious groups in conflict-ridden Syria.

But it refuses to engage with the Damascus regime before al-Assad's departure.

Continued violence

On the ground, Israel said on Sunday that its artillery responded after gunfire from Syria hit an army vehicle but caused no casualties.

"Shots were fired at IDF (Israeli army) soldiers...in the central Golan Heights," an army spokeswoman told the AFP news agency, adding that the Syrian fire hit "a vehicle," but caused no injuries.

In Damascus government artillery bombarded the southern district of Al-Hajar al-Aswad, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The Britain-based watchdog, which relies on a network of activists and medics in civilian and military hospitals to compile its tolls, said one civilian was killed and several wounded.

Aleppo and surrounding areas in the north also saw heavy combat, the Observatory said, reporting fierce clashes at regime Base 46 in the province, which has been besieged for weeks.

Artillery fire also hit the provinces of Daraa in the south and Deir Ezzor in the east, where rebels on Saturday said they had seized the key regime airport of Hamdan, a base for helicopter gunships.

The Observatory said at least two rebels were killed in a government ambush in the central province of Hama.

Sunday's fighting came a day after at least 142 people were killed nationwide, according to the Observatory, which has put the death toll in more than 20 months of conflict at 39,000.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/11/20121118105216255415.html>

- **Iran calls for international consensus against Israel**

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has called for an international consensus against the ongoing Israeli aggression against Gaza and the restoration of peace and stability in the besieged Palestinian enclave.

In a telephone conversation with Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi on Sunday, Ahmadinejad hailed his Egyptian counterpart's efforts to restore peace, security and stability in Gaza.

"Our human and religious duty obliges us to make efforts to prevent the massacre of Gaza's innocent people and restore peace and sustainable security in this region and also the entire land of Palestine," Ahmadinejad said.

The Gaza Strip has been under Israeli fire for six consecutive days. Three Palestinians, including a child, were killed in the Israeli airstrikes on the enclave on Monday, raising the death toll from the aggression since Wednesday to 85.

Ahmadinejad further called for a clear plan to stop the violence and bloodshed in Gaza, urging an international consensus against the Israeli aggression. The recent attacks on Gaza rage on as Israel keeps its crippling blockade on the strip, which it imposed in 2007.

"It is necessary to make all efforts to stop the massacre of women and children and the innocent people of Gaza and Palestine," the Iranian president added.

Morsi, for his part, expressed concern over the situation of the people of Gaza and said he had been in contact with the leaders of other countries in order to reach an international consensus against Israel.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/11/19/273207/iran-urges-intl-consensus-against-israel/>

- **Iran stresses peaceful solution for Syria**

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi has reiterated Tehran’s stance in support of a peaceful resolution to the Syrian crisis through the participation of all parties involved.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly stressed, and today we once again emphasize, that we seek a peaceful Syria-Syria resolution to Syria’s issue without any foreign interference,” Salehi told reporters at the end of the Syria National Dialogue meeting held in Tehran on Sunday.

Salehi added that the Syrian government is obliged to respond to the legitimate demands of the Syrian people.

“We stress respect for Syria’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and for the legitimate demands of the Syrian nation; and these are the principles that must be taken into account in any discourse on Syria.”

According to Salehi, representatives from nearly 40 active Syrian political parties, including 130 figures from inside Syria and 40 Syrian and non-Syrian figures from other countries took part in the Sunday meeting.

He said that members of the Syrian opposition were also among the participants.

The Iranian top diplomat said the participants reiterated the need for “democracy and peace” in Syria and called for an end to “violence” in the Arab country.

Those attending the meeting agreed to establish a committee to follow through national dialog in Syria and to extend the talks to those opposition figures who had been invited to but did not attend the Tehran meeting due to various reasons, Salehi said.

Syria has been experiencing unrest since mid-March 2011. Many people, including large numbers of security personnel, have been killed in the violence.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/11/19/273218/iran-stresses-peaceful-solution-for-syria/>

3. SYRIA

- **Syrian Chief Justice announces defection from regime**

The Chief Justice of the court of Deir al-Zour in eastern Syria, Ali al-Aoun, announced his defection from Bashar al-Assad's regime citing the systematic killing of the Syrian people.

"The Syrian regime is embarking on a genocidal campaign against the people with the help of its allies," Aoun said in a special interview with Al Arabiya.

Aoun, who was also a member of the ruling Baath Party, said that dozens of Syrian officials and party members are going to follow in his footsteps very soon.

"They have all defected since the first days of the revolution, but were waiting for the right time to make their defection public. This specifically applies to the judiciary."

Aoun labeled former Syrian Prime Minister Riad Hijab, who defected in August 2012, as "the father of defectors," in that his act encouraged many Syrian officials to turn their back on the regime.

"The coming stage will witness major defections now that many officials have managed to have their families out of Syria and safely settled in Jordan or Turkey," he concluded.

Aoun said he is thankful to the Free Syrian Army, the main armed Syrian opposition, for helping him get his extended family out of Syria.

Regarding the progress of the uprising, Aoun argued that the Syrian regime has already fallen and that the liberation of the city of al-Bukamal in the Deir al-Zour governorate is very symbolic in this regard.

“Al-Bukamal is the first city that defeated the French occupation in the past, which means that it is a city known for its resistance. It will also be a safe haven for defectors and Free Syrian Army officers.”

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/18/250330.html>

- **Terrorists Headquarters, Gatherings Destroyed, Gunmen of Various Nationalities Eliminated in Several Provinces**



PROVINCES, SANA_ Our armed units clashed last night with terrorists that were intimidating the citizens, sabotaging and looting their properties in Bab al-Turkmen neighborhood in Homs, inflicting heavy losses upon them.

A source in the province to SANA reporter that the clash resulted in killing a number of terrorists including 7 of Saudi nationality who are : Jassim al-Awad, Khaled al-Farhan, Ahmed al-Sa'our, Khalaf al-Jad'an, Mohammed al-Faydeh, Adnan al-Faydeh, Bakkar Abdul al-Faydeh in addition to Tunisian terrorists who are Hardan Sami and Mohamed Ould Younis.

The source added that the Jordanian terrorists are Watheq Mohammad al-Khalaf, Khalid al-Wafi, Kamal Badran, Wardan Mohamed Arafa and Saleh al-Hardani.

The source mentioned that Khaled Alloush, Samir al-Jana, Mahmoud al-Jana, Qassim Abdul Jalil, Farhan Attieh were identified among the terrorists and hold Lebanese nationality in addition to two Egyptians who are Jawdat al-Saidi, Qassim Abdul Haq.

Mohammed al-Qasimi, Ghanim al-Qasimi and Qassim Saad Eddin were also identified among the terrorists.

Headquarters of So-Called Military Council of Terrorists Targeted in Deir Ezzor

A unit of our armed forces targeted the headquarters of the so-called military council of terrorist groups in al-Rushdieh in Deir Ezzor on Monday and killed dozens of terrorists.

Hasan Murei al-Alwan, nicknamed Hasan al-Kasmatah Abu Tammam, Mahmoud Tlass, Ismail Musa al-Tayeh and Salah al-Akol were identified among the dead.

Machinegun-equipped Cars Destroyed, Terrorists Targeted in Aleppo

Armed forces targeted a number of terrorists' hideouts near Miami Restaurant, al-Kindi Hospital and al-Bakarah Mosque in Hindarat in Aleppo.

The armed forces inflicted heavy losses upon terrorists and killed a number of leaders of the armed terrorist groups in the area.

10 cars equipped with medium and heavy machineguns were also destroyed in area...

<http://sana.sy/eng/337/2012/11/19/453151.htm>

- **Armed Forces Direct Painful Blows to Terrorists, Destroy Their Cars in Various Areas**

PROVINCES, (SANA) - Units of the Armed Forces killed scores of terrorists and destroyed their equipment in a series of qualitative operations against the armed terrorists groups in the fields surrounding Daraya city in Damascus Countryside.

An official source told SANA reporter that the Armed Forces directed strong blows against terrorists' gatherings in these fields, destroying a number of their vehicles and injuring many of them, while others fled away leaving their weapons and ammunition behind.

The source added that the army units discovered a field hospital including medicine and medical instruments and equipment which the terrorists had stolen from health centers and hospitals.

It added that a unit of the Armed Forces found a scaffold in the fields used by terrorists to execute kidnapped residents who rejected to cooperate with them.

The locals in the area told SANA reporter that the terrorists burned the bodies of their dead colleagues from non-Syrian nationalities in order not to be identified, adding that the features of the mercenary terrorists operating in the area indicate that they are from African countries.

In the town of Hjeira in Damascus countryside, an Armed Forces unit clashed with a terrorist group, eliminating all its members, some of them of non-Syrian nationalities.

An official source told SANA's correspondent that a number of very dangerous terrorists were eliminated, including Fahd Khalifa, Fares al-Ali, Khaled al-Rifai, Walid al-Rifai, and a Libyan known as Abu Huzayfa, in addition to nine terrorists from Jabhet al-NAsra.

The source added that a truck equipped with a mortarlauncher was destroyed along with the terrorists inside it near al-Zerafun restaurant in al-Hosayniye.

An army unit clashed with terrorists in al-Dyabyeh area in Damascus Countryside, killing scores of them and destroying their equipment and weapons.

An official source told SANA reporter that a Mortar was destroyed behind al-Zahraa Mosque, adding that the terrorists used to Mortar to target the locals in the area.

Armed Forces Clash with Terrorists in Deir Ezzor

A unit of our armed forces on Sunday directed painful blows to a gathering for terrorists in al-Bukamal, Deir Ezzor countryside, killing and wounding dozens of them.

An official source told SANA reporter that terrorists Mohammed Amin al-Qashqaa, Omar Mohammed al-Qashqaa, from Jiser al-Shoughour, Idleb, Said al-Raja, Ahmad al-Matroud, Khalil Hujiaj al-Kawaa, Mohammad Jassem al-Hwaini, Radwan Jawdat al-Malla, Omar al-Rawi, Abdullah Saker and Salah al-Masi were identified among the dead.

Another armed forces unit clashed with a terrorist group in al-Jbeileh district in Deir Ezzor city, killing and wounding its members.

The source said terrorist, Abdul Rahman Saleh al-Khlaif al-Habboush, a prominent member in the so-called "al-Muhajirin (the migrants) battalion" affiliated to Jabhat al-Nusra was identified among the dead.

Meanwhile, an army unit clashed with terrorists, most of whom are from Jabhat al-Nusra, near al-Ba'ajin School in the same area, killing and injuring many of them.

Another army unit killed a number of terrorists in al-Ommal neighborhood in the city and arrested terrorist Safwan Karjousli from the so-called 'Ansar al-Sunneh' battalion.

Terrorists Killed in Explosion while Stealing Gas from a Pipeline in Deir Ezzor

Scores of terrorists were killed while trying to steal gas from a pipeline in al-Tabiyeh area. An explosion occurred as the terrorists were filling gas bottles from the pipeline which caused their death.

Terrorist Rob Deir Ezzor Education Directorate

An armed terrorist group robbed the Deir Ezzor Education Directorate, stealing a large sum on money.

An official source told SANA that terrorist belonging to the so-called "al-Abbas Brigade" broke into the directorate and trashed its contents, stealing SYP 22 million.

The source added that around 30 terrorists fled Deir Ezzor towards the countryside with large sums of stolen money.

Units of the Armed Forces Eliminate Several Terrorists in Aleppo

Units of the Armed Forces carried out a series of qualitative operations against armed terrorist groups in al-Atareb, Handarat, Daret Azzah, Kafar Naha, Deir Hafer, Bani Zaid, Bustand al-Qaser and al-Maslamieh areas in Aleppo countryside and eliminated tens of terrorists.

A source in the province told SANA reporter that a unit of the Armed Forces eliminated terrorists in al-Atareb in Aleppo countryside.

The source added that units of the Armed Forces destroyed dens of terrorists which included weapons and munitions in Handarat and Daret Azzah areas.

Another unit of the Armed Forces eliminated an armed terrorist group in Kafar Naha and Deir Hafer areas.

In Aleppo city, a unit of the Armed Forces carried out a qualitative operation in Bustan al-Qaser and eliminated ten terrorists.

The Armed Forces eliminated terrorists near al-Kindi Hospital in al-Maslamieh, in addition to destroying a terrorist site near al-Zarzour Hospital in al-Ansari al-Sharqi area.

SANA reporter quoted an official source as saying that tens of terrorists were killed in clashes between two armed terrorist groups in Aleppo.

Five cars for terrorists, three of which are equipped with machineguns and the other two loaded with weapons, ammunition and terrorists, were destroyed near Saadallah al-Jaberi school in al-Sukkari area in Aleppo city.

In the meantime, a unit of the Armed Forces killed a number of terrorists near the Fifth Industrial School in al-Salehin area, including terrorist Mohammad Abu Dan, leader of an armed terrorist group.

Armed Forces Clear Several Areas in Countryside of Kasab in Lattakia of Terrorists

Units of the Armed Forces cleared several areas in the countryside of Kasab in Lattakia province of the armed terrorist groups, inflicting heavy losses upon their members.

A source in the province told SANA reporter that the army units cleared a large part of al-Frunloq forests and the areas of Jabal al-Nasr, Nabei al-Mur and the broadcasting station in Kasab of the terrorists who caused huge damage to these areas.

The source added that the Armed Forces are continuing their mission in pursuing the vanquished terrorists.

Authorities Clash with Terrorist Groups in Homs

Authorities clashed with armed terrorist groups in a number of Homs neighborhoods, inflicting heavy losses upon them.

SANA reporter quoted a source in the province as saying that the authorities clashed with terrorists from Bab Hood and Bab al-Turkman, al-Warsheh, al-Safsafeh and al-Qalaa neighborhoods, killing and injuring many of them.

The source added that the authorities destroyed a vehicle equipped with a machinegun and a bulldozer, killing all terrorists inside near al-Mreij area in al-Rastan in the countryside of Homs.

<http://sana.sy/eng/337/2012/11/19/452984.htm>

4. ISRAEL-PALESTINE

- **Israel kills 10 Palestinians, destroys Hamas Cabinet building**

Israeli air strikes killed 10 Palestinians and destroyed the Hamas government building on Saturday as the Jewish state called up thousands more reservists for a possible ground war.



“The cabinet headquarters was targeted with four strikes and the government stresses that it remains committed to its positions and its stand alongside the people,” the Hamas government said in a statement.

Eyewitnesses and Hamas officials said the building located in the Nasser neighborhood of Gaza City was virtually leveled in the strike.

“The headquarters was completely destroyed and neighboring houses were damaged as a result of the barbaric Israeli bombing,” a Hamas official said.

After Palestinian militants fired rockets at the heart of Israel on Friday, Israeli warplanes carried out 180 air strikes overnight, Israel television reported.

“It’s like a real-life horror movie, what I saw today... It’s a miracle we’re still alive,” said 18-year-old Suha, standing outside her house.

Medics said 40 Gazans have been killed and more than 390 wounded since Israel launched its aerial campaign on Wednesday afternoon, with at least five militants among 10 people killed on Saturday.

As the toll rose, sirens sounds in Tel Aviv for a third day, sending people scuttling for cover a day after a rocket hit the sea near the city center, AFP correspondents said.

Officials said one rocket was intercepted by the Iron Dome anti-missile system while a second hit somewhere in the Tel Aviv metropolitan area.

International reactions

In Egypt, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Israel would be held to account for the children killed.

“Everyone must know that sooner or later there will be a holding to account for the massacre of these innocent children killed inhumanely in Gaza,” he said in a speech in Cairo.

The United States called for diplomacy and “de-escalation” as a way to end the crisis.

Ben Rhodes, White House deputy national security adviser, told reporters the United States “wants the same thing as the Israelis want,” which is an end to rocket attacks on Israel by Palestinian militants in Gaza.

Arab League chief Nabil al-Arabi, meanwhile, pledged to support Palestinians against “Israel's aggression” and to end the blockade of Gaza as Arab ministers began emergency talks on the conflict in Cairo Saturday.

“We pledge to the Palestinians in Gaza and everywhere to provide support to confront this aggression and break the siege,” he said at the start of the meeting.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/17/250100.html>

- **19 dead in Gaza airstrikes**

BETHLEHEM (Ma'an) -- Multiple airstrikes killed 19 people and injured dozens more as Israel's assault on the Gaza Strip entered its sixth day Monday, a Ma'an reporter said.



An airstrike on a car in the Tal al-Hawa district of Gaza City killed 23-year-old Muhammad Riyad Shamlakh on Monday morning, medics said.

Mahmoud Said Abu Khatir and Abdullah Harb Abu Khatir were killed by a missile from Israeli jets targeting a motorcycle in Khan Younis in south Gaza. Eyewitnesses told Ma'an that the victims were passersby and the motorcyclist was not hurt.

Israeli aircraft targeted a car in the central Gaza Strip earlier Monday morning, killing three people, eyewitnesses said. Tamer Bashir, Amin al-Bashir and Rashid Abu Amrah were killed when the vehicle they were traveling in was hit in Deir al-Balah.

Meanwhile an airstrike killed Omar and Ibrahim al-Astal in al-Qarara in southern Gaza. A four-year girl was seriously injured in the same raid.

At dawn, Muhammed Iyad Abu Zour, 4, Abu Zour, 19, Ahed Al-Qatati, 38, and Sahar Abu Zour were killed after airstrikes hit a house in the al-Zaitoun neighborhood of Gaza City.

Gaza emergency services spokesman Adham Abu Salmiya said Abdul-Rahman Muhammad al-Attar killed in airstrike on north Gaza.

Muhammad Salameh Jundi, 31, was killed in the al-Shujaiyeh neighborhood, Imad Abu Hamda, 30, was killed in al-Shati refugee camp, and Jalal Nasr, 35, died from wounds sustained in a strike on Jabaliya, north of Gaza.

An 18-month-old baby, Rama al-Shandi, was also reported killed in the strikes.

Thirty other people were wounded in the attacks and reporters in Gaza City said a massive blast at 2 a.m. damaged a police station.

In Rafah, three people were killed in two airstrikes targeting the city. One person was reported injured.

Another man died from injuries sustained during the bombardment earlier this week. He was identified as Ramadan Mahmoud of al-Maghazi camp.

Israel's army said it targeted 80 sites across the Gaza Strip overnight Sunday, including "underground rocket launching sites, terror tunnels and training bases, inflicting severe damage to the rocket launching capabilities of terror organizations operating out of the Gaza Strip."

Over 1,350 sites in the Gaza Strip have been targeted since Israel launched Operation Pillar of Cloud on Wednesday, an army statement said.

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=539377>

- **At least 10 Palestinian civilians killed overnight**

At least ten Palestinian civilians and two field commanders from the Islamic Jihad faction were killed and at least 30 other Palestinians were hurt in IAF airstrikes overnight Sunday, Gaza hospital officials said, bringing the death toll from six days of clashes in Gaza to 85.

Conflicting reports said up to 16 Palestinians were killed in the strikes overnight.

<http://www.ipost.com/Headlines/Article.aspx?id=292518>

- **Gaza death toll soars despite calls for truce**

Israeli airstrikes have pounded Gaza for a sixth day successive day, raising to 84 the number of Palestinians killed, as the UN Secretary General calls for an immediate ceasefire.

Three people, including two children, were killed and 30 others were injured in the latest air strike before dawn on Monday on a family home in the Zeitoun neighbourhood in Gaza City, medical officials said. Israel bombed 80 locations in Gaza overnight, the military said on Monday, as officials prepared for a ground offensive if talks for a truce fail.

Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary General, was due to arrive in Cairo to add his weight to the truce efforts after Egypt took the lead in trying to broker a ceasefire and its officials met the parties on Sunday.

Israeli media said a delegation from Israel had been to Cairo for talks on ending the attacks.

Mohamed Morsi, Egypt's president, met with Khaled Meshaal, the political leader of Hamas, which runs the Gaza Strip, and Ramadan Shallah of Islamic Jihad as part of the mediation efforts.

Gaza health officials said that 84 Palestinians, at least 23 of them children and several women, had been killed since Israel's airstrikes began.

Hundreds of others have been wounded and Palestinian hospitals are struggling to cope.

Civilian casualties

The Israeli army said it had fired missiles at over 1,300 locations in Gaza since Wednesday, and that 544 rockets were fired back against Israel. Three Israelis have been killed and a few dozen wounded.

The army said that some 302 rockets were intercepted by Iron Dome and 99 failed to reach Israel and landed inside Gaza.

Ashraf al-Kidra, a spokesperson of the health ministry in Gaza, said on Sunday that civilians accounted for half of the Palestinian death toll. More than 750 other Palestinians have been wounded.

In the single deadliest attack of the Israeli operation so far, 12 civilians were killed in Sunday's air attack on a four-storey house in northern Gaza City, health officials said.

Two or three missiles fired by F-16 fighter jets reduced the house in the Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood to rubble, witnesses said.

Five women, including one 80-year-old, and four small children were among the dead, Kidra said.

The Israeli military said that they had mistakenly bombed the home due to a technical error while targeting a senior Hamas official, the Haaretz newspaper reported.

The report says that the military admitted killing mainly "unarmed civilians, including children and infants", and that the source of the error was either the failure to paint the target of the attack on the correct site or that one of the munitions in the strike misfired.

Earlier, medical sources in Gaza said at least three children - including an 18-month-old infant - and two women were killed in a air raid east of Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza.

'Immediate ceasefire'

Ban expressed grave concern in a statement before setting off for the region. He will visit Israel on Tuesday.

"I am deeply saddened by the reported deaths of more than ten members of the Dalu family... (and) by the continuing firing of rockets against Israeli towns, which have killed several Israeli civilians," Ban said.

"I strongly urge the parties to cooperate with all efforts led by Egypt to reach an immediate ceasefire," he said.

Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister, said that he had assured world leaders that Israel was doing its utmost to avoid causing civilian casualties. However, many of the Palestinians killed are women and children.

Fighters in Gaza launched dozens of rockets and targeted Tel Aviv for a fourth day on Sunday. Israel's "Iron Dome" missile shield shot down all three rockets.

In scenes recalling Israel's 2008 War on Gaza, tanks, artillery and infantry have massed in field encampments along the sandy, fenced-off border with Gaza and military convoys moved on roads in the area.

Israel has authorised the call-up of 75,000 reservists, although there was no immediate sign when or whether they might be needed in a ground invasion.

Israel's operation has so far drawn Western support for what US and European leaders have called its right to self-defence, but there have also been a growing number of appeals to seek an end the attacks against civilians.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/11/2012111965527583514.html>

- **Israel strikes pushes Gaza death toll to 87 as truce talks intensify**

Israeli air strikes across the Gaza Strip killed 10 people early on Monday, raising the Palestinian death toll to 87 as as Israel's relentless air campaign entered its sixth day.

The latest to die were Ibrahim al-Astal and Obama al-Astal, two farmers who were killed in a strike in Qarara, east of Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip, the Hamas-run

Shortly before that, three people were killed in a strike on a car in Deir al-Balah in central Gaza, all of them from the same family: Amir Bashir, Tamal Bashir and Salah Bashir, Qudra said.

In Gaza City, two women and a child were among four killed in a strike on the Zeitun neighbourhood -- Nisma Abu Zorr, 23, Mohammed Abu Zorr, 5, Saha Abu Zorr, 20 and Ahid al-Qatati 35,

And medics said another man had been found dead in the northern town of Beit Lahiya, naming him as Abdel Rahman al-Atar, a 50-year-old farmer.

The strike in Zeitun came after a night that saw Israeli war planes level a Gaza City police station as navy ships kept up sustained fire at the Gaza shore, AFP news agency correspondents said.

The deaths came after multiple raids on Sunday that killed 31, in the bloodiest day of Israel's bombing campaign, medics said.

The number of injuries rose over 700, officials said.

At least 10 children, five of them babies and toddlers, and six women were among those killed on Sunday, in attacks that came even as diplomatic efforts intensified to broker an end to the bloodshed which began on Wednesday.

The violence has also cost the lives of three Israelis and injured more than 50, according to medical sources.

By far the deadliest strike was in northern Gaza City where a missile levelled a three-storey building, killing nine members of the Al-Dallu family -- five of them children -- and two other people, medics said.

Qudra named the dead as policeman Mohammed al-Dallu, 35, Suheila al-Dallu, 50, Samah al-Dallu, 22, and five children: Jamal and Sara, whose ages were not immediately available, five-year-old Yussef, two-year-old Ranin, and 11-month-old Ibrahim.

The body of another woman from the same family was also pulled from the rubble but her identity was not immediately clear.

The other two victims, who lived next door, were named as Amina Mattar al-Muzzana, 83, and Abdullah Mohammed al-Muzzana, 22, Qudra said.

The Israeli army had no immediate comment on the strike, only saying the air force had hit “a few targets in northern Gaza City.”

The Palestinian Authority has asked for an urgent Arab League summit to discuss Israeli attacks on Gaza, the League said on Sunday.

The authority is headed by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, whose secular Fatah movement was driven out of Gaza five years ago by Islamist movement Hamas which now controls the Gaza Strip.

Abbas, who is based in the West Bank, has been accused by some Palestinians of not reacting energetically enough to the Israeli air strikes against Gaza.

On Saturday, Arab foreign ministers condemned the Israeli offensive on Gaza and expressed “complete discontent” at the U.N. Security Council’s failure to bring about a ceasefire.

The Arab League was discussing with its members the Palestinian request, Egyptian state news agency MENA reported.

The head of the Arab League and a group of Arab foreign ministers will visit Gaza on Tuesday to show solidarity with Palestinians

During an emergency meeting on Saturday, Palestinian Foreign Minister Riad Malki asked the Arab League for an urgent summit and for “indefinite financial support” from Arab states.

Arab ministers backed Egyptian-led efforts to mediate a truce between Palestinians and Israelis which are yet to show results.

Israel’s declared goal is to deplete Gaza arsenals and force Hamas to stop rocket fire that has bedeviled Israeli border towns for years and is now displaying greater range, putting Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in the crosshairs.

The Israeli military said 544 rockets fired from Gaza have hit Israel since Wednesday, killing three civilians and wounding dozens. Some 302 were intercepted and 99 failed to reach Israel and landed inside the Gaza Strip.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/19/250449.html>

- **Israeli ambassador quickly backtracks on ‘Hamas negotiation’ tweet**

The Israeli ambassador has backtracked on a tweet posted on his Twitter account, suggesting Israel was willing to negotiate with Hamas in an effort to stop the ongoing attacks between Palestinians and Israel.

Michael Oren, the Israeli ambassador to America, blamed staffers on Sunday, whom he claimed posted this tweet on his account: “Just appeared on the set of #CNN: #Israel willing to sit down with #Hamas – if they just stop shooting at us.”

The message goes against recent Israeli rhetoric suggesting that Hamas is a militant group that they will not negotiate with. Israel launched a massive air campaign on Gaza since last Wednesday with the declared goal of deterring Hamas, the Palestinian Islamist group that runs the Strip, from launching rockets that have plagued its southern communities for years.

Quickly, Oren's tweet was deleted and a series of explanatory posts followed.

“Correction: the earlier tweet about my CNN interview was sent erroneously by a staffer,” he later wrote.

‘I categorically deny the quote attributed to me by CNN. #Hamis is a terrorist organization dedicated to destroying #Israel & killing #Jews.

“Worldwide and #Hamis is absolutely not a partner for peace,” he wrote in follow-up posts.

But, as a writer at Britain’s Daily Mail pointed out, the problem with his retraction is that it seems less believable given his appearance on CNN.

“The people and the government and the state of Israel want peace with their neighbors and we’re willing to sit down and negotiate with them if they’re willing to sit down and negotiate with us. Everything’s on the table, we sign on to the two-state solution we’re committed to it, just stop shooting at us,” he said to CNN’s Don Lemon.

Israeli air strikes across the Gaza Strip killed 10 people early on Monday, raising the Palestinian death toll to 87 as Israel's relentless air campaign entered its sixth day.

The deaths came after multiple raids on Sunday that killed 31, in the bloodiest day of Israel’s bombing campaign, medics said.

On Sunday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned that Israel was ready to "significantly expand" its campaign against Palestinian militants in Gaza.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/19/250505.html>

- **At Least 20 Palestinians Martyred on Fifth Day of Israeli Aggression on Gaza**

GAZA, (SANA)- At least 20 Palestinians, including women and children, were martyred and tens were injured, among them journalists, on the fifth day of the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip

which has been continuing since last Wednesday claiming lives and leaving huge destruction in a series of air raids and shelling carried out by the Israeli warplanes, artillery and boats.

The Israeli occupation's warplanes shelled in the morning al-Durj police station in Gaza city, destroying it completely, and targeted a tower in which satellite channels and various local and foreign media outlets and injured a number of journalists.

These raids came a few hours after the martyrdom of two siblings, Joumana and Tamer Abu Saifan, due to a raid on their house in Jabalia, northern Gaza, according to medical sources and the Palestinian News and Info Agency , Wafa.

Child Eyad Abu Khouseh was also martyred and two others were injured in shelling which hit a house in the east of al-Breij in central Gaza.

The sources also mentioned that the bodies of martyr Ahmad Issam al-Nahhal and the 9-year-old girl Tasnim al-Nahhal al-Shifaa were admitted to al-Shifaa Medical Compound.

Meanwhile, the woman Saadiya al-Dheeb was martyred in a raid on al-Shujaiyeh neighborhood to the east of Gaza city, while medical cadres took the body of another woman, Om Rafi Abdul-Aal, from the debris of her house which was demolished in a raid on the Police Station in al-Tuffah neighborhood in northern Gaza.

In a new crime committed by the Israeli occupation forces, nine Palestinians, including 8 from al-Dalo family, were also martyred in shelling on their house the north of the Strip. A medical source confirmed that the body of the 11-month-old Ibrahim al-Dalo was found under the debris. According to a medical source, three other Palestinians, including two women, were martyred and ten others were injured in Israeli shelling in the north of Gaza city. In Rafah in the south, an Israeli warplane bombarded with missiles a house for Abu Naqireh family, causing the martyrdom of Mohammad Abu Naqireh.

The Israeli warplanes also targeted a tower in Gaza in which satellite channels and various local and foreign media outlets and injured a number of journalists. The Palestinian Resistance responded to the Israeli occupation crimes by shelling a number of settlements with several rockets.

The Palestinian Resistance responded to the Israeli occupation crimes by shelling a number of settlements with several rockets and targeting an Israeli warship.

The death toll due to the Israeli assault has so far reached 67 martyrs and more than 600 injured.
<http://sana.sy/eng/22/2012/11/19/453026.htm>

5. AFRICA and EGYPT

- **Around 400 Egypt activists cross into Gaza on ‘solidarity’ trip**

“Almost 400 of us, mostly Egyptian activists in AlShifa hospital #Gaza for solidarity rally. We got convoy through Rafah, who would've thought?” tweeted an Egypt-based activist late Sunday as the group begun their visit to the city by visiting a Gaza hospital.

A bus convoy transporting members of several Egyptian parties and political movements arrived at the country’s Rafah border crossing with Gaza, officials said, as Israeli airstrikes pounded the coastal enclave for a fifth day,

“We want the free world to stop the onslaught on defenseless civilians,” said Mahmoud Ali of the Constitution Party, according to state-owned news agency MENA. “We want to relay to the steadfast Palestinian people the support of all Egyptians.”

The Egyptian online newspaper, Ahram Online, reported the number of activists crossing into Gaza had reached 550, with the convoy including eight buses, along with several other smaller vehicles.

“We brought them medical supplies in coordination with the Egyptian Red Crescent,” activist Amira Sheaishaa said.

“We all entered through Rafah border ... 100s now attempting to enter Gaza,” activist Gigi Ibrahim said on her Twitter account, according to AFP.

But early Monday, members of the delegation began tweeting that they were witness to “large explosions” which shook Gaza.

“Jesus that was close. Massive explosion next to us by Al-Sifaa [sic] hospital followed by another one on other side. Ambulances coming in #Gaza,” Twitter user @Beltrew, a Cairo-based journalist, posted on the microblogging site.

Israeli air strikes on Sunday killed at least 31 Palestinians in the bloodiest day of its massive air campaign to halt rocket fire from the Gaza Strip.

Egypt is at the center of efforts to broker a ceasefire. Security officials in Cairo said an Israeli envoy also arrived in the Egyptian capital on Sunday for talks.

Under former President Hosni Mubarak, relief convoys were seldom allowed to cross into Gaza.
<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/19/250463.html>

- **Egyptian President Mursi absent at enthronement of Pope Tawadros II**

President Mohamed Mursi was absent at the installation ceremony of the new Coptic Pope Tawadros II on Sunday to the dismay of Christians who fear being sidelined in the new Islamist-led Egypt.

Pope Tawadros II was installed at Cairo's Abbasiya Cathedral in a ceremony attended by Christian leaders from several countries as well as Egyptian public figures.

A church source had told Reuters: “We don’t know why Mursi will not attend but it is a major event and nothing should stand in the way of him attending ... Christians always had a strong feeling that he does not want to come.”

A presidential source said there had been no government announcement regarding Mursi’s plans.

Mursi, who hails from the Muslim Brotherhood, has repeatedly said he is the president of all Egyptians but Christians cite recent cases of religious intimidation by radical Islamists, such as a raid earlier this month on a party to promote interfaith harmony, as a sign of things to come.

Coptic rights activist and lawyer Peter el-Naggar said: “President Mursi’s decision not to attend comes as a surrender to pressures that some (ultra-orthodox Islamist) Salafi groups and others put on him.”

“The presidency has previously announced that the president will attend if he got invited, and he was invited,” he said.

Egypt’s Coptic minority is the Middle East’s largest Christian community.

Pope Tawadros II told Reuters earlier this month that a constitution being drafted by Egypt’s politicians must be inclusive and that the church would oppose any text that only addressed one part of the Muslim-majority nation.

Tawadros told Al Arabiya earlier this month that the security situation, not the dominance of Islamists, is what prompts Egyptians - Christians and Muslims alike - to leave the country, new.

Tawadros said since country’s 2011 revolution, the security situation compelled Egyptians to emigrate, rebuffing claims that Coptic Egyptians are leaving the country more than Muslims.

While Shariah (Islamic law) is not applicable to Christians in Egypt, Tawadros rejected article 2 in the constitution , which states that the “principles” of Islamic Sharia law are the main source of legislation.

He said article 2 will not grant Christians in Egypt their rights.

The marginalization of Christians is what has compelled his predecessor, Pope Shenouda III, to take more of a political role.

But he is uninvolved in politics, he said, adding that the Church as an institution is spiritual and not political.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/18/250411.html>

- **Deaths reported in Kenya bus blast**

At least five people have been killed after a grenade destroyed a minibus in a Somali-dominated part of Nairobi, Kenyan security officials say.

Police said Sunday's blast in the capital's Eastleigh neighbourhood was probably caused by an explosive device.

Al Jazeera's Catherine Soi, reporting from the scene of the explosion, said here is a big population of Somalis in Eastleigh, adding that "it is very worrying because just last week there were two IED attacks in this neighbourhood", using the acronym for improvised explosive devices

"I saw bodies ripped apart," a Reuters photographer who witnessed Sunday's blast.

Moses Ombati, Nairobi regional police commander, said a grenade had been thrown into the minibus, commonly referred to as matatus in Kenya.

He confirmed that five people had been killed, while the Kenya Red Cross said on its Twitter account that seven people had died and 24 had been taken to hospital.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack.

The force of the explosion tore apart the vehicle's roof and seats and shattered the window of a nearby cafe. Two other cars were damaged, the photographer said.

"There was a passenger on the minibus and he came out just before the explosion," our correspondent said.

"People have been injured and they've been taken to the hospital; police are at the scene."

Kenya has suffered a string of deadly attacks in Nairobi, the southern port city of Mombasa as well as the eastern garrison town of Garissa over the past year.

The attacks have been blamed on Somali groups and their sympathisers in retaliation for Kenya's decision to send troops into Somalia last year to drive out al-Qaeda-linked fighters which Kenya has blamed for attacks on its territory.

African Union peacekeepers, led by Kenyan forces, drove al-Shabaab out of their last major urban stronghold of Kismayu in southern Somalia seven weeks ago.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/11/20121118135632876369.html>

- **Egypt's new Coptic pope enthroned**

The new pope of Egypt's Orthodox Coptic church was enthroned in an elaborate ceremony lasting nearly four hours, attended by the nation's Muslim prime minister and a host of cabinet ministers and politicians.

Pope Tawadros II, 60, was elected November 4, but the official enthronement ceremony was held on Sunday at the Coptic cathedral in Cairo.

He replaced Shenouda III, who died in March after leading the ancient church for 40 years.

The packed cathedral repeatedly erupted into applause as the ceremony progressed.

The ceremony's climax came when the papal crown was placed on Tawadros' head before he sat on the throne of St Mark, the Coptic church's founding saint.

Tawadros did not address the televised ceremony, but had a brief speech read on his behalf by one of the church's leaders in which he pledged to work for the good of Egypt, with its Muslims and Christians alike.

Egypt's Christians make up about 10 per cent of the nation's estimated 83 million people, making them the largest single Christian community in the Middle East.

Christians have long complained of discrimination, particularly in the last four decades as the country's Muslim majority moved toward religious conservatism.

The rise to power of Islamists after the ouster nearly two years ago of authoritarian leader Hosni Mubarak has deepened their concerns, amid increasing attacks targeting their churches and businesses.

Vatican Radio said he expressed hope that relations between the Catholic Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church will continue to grow both "in a fraternal spirit of collaboration" as well as "through a deepening of the theological dialogue".

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/11/2012111821348705466.html>

- **Tunisian detainee dies after hunger strike**

A prominent figure in Tunisia's Salafist movement has died nearly two months after launching a hunger strike following his arrest for an attack on the US embassy, his lawyer and the justice ministry have said.

Mohammed Bakhti died in hospital on Saturday, two days after the death of another suspect, the 26-year-old student Bechir Gholli. They were among dozens of Salafists, hardline Muslims, on hunger strike over prison conditions.

"It's a shame that Tunisians die in prison after the revolution," Bakhti's lawyer, Anouar Aouled Ali, told Reuters.

The lawyer had warned that Bakhti, who was suffering from a brain haemorrhage, was in critical condition for several days.

Bakhti and Gholli started their hunger strike in late September, days after their arrest for a September 14 attack on the US embassy during which four of the assailants were killed in clashes with security forces.

They insisted they were innocent and protested over the conditions of detention, while the Salafist movement charged it was being victimised by the authorities.

Bakhti was considered a senior figure in the jihadist movement and close to Abu Iyad, the alleged organiser of the embassy attack who is on the run.

He was jailed for 12 years in 2007 for bloody clashes between the army and Islamists in Soliman, near the capital Tunis, under Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's regime but released under an amnesty declared after the 2011 revolution.

In the attack on the US mission, several hundred protesters, angry over an anti-Islam film made in the United States, stormed the sprawling embassy compound in a suburb of Tunis.

More than 100 people were detained following the attack.

Tunisia became the birthplace of the "Arab Spring" in January 2011 when protesters overthrew a long-established government and sent political shockwaves through the Arab world.

"The death of Tunisians because of hunger strikes is unacceptable .. the government should respond to the demands of the rest of the hunger strikers," Imen Triki, president of the Freedom and Fairness human rights group, said.

"We regret the death of any Tunisian .. We have made many attempts to persuade Gholli and Bakhti to stop the hunger strike, but they refused and we provided them medical assistance," Justice Minister Nouredine Behiri said on Friday.

The deaths of the two Salafists could embarrass the Islamic government, which is under pressure from both Salafists calling for the introduction of Islamic law and secular opposition parties determined to prevent this.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/11/20121117101314405163.html>

6. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Protesters in Jordan capital call for king to quit**

AMMAN, (Reuters) - Around 2,000 people called for the removal of Jordan's King Abdullah at a rally in downtown Amman on Friday in protest at fuel price hikes, in a marked escalation of street anger in the third day of demonstrations in the Western-backed kingdom.

"Go down Abdullah, go down," the protesters chanted as police, some in riot gear, largely stayed away from crowd, near the main Hussein Mosque.

The crowd also chanted "The people want the downfall of the regime", the rallying cry of the Arab Spring uprisings that have shaken the Middle East and toppled leaders in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen.

"Shame. Shame. Prices are spiking and Abdullah gambles," people shouted.

The Muslim Brotherhood, the country's largest opposition group, had called on people to take to the streets, but top officials from the group choose not to participate in the rally.

The 50-year-old king has ruled since 1999.

<http://www.asharq-e.com/news.asp?section=1&id=31828>

- **Mansour : Decisions of Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting Do not Upgrade to Level of National Responsibilities**

BEIRUT, (SANA)- Lebanese Foreign Minister Adnan Mansour said that the decisions of the Arab Foreign Ministers' meeting held in Cairo on the Israeli aggression on Gaza Strip do not upgrade to the level of national and pan-Arab responsibilities.

"Arabs possess the pressure means that could give the Arab world a big power to impose its will," Mansour added in an interview with the Lebanese al-Manar TV Channel on Sunday, expressing regret that these means had not been used.

" Such pressure means to be used there should by an Arab consensus," the Minister said.

He called for activating the Israeli boycott bureau and to boycott all the foreign companies that deal with Israel.

Minister Mansour slammed the Arab League (AL) stance towards the Israeli aggression on Gaza and its stance towards the crisis in Syria as it goes too far in the Syrian file due to the foreign pressures and internal factors.

He went on to say the Arab countries to reach a unified stance towards Palestine there should be united will.

Mansour said that despite suspending Syria's Arab League membership, but its role has always been a national and pan-Arab one as it is not far from the Palestinian cause. " The countries that worked to keep Syria away from the Arab League couldn't take its role and presence in the region as no state could replace it."

<http://sana.sy/eng/22/2012/11/19/453154.htm>

7. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **King Abdullah undergoes successful surgery - Royal Court**

RIYADH Asharq Al-Awsat - the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud has undergone successful back surgery at a hospital in, Riyadh, to tighten a loose ligament, the royal court said in a statement Sunday.

"Surgery was performed at the National Guard's King Abdulaziz Medical City in Riyadh on Saturday ... where a loose ligament in the upper back was tightened," the SPA news agency, said.

"With God's help, the surgery ended at 0315 on Sunday morning ... and thanks be to God it was successful," it added.

<http://www.asharq-e.com/news.asp?section=1&id=31853>

8. AFGHANISTAN - PAKISTAN

- **Former JI chief Qazi Hussain escapes bomb attack in Mohmand**

PESHAWAR: The former chief of the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI), Pakistan's largest religio-political party, narrowly escaped a bomb attack on Monday as a female suicide bomber detonated her explosives near his convoy in northwest Mohmand tribal agency.

Shamsur Rehman Khan says Qazi Husain Ahmad, the former JI chief, escaped unhurt from the attack.

Khan, who is a government administrator in Mohmand, says the bomber was wearing a burqa and had explosives strapped to her body.

The suicide bomber detonated her explosives after a vehicle with the former JI chief had passed, a government official said.

Another local official, Jamshed Khan, confirmed the incident and said “pieces of female clothes and hair found from the site make us believe that the attacker was a woman”.

Five people, including the bodyguard of the former JI chief, were injured in the attack, officials said. A vehicle was also damaged although Ahmad’s vehicle was not damaged or hit by the force of the blast.

Qazi Hussain was heading to Mian Mandi area in Mohmand tribal region to address a congregation of the party and to inaugurate a centre of the organisation.

Mohmand is one of seven districts in Pakistan’s restive semi-autonomous tribal belt, where Pakistani Taliban and al Qaeda-linked militants are said to have carved out strongholds.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Pakistani Taliban chief Hakimullah Mehsud reportedly criticized the Jamaat-i-Islami and singled out Ahmad in particular in a recent audio message, accusing him of supporting Pakistan’s US-allied rulers.

<http://dawn.com/2012/11/19/qazi-hussain-escapes-bomb-attack-in-mohmand-tribal-region/>

- **PM Ashraf inaugurates D-8 convention**

ISLAMABAD: A four-day meeting of the Developing-8 (D-8) countries begins on Monday, DawnNews reported.

Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf inaugurated the four-day D-8 exhibition.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, PM Ashraf said that D-8 countries need to promote trade and the level of access to each others market should be equal.

“Pakistan believes in trade not in aid,” said the prime minister.

The prime minister said that the D-8 convention took significant measure to promote bilateral trade and this exhibition will also play an important role in enhancing the bilateral trade.

According to Raja Pervez Ashraf, the D-8 countries have the potential to boost the industrial sector.

Furthermore, he added D-8 countries should come forward towards sustainable commercial cooperation for peace and development in the region.

The event will be attended by leaders and representatives from Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria and Turkey. It will project Pakistan as a business destination and underscore the linkage of democracy with peace and development.

Presidents Mohamed Morsi of Egypt, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran and Goodluck Ebele Jonathan of Nigeria and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey will attend the summit. Malaysia is likely to be represented by its deputy prime minister and Bangladesh by its foreign minister.

<http://dawn.com/2012/11/19/pm-ashraf-inaugurates-d-8-convention/>

- **Two killed in blast near Imambargah: Sectarian attack unnerves Karachi**

KARACHI: Already tormented by terrorist and sectarian killings for more than a month, Karachi had another terrifying experience on Sunday evening when a bomb went off near an Imambargah in Abbas Town locality of Gulshan-i-Iqbal. At least two people were killed and over a dozen others injured.

Despite extensive security measures taken in the city to avert incidents of terrorism, the assailant succeeded to park an explosives-laden motorcycle near the Imambargah where a Muharram Majlis was to be held. The bomb, police said, was detonated by a remote-control device.

Although there were intelligence reports about threats of such attacks, particularly in the first ten days of Muharram, the blast near the Masjid-o-Imambargah Mohammad-i-Mustafa could not be prevented. Besides police, Rangers were also posted at the place.

A spokesman for the Rangers said five Rangers personnel were among the wounded and one of them was in serious condition in Abbasi Shaheed Hospital. The others were taken to the Rangers hospital.

The explosion took place minutes before the Majlis was to begin. But, despite the blast, the Majlis was held as scheduled.

The blast ripped through a number of shops, dislodged an electric pole and damaged a transformer, plunging the entire area into darkness, residents said. A truck carrying bakery products was also damaged.

The IED-rigged motorcycle had been parked just before the Majlis was to begin, IG Sindh Fayyaz Leghari said.

Additional IG of Karachi Iqbal Mehmood told a private TV channel that police had recommended a ban on motorcycle riding during Ashura in the city.

“Initial reports suggest the IED (improvised explosive device) weighing three to four kilogram had been rigged in the motorcycle,” DIG East Shahid Hayat told Dawn.

Some of the injured were taken to the nearby Patel Hospital and others to a private hospital on Stadium Road.

One of the deceased was identified as Azhar Hussain, but the identity of the other body could not be ascertained.

“We have received the body of an 18-year-old boy from the Patel Hospital,” in-charge of the emergency ward of the JPMC Dr Seemin Jamali said.

The body of Azhar Hussain was taken to Incholi area in a procession.

With enraged youth protesting and shouting slogans, no senior police officer went to the site of the blast. A team of the bomb disposal squad appeared there an hour after the blast.

In a similar attack, at least seven people were killed when an IDE rigged in a motorcycle ripped through a busy market in a North Nazimabad area dominated by Bohri community on Sept 19.

On Nov 9, three Rangers personnel were killed when an explosives-laden truck rammed into a Rangers compound in North Nazimabad.

<http://dawn.com/2012/11/19/two-killed-12-injured-in-blast-near-imambargah-sectarian-attack-unnerves-karachi-2/>



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This media summary is prepared by **ORSAM Assistant Ebru DEMİR. 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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