



# MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

## GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

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## 1. IRAQ

- **Committee of Peshmerga visits Kirkuk**

Kirkuk / NINA / The committee of the Peshmerga in Kurdistan Parliament has visited the city of Kirkuk today 20, Nov.

The reporter of the National Iraqi News Agency / NINA / said that the committee members held a meeting upon arrival with the governor of Kirkuk Najimalddin Kareem and discussed with him the recent security developments south of Kirkuk.

The differences between the Kurdistan region and the central government have escalated in recent times, especially after the formation of the Tigris forces to maintain security in Diyala, Kirkuk and Salah al-Din, in which the Kurds considered that as violation of the constitution and an interference in the disputed areas.

On last Friday clashes erupted between elements of the Tigris forces and Personal Protection team of a Kurdish member in the city of Tuz Khurmatu, east of the city of Tikrit, killing one civilian and wounding a number of Tigris operations forces.

The commander in chief of the armed forces, Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki warned yesterday, the Peshmerga forces of change positions and move closer to the positions of the armed forces.

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

- **Jawhar: Talabani-Barazani meeting to discuss mechanism of getting out of the crisis**

Erbil (NINA) – Media Advisor to the Speaker of Kurdistan Parliament, Tariq Jawhar, said that Tuesday's, Nov. 20, meeting between President Jalal Talabani and the President of Kurdistan Region, Massoud Barazani, in Erbil is to discuss available mechanism to solve the political crisis.

In a statement to NINA on Monday, Nov. 19, Jawhar said that Iraq is going through a very dangerous domestic problem; all have to bear their responsibilities toward getting out of current crisis.

He added, "Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki has to review his policies toward others, especially the Kurds." He pointed out that Maliki has renounced all his agreements and commitments, especially the last he made to the President on dissolving Dijla Operations.

Jawhar went on saying that the Kurdish leadership supports initiating new serious dialogue toward solving the problems to reach internal stability.

On Monday morning, President Jalal Talabani arrived in Erbil coming from Sulaymaniya, and he is scheduled to meet on Tuesday with President Barazani.

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

- **MP: Kurdish objection is internal war**

BAGHDAD / NINA / MP of the state of law, Fatima al-Zerqani described Kurdistan's objection to the establishment of the Tigris Operations Command as "internal war".

She said in a press statement: "The formation of the Tigris operations is normal, because the General Command of the Armed Forces felt the need to form this leadership in those areas," indicating that "the Tigris operations does not target any of the components of Iraq, but it was formed to protect them."

She added: "The Iraqi army forces, according to the Constitution, have the right to enter any area because they are federal forces" adding that "the objection to the Tigris operation is "to keep sensitive areas under the control of a certain political party to order to influence negotiation and elections and wealth in the future ".

It is mentioned that last Friday saw clashes between elements of the Tigris operations and the Personal Protection of a Kurdish member in the district of Tuz east of Tikrit, which resulted in the death of one civilian and wounding 18 of the elements of the Tigris operations forces.

The Office of the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces Nuri al-Maliki has warned yesterday, the Peshmerga forces of change positions and move closer to the positions of the armed forces.

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

## 2. IRAN

- **Pakistan against unilateral sanctions on Iran: Pakistani FM**

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar has censured the unilateral Western sanctions imposed against Iran over its nuclear energy program.



The Pakistani foreign minister said on Tuesday that her country abides by international rules and regulations but is against any unilateral sanctions imposed on "any country."

Rabbani Khar made the remarks ahead of the eighth summit of the Group of Eight Developing Countries (D8) scheduled to be held in Islamabad on November 22, 2012.

Since the beginning of 2012, the United States and the European Union have imposed illegal sanctions on Iran's oil and financial sectors with the goal of preventing other countries from purchasing Iranian crude and conducting transactions with the Central Bank of Iran. The sanctions entered into force in early summer 2012.

On October 15, the EU foreign ministers reached an agreement on another round of sanctions against Iran.

The illegal US-engineered sanctions have been imposed based on the unfounded accusation that Iran is pursuing non-civilian objectives in its nuclear energy program.

Iran says its nuclear activities are entirely peaceful, arguing that as a committed signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency, it has the right to use nuclear technology for civilian purposes.

Rabbani Khar further underlined the necessity for boosting trade among the D8 member states. She said the current volume of trade between the group's member countries stand at USD 130 billion, adding that the figure will increase to USD 507 billion over the next ten years.

The D8 group comprises Iran, Turkey, Malaysia, Pakistan, Nigeria, Egypt, Bangladesh and Indonesia.

Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is scheduled to travel to Pakistan to attend the D8 summit, during which Pakistan will assume the rotational presidency of the D8 until 2014.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/11/20/273460/pakistan-slams-unilateral-bans-on-iran/>

- **Iran will help Syria restore stability: Salehi**

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi says the Islamic Republic will continue its efforts to help resolve the ongoing crisis in Syria and restore peace and stability in the country.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran has used and will use all of its political capacity and capability to help the Syrian people move beyond the



current sensitive conditions and restore stability and security in the country,” Salehi said in a meeting with Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim, Syriac Orthodox Archbishop of Syria's Aleppo, on the sidelines of the second day of the Syria National Dialogue meeting in Tehran on Monday.

The Syrians themselves must determine their destiny and any political reform in their country must be undertaken by the Syrian nation, Salehi stressed.

The Iranian foreign minister lashed out at certain foreign countries that seek to create a political vacuum in the Arab country and warned of the dire consequences of the persistence of insecurity in Syria particularly for its neighboring countries.

“It is only the Zionist regime (Israel) that benefits from a weak and insecure Syria,” Salehi added.

Yohanna Ibrahim, for his part, described the Syria National Dialogue meeting as very important and hailed Iran’s role in settling the Syrian unrest as crucial and influential.

The archbishop also called for the continuation of the talks between all Syrian parties to bring an end to the crisis in the Arab Country.

The two-day meeting on Syria with the main theme of “No to Violence, Yes to Democracy” wrapped up in Tehran on Monday with the participants unanimously opposing foreign interference and calling for a peaceful solution to the Syrian conflict.

Salehi had earlier said that representatives from nearly 40 active Syrian political parties, including 130 figures from inside Syria and 40 Syrian and non-Syrian figures from other countries, had taken part in the meeting.

Those attending the meeting agreed to form a committee to follow through national dialog in Syria and to extend the talks to other Syrian groups to prepare the ground for national reconciliation and political reforms.

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

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/11/20/273449/iran-to-help-syria-restore-stability/>

- **Israel plots to weaken Islamic resistance: Iran**

Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast says Israel and its supporters have plotted "seditions" in the region to weaken the Islamic resistance front.

"We had repeatedly warned that the seditions in the region are plotted by the Zionist regime [of Israel] and the regime's supporters with the aim of getting regional countries involved and interfering in the internal and regional issues in order to weaken the Islamic resistance front," Mehmanparast said on Tuesday during his weekly press conference.

He added that the Israeli regime's attacks against Gaza and the massacre of women and children proved that Israel had been neglected as the main threat in the region.

Israeli airstrikes and shelling have left at least 112 Palestinians dead and over 900 others injured since November 14. Twenty seven children were among the Palestinian fatalities.

Referring to the measures taken by Iran following Israel's attack on the costal enclave, Mehmanparast said, "[Iranian] Foreign Minister [Ali Akbar] Salehi has announced the readiness of the Islamic Republic to send humanitarian aid, particularly medicine, medical equipment and food, in telephone conversations with Hamas and Islamic [Jihad] Movement officials."

Mehmanparast added that helping the people of Palestine and Gaza is the duty of all countries particularly Islamic nations.

"When the Zionist regime commits crimes against these defenseless people, it is required that all countries take the necessary measures to defend the people of Palestine."

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/11/20/273458/israel-plots-to-weaken-islamic-resistance/>

- **Syrian govt., opposition establish joint committee**

TEHRAN, Nov. 20 (MNA) – Representatives of the Syrian government and opposition groups agreed in Tehran on Monday to establish a joint committee to promote national dialogue in Syria.

The agreement was made on the last day of the two-day Syrian national dialogue meeting, which was held on the theme of “No to Violence, Yes to Democracy.”

About 200 Syrian citizens, including religious leaders, party leaders, political figures, tribal chiefs, and representatives of Syrian opposition groups, as well as representatives from Turkey, Egypt, Iraq, and a number of other countries, attended the meeting.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian told the Persian service of IRNA on Monday, “The main task of the committee is to make preparations for holding the next national dialogue meeting in the city of Damascus, the capital of Syria.”

After Monday’s meeting, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi said that the committee is tasked with establishing contact with other representatives of the Syrian people to help promote national dialogue and implement political reforms.

Salehi also told IRNA on the same day, “We took the initiative to hold negotiations between Syrian groups and are responsible for facilitating the talks, but we will not continue national dialogue between Syrian groups, and this is the groups within Syria who should continue the movement initiated with Iran’s initiative.”

<http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1748194>

- **Iranian, Egyptian presidents call for intl. efforts to stop Israel’s attacks on Gaza**

TEHRAN, Nov. 20 (MNA) - During a telephone conversation on Sunday, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi emphasized that the

international community should make efforts to stop Israel’s acts of aggression against the Palestinian people.

Ahmadinejad thanked Morsi for his efforts to restore peace, security, and stability in Gaza and said, “Humanitarian and religious duties oblige us to make efforts to prevent the killing of the innocent people of Gaza and restore long-lasting peace and security in this part and the entire Palestinian territories.”

Certain countries in and outside of the region are concerned about Israel’s crimes against Gaza, the Iranian president said, adding, “We should act based on a certain initiative to prevent the continuation of killings and bloodshed in Gaza, and consensus should be developed in the international arena against the Zionist regime’s acts of aggression through consultations with other countries.”

He also said, “It is necessary that we make every effort to end the killing of women and children and the oppressed people of Gaza and Palestine.”

The Egyptian president expressed concern about the situation in Gaza and stated that he is making endeavors to stop Israeli crimes in this coastal strip.

“I have contacted many leaders of the world, and I am seeking to help forge international consensus against the Zionist regime’s acts of aggression against Gaza,” Morsi noted.

He also said that pressure should be exerted on Israel to stop the bloodshed.

<http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1748197>

### 3. SYRIA

- **People's Assembly: Those who weep on Arabs under pretext of democracy stand helpless in front of Zionist aggression on Gaza**

DAMASCUS, (SANA)-The People's Assembly on Monday discussed the repercussions of the Israeli brutal aggression on the Palestinian people in Gaza.



Speaker of the Assembly Mohammad Jihad al-Laham said that the Zionist Administration's hegemony on the decision of a number of Arab states was behind the reason of the brutal aggression of Israel on Gaza.

"Those who pretend to weep on the Arab people under the pretext of democracy, freedom and human rights stand helpless in front of the aggression, blocked and the crimes against humanity in Gaza," al-Laham added.

Other Syrian MPs denounced the aggression on Gaza, affirming that the Palestinian people's steadfastness in Gaza strip and the reach of its missiles in the heart of the Zionist entity has uncovered some Arab reactionary regimes and unveiled them in front of the Arab people.

They called on the sheikhs of instigation, emirs of the Gulf, to call for Jihad in Palestine and offer financial and military support to the resistant men there instead of calling for sedition among sons of the one nation.

Interior Minister Announces a Special Office for Interior Security Forces Martyrs Affairs

The Budget and Accounts Committee at the People's Assembly discussed the Interior Ministry's report on the proposed plans and project of the Ministry for 2013.

Members of the committee called for speeding up the procedures concerning the martyrs' affairs and increasing supplies to the Police Hospital.

Interior Minister, Lt. Gen. Mohammad al-Shaar, said the Ministry is working to provide houses to police officers, stressing the importance of the interior security forces' role in confronting the armed terrorist groups.

He added that the number of interior security forces' martyrs has reached 1350 during the crisis, pointing out that a special office concerned in the martyrs affairs has been established at the Ministry.

<http://sana.sy/eng/21/2012/11/20/453289.htm>

- **Federation of Journalists Calls for Supporting the People of Gaza and Saving Them from Genocide**

DAMASCUS, (SANA) – The Federation of Journalists in Syria called upon the free people of the world to support the people of Gaza and save them from genocide and the siege imposed upon them.

In a statement issued on Monday, the Federation said that the people of Gaza Strip are being subjected to a vicious Israeli attack for days in full view of the whole world, with the Israeli enemy committing genocide against women, children and the elderly and killing and wounding hundreds.

The Federation noted that the Israeli occupation is targeting infrastructure, services establishments and locations of journalists, with Israeli raids affecting some TV stations and media establishments reporting the facts of the aggression on Gaza to the world.

The statement called upon Arab and international journalism syndicates and organizations to rise up to their responsibilities and work to protect journalists, calling upon the Arab masses, organizations, syndicates and parties to assume a unified stance that shows their anger and disdain over the Israeli aggression, demands the cessation of all forms of normalization and

association with the Israeli enemy, and fulfils humane and legal obligations towards the Palestinian people.

<http://sana.sy/eng/21/2012/11/20/453230.htm>

- **Popular Nationalist Forum for Supporting Syria's Steadfastness: The Enemies of Gaza and Syria are One and the Same**

DAMASCUS, ( SANA) – The Popular Nationalist Forum for Supporting Syria's Steadfastness stressed that those who target the resistant Gaza are Syria's enemies themselves and that the allies of the Israeli entity and their friends among the Arab regimes are waging a ferocious war on Syria.



In a statement following its extraordinary meeting held in Damascus on Monday, the Forum greeted Syria's leadership, army and people, hailing the sacrifices of the Syrian Arab Army in the face of all hostile schemes.

The statement asserted that the so-called " Syrian opposition coalition" is a Zionist-US-Turkish-Arab scheme whose main goal is to continue aggression on Syrian, undermine it and destroy its infrastructure.

Representing all popular parties, unions and independent figures and associations, the Forum condemned the so-called "Syrian opposition coalition" as "terrorist and aggressive", adding that it constitutes another form of killing of the Syrians, calling for foreign intervention and blocking all ways leading to dialogue in order to reach a peaceful solution to the crisis in Syria.

The statement indicated that the Syrians are not alone in the field, rather they have real friends in the Arab and international arenas.

The Forum stressed that what Syria is facing aims at taking revenge on it for its adherence to its principled approach in supporting the struggle of the Palestinian people against the Israeli occupation and the Arab resistance, as well as its rejection to give up the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian people's right to restore their territories and legitimate rights in establishing an independent state with al-Quds as its capital.

The statement denounced the Israeli aggression on the people of the besieged Gaza Strip, regretting the weak Arab official stance adopted at the recent meeting of the Arab foreign ministers towards what is taking place in the Strip.

It called upon all Arab leaders to shoulder their national responsibilities and take a firm stance against the Israeli aggression, in addition to supporting the Palestinian resistance and supplying it with money, arms and basic needs in the face of this aggression and ending the normalization of relations and all the agreement signed with Israel.

The participants reiterated support to Gaza people, calling upon all countries of the world and the international organizations to assume their responsibilities and end the brutal Israeli aggression on Gaza.

They held Washington and its allies responsible for encouraging the Israelis to shed more blood of the Palestinian people and for supplying terrorists and al-Qaeda members with money and arms to shed more Syrian blood.

The statement concluded that it is time for Arabs to realize the imminent dangers and threats in light of a weak Arab official stance that abandoned its commitment to the nation's issues, adding that Syria's choice and national approach in supporting the Arab resistance is the correct Arab stance.

<http://sana.sy/eng/21/2012/11/20/453266.htm>

- **Syria Islamists reject new opposition bloc**

The main Islamist rebel groups in Aleppo, a key front line in Syria's civil war, have rejected the newly formed opposition bloc, saying they want an Islamic state, as clashes raged countrywide.

"We, the fighting squads of Aleppo city and province, unanimously reject the conspiratorial project called the National Coalition and announce our consensus to establish an Islamic state" in Syria, a spokesperson announced in an internet video on Monday.

"We reject any external coalitions or councils imposed on us at home from any party whatsoever," he said.

The EU recognised the new coalition on Monday as "legitimate representatives" of the Syrian people, but did not grant it full recognition.

In the video posted online, the unidentified speaker sits at the head of a long table with at least 30 others, in front of a black Islamist flag.

He listed some 14 armed groups as signatories to the statement, including the Al-Nusra Front, Ahrar al-Sham and Liwa al-Tawhid, who reject the opposition coalition.

'Not all forces in Aleppo agree'

The Ahrar al-Sham group rejected the proclamation on its official web page, however, saying that its leadership did not endorse the statement.

The Al-Nusra Front, a formidable fighting force, has claimed the majority of suicide bombings in Syria's deadly 20-month-old conflict.

Abdel Jabbar al-Okaidi, the head of the mainstream rebel Free Syrian Army (FSA) in the embattled northern city of Aleppo, told the AFP news agency that the statement did not represent the opinion of all rebel groups in the province.

"These groups represent a number of military factions on the ground and reflect their position, but not all military forces in Aleppo agree with this," the defected former army colonel told AFP by phone.

"The military council has announced its support for the National Coalition and is collaborating with them," Okaidi added.

The new National Coalition aims to present a united front to the international community and is lobbying for weapons supplies to help topple President Bashar al-Assad's government.

#### Fighting flares

On the ground, fighting flared along the Turkish border after rebels took control of the large army Base 46 in the northern province of Aleppo that had been besieged for weeks.

Six rebels were killed in clashes with Kurdish fighters and the head of the local Kurdish People's Assembly was shot dead in the town of Ras al-Ain, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported.

The clashes erupted after a Kurdish demonstration demanding that all rebels not from Ras al-Ain leave after they took the town last week.

The Kurdish fighters belonged to the People's Defence Units, the armed wing of the Democratic Union Party (PYD) which is linked to Turkey's rebel Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

"The rebels burned a flag of the [Kurdish] Democratic Union Party and the Kurds reacted by burning the FSA flag," an activist told AFP.

Rebels accuse Kurdish groups of negotiating directly with Assad's regime, while Kurds question why the rebels entered a safe area.

"The Kurdish regions provide safe havens to thousands of refugees from Damascus, Hama and Homs," PYD leader Saleh Muslim told AFP by phone.

"We are not looking for a confrontation with the FSA, but its members who provoked the incident today in Ras al-Ain receive their orders from Turkey," he said.

Elsewhere, the Observatory said a general it named as Abdullah Darawi was killed in a rebel attack on the town of Nabak, north of Damascus, along with four policemen accompanying him.

The official SANA news agency blamed "terrorists" for the killings.

Fighting also erupted at a border post near the town of Kasab in Latakia province, the Observatory said.

In the mountainous region of Jabal al-Turkman, eight rebels and four soldiers were killed after insurgents attacked an army convoy en route to Kasab.

The Observatory, which relies on a network of activists and medics, said at least 50 people were killed nationwide on Monday - 25 rebels, 16 civilians and nine soldiers.

It puts the death toll in more than 20 months of conflict at more than 39,000.

Al Jazeera is unable to independently verify reports of violence, as the Syrian government has placed strict restrictions on reporting.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/11/2012112014726373275.html>

## 4. ISRAEL-PALESTINE

- **Diplomatic push for Gaza truce**

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is to visit Jerusalem and the West Bank city of Ramallah this week for talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on the crisis in Gaza.

Ban met the Arab league chief, Nabil al-Arabi, and called on to support Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi's efforts to mediate a truce in the conflict as the Palestinian death toll from Israeli raids had increased to over 100.

Egypt has been trying to broker a ceasefire with the help of Qatar and Turkey.

Al Jazeera's Peter Greste, reporting from Cairo, says : "There is a momentum towards a ceasefire agreement, according to the Egyptians, perhaps because there are no details shows people feel confident".

"Ban Ki Moon would not be going to Israel and the West Bank if he felt something could not be achieved," said Greste.

The content of the Egyptian plan is not known, but both Israel and Hamas have presented conditions.

With Ban pushing for a ceasefire, Khaled Meshaal, the Hamas leader said his movement was committed to efforts to secure a truce, but insisted that Israel must lift its six-year blockade of the Gaza Strip, which has left the Gaza strip deprived of a much needed economic boost.

The US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, will also visit Israel, Egypt and the West Bank, as the United States is also pushing to avoid an escalation of the Gaza crisis.

Clinton will meet Netanyahu and then discuss the crisis with Egyptian and Palestinian leaders, but she will not be meeting Hamas officials in Gaza and Cairo.

On Tuesday the Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and various Arab foreign ministers are also expected to visit Gaza on Tuesday, to show solidarity with the people of Gaza.

"A decision was taken that for the time being there is a temporary hold on the ground incursion to give diplomacy a chance to succeed," Netanyahu's spokesperson told the AFP news agency. Ministers in Netanyahu's inner circle, known as the the Forum of Nine also held lengthy talks on whether to agree to a ceasefire or expand the air and naval campaign into a ground operation.

#### Overnight attacks

Israeli raids on the Gaza Strip have continued for a seventh day, despite calls for a truce, with the overall death toll reaching 111, according to medical sources.

In the latest Israeli airstrike early on Tuesday morning, at least four people were injured when F-16 fighter jets hit the Islamic National Bank in Gaza City, which is located in a residential area.

In other violence on Monday, two boys, aged two and four, and their parents were killed in Jabaliya refugee camp late in the evening. More than a dozen people were injured, mostly women and children.

During the afternoon, one person was killed and another two wounded when a missile struck a car just north of Gaza City.

Elsewhere, a missile hit a motorcycle east of Khan Yunis in southern Gaza, killing two men and critically wounding a child who was with them, Gaza's ambulance service said.

Earlier in the day, two women and a child were among four killed in a raid on Gaza City's eastern Zeitun neighbourhood.

The Israeli military has struck more than 1,350 targets in Gaza since attacks began on Wednesday, Israel says it launched the operation to deter Palestinian fighters from launching rockets into its territory.

Since then, 640 rockets have hit Israel while more than 300 others have been intercepted by Israel's anti-missile system, the Iron Dome, according to the Israeli army. Three Israeli civilians died on Thursday in a rocket strike.

The Israeli military said that 67 rockets had been fired at the country on Monday, and that three Israelis had been wounded.

Many residents of southern Israel have left the area and schools have been closed since the start of the crisis.

More than 30 people were killed in Gaza on Monday.

Al Jazeera's Nicole Johnston, reporting from Gaza City, said most of the dead were civilians.

"The aerial bombardment goes on as does the assault from sea," she said, adding that strikes could happen anywhere in the densely populated enclave.

Gaza visit

Arabi is also due in Gaza on Tuesday, accompanied Davutoglu and several Arab top diplomats, in the latest in a series of visits that have eased the long diplomatic isolation of the territory's Hamas rulers.

Israel has its own demands, with Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman insisting "the first and absolute condition for a truce is stopping all fire from Gaza."

Hamas is also understood to be seeking guarantees Israel will stop its targeted killings, like the one that killed a top military commander on Wednesday, sparking the current hostilities.

Meshaal, the Hamas leader, said on Monday his group was committed to efforts to secure a truce, but insisted that Israel must lift its six-year blockade of the Gaza Strip.

"We are not against a calming, but we want our demands ... to end the thuggery, to end the aggression and to lift the blockade," he said, adding that Hamas would reject any Israeli preconditions for a ceasefire because "they started the aggression".

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/11/2012111915617518485.html>

- **Palestinians protest in the West Bank**

Palestinians have taken to the streets across the West Bank in protest at Israeli air attacks on the Gaza Strip, leading to one death in the southern city of Hebron.

A second person died on Monday of wounds sustained from an earlier protest.



Protests broke out in Hebron's Old City after which Palestinian protesters were pushed back into the centre of the city by Israeli security forces.

According to witnesses, Hamdi al-Falah, 17 years old, was shot four times by Israeli troops.

"He was going to his house, there were clashes nearby and he might have been protesting. He got shot once in the leg, one in the arm, one in the chest and one in his head," a Hebron resident told Al Jazeera.

"Now the IDF are in the middle of the city and they are throwing teargas everywhere. Most of the entrances to the city are blocked. They are shooting rubber-coated steel bullets and live ammunition. It's getting crazy here."

Amateur videos show Palestinian youth shooting fireworks in the middle of the city, prompting a violent response from Israeli soldiers, according to witnesses.

Police officer's death

Earlier in the day, Rushdi al-Tamimi, a Palestinian police officer, died of wounds sustained two days earlier in Nabi Saleh, a village near Ramallah, hospital officials said.

"Rushdi al-Tamimi died today from his wounds," Ahmed al-Betawi, director of the Ramallah hospital, said. Fellow activists said he was 31.

He was shot with a live bullet during a demonstration in support of Gaza in the village of Nabi Saleh," said Abir Kopty, spokeswoman for a coalition of grassroots activists known as the Popular Struggle Committees.

"He was shot in the back and the bullet penetrated his stomach."

In the village of Attara, several protesters were reportedly injured after Israeli soldiers fired teargas to disperse a crowd of Palestinian stone throwers, while some Palestinians were arrested by Israeli soldiers.

Red Crescent ambulances arrived to help those injured.

Also in the West Bank, near the settlement of Ofra in the Ramallah district, Palestinian and international protesters attempted to block the settler access road which snakes through the West Bank.

Palestinians with banners attempted to block the road, soldiers who arrived on the scene fired tear gas to disperse the protesters.

In the Ramallah district, Palestinian youths cut the fence to the Ofer military camp and put up the Palestinian flag inside the camp which is also used as a prison and military court in the West Bank.

Residents of the city of Orif, near Nablus, said a group of settlers from a nearby settlement came to the mosque before dawn, poured petrol on an old carpet near the mosque's door, and set it ablaze.

"Before the dawn prayers, 30 minutes before, when we entered, we were afraid that there would be settlers in the neighbourhood as usual, every night they are here until the morning," Issam al-Safadi, an Orif resident, told Reuters news agency.

"When we came to the mosque we found the door was burnt, they'd tried to enter but the door was shut and here they have burnt the carpet."

Israel launched an extensive aerial campaign on Gaza on Wednesday with the declared goal of deterring Hamas from launching rockets at its southern communities.

The salvos have intensified, and are now displaying greater range.

Hamas, says its cross-border attacks have come in response to Israeli air strikes against Palestinian fighters in Gaza.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/11/20121119194625198412.html>

- **Clinton to arrive in Israel, push for Gaza ceasefire**

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is set to arrive in Israel Tuesday night. Clinton will meet with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu on Wednesday, according to a source.

White House deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes told reporters that the message of Clinton's trip will be that it is in nobody's interest for there to be an escalation of military conflict in Gaza. He added that Hamas must end rocket attacks into Israel and that Egypt can be a partner in helping to resolve the conflict in Gaza.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Tuesday called for an immediate ceasefire and said an Israeli ground operation in the Palestinian enclave would be a "dangerous escalation" that must be avoided.

"Immediate steps are needed by all to avoid a further escalation, including a ground operation which will only result in further tragedy," he said, before adding that Israel has "legitimate security concerns."

Ban spoke at a news conference in Cairo after talks with Arab League chief Nabil Elaraby. Later on Tuesday, the UN secretary-general will travel to Israel for talks with Netanyahu.

In a meeting with President Shimon Peres in the President's Residence on Tuesday, German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle on Tuesday confirmed his frequently voiced stance that Israel has the right to defend herself against rocket attacks from Gaza.

"The German People and the German Government stand by Israel's right to protect and defend itself against missile attacks from Gaza; and Hamas has the responsibility to stop the missile attacks against Israel," Westerwelle said.

"We're all interested in a cessation of hostilities," he said, adding that everyone was working towards a de-escalation of the situation and doing their utmost towards a achieving a ceasefire, but the cessation of rocket-fire against Israel was incumbent upon Hamas.

On Monday night, Westerwelle met with Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman, before heading to Ramallah to meet with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

Ceasefire or ground operation?

Israel's diplomatic and security cabinet met late Monday night to discuss the latest cease-fire initiatives. The government agreed to briefly hold off on sending ground forces into Gaza in order to allow time for cease-fire efforts in Cairo to continue, an Israeli official told The Jerusalem Post on Monday.

"Israel prefers a diplomatic solution," the official said, but added that any agreement must provide a real solution that would erase the threat of rocket attacks against the South.

If such a diplomatic solution is not found, then Israel is preparing its ground forces to enter Gaza, the official said.

US President Barack Obama called Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi to underscore the necessity of ending Hamas rocket fire into Israel, and to talk about ways to de-escalate the situation.

He also spoke with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, his third conversation with the prime minister since Operation Pillar of Defense was launched last Wednesday.

In both calls, Obama said he regretted the loss of Israeli and Palestinian lives.

In the middle of the afternoon, it appeared that Hamas and Israel were close to a deal, and that Hamas and Islamic Jihad had made a cease-fire offer to Israel.

Mashaal: Netanyahu, not Hamas asked for a cease-fire

Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal said on Monday that discussions to achieve a cease-fire were continuing, "but Hamas won't succumb to Israel's conditions."

Hamas, he pointed out, was not opposed to a truce and is continuing to insist on the need to lift the blockade on the Gaza Strip and halt Israeli military strikes.

Israel, in turn, wants a security zone around the Gaza border and an end to the smuggling of weapons into the Strip.

Mashaal boasted that Hamas and other armed groups in the Gaza Strip managed to achieve a balance of power with Israel within 48 hours after the assassination of Ahmed Jabari, the commander of Hamas's armed wing, Izzadin Kassam.

An official in the Prime Minister's Office denied a claim made by Mashaal that Netanyahu had asked for a cease-fire.

"We have been hitting Hamas very hard," the official said, explaining that Israel had attacked Hamas's weapons arsenal, leadership, buildings and communication apparatus from the air.

"Hamas is under a lot of pressure and as a result, they are saying many things that are in no way connected to reality," he said.

In Monday's speech, Mashaal warned Israel against launching a ground offensive on the Gaza Strip, adding that such a move would be "idiotic." The ground war would not be a picnic, he cautioned.

"We are not afraid of a ground war. If the enemy launches a ground attack, we will face it with courage," the Hamas leader said.

Peres praises Morsi for cease-fire efforts

Quartet special envoy Tony Blair told President Shimon Peres that Egypt, Qatar, America and the UN were working to put in place a cease-fire.

Peres said that he appreciated efforts by Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi to end the hostilities.

“Egypt is a significant player in the Middle East. Strangely, it is Hamas that doesn’t listen to the Egyptian president,” he said.

Peres accused Iran of pressuring Hamas to continue the conflict, saying that Tehran is supplying Hamas “with arms, training them and sending them money.”

On Sunday, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius similarly held meetings in Jerusalem and Ramallah to discuss the options for a Gaza cease-fire.

Russia on Monday urged an end to Palestinian rocket attacks and what it called disproportionate Israeli bombing of the Gaza Strip, and said it may propose a UN Security Council resolution on the conflict.

“We again affirm our position on the inadmissibility of firing at Israeli regions and of disproportionate strikes on Gaza,” the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement. “Moscow considers it necessary to stop the military confrontation without delay.”

Russian UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin said Moscow may propose a Security Council resolution that would envisage ceasing violence on both sides before the resumption of peace talks, news agencies reported.

<http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=292664>

- **Gazans fire eight rockets toward Beersheba; 5 intercepted**

Palestinians in the Gaza Strip fired a second barrage of eight rockets toward Beersheba Tuesday morning. Iron Dome intercepted five of the rockets.

Three of the rockets struck the ground, causing some damage. Magen David Adom paramedics were treating three people for shock.

<http://www.jpost.com/Headlines/Article.aspx?id=292661>

## 5. AFRICA and EGYPT

- **In midst of renewed clashes on Mohamed Mahmoud, remembering the violence of 2011**

Like other Egyptians who were provoked by the pictures of the injured people during the Mohamed Mahmoud clashes in 2011 — the first anniversary of which was commemorated today with



demonstrations and renewed clashes — Noha Zayed, 33, decided to go to the Tahrir Square last year out of curiosity and a sense of engagement.

She did not know what this simple thrust to be in the square would get her and her husband into.

It was the Saturday after the “One Demand Friday” demonstration of 2011, as the revolutionary youth and civil forces called it, or the “Dropping of Selmy’s Document” demonstration, as the Muslim Brotherhood called it. Protesters had rallied to call for a halt on a set of pre-constitutional rules enshrined in a document named after then-Deputy Prime Minister Ali al-Selmy which would grant the military institution sweeping authorities.

On that Saturday, 19 November 2011, army and police forces attacked demonstrators and families of the martyrs of the revolution, who staged a sit-in after the departure of Islamist forces the previous day. Word got out quickly on social networking sites, pictures of the attack were posted online and calls were trumpeted to go and defend the demonstrators.

More people came to the site, forcing the army and the police to retreat to Mohamed Mahmoud Street, where clashes began and remained for the five days to follow. More than 40 people were

killed, hundreds injured and lost their eyes and the clashes remained engraved in the collective memory of the country's revolutionaries.

Coming from 6th of October City, Zayed, the managing partner of a clothing line, told her husband, 38-year-old Mohamed Mansour, to meet her in the square after he finished work at an international petroleum company in Maadi.

After Mansour finished work he met his wife in Tahrir Square. "It was relatively calm," he says. "My wife was curious to go see what was happening on Mohamed Mahmoud Street."

When they went there, a few kids tried to stop them, warning them of heavy clashes further down the street. "I did not pay attention to them, for I've seen this before," he says. "I loudly called on everybody to stay put."

"I usually played the role of a traffic policeman in organizing peoples' movements when things like this happened," he says. "But this time the traffic was like a stampede."

He and his wife saw the security forces and the military police attacking. They had enough space behind them to run, but Mansour was pushed and fell down. "When I tried to get up, a man fell on top of me and pushed me to the ground again. He was not heavy, but then more and more people fell on us," says Mansour. "I put my hands under my chest as I was unable to breath. This helped me, but my hands got badly bruised."

"I was looking for my husband at that moment, but the crowd pushed me away," Zayed says. "Suddenly I found myself in the subway station."

"I went out to Talaat Harb Square, which was relatively calm, and tried to call my husband on his mobile phone. That's what we do when we can't find each other. But his phone was not reachable, so I thought he was either wounded or arrested."

She did not know Mansour was lying on the ground with a pile of people on top of him.



“I began to lose sensation gradually,” he says. “I decided to focus on breathing, like with yoga. But I fainted seconds later.”

“Actually, I didn’t know if I fainted. I was thinking of death. And I did feel I was dead and had moved to another life whose dimensions I began to understand.”

“I don’t know how long I stayed like that, but then I realized that I was alive. I felt I was coming out of a deep abyss, and I started to hear ambient sounds,” he continues.

“I found myself in the field hospital. I started thinking of my wife. I realized that I lost my phone, so I took a phone from a lady. I felt I was ok, but I did not remember my wife’s number.”

His wife was waiting for him in the car. “I went to the car to recharge my phone,” Zayed says. “And he called and told me he was in the field hospital.”

The couple met again, and Mansour’s brother came to see him when he heard he was injured. They then tried to leave the place, which looked like a battlefield, before security forces attacked it again.

“My face was smeared with blood and mud, and so were my clothes. I could have been easily identified as a demonstrator, so I went to a friend’s apartment downtown, took a blanket from him and wrapped myself with it. Then I went to a hospital I knew would not turn me in,” Mansour says.

On their way to the hospital, Zayed was still following up on what was going on in the square with passion. She saw images of many people injured and dead lying on the ground next to the garbage. “It was shocking, but what was more shocking was that my husband was one of them.”

They later went home and showed their children, Selim, who is seven years old, and Ali, who is five years old, videos of their father on YouTube while he was lying in the middle of the garbage. “We are proud of you, Daddy,” Selim told him.

The couple did not take part in Mondays’ commemoration marches. They found no reason why more than 50 political parties and movements came to the square.

“The real protagonists of Mohamed Mahmoud Street were those unknown people who were provoked by the pictures and came of their own free will to defend the demonstrators,” says Mansour. “The parties and movements only followed them.”

Zayed opines that taking part in commemorations is optional. “But defending people against police brutality was mandatory for us last year.”

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/midst-renewed-clashes-mohamed-mahmoud-remembering-violence-2011>

- **Morsy attends sister's funeral**

President Mohamed Morsy attended the funeral of his sister, who passed away Monday, in the Sharqiya village of Adwa Tuesday.

He will receive condolences at Hassan al-Sharbatly mosque in Cairo’s Fifth Settlement.

The president’s office called on all individuals and authorities not to publish any obituaries in newspapers.

Presidential spokesperson Yasser Ali said the presidential office believes it would be better if the money spent on such obituaries was donated to charity.

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/morsy-attends-sister-s-funeral>

- **Spain rejects Egypt's request to extradite Salem children**

A judicial official said Monday that Egyptian authorities are considering all legal procedures to compel the Spanish authorities to extradite businessman Hussein Salem's children, who fled to Spain during the 25 January uprising.

The state-run MENA news agency quoted the official as saying that the Spanish Constitutional Court on Friday rejected the extradition of Khaled and Magda Salem to Egypt.

According to the source, the ruling was based on the fact the pair are Spanish citizens and Spanish law bans extraditing citizens to other countries unless there is an agreement in place between them. The court also cited the UN Anti-Corruption Treaty in its decision.

A Spanish court ruled to hand the Salems over to Egypt in March, but they appealed the verdict.

Salem and his children are charged with several crimes, including money laundering in collaboration with the former president.

In June, the Cairo Criminal Court sentenced Salem, a close ally of former President Hosni Mubarak, and former Petroleum Minister Sameh Fahmy to 15 years in prison for their involvement in Egypt's notorious gas deal with Israel.

Egypt has an extradition request pending for Salem, who was arrested in Spain last June. On 1 November, the Spanish Supreme Court rejected Salem's asylum request and ruled that his extradition could go ahead.

Prior to this, a Spanish national court had ordered the handover of Salem on the grounds that he is exploiting his Spanish nationality to evade extradition.

Salem fled to Spain during Egypt's 25 January uprising last year. Following Mubarak's resignation, Egypt called on Interpol to arrest Salem for bribery, abuse of power and squandering public

money. The Spanish government then found evidence implicating him in money laundering in Spain.

Salem was accused of giving Mubarak and his two sons, Alaa and Gamal, luxury villas in Sharm el-Sheikh for free, although they are valued at more than 5 million euros, in return for Mubarak granting him more than 2 million square meters of land in the same area.

The Cairo Criminal Court acquitted the defendants on 2 June, saying the sales in question occurred more than 10 years ago, which is beyond the statute of limitations for non-state employees to be prosecuted on corruption charges.

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/spain-rejects-egypt-s-request-extradite-salem-children>

- **Egypt protestors, police clash on battle anniversary**

Protesters in Egypt's capital clashed with police on Monday during a protest to mark a year since a five-day long street battle with security forces in which dozens of protesters were killed, witnesses said.

The clashes erupted when demonstrators tried to destroy a concrete barrier security forces had put up to end last year's fighting with activists who wanted the military rulers at the time to transfer power to a civilian government.

The official MENA news agency reported three police conscripts and three protesters injured in Monday's ongoing clashes.

At least 45 protesters died over five days of fighting that began on November 19 last year to put pressure on the military, which took power after a popular uprising overthrew president Hosni Mubarak in February.

The military responded by promising to hand over power by June 2012. It transferred control to Islamist President Mohammed Mursi after his election that month.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/19/250622.html>

## 6. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Jordan's King Abdullah II cancels visit to Britain**

LONDON (AP) — Britain's Foreign Office says King Abdullah II of Jordan has canceled a visit to the U.K. that was planned for next week.

Abdullah was due to speak at a London think tank and had been expected to meet Prime Minister David Cameron and other officials.

No reason was given for the cancelation, which comes amid escalating violence between Israel and the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, and as protests rage in Jordan against rising fuel costs.

One man has been killed and 75 injured in unrest across the country in recent days, which has seen protesters call for the king to be ousted.

Jordan has so far weathered nearly two years of Arab unrest that has seen longtime rulers toppled in Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Tunisia.

<http://www.asharq-e.com/news.asp?section=1&id=31859>

## 7. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **U.N. Chief pledges support for Yemen transition**

U.N. chief Ban Ki-moon pledged his support on a visit to Yemen on Monday to the year-old political transition that ended 11 months of deadly protests against veteran strongman Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Ban hailed the progress made by President Abdrabuh Mansur Hadi's government in restoring peace after last year's violence that left hundreds dead and the security forces split down the middle between Saleh loyalists and opponents.

But he pointed to the major challenges that still need to be addressed, singling out the grievances of the formerly independent south and the threat posed by Al-Qaeda, whose Yemen branch is regarded by Washington as the jihadist network's most dangerous.

"Your country... was on the brink of civil war, even just one year ago but you have overcome this with political courage and determination," Ban said on his visit to mark the anniversary later this week of Saleh's signing of the transition agreement under which he stepped down.

"But it may be too early only to rejoice; there is still a long way to go," Ban said.

"Fighting against al-Qaeda, that will be a very important and serious issue."

Before a counter-offensive ordered by Hadi earlier this year, the jihadists held large swathes of southern Yemen. Despite their loss of a string of towns east of Aden in June, they continue to launch hit-and-run attacks on government and civilian targets across the country.

Ban also pointed to the grievances that have fanned separatist sentiment in the formerly independent south, citing demands for "compensation for land and property, jobs lost after unification" in 1990 that was followed by a 1994 civil war.

Ban said he had held talks with the committee preparing for a promised national dialogue which is intended to result in a new constitution and electoral law.

"They are very much committed to address all the challenges, including the grievances of (the South) and meeting the legitimate aspirations of many people," the UN chief said.

Early last month, the Southern Movement announced it would boycott the national dialogue in protest at its aspirations not being heard.

The Yemeni president vowed that parliamentary elections would go ahead in February 2014 as planned under the transition agreement.

Hadi told reporters that a preparatory committee for the national dialogue had completed 95 percent of its work.

"The remaining five percent will be completed in the coming few weeks," he said.

Hadi has repeatedly urged all factions to join the critical talks, including Zaidi Shiite rebels who have mounted repeated uprisings in the far north since 1994, as well as the Southern Movement.

But Hadi, who is himself a southerner, gave the separatists little encouragement for a change of heart on their threatened boycott.

"Everything will take place within the framework of Yemen's security and its unity," he said.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/20/250630.html>

- **Ten Arab ministers to enter Gaza: Arab league**

Arab League chief Nabil al-Arabi accompanied by ten Arab foreign ministers will cross into Gaza from Egypt on Tuesday to show support for the Palestinians, the league's deputy secretary general told AFP.

The delegation is expected to reach the crossing around noon (1000 GMT), said Ahmed Ben Hilli, adding that Turkey's foreign minister will join the mission.

“The main goal is to express Arab solidarity and support for the steadfastness of the people and Gaza,” he said.

At least 112 Palestinians and three Israelis have been killed since Israel launched air strikes against the Hamas-controlled territory last Wednesday in a bid to stop militants firing rockets into the Jewish state.

The delegation will visit hospitals and perhaps relatives of victims of the conflict between Hamas and Israel, now in its sixth day, he said.

Ben Hilli did not identify the ministers, but an Arab League official had earlier said they included those from Jordan and Morocco. Ben Hilli said the delegation would include ministers from North Africa, the Levant and the Gulf.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/20/250729.html>

## 8. AFGHANISTAN - PAKISTAN

- **Pakistan quashes charges against Christian girl in Quran burning case**

A Pakistan court on Tuesday threw out all charges against a Christian girl accused of blasphemy in a case that drew international condemnation, lawyers said.

Rimsha Masih spent three weeks on remand in an adult jail after she was arrested on Aug. 16 for allegedly burning pages from the Quran in a case that prompted worldwide condemnation.

She was released on bail in September and police have since told the courts that she was not guilty and that a cleric who allegedly framed her should face trial instead.

“The court has quashed the case, declaring Rimsha innocent,” her lawyer Akmal Bhatti told AFP.

Cleric Hafiz Mohammed Khalid Chishti, who first gave police the burned papers as evidence against her, was detained on September 1 for desecrating the Quran and tampering with evidence.

An official medical report classified Rimsha as “uneducated” and aged 14, but with a mental age younger than her years. Others have said she is as young as 11 and suffers from Down’s Syndrome.

Paul Bhatti, the only Christian member of Pakistan’s federal cabinet, confirmed that the case had been thrown out by the high court in the capital Islamabad.

“I welcome this order. Justice has been done and the law of the land has been upheld by the court,” he told AFP.

“It will send out a positive image of Pakistan in the international community that there is justice for all and that society has risen up for justice and tolerance,” he added.

Rimsha and her family, who have been in fear for their lives since the allegations, were moved to an undisclosed location after her release on bail on Sept. 8.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/20/250687.html>

- **Four charged in US for plotting to join Taliban**

Three of the four had undertaken preliminary training at firearms and paintball centers in southern California, as preparation for further training in Afghanistan, said an FBI statement.

The alleged plot aimed “to provide material support to terrorists by making arrangements to join al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan in order to kill, among others, American targets,” it added.

Ralph Deleon, 23, 21-year-old Miguel Alejandro Santana Vidriales, and Arifeen David Gojali, also 21, were arrested on Friday and appeared in court Monday outside Los Angeles.

The fourth man charged, Sohiel Omar Kabir, 34, is in custody in Afghanistan, said the FBI, quoting US Attorney Andre Birotte Jr and Bill Lewis, assistant head of the bureau’s Los Angeles office.

Santana and Deleon told a confidential source working for the FBI that they “planned to travel to Afghanistan to engage in ‘violent jihad’,” said the FBI.

The charges against the four include “conspiracy to kill, kidnap, maim, or injure persons and damage property in a foreign country,” and helping a plot to kill or attempt to kill US officers and American citizens.

They also allegedly sought to help a “conspiracy to use a weapon of mass destruction outside the United States,” and a plot aimed at “bombing places of public use and government facilities.”

Kabir was born in Afghanistan and is a naturalized US citizen. Deleon was born in the Philippines and is a resident alien in California; Santana was born in Mexico and has applied for US citizenship, while Gojali is a US citizen.

If convicted, they face up to 15 years in jail.

<http://dawn.com/2012/11/20/four-charged-in-us-for-plotting-to-join-taliban/>



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