



# MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

## GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

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## 1. IRAQ

- **Basra province looking prospects of joint cooperation with Britain.**

Basra / NINA /-- Basra governor Khalaf Abdul Samad touched during a meeting with the British ambassador to Iraq Simon Collis prospects of joint cooperation between the two sides.

The governor said in a statement to NINA : "The meeting focused on the need to develop professional and technical skills of the personnel working in the institutions of the province in various disciplines.

For his part, British Ambassador said that "the next phase will witness significant developments in relations with Basra, through the implementation of joint projects."

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

- **Talabani invites Morsi to visit Iraq**

Cairo (NINA) – President Jalal Talabani extended an official invitation to Egypt's President, Mohamed Morsi, to visit Iraq.

Source at the Egyptian Presidency told NINA on Thursday, Nov. 8, that President Morsi received Head of Iraqi Presidency Office, Naseer al-Ani, who delivered Talabani's message inviting Morsi to visit Iraq.

The source added that President Morsi promised to fulfill the invitation in due time.

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

- **Maliki: We seek to make Iraqi Army's armament based on American weaponry**

Baghdad (NINA) – Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki said, "We seek on making American weaponry to become base for Iraq's Army's main armament."

The Prime Minister's Office quoted Maliki in an interview on Thursday, Nov. 8, with Rasheed Satellite Channel, saying, "In its relations with the world's countries, Iraq follows open door policies." He categorically denied the presence of a single American soldier on Iraqi soil.

As for Iraq's stance toward the Syrian crisis, Maliki affirmed, "The cycle of killing continues in Syria both sides are being supported by arms." He added, "We do not supply money nor a single

bullet and we are not supporting either side and we do not allow planes carrying weapons to fly through Iraq's air space."

As for the case of Central Bank of Iraq, Maliki said that it is before the judiciary to decide and no one intends to control it, because it belongs to the state not to any single side.

About redrawing the borders between provinces, Maliki said that it is impractical because neither Duhok province can rejoin Niniveh province, nor Najaf province rejoin Karbala province or Salaheddin province rejoin Baghdad as they were.

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

- **Kurdistan Parliament: the formation of Dijlah Operations Command, unconstitutional.**

Arbil / Nina /-- Kurdistan parliament rejected the decision of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki for the formation of Dijlah Operations Command , describing it as dangerous to the national interests.

In a statement , Kurdistan Parliament said : "The formation of such a military entity is contrary to the Iraqi constitution and not consistent with the spirit of fraternal coexistence between the components of Iraqi people.

The statement was signed by all parliamentary blocs of Kurdistan without exception.

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

- **Talabani and Barzani review latest developments in Iraq and the region.**

Baghdad / NINA /-- President Jalal Talabani touched in Sulaimaniyah with the President of the Kurdistan Regional Government ,Vice Chairman of the Kurdistan Democratic Party Nechirvan Barzani, the latest political developments and the situation in Iraqi Kurdistan region .

The Web site of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said views of both sides were identical on all issues and questions that were discussed.

During the meeting the tow sides emphasized on developing of coordination and cooperation between the Kurdish political parties , the importance of Kurdish unity, and the development of the strategic alliance between the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party, in the interest of the people of Kurdistan."

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

## 2. IRAN

- **Iranian fighters 'fired on US drone in Gulf'**

Pentagon says two jets fired multiple rounds at surveillance drone over international waters in the Gulf on November 1.

Two Iranian fighter jets fired on an unarmed US drone in the Gulf last week and missed, the Pentagon has said, warning that the US stood ready to protect its forces in the region.



The incident occurred on November 1, less than a week before the US presidential election, the Department of Defence said.

"They intercepted the aircraft and fired multiple rounds," spokesman George Little told a news conference on Thursday.

The exchange is the latest episode between the two countries amid a mounting crisis over Tehran's nuclear programme and a shadow war marked by cyber-attacks and assassinations in Iran.

Tough new sanctions led by the US are squeezing Iran's economy while Washington is accused of staging cyber sabotage on Tehran's uranium enrichment plants.

'International airspace'

The US military drone was "never in Iranian air space" and came under fire from Su-25 fighters off the Iranian coast over international waters, Little said.

The robotic Predator aircraft was conducting "routine surveillance" and the US has told Iran it has no plans to suspend the flights, he said.

"The United States has communicated to the Iranians that we will continue to conduct surveillance flights over international waters over the Arabian Gulf consistent with longstanding practice and our commitment to the security of the region," the spokesman said.

Little said the US was prepared to safeguard its forces.

"We have a wide range of options, from diplomatic to military, to protect our military assets and our forces in the region and will do so when necessary," Little said.

The Predator returned safely to an unspecified military base in the region following the incident that occurred at 4:50am US eastern standard time (08:50 GMT).

The MQ-1 drone, a turboprop plane that flies at a much slower speed than the fighter jets, was pursued further by the Iranian warplanes but not fired on again, Little added.

The Predator was intercepted about 16 nautical miles off the Iranian coast, beyond the country's territorial waters that extend 12 nautical miles off the country's shore, the Pentagon said.

More sanctions

At the US State Department, officials unveiled more sanctions on Iran, targeting the communications minister and the culture ministry among others for censoring the media and the internet.

The move against Communications Minister Reza Taghipour came after he was blamed for ordering the jamming of international satellite TV broadcasts and restricting internet access, a department official said.

The US is determined to stop the "Iranian government from creating an 'electronic curtain' to cut Iranian citizens off from the rest of the world," said State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/11/20121182048162355.html>

- **Iran UN mission denounces human rights situation in West**

The Iranian mission to the United Nations has strongly criticized the human rights situation in Western countries, including the US and Canada.



Addressing the UN General Assembly's Third Committee on Thursday, a member of the Iranian mission denounced human rights violations in the US, UK, Canada, Australia and EU member states.

The Iranian envoy enumerated various cases of human rights abuses in certain Western countries, criticizing the West's biased approach and double standards toward the issue of rights in other countries.

The representative pointed to Islamophobia, racial and ethnic discrimination as well as crackdown on peaceful demonstrations in Europe and the US.

The Iranian envoy said that such countries that have a long record of human rights violation both inside and outside their territories are not in a place to claim advocating human rights in other countries and they had better work toward the improvement of the grave human rights situation in their own countries.

The Iranian envoy also criticized Canada's violation of the rights of its indigenous people and racial minorities and censured Ottawa's call for the resignation of the UN Palestinian rights envoy.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/11/09/271217/iran-raps-west-human-rights-situation/>

- **France calls for answers over Iranian's death**

Activists say blogger Sattar Beheshti died in custody after being tortured for online criticism of Iran's government.

France has called on the Iranian authorities to explain the death in custody of a blogger who, opposition activists say, was killed by torture for criticising the government on the internet.

A French foreign ministry spokesman said on Thursday that Paris was "profoundly shocked" to have learned of the death in custody of 35-year-old Sattar Beheshti.



"We call on the Iranian authorities to shed as much light as possible on the circumstances of his death," the spokesman said.

"The repression of peacefully expressed dissident voices in Iran is unacceptable."

According to opposition groups, Beheshti's family were asked on Wednesday to collect his body from the Kahrizak detention centre in Tehran, where he had been held since being arrested on October 30.

In the last blog he wrote before his arrest, Beheshti had said he was being constantly harassed by telephone by members of the security services.

"Yesterday they threatened to tell my mother that she would soon be wearing black if I did not shut up," he wrote.

It is thought Beheshti was targeted for his writings on political and social issues on his blog and on Facebook.

Beheshti's family say they have been prevented from visiting his grave, with the exception of his brother-in-law.

Amnesty International (AI) has also called on the Iranian authorities to answer questions on Beheshti's death.

"Fears that Sattar Beheshti died as a result of torture in an Iranian detention facility, after apparently lodging a complaint about torture are very plausible, given Iran's track record when it comes to deaths in custody," said Ann Harrison, AI's deputy Middle East and North Africa programme director.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2012/11/2012118181832663451.html>

- **Iran open to negotiations with America 'even in hell:' top official**

Iran would open negotiations with the United States "even at the bottom of hell" should that be in its interests, Secretary of Iran's Human Rights Council Mohammad Javad Larijani said on Wednesday.

Larijani, an advisor to the Iran's supreme leader and the director of Institute for Studies in Theoretical Physics and Mathematics in Tehran, said however that any negotiations should be based on mutual respect and fairness, the semi-official Mehr news agency reported.

"Negotiation with the U.S. due to pressure is not acceptable to us," Larijani said in the Northern city of Anzali, adding that such talks with Washington should be the result of a "strategy" if Tehran ever accepts to sit to the negotiating table with the United States, the Fars News Agency report.

He said that any negotiations with the West should serve Iran's interests, adding that only Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei had the authority to decide on the matter.

Earlier, his brother Ayatollah Sadeq Amoil Larijani who heads Iran's Judiciary system, said, “The Americans should not imagine that they can blackmail our nation by sitting at the negotiating table with Iran.”

Iran and the United States broke relations in April 1980 after Iranian students broke into the U.S. embassy and held captive its diplomatic staff for 444 days.

“Relations with the U.S. are not easy and after all the U.S. pressures and crimes against the Iranian people, such relations are not possible (to establish) overnight,” Amoli Larijani said in Tehran on Wednesday.

“The U.S. will start to be wise only when it manages to win the Iranian nation's trust”, he added.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/08/248274.html?PHPSESSID=5e1e6jisc6vfvv9opbnf8ibj51>

- **Russian FM backs Iran role in settling Syria unrest**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has welcomed the Islamic Republic of Iran's participation in finding a solution to the Syrian unrest.

Lavrov said in an interview with Moskovskie Novosti daily on Thursday that Moscow supported Egyptian President Mohammad Morsi's proposal that a quartet group comprising Iran, Egypt, Turkey and Saudi Arabia develop initiatives to address the resolution of the Syrian unrest.



He said that the five permanent members of the UN Security Council could also work with the four countries of the quartet in resolving the Syrian issue.

Lavrov said that it would be difficult to solve the Syrian issue without Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt as well as Syria's neighbors.

During an emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in the Saudi city of Mecca in mid-August, Morsi put forward a proposal for the establishment of a quartet group, comprising Iran, Egypt, Turkey and Saudi Arabia, to help resolve the Syrian crisis.

The high-level meeting of the group was held on September 17 about a week after preparatory talks in the Egyptian capital by lower-ranking officials from the four countries.

Russia has repeatedly highlighted Iran's role in finding a peaceful solution to the ongoing crisis in Syria.

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

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/11/09/271203/russia-backs-iran-role-in-syria-solution/>

- **Iran, Armenia start building joint hydro-electric power plant**

Iran and Armenia have started the construction of a joint hydro-electric power plant (HPP) on the Aras River, which borders the two countries.



The construction of the plant started on Wednesday in a ceremony attended by Armenian President Serzh Sarksyan and Iran's Energy Minister Majid Namjou.

With the completion of the project, some 1,700 megawatts of electricity will be generated annually for domestic production in Iran, said managing director of East Azarbaijan Regional Water Company, Arsalan Hashemi.

According to Hashemi, the HPP has the capacity to produce 260 megawatts and includes two 130-megawatt plants, one in Iran and the other one in Armenia.

The project is financed with USD 560 and 500 million in credits respectively from Armenia and Iran.

Iran and Armenia agreed to build the joint plant during Namjou's one-day trip to Armenia in June.

The plant is being constructed simultaneously in Armenia's Meghri and Iran's Qarachilar regions.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/11/08/271085/iran-armenia-start-building-joint-plant/>

- **Iran, Iraq sign MoU to broaden cooperation in educational field**

Tehran, Nov 9, IRNA – Head of Iran's Technical and Vocational Training Organization, Koroush Parand, said on Friday that Iran and Iraq have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for

expansion of cooperation in the fields of education and vocational training to promote employment opportunities in their job market.

The MoU is to broaden mutual cooperation in line with their growing international cooperation, he said.

The MoU is to help both sides broaden mutual cooperation in creating enough room for employment and vocational and technical training, to benefit from Iran's experience in eradication of poverty and unemployment, and to provide training courses on new technological know-how as well as social welfare, he said.

The MoU is to help rehabilitate the needy people, he said.

He also invited the two sides' private sectors to play active role in bolstering and broadening such mutually beneficial cooperation.

<http://old.irna.ir/News/Economic/Iran,-Iraq-sign-MoU-to-broaden-cooperation-in-educational-field/80406674>

### 3. SYRIA

- **UN warns of rising humanitarian need in Syria**

UN projects the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance in Syria could reach four million by 2013.

The United Nations has warned that if the conflict in Syria continues at its current pace the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance within the country would rise by 1.5 million by early next year.

In an interview ahead of Friday's fifth Syrian Humanitarian Forum in Geneva, John Ging, operations director for the UN humanitarian office, has said the number of the Syrians that would need some form of humanitarian aid could increase from 2.5 million to four million by early 2013.

"People need to be aware of just how desperate the situation is inside Syria for the people there, how unbearable it is, and how they are suffering and falling into ever deeper despair and humanitarian need ... It's just getting a lot worse very rapidly for the ordinary people", Ging said.

Ging also said UN projections see the number of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries reaching 700,000, up from the current estimated 400,000 in early 2013.

Of the 2.5 million Syrians currently in need of humanitarian aid in Syria, Ging said the United Nations and other organisations are only able to reach 1.5 million. Funding was cited as one reason for the shortfall.

Programmes for Syrian refugees in camps in neighbouring countries, including Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan, are also seriously underfunded, warned Ging. Donors have so far provided only 50 per cent of the amount needed, he said.

The UN humanitarian projections come as Syrian opposition figures are meeting in the Qatari capital, Doha, to forge a broad-based leadership group sought by the international community.

#### Opposition meeting

Riad Seif, a prominent dissident who had proposed a Western-backed initiative to unite the opposition and form a transitional government, said on Thursday that he was "optimistic" an agreement could be reached.

The opposition is moving towards creating "a political leadership that would satisfy the Syrians and be recognised by the international community," Seif said.

He later added that the main opposition bloc, the Syrian National Council (SNC), had deferred a decision until after a final round of internal elections on Friday.

The SNC is hesitant since it would reportedly be given only 22 of 60 seats in the new group, to make room for activists from inside Syria.

Al Jazeera's Omar Al Saleh, reporting from Doha, said it was obvious from Thursday's drawn-out negotiations that the Syrian opposition remain divided, with "huge differences between the members of the Syrian National Council and other opposition figures".

"The international community and the core group of the 'Friends of Syria' that includes the US, France, Britain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, as well as Turkey, are pushing for a new initiative to be adopted by the delegates," he said.

"That initiative calls for a coherent representative structure that would also represent those fighting inside Syria. Western diplomats are telling Al Jazeera that this is not going to happen any time soon."

'Government-in-exile'

Washington wants the opposition to reshape into a "government-in-exile".

Opposition leaders say such a body could be sited outside Syria or in zones now under rebel control.

Hamad Bin Jassim al-Thani, prime minister of Qatar, urged Assad's opponents to "unify their ranks and positions and to prioritise the interests of their nation and people over their own personal interests".

The search for a united front came as video emerged purporting to show rebel fighters shooting dead an unarmed man.

The United Nations and human rights groups say both pro-government and anti-Assad fighters are guilty of war crimes - and the latest video would appear to give more evidence for that.

"It shows the ugliness of the war," said Middle East analyst Joseph Kechichian. "Obviously this is a civil war going on and there are breaches of international conduct and human conduct ... This is not the first time and not the last. Unfortunately, we are going to see these more often."

Reacting to the footage, SNC's Radwan Ziadeh said: "It's a very shocking video and alarming." "We condemn all the human rights violations committed by the rebels or FSA [Free Syrian Army]. [But] we are not sure that who did this execution are members of the FSA."

Assad vows to stay

Meanwhile, a defiant Bashar al-Assad, Syrian president, rejected calls he seek a safe exit from the country, vowing he would "live in Syria and die in Syria".

"I am not a puppet. I was not made by the West to go to the West or to any other country," Assad said in English in an interview with Russia's RT television.

"I am Syrian, I was made in Syria, I have to live in Syria and die in Syria," he said, according to transcripts posted on RT's website.

On Tuesday, David Cameron, British prime minister, floated the idea of granting Assad safe passage from the country, saying it "could be arranged," although he wanted the Syrian leader to face international justice.

Assad also warned against foreign intervention in the country's escalating conflict, saying such a move would have global consequences and shake regional stability.

"We are the last stronghold of secularism and stability in the region ... it will have a domino effect that will affect the world from the Atlantic to the Pacific," the transcript said.

In a separate video extract of the interview, Assad added: "The price of this invasion, if it happens, is going to be big, more than the whole world can afford."

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/11/201211962354550350.html>

- **Envoys from 60 countries to gather in Tokyo over Syria conflict**

Japan said Friday around 150 envoys from some 60 countries are expected to attend an international conference in Tokyo this month aimed at pressuring the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.



It will bring together senior government officials from "Friends of Syria Group" countries supporting the Syrian opposition and seeking to ratchet up pressure on the Assad regime, a foreign ministry official said.

The Friends of Syria Group has previously organized four such meetings -- in Paris in April, Washington in June, Doha in July and the Hague in September, the official said.

"Some 150 participants from some 60 countries participated in the previous meetings and we expect a similar size this time as well," the foreign ministry official said.

Further details of the meeting, including the date, will be announced soon.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Osamu Fujimura said on Monday: "The meeting is aimed at broadening the range of countries taking part in sanctions and enhancing the effectiveness of pressure on the Syrian government."

Tokyo imposed a freeze on assets held in Japan by the Syrian president and military leaders in September last year, in concert with European countries and the United States.

Tokyo has also banned chartered flights from Syria since July.

Kyodo News reported from Cairo that the Syrian foreign ministry on Thursday demanded the Tokyo meeting be called off.

But the official said the Japanese government will go ahead with it as scheduled.

Conflict erupted in Syria in March 2011 when Assad's forces moved to crush pro-reform protests, triggering an armed uprising.

More than 36,000 people have been killed, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/09/248537.html?PHPSESSID=5e1e6jjsq6vfvv9opbnf8ibj51>

- **FSA claims control of Turkish border crossing as refugee crisis mounts**

The Free Syrian Army (FSA) announced early Thursday that fighters from the armed opposition had gained control of the Ras al-Ain crossing on the Turkish border in the Hasaka province, as hundreds of Syrians continue to stream into makeshift refugee camps on the border every day.



The latest development from the FSA was reported by Al Arabiya TV. Further details are yet to be reported, but comes a day after opposition fighters fired at the Syrian presidential palace in Damascus, but missed.

Turkey said Wednesday it is in talks with NATO over the possible deployment of Patriot missiles on its soil amid the escalating conflict in neighboring Syria, but the prime minister insisted that no request has yet been made.

Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu told reporters during a visit to Brussels that it was only “normal” to discuss any defense measures in the face of potential risk from Syria, according to the state-run Anatolia news agency.

Turkey has already beefed up border security with tanks and anti-aircraft batteries in the face of the deadly 20-month conflict in Syria, which has occasionally spilled over into Turkish soil.

On the Turkish border, volunteer aid workers are struggling to cope with the humanitarian crisis as warplanes and helicopter gunships try to reverse significant rebel gains made in Idlib province in the war to bring down President Bashar al-Assad.

But some refugees say they would rather return home and risk death than eke out a miserable existence under canvas as winter sets in.

“We were moving from village to village but now they’re bombing everywhere,” Fatima Gharbiyeh told AFP new agency, at an unfinished camp that on Tuesday welcomed its first families at the Bab el-Hawa border crossing.

She, her husband and four children arrived in a group of 18 families trucked by rebels from Jabal al-Zawiya to the camp, just across the road from a rebel firing range and within earshot of gunfire.

It is the third camp to spring up in this tiny corner of the border. Thousands of others are already living in the villages of Atme and Qah.

The United Nations estimates that more than 2.5 million people have been affected by the war, with more than 358,000 refugees registered in neighboring countries and many more unregistered.

The newest displaced come from a roll call of the sites of some of the heaviest fighting in recent weeks, little more than an hour’s drive south through the olive groves.

They come from Kfar Nabal, where the horrifying aftermath of a heavy air strike was filmed this week, from Maaret al-Numan, and from Al-Atarib.

“The flow of refugees depends on the intensity of the bombing. Sometimes it’s 100 a day and sometimes 500. The day before yesterday we got 1,000,” said Ghassan al-Sheikh, 52, a volunteer helping refugees at the school in Atme.

The international community continues to seek out a solution for the crisis, although world leaders have come under attack by Syrian opposition groups claiming they are not doing enough to halt the bloodshed.

On Thursday, British Prime Minister David Cameron’s office said the UK wants to reexamine previously abandoned options in looking at ways to end the conflict in Syria.

Asked if these could include such measures as arming the Syrian rebels or creating a no-fly zone, an official from Cameron’s office declined to say which specific options would be reconsidered, according to Reuters news agency.

“The prime minister wants to come back and look at things that were on the table a year ago which we didn’t want to do then. He wants to put them back on the table,” the official said.

“We haven’t ruled anything in and we haven’t ruled anything out ... This is the moment to get some impetus going forward. We want to put everything on the table,” the official added.

Options that have been suggested in the past have included arming Syria’s rebels and creating safe havens inside Syria enforced by Western air power. A European Union arms embargo on Syria expires on Dec. 1.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/08/248324.html?PHPSESSID=5e1e6jjsq6vfvv9opbnf8ibj51>

- **Bashar Assad: Price of invasion more than world can afford**

Syrian President Bashar Assad has dismissed the likelihood of any Western-led military intervention against his country, saying the domino effect of such adventurism will be unbearable for the global community.

“I do not think the West is going [to intervene], but if they do so, nobody can tell what is next. I think the price of this [foreign] invasion if it happened is going to be more than the whole world can afford,” said Assad in a Thursday interview with Russia Today TV network.

Assad praised Syria as the “last stronghold” of “stability” and “coexistence” in the region, warning that the domino effect of any military strike against the country “will affect the world from the Atlantic to the Pacific and you know the implication on the rest of the world.”

“I am not a puppet. I was not made by the West to go to the West or to any other country. I am Syrian, I was made in Syria, I have to live in Syria and die in Syria,” he pointed out.

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

The anti-Syria Western states have been calling for Assad to step down, but Russia and China oppose the Western drive to oust the Syrian president.

On Sunday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov warned that Western countries are seeking a UN Security Council resolution that will aggravate the situation in Syria in order to pave the way for the establishment of another government in the Arab state.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/11/08/271152/syria-invasion-not-affordable-by-world/>

## 4. ISRAEL-PALESTINE

- **Boy killed 'by Israeli gunfire' in Gaza**

Palestinian boy, 13, killed by helicopter gunfire during incursion by Israeli forces, Gaza's health ministry says.

Gunfire from Israeli forces has killed a Palestinian boy in the besieged Gaza Strip, local medics have said, during border clashes between the Israeli army and Palestinian fighters.



The Popular Resistance Committees said its fighters had confronted an Israeli force of four tanks and a bulldozer involved in a short-range incursion beyond Israel's border fence with the Gaza Strip.

"Terrorists opened fire at IDF soldiers while they were performing routine activity adjacent to the security fence," an Israeli military spokeswoman said in Jerusalem.

An Israeli military official said the soldiers responded by firing at "suspicious locations".

Ashraf al-Qudra, spokesman for Gaza's health ministry, said the boy had been killed near the border.

"Thirteen-year-old Hmeid Yunes Abu Daqqa was killed by bullets fired from an Israeli helicopter during an incursion in Abasan and Al-Qarara," he said, referring to two neighbourhoods east of Khan Yunis.

Witnesses confirmed that Israeli helicopters had opened fire as Israeli tanks carried out an incursion east of the city.

Palestinian gunmen fired mortar shells at the tanks, sparking a brief exchange of fire, they said.

The incident broke nearly two weeks of a lull in violence between Gaza gunmen and Israeli forces since the last wave of fighting that killed several fighters, mostly from Hamas.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/11/2012118171338601313.html>

- **Palestinians allocate draft resolution on U.N. status upgrade**

The draft resolution, which could be put to a vote in the 193-nation U.N. General Assembly later this month, also reiterates the Palestinian Authority's commitment to the "two-state solution" in which Israel and an independent Palestinian state would co-exist in peace.



If approved, the resolution would "accord to Palestine Observer State status in the United Nations system, without prejudice to the acquired rights, privileges and role of the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people," according to a draft obtained by Reuters.

The Palestinians are currently considered an observer "entity" at the United Nations. Acceptance of the Palestinians as a non-member state, similar to the Vatican's U.N. status, would implicitly recognize Palestinian statehood.

The upgrade could also grant the Palestinians access to bodies like the International Criminal Court in The Hague, where they could file complaints against Israel.

The status upgrade seems certain to win approval in any vote in the General Assembly, which is composed mostly of post-colonial states historically sympathetic to the Palestinians. Palestinian diplomats also are courting European countries to further burnish their case.

Frustrated that their bid for full U.N. membership last year failed amid U.S. opposition in the U.N. Security Council, Palestinians launched their watered-down bid for recognition as an "observer state," the same status given to the Vatican.

Israel and the United States oppose the move by the Palestinians and have called on Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to return to peace talks that collapsed in 2010 over Israeli settlement construction in the occupied West Bank.

The draft resolution would have U.N. member states express "the urgent need for the resumption and acceleration of negotiations within the Middle East peace process."

Palestinian officials said last month they can count on around 115 "yes" votes in the General Assembly, mostly from Arab, African, Latin American and Asian states, and expect around 22 "no" votes, led by the United States, as well as 56 abstentions.

U.N. diplomats said no date for a vote has been set. Several Western diplomats said U.S. and European officials are lobbying the Palestinians to persuade them to delay the move to allow newly re-elected U.S. President Barack Obama time to try to restart moribund Middle East peace talks.

An Israeli official said earlier this week that if the Palestinians push on with the U.N. bid, Israel may cancel the Paris Protocol, a key economic accord it maintains with the cash-strapped Palestinian Authority.

The United States has also suggested that funding for the Palestinians - and possibly some funding for the United Nations - could be at risk if the Palestinians seek a U.N. upgrade <http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/09/248528.html?PHPSESSID=5e1e6jjsq6vfvv9opbnf8ibj51>

- **Arab Israeli voter turnout shrinks, survey says**

The voter turnout among the Arab Israelis has declined over the past five elections in the Occupied Palestinian Territories as the level of distrust toward the Israeli political system is on the rise among the minority, a survey says.



The recent survey conducted by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, a German political establishment, and the Israeli social organization of Abraham Fund Initiatives showed that voting levels among the Arab minority who live in the Occupied Palestinian Territories dropped from 75 percent in the 1999 elections to 53.4 percent in 2009.

According to the survey, the percentage of the voting levels is likely to decline even further in the future.

“No Arab living in Israel should vote,” said Salman, 32, from the village of Beit Safafa near al-Quds (Jerusalem).

Salman further said that the Second Intifada served as a turning point in his attitude toward the Israeli regime.

Over 6,000 Palestinians died during their First Intifada between 1987 and 1993 and the second one in 2000s.

According to Abraham Fund Initiatives officials, falling rates of Arab voting could destabilize the Israeli society and cause "a socio-national rift that will be hard to mend in the future."

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/11/09/271200/arab-israeli-voter-turnout-shrinks/>

- **Hamas brigades claim attack on Israeli military in Gaza**

GAZA CITY (Ma'an) -- The military wing of Hamas says it detonated a roadside bomb targeting the Israeli military in the southern Gaza Strip on Thursday evening.

The Al-Qassam Brigades said the bomb, east of Khan Younis, was a response to Israeli incursions into Gaza and attacks on Palestinians, particularly the killing of a 13-year-old boy earlier Thursday.

An Israeli military spokesman said an "explosive tunnel" was detonated in the area lightly injuring a soldier and damaging a vacant army vehicle nearby. The army said in a statement that its forces were conducting "operational activity in the area" at the time.

Earlier Thursday, a 13-year-old Palestinian boy was killed after a day of clashes in southern Gaza.

Hamid Younis Abu Daqqa died after Israeli forces targeted houses and farms east of Khan Younis, according to Ashraf al-Qidra, a health ministry spokesman in Gaza. Medics said the boy was hit by machine gun fire, either from Israeli helicopters or tanks that took part in the incident.

On Thursday morning, the Popular Resistance Committees said its militants had engaged in a gun battle with an Israeli force of four tanks and a bulldozer which had crossed over the border into the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli military said its forces came under fire and responded by firing at "suspicious locations".

"Terrorists opened fire at (Israeli) soldiers while they were performing routine activity adjacent to the security fence," military spokeswoman Avital Leibovich said.

Asked about the boy's death, she said: "I cannot confirm that we targeted anyone. We don't have any information at all."

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=535501>

- **Liberman heads to Vienna to thwart Palestinian UN bid**

FM warns of "far-reaching implications" to PA statehood bid; Fatah official: Bid will mark an end to Oslo Accords, following UN recognition Palestine will force int'l community to take legal action against Israel.



Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman warned on Thursday that there would be "far-reaching implications" to the Palestinians' bid to upgrade their UN status to that of non-member state later this month.

"This unilateral step has broken the rules and crossed a red line," Liberman said before heading to Vienna to attend an urgent meeting of Israeli ambassadors to Europe.

The emissaries were discussing ways to lobby European governments not to support the plan and to pressure the Palestinian Authority to either delay, or drop, its bid.

Also on Thursday, Abbas Zaki, a member of the Fatah central committee, denied reports that some Arab countries had been exerting pressure on the PA leadership to refrain from the statehood bid.

"Until this moment, no one has dared to ask us not to go to the UN," Zaki stressed.

"We have no other choice. Some European countries, like Britain, have only asked us to delay the statehood bid for three months. But we are determined to go to the UN General Assembly this month."

PA officials said President Mahmoud Abbas was considering asking for a UN vote on November 15 or 29.

November 15 is the anniversary of the declaration of a Palestinian state in Algeria in 1988. November 29 is the International Day for Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

November 29 is also the date in 1947 that the UN General Assembly voted to partition Mandatory Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state.

The PA circulated a draft resolution of their UN bid on Wednesday, which states their commitment to a "two-state solution" in which Israel and an independent Palestinian state would coexist in peace.

The draft resolution would have UN member states express “the urgent need for the resumption and acceleration of negotiations within the Middle East peace process.”

Zaki and several Palestinian officials warned Israel against imposing sanctions on the PA in response to the statehood bid. Zaki said that once the status of a Palestinian state was upgraded, the Palestinians would be able to pursue Israel for “war crimes” in the International Criminal Court.

The upgraded status, however, would not grant the Palestinians full rights as a United Nations member state. Only the Security Council can grant a state membership. The PA has yet to secure the majority vote needed for that bid. Even if it did, the US has promised to veto it.

The UN General Assembly vote to upgrade the Palestinian status to that of non-member observer state cannot be vetoed. The Palestinians already know they have the majority support needed to pass the resolution.

“Once we become a recognized state, we will go to all UN agencies to force the international community to take legal action against Israel,” Zaki told the London-based Al-Quds al-Arabi newspaper.

He said that after the UN voted in favor of the PA request to become a non-member state, “the case of the Oslo Accords and the Palestinian Authority will be closed. We will have a state parliament and not a Palestinian Legislative Council.”

Former Foreign Ministry legal adviser Alan Baker said, however, that passage of the UN General Assembly resolution on non-member status would not automatically grant the Palestinians the legal right to exit their international agreements under the Oslo Accords. Nor would such a resolution nullify the accords, he added.

Even after the resolution passed, both Israel and the PA would be bound to abide by those agreements, he said.

If the PA wanted to break those agreements, it could do it without the UN resolution, Baker said.

Saleh Ra’fat, a member of the PLO Executive Committee, warned that the PA leadership would abrogate economic and security agreements with Israel if the government imposed sanctions in response to the statehood bid.

“The Palestinian leadership will respond if the Israeli government carries out its threats against the Palestinian Authority,” Ra’fat told the Jerusalem-based Al-Quds daily.

The PA would consider itself free of all its commitments under the agreements signed with Israel, including economic and security obligations, he said.

Ra'fat said that if Israel decided to withhold tax revenues belonging to the PA, the Palestinians would respond with a boycott of all Israeli goods.

He also threatened to “escalate popular resistance” against Israel.

The PA planned to call for an international conference for peace, in Moscow, after the UN vote, the PLO official said.

Jamal Muhassen, a member of the Fatah central committee, declared that the PA leadership was determined to go to the UN this month despite Israeli and American “threats.”

The “situation on the ground would change” after the UN vote because “the Palestinian state will be under occupation,” Muhassen said.

Another PLO official, Tayseer Khaled, said the Palestinians would cancel the 1994 Paris Economic Protocol if the Israeli government imposed financial sanctions on the PA after the UN vote.

“We will stop importing everything that is Israeli,” Khaled cautioned. “We will not remain idle if Israel robs Palestinian money.”

<http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=291132>

## 5. AFRICA and EGYPT

- **Egypt’s new Pope says security situation, not Islamists, worries Christians**

The security situation and not the dominance of Islamists is what prompting Egyptian - Christians and Muslims alike - to leave the country, new Pope Anba Tawadros told Al Arabiya.

Tawadros said since the January 25 Revolution the security situation compelled Egyptians to emigrate rebuffing claims that only or more Coptic Egyptian are leaving than Muslims.

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

He said article 2 will not give Christians in Egypt rights.

The marginalization of Christians is what has compelled his predecessor, Pope Shenuda 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.

He also made comments regarding Egypt's relations with Isreal. He said there are no planned trips to Jerusalem and if there are, Egyptian Christians and Muslims will go together.

On April 2012, Jordanian king and Egypt's grand mufti visited Jerusalem's al-Aqsa mosque despite claims by an internationally prominent cleric that such visits are a sop to Israel.

Early 2012, chairman of the International Union for Muslim Scholars Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi disapproved of the Palestinian Authorities chief Mahmoud Abbas's call for Arabs and Muslims to a visit occupied Jerusalem commenting that this is not accepted in Islam.

While the Egyptian government is normalizing relations with Israel, the people reject it, Tawadros added.

Islamists criticized Egyptian President Mohammed Mursi for re-opening the Egyptian embassy in Israel. But during Mursi's Eid al-Adha speech in October, Mursi said that "without declaring war against anyone," Egypt would do its best to support Palestinian in their struggle against Israeli occupation.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/08/248442.html?PHPSESSID=5e1e6jjsq6vfvv9opbnf8ibj51>

- **Egypt prosecutor asks government to shut down porn websites**

Egypt must block pornographic websites, its public prosecutor ordered on Wednesday, a move likely to be popular with resurgent religious conservatives, but eyed with suspicion by liberals who fear increasing censorship.



Prosecutor Abdel Maguid Mahmoud ordered government authorities "to take the necessary measures to block any corrupt or corrupting pornographic pictures or scenes inconsistent with the values and traditions of the Egyptian people and the higher interests of the state."

Mahmoud said his ruling was in response to a 2009 court ruling that such sites be blocked. It was not clear if political prodding had led to the latest decision.

Mahmoud was widely criticized in October after the acquittal of senior Mubarak-era officials charged with organizing violence during the uprising that deposed the leader.

New President Mohamed Mursi was thwarted in an attempt last month to replace Mahmoud by appointing him ambassador to the Vatican.

In September, Telecommunications Minister Hany Mahmoud was quoted in the media as saying it would be technically difficult to block porn sites and that the correct way to address the issue would be to raise awareness among the young.

Pornographic and other sites are routinely blocked in many Middle Eastern countries, including Gulf Arab states and Iran, but local users often find ways to circumvent the restrictions.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/07/248261.html?PHPSESSID=5e1e6jjsq6vfvv9opbnf8ibj51>

- **Sudan's Bashir vows 'painful response' to alleged Israel bombing**

KHARTOUM – Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir on Thursday promised his country would respond robustly to what he believes was an Israeli bombing of a Khartoum arms factory and said he was in "perfect health" after undergoing surgery in Saudi Arabia.



Sudan last month accused Israel of carrying out an air strike on the Yarmouk arms factory in the south of Khartoum, causing a blast that killed four people.

Israel has not commented on the charge, but has long accused Sudan of channeling weapons from Iran to the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip.

"I am in perfect health, and our response to Israel will be painful," state radio quoted Bashir, 68, as saying in a brief text message sent to mobile phones.

Bashir, who came to power in a bloodless 1989 coup, left hospital in Saudi Arabia on Wednesday after undergoing a "small, successful" operation, state media said.

Sudanese blogs and newspapers had begun to speculate about the president's health because he has held fewer public rallies in the past few months. He underwent surgery on his vocal cords in Qatar in August, an official said last month.

Over more than two decades in power, Bashir has weathered multiple armed rebellions, years of US trade sanctions, an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court, waves of student protests, and the secession of oil-producing South Sudan last year.

He is known for his fiery speeches and for dancing and waving his walking stick at public events.

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/sudan-s-bashir-vows-painful-response-alleged-israel-bombing>

- **Public prosecutor returns church land plot seized by Salafis**

Public Prosecutor Abdel Meguid Mahmoud returned a plot of land owned by the Shubra El-Kheima Church after the church's bishop complained that a group of Salafis had occupied the land Tuesday and turned a building on the property into a mosque.

Prosecutor and police investigations proved the church's legal ownership of the plot.

Mahmoud ordered the police to protect the land and prevent any illegal construction on it.

The Maspero Youth Union, led by Coptic activists, called for demonstrations on Wednesday to protest continuous attacks on Coptic places of worship.

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/public-prosecutor-returns-church-land-plot-seized-salafis>

## 6. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Aoun meets Rai, claims two agree on crisis plan**

BEIRUT: Free Patriotic Movement leader MP Michel Aoun reassured the Lebanese Thursday that the country's stability would not be shaken by political tensions linked to last month's assassination of police intelligence chief Brig. Gen. Wissam al-Hasan.



Speaking to reporters after meeting with Maronite Patriarch Beshara Rai in Bkirki, north of Beirut, Aoun said they had agreed on ways to resolve the current political crisis sparked by Hasan's killing, but he declined to give details.

The FPM leader said he visited Rai to congratulate him on his recent appointment by Pope Benedict XVI as a cardinal in the Catholic Church.

"We talked about the common issue, which is the current political crisis in Lebanon. We exchanged views on it and we reached an identical vision on ways of solving it," Aoun said. "We hope that this identical [views] will apply to other parties in order to reach results."

"We reassure all the Lebanese that stability will not be touched. The intensity of the crisis goes up and down only in speeches. Nothing more than this will happen," he added.

Asked to elaborate on what he and Rai agreed, Aoun said: "We cannot reveal intentions before we talk with the other parties."

In response to a question on whether Rai would invite top Maronite leaders for a meeting in Bkirki to discuss what they had agreed on, Aoun said it was up to the patriarch to take such an initiative.

Asked whether Rai would launch an initiative to resolve the political crisis, Aoun told reporters: "The cardinal will always provide you with necessary information."

The assassination of Hasan in a car bomb in the Beirut district of Ashrafieh on Oct. 19 has thrown Lebanon into a serious political crisis following the opposition March 14 coalition's calls for the resignation of the government and the formation of a new Cabinet. The coalition has called on Prime Minister Najib Mikati to step aside.

Asked if he would agree to a Cabinet change if Rai approved it, Aoun said: "You have begun talking about details while we are still in the phase of general talks."

Meanwhile, Rai also met with Daoud Sayegh, a political adviser to former Prime Minister Saad Hariri, who conveyed to him a letter from the leader of the Future Movement on the occasion of the patriarch's appointment as a cardinal.

In his letter, Hariri said the cardinal rank was meant to honor all the Lebanese in view of Bkirki's role as a moral authority and wished Rai success in serving the Maronite Church and Lebanon.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Politics/2012/Nov-09/194434-aoun-meets-rai-claims-two-agree-on-crisis-plan.ashx#ixzz2BiZ1xXTt>

## 7. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Saudi cleric condemns minor girls' marriage to wealthy older men**

Former member of the Saudi Council of Senior Scholars Sheikh Abdullah al-Rakban admitted that the “sale” of minor girls to wealthy husbands takes place in rural and Bedouin communities and stressed the necessity of raising awareness about marriage age.



“If a girl is over 25 years old, she is considered mature and has the right to marry whoever she chooses,” Rakban said in a seminar held at the Imam Mohamed bin Saud Islamic University under the title Marriage Age: A Religious and Social Perspective.

“But if she is under 20, this most probably means that her parents forced her to get married especially if the husband is a wealthy older man.”

It is also important, Rakban noted, to make sure that the age difference between husband and wife is reasonable so that they can develop a healthy relationship.

Rakban said he differed with religious scholars who argue that it is not religiously permissible to set a minimum age for marriage.

“Marriage age is one of the matters a ruler can determine and people under the specified age should not be allowed to marry unless under exceptional circumstances.”

Professor of sociology at the School of Social Sciences at the Imam Mohamed bin Saudi University Dr. Ali bin Abdul Rahman al-Rumi revealed that 5,622 Saudi girls got married under the age of 14, that is not more than 1% of the population.

Rumi explained that Saudi Arabia is signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) provided that none of the terms that violate Islamic laws is applied.

“Islam does not prohibit the marriage of minor girls, but international organizations keep putting pressure on countries that signed with reservations and raise hell if one minor girl gets married in any of them,” he said.

Rumi, however, admitted to the drawbacks of early marriages.

“Girls at this young age are more fertile and this leads to a remarkable rise in the population.”

According to Dr. Abdullah bin Saleh al-Hudaithi, member of the Saudi Consultative Council, the Ministry of Justice is currently studying the possibility of setting a minimum marriage age, but the issue was not discussed at the council.

“There was a recommendation to determine the minimum age for a girl to have a marriage contract, but it was withdrawn later,” he said.

Hudaithi pointed out the difference between the marriage contract and the consummation of the marriage.

“I believe the minimum age should apply to consummation, but a marriage contract can be signed before that age is reached.”

According to this regulation, he explained, the girl can ask for divorce if after reaching the legal she does not want to consummate the marriage.

Dr. Kais bin Mohamed Al al-Sheikh argued that marrying girls at a young age is sometimes better for them.

“Parents may see that it is in the girl’s best interest to marry at this age and sometimes a girl would keep postponing marriage until she becomes a spinster or make the wrong choice.”

Member of the Saudi Human Rights Association Dr. Abdul Aziz al-Faleh stressed the necessity of referring the matter to the Council of Senior Scholars.

“International organizations are putting a lot of pressure on Saudi Arabia to regulate marriage age,” he said.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/08/248411.html?PHPSESSID=5e1e6jjsq6vfvv9opbnf8ibj51>

- **Massive Saudi rally remembers victims of regime crackdown**

Saudis have massively thronged the streets of the city of Qatif in the east of the country to commemorate 14 people killed by the kingdom's security forces during an anti-regime protest a year ago, Press TV reports.



On Thursday, hundreds of protesters condemned Al Saud regime for its refusal to launch a probe into the suspicious killings.

The demonstrators also denounced the Saudi government's violent crackdown on peaceful rallies held from time to time to demand the release of political prisoners.

Last month, the Saudi Interior Ministry warned the public against staging demonstrations in support of the political prisoners in the kingdom and pledged to deal "firmly" with those participating in such protest rallies.

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

The demonstrations have grown more critical of the repressive Al Saud regime, especially since November 2011, when Saudi security forces killed five protesters and injured many others in the province.

Saudi forces have arrested dozens of people, including prominent Shia cleric Sheikh Nemr al-Nemr.

According to Human Rights Watch, the Saudi regime "routinely represses expression critical of the government."

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/11/08/271165/massive-saudi-rally-remembers-victims/>

## 8. AFGHANISTAN - PAKISTAN

### • Deadly blasts hit Afghanistan

At least 20 people, including civilians going to a wedding, are killed in a spate of attacks across the country.

A spate of attacks across Afghanistan have killed 20 people, including women and a child on their way to a wedding, officials say.

The deadliest attack on Thursday happened in the southern Helmand province.



"Ten civilians, including four women and a child were killed in a roadside bomb attack as they were going to attend a wedding party in Musa Qala district of Helmand province," Ahmad Zeerak, the provincial governor's spokesman, told the AFP news agency.

Seven children were wounded in the blast, which police blamed on the Taliban.

Al Jazeera's Steve Chao, reporting from Helmand, said the province has experienced daily attacks, which have been seen as "an indication the Taliban are testing Afghan resolve" ahead of a 2014 international troop withdrawal.

In nearby Zabul province, a remote-controlled bomb in a bazaar killed two boys aged 12 and 14, provincial spokesman Ahmad Jawed Faisal said.

In the southern city of Kandahar, a suicide bomber on a motorcycle killed at least three policemen when he blew himself up at a check point.

Nesar Ahmad, a resident of the nation's second-largest city, described the bomb as powerful, citing damage to windows in nearby buildings.

From the perspective of one neighbourhood in Herat

Speaking to the Reuters news agency, Ahmad said "it was early in the morning when I heard a heavy bang, we came here and saw that a suicide attacker had targeted the check post, I have no more details about the incident".

Another three people were wounded in the Kandahar attack.

In the east, five soldiers of the Afghan National Army were killed after their convoy struck a landmine, said Sarhadi Zewak, spokesman for the provincial governor.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2012/11/201211884243670949.html>

- **Deadly Karachi blast targets security forces**

The Pakistani Taliban-orchestrated attack killed at least three in a residential quarters of paramilitary group.

A suicide bomber has killed at least three paramilitary forces and left another 21 wounded in southern Pakistan when he rammed his vehicle into the gates of a military base.



Thursday's blast targeted a Rangers paramilitary headquarters in Karachi and is the latest in a series of attacks against security forces, said Javed Odho, Karachi police inspector general.

Al Jazeera's Kamal Hyder, reporting from Islamabad, said the Pakistani Taliban issued a statement saying they carried out the attack on the headquarters of the paramilitary base in the nation's largest city.

"The target was the residential quarter ... The purpose of the attacker would have been to get to as many people in that residential quarter as possible", said our correspondent.

The police investigation team said more than 100 kilogrammes of explosives were packed into the small truck that rammed into the building.

The Rangers paramilitary forces have been aiding Karachi police in anti-terrorism operations.

The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, TTP, had previously issued a statement saying they would target the Muttahida Qaumi Movement, MQM, a political party in Sindh province with a large presence in Karachi.

Al Jazeera's Hyder said the statement was proof the Pakistani Taliban made Karachi into their "next battleground".

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2012/11/201211854059317349.html>



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*\*This media summary is prepared by **ORSAM Middle East Research Assistant Sercan DOĐAN**. It covers news and commentaries as reported by the national media sources publishing in the Middle Eastern countries. The views expressed are not those of ORSAM and their inclusion does not imply factual accuracy.*

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