



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

The Restructuring Procees of Iraq

Irak'ın Yeniden Yapılanma Süreci

Energy Security

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1. IRAQ

- **Kirkuk Head of Provincial Council discusses with UN official frameworks of cooperation**

Kirkuk, July 24 -- Kirkuk Head of Provincial Council Hassan Turan discussed with UN the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in Iraq for Humanitarian Affairs Jacqueline Badcock frameworks of cooperation to benefit from joint programs and projects implemented by international humanitarian organizations of the International Organization.

Nina correspondent said that Badcock expressed during the meeting today " the desire of the United Nations to activate its humanitarian work in the province of Kirkuk and the implementation of programs and projects in this area. "

(NINA)

- **UNHCR: 10,000 Iraqi refugees flee Syria in under a week**

GENEVA, July 24, 2012 (AFP) - More than 10,000 Iraqis have fled Syria to return

home since Wednesday fearing for their lives, the UN refugee agency said.

"Many of the returnees have expressed their fear regarding the ongoing risks to their safety in Iraq, but said they had little choice, given the security threats in Syria," UNHCR spokeswoman Melissa Fleming said in Geneva on Tuesday.

The Iraqi government is bringing back returning Iraqi refugees by the planeload, she said, adding that the agency welcomed the announcement by Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki that Syrians would continue to be allowed free access to cross into Iraq.

To date, some 7,500 Syrians have gone to Iraq, Fleming said, adding that in all nearly 150,000 Syrians were being sheltered in neighbouring countries, 30,000 more than on July 18.

On Monday, 6,000 Syrians arrived in Libya but that figure is now nearer 30,000, the UNHCR said.

Thousands of Syrians affected by the fighting have also relocated from the Damascus suburb of Seida Zeinab to other

parts of the capital, citing direct threats or fears of being caught up in the violence, Fleming said.

The displaced people have made makeshift camps in the capital's parks, while 58 schools now offer them shelter.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Jul-24/181820-10000-iraqi-refugees-flee-syria-in-under-a-week.ashx#axzz21Zt3J3TE>

- **Justice Minister orders to open all prisons to Human Rights Committees**

Baghdad, July 24 (AIN) –The Justice Minister, Hassan al-Shimmari, instructed to allow access for the Committees of the Human Rights of the United Nation into all the prisons in Iraq in order to make the public be acquainted with its neutral reports and follow up the application of the international standards in the Iraqi prisons.

While meeting the head of the delegation of the Human Rights to Iraq, Francisco Mota, Shimmari called "The Committees to resume their visits to the prisons and prepare their reports in order to be submitted to the UN in addition to

presenting a copy of those reports to the Ministry."

He stressed the necessity of "Diagnosing the negative points in order to set the suitable solutions for them," assuring that "The Committee has to respond to some unofficial organizations."

"The official reports made by the British and US Foreign Ministries, the Red Crescent Delegation and the Arab League Delegations were positive and denied the claims that the Ministry is violating the human rights," he pointed out.

"The cooperation of the UN by visiting the prisons will help the Ministry to evaluate its performance by following the international standards that would result in having an objective evaluation," he concluded

http://www.alliraqnews.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14946:justice-minister-orders-to-open-all-prisons-to-human-rights-committees-&catid=35:political&Itemid=2

- **Maliki meets Mutlaq after 8 months of relation rapture**

Baghdad, July 24 (AIN) –The Premier, Nouri al-Maliki, met The Deputy Premier, Salih al-Mutleg, at his office on Tuesday evening.

Informed source stated to AIN "Maliki sent an invitation to Mutleg, through MP, Haider al-Mulla who is a member of the Iraqi Front for National Dialogue that is headed by Mutleg, to attend a political breakfast to discuss political cases."

Earlier, Maliki announced that he will submit a request to the parliament to withdrawing confidence from Mutleg who described him as dictator. /End/

http://www.alliraqnews.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14975:breaking-newsmaliki-meets-mutleg-after-8-months-of-relations-rapture-&catid=35:political&Itemid=2

- **MP: No alliance between Maliki and Allawi**

ERBIL, July 24 (AKnews)- There is no "strategic" alliance between Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and his elections' rival, former PM Ayad Allawi, said a Kurdish MP.

Mahmoud Osman's statement came in response to reports which allege following the long political crisis in the country, the political positions have changed "radically" and "unexpected" alliances will be created.

Reports said that the PM is currently involved in talks of alliance with Allawi and the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI).

Osman of the Kurdistan Blocs Coalition (KBC) said the talks over the "strategic" alliance between Maliki and Allawi are "only media reports not more and are unlikely to be enforced.

<http://www.aknews.com/en/aknews/4/318423/>

- **MP withdraws from Allawi's bloc and joins Iraqiya Free bloc**

BAGHDAD, July 24 (AKnews) - Iraqi MP Lubna Rahim has withdrawn from the National Accord Movement, led by Ayad Allawi, and joined the Iraqiya Free bloc.

Rahim did not address the reasons for her withdrawal, but pointed out that the Iraqiya Free bloc is closer to her political beliefs.

Rahim said at a press conference in the Council of Representatives: "The Iraqiya Free bloc adopts moderate positions in the political process and it is far from the culture of conflict about the positions and privileges.

"The withdrawal decision came out from my commitment to keeping the promises and covenants I made when I became an MP in the Council of Representatives."

Many MPs withdrew from Iraqiya amid the political crisis in the country.

(AKnews)

- **Sabah al-Saadi: reforms need a good will**

Baghdad, July 24 / NINA /-- Independent MP Sabah Saidi for the National Alliance said : " Reforms if were benefited by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, would be benefited by others , he said .

He told NINA : "Claiming reforms is necessary, in condition that esteem from honesty and based on the interests of the Iraqi citizens not the interests of the political parties.

The National Alliance put forward a paper for the reform, in light of the claims of political blocs led by the Iraqiya Slate and the Kurdistan Alliance, to replace Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki as he declined of all former reached agreements especially Erbil agreement which formalized the current government.

(NINA)

- **Jaafari, leader within Change Movement review discussions among blocs**

Baghdad, July 24 (AIN) –The head of the Iraqi National Alliance, Ibraheem al-Jaafari, reviewed "The current discussions among the political blocs."

A statement by Jaafari's office received by AIN cited "Jaafari received Azad Kojlak, the leader within the Movement in addition to the member of the Movement, MP Sardar Abdul Allah, at his office in Baghdad on Tuesday."

"Both sides discussed the dialogues conducted among the blocs that aim at reaching positive solutions to reform the

general situation in the country," the statement concluded

(alliraqnews)

- **Jaffari, Shawees discuss recent political crisis talks**

BAGHDAD, July 24/ Aswat al-Iraq: Head of the National Alliance Ibraheem al-Jaffari discussed with a leading member at the Kurdish Alliance Roz Nouri Shawees the results of the meetings held recently to find the solutions to the current political crisis.

In a statement of his office, copy received by Aswat al-Iraq, Jaffari stressed the continuation of contacts with all political parties to find a solution to the present dilemma.

Iraq has been witnessing continued political crisis which culminated in some demands to demote Premier Maliki who was charged with "dictatorial" behavior.

Arbil-Najaf alliance (consisting of Iraqiya Bloc, Sadrist Trend and the Kurdish Alliance) tried to withdraw confidence from Maliki, charging him with

"unilaterally ruling the state and violating the constitution."

President Talabani refused to respond to the powers demanding Maliki's demotion, noting that the demand bore less than 164 signatories, stressing that dialogue and the National Conference are the best ways to overcome political crises.

(Aswat al-Iraq)

- **Jafari, PUK discuss political blocs' dialogue**

Baghdad, July 24 (NINA) – Leader of the National Alliance, Ibrahim al-Jafari, discussed with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) official, Abdul Lateef Rasheed, the ongoing dialogues with political blocs.

A statement issued on Tuesday, July 24, by Jafari's Office said that these meetings aim to get out of current crisis.

For his part, Rasheed conveyed President Talabani's regards and praises to the role Jafari is playing toward bringing various points of view closer, to come out with a reformative outlook that ends disputes between adversaries.

(NINA)

- **NA : Demands by KA ,closest to be achieved, in contrary of the IS demands**

Baghdad, July 24 / NINA /--An acquainted source for the National Alliance parliamentary bloc said: "Demands presented by Kurdistan Alliance are closest to be achieved than demands of Iraqiya late .

The source, who preferred anonymity told NINA : " Kurdistan Alliance's demands are susceptible to be negotiated because most of are constitutional demands away from Iraqiya Slate demands that need to a Parliamentary legislation."

(NINA)

- **Mala Bakhtiar denies dialogue on reunion between PUK and Gorran**

ERBIL, July 24 (AKnews) – There is no dialogue for a reunion between the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Gorran Movement, said the governing body official in the PUK's politburo.

Mala Bakhtiar said: "The latest visit of deputy secretary general of the PUK Barham Salih to Iran is to discuss the current crisis between Iraq and the Kurdistan Region."

Bakhtiar denied Iran's mediator role between the PUK and Gorran in the region.

The official said there are channels of dialogue between both sides in the region for re-normalizing relations, not a reunion.

Bakhtiar also said: "If any agreement were to be reached between the two parties it would be announced to the public, of course without accepting any external pressures."

<http://www.aknews.com/en/aknews/4/318376/>

- **There's contradiction between committee amendments and proposals of political leaders about electoral law, says regions committee**

BAGHDAD, July 24 (AKnews) - The regions and provinces committee in the Iraqi Council of Representatives stated Tuesday that there is a big contrast between what

has been modified on the provincial elections law by the regions committee and what was agreed upon during the meeting of the heads of political blocs.

The political blocs have failed until now to agree on amendments on the provincial elections law due to differences about the distribution mechanism of the electoral quota.

Committee member Mahdi Haji said: "The first and second reading of the law is done and all the proposals and views of the Council of Representatives were included and it is ready to be submitted for voting.

"The agreement on the law needs consultation and consensus on the proposals."

The Iraqi government previously ratified the allocation of \$10bn IQD to cover the expenses of the provincial districts and areas elections.

<http://www.aknews.com/en/aknews/4/318500/>

- **MPs host senior security officials**

ERBIL, July 24 (AKnews)- The Iraqi House of Representatives decided today to host the security officials over yesterday's insurgent attacks.

Due to the deteriorating security of the country and yesterday's coordinated bombings the presidency of the House decided to host the defense minister, deputy for interior minister and some other senior security officials, said Kurdish MP Shuwan Mohammed Taha.

Taha added Qusay Suhayl, first deputy for House Speaker Osama al-Nujaifi, will chair the session.

Yesterday's attacks across Iraq left behind 332 people dead and wounded.

(AKnews)

- **Parliamentarians to halt seriously to rectify security conditions and handle errors, says Taifur**

ERBIL, July 24 (AKnews) – Repeated security breaches in Iraq requires of us today as parliamentarians to rectify seriously the situation and handle the errors, said the second deputy of the Iraqi parliament speaker Arf Taifur.

arif tayfur, arf taifurThe situation requires us to follow up plans and call on security leaders to deal with the current crisis, said Taifur.

Taifur asked the Iraqi government to show more effort and form procedures to detect errors in the security forces and penalize negligence and terrorists, said a statement from Iraq's House of Representatives.

Yesterday a number of bomb blasts rocked cities, districts and towns in Iraq and left 332 casualties.

(AKnews)

- **Iraq court says president cannot testify in VP case**

By AFP

Baghdad, July 24

Iraq court says President Jalal Talabani cannot testify in the trial of the country's fugitive Vice President Tareq al-Hashemi

The trial of Iraq's fugitive Vice President Tareq al-Hashemi, accused of running death squads, was postponed Tuesday

after defense requests to call President Jalal Talabani to testify were again denied.

Hashemi, last known to be in Turkey, is being tried in absentia along with several of his bodyguards in a case which when initially filed in December as U.S. troops were pulling out worsened a brewing political crisis.

The vice president, a Sunni, insists the charges filed by the Shiite-led government are politically-motivated.

"The federal appeals court rejected all of the appeals we filed, and returned the whole case to the CCCI," said Muayad al-Izzi, head of Hashemi's defense team, referring to the Central Criminal Court of Iraq.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/07/24/228140.html>

- **Criminal Court adjourn to August 14th Al- Hashemi issue**

Baghdad, July 24 / NINA /-- Criminal Court adjourned its session to 14th next August regarding the case of Vice President Tareq al-Hashemi.

A well informed source said to NINA : " The Criminal Court listened today to the holding detachment testifies.

The Supreme Judicial Council announced on the eighth of current July to postpone Hashimi trial in its Fifth Session to 24th of this month.

It is noteworthy to mention in this context that the defense for al-Hashemi provied in the last hearing, which held last month a considerable discriminatory appeals to the Court.

(NINA)

- **Iraq Urged to Halt Executions after Court Upholds 196 Death Sentences**

Press Release

July 24, 2012

(New York) – Amnesty International today urged Iraqi authorities to commute all pending death sentences and impose a moratorium on executions with a view to abolish the death penalty after the chief of police in the Iraqi governorate of Anbar announced on Monday a Court of Cassation decision to uphold 196 death sentences in the region.

It is unclear if the sentences have been ratified by the Iraqi presidency yet.

The announcement gave no timeline for carrying out the executions but expressed a hope that it would be soon.

"After this alarming announcement, Iraqi authorities must move quickly to commute all death sentences and declare a moratorium on executions across the country," said Philip Luther, Middle East and North Africa Director at Amnesty International.

"If the Iraqi authorities carry out these death sentences, they would nearly quadruple Iraq's already shocking execution record so far this year."

In the first half of 2012 alone, Iraq executed at least 70 people, which is already more than the figure for all of last year.

According to Amnesty International's information, in 2011 a total of at least 68 people were executed in Iraq. Around the country, hundreds of others are believed to remain on death row.

The death penalty was suspended in Iraq after the US-led invasion in 2003 but restored in August 2004. Since then, hundreds of people have been sentenced to death and many have been executed.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty – the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment – in all cases without exception, as a violation of the right to life.

Amnesty International is a Nobel Peace Prize-winning grassroots activist organization with more than 3 million supporters, activists and volunteers in more than 150 countries campaigning for human rights worldwide. The organization investigates and exposes abuses, educates and mobilizes the public, and works to protect people wherever justice, freedom, truth and dignity are denied.

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/news/news-item/iraq-urged-to-halt-executions-after-196-death-sentences-upheld>

- **MPs of Basra threaten to lead public rallies for lack of services in their province**

Basra, July 24 (AIN) –MPs of Basra province threatened to lead public rallies if the deterioration of the services continued in their province.

MP, Jawad al-Bazoni, stated in a press conference that he held with a number of other MPs from Basra that "With the continuous deterioration of the services in all aspects especially the electric power all over Iraq including Basra, Basra MPs feel that it is their duty to lead a public demonstrations against the local government and the central government to call for providing services and upgrading the electric power."

For his part, the independent MP, Sabah al-Saedi, assured during the conference that "The central Government is corrupted especially the Ministry of Electricity in which the Minister is replaced every year without reaching solution for the crisis of the electric power."

http://www.alliraqnews.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14969:mps-of-basra-threaten-to-lead-public-rallies-for-lack-of-services-their-province-&catid=35:political&Itemid=2

- **Diwaniyah accuses Minister of Finance of transferring its share of the appointments to provinces belong to the latter)**

Shafaq News, July 24 / MP for the Liberal bloc of Diwaniyah province has accused on Tuesday the Finance Minister, Rafie al-Issawi of transferring Diwaniyah province share of appointments to other provinces belonged to the minister.

Iqbal al-Gorabi said in a statement reported for "Shafaq News" that "the Finance Minister, Rafie al-Issawi transferred the share of the province amounting to 4% of the federal budget to the provinces that belongs to his."

"The decision of Diwaniyah provincial Council to file a lawsuit in federal court against the ministries that have turned the share of appointments from Diwaniyah province to other provinces is a sound and constitutional decision."

"There is 4% of the overall budget as electoral right for Diwaniyah province but the Ministry of Finance has not allocated any share."

"Staff from the nearby provinces were recruited from Diwaniyah province and they are being transferred after a month to their home provinces," indicating that "most of the appointments come from the Ministry of Interior and Defense," she added.

Diwaniyah provincial council has announced earlier its refusal to receive the ministerial appointments orders sent to the province departments threatening to file a lawsuit against the ministries that appoint staffs in Diwaniyah departments without reference to it.

<http://www.shafaq.com/en/news/3065-diwaniyah-accuses-minister-of-finance-of-transferring-its-share-of-the-appointments-to-provinces-belong-to-the-latter.html>

- **Parliamentary committee to follow-up Syrian situation formed**

BAGHDAD, July 24/ Aswat al-Iraq: Chairman of Parliamentary Foreign Relations announced the formation of a special committee to follow-up the Syrian situation and its aftermath.

MP Humam Hammoudi reviewed before the Parliament the situation in Syria and the efforts made by the Iraqi embassy there for the return of the Iraqi, either by land or air.

He urged the Iraqi government to open the borders and receive the Iraqi citizens living in Syria.

The committee will have contact with concerned ministries and departments to facilitate this mission.

On the other hand, Parliament Speaker Usama Nujaiifi urged the Iraqi government to facilitate their return of the Iraqis and allocate necessary funds to provide them with decent life.

During the session, MP Salman al-Jumaili reminded of the close relations with the Syrian people, but expressed astonishment that the Iraqi stand, as chairman of Arab Summit, was not compatible with the Arab League's.

MP Baha' al-Araji warned against the infiltration of terrorists via the immigrants.

MP Mahmoud Othman called for hosting Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces Nouri al-Maliki and a number of concerned ministers with the Syrian question and its reflection on the Iraqi internal situation.

http://en.aswataliraq.info/%28S%28st4f2c%20gl5avrqthd3ez5%29%29/Default1.aspx?page=article_page&id=149672&l=1

- **Syrian Transitional Council values Iraqi government's decision to receive Syrians refugees**

Baghdad, July 24 / NINA /-- Syrian Transitional Council praised the Iraqi government's decision to receive Syrian refugees.

An official source said to NINA : "The Council praised the position of Iraq government regarding harboring Syrian refugees, expressing in this context its profound gratitude .

Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki ordered yesterday to create the necessary supplies for the reception of Syrian refugees. "

Iraqi Radio Blames Recent Terrorist Bombings on Saudi Arabia (fars news)

TEHRAN, July 24 (FNA)- Saudi Arabia was behind the recent deadly bombings in Iraq, Radio Sawt al-Iraq said, and stressed that the bombings were the first outcome of the appointment of hawkish Prince Bandar bin Sultan as Riyadh's new spy chief.

On Monday, 22 powerful explosions hit civilian, military and police targets across Iraq, leaving 107 people dead and 223 injured. The heaviest death toll was in Taji, where at least 40 people are known to have died. A mortar shelling of a military base outside Baghdad is known to have killed 15 soldiers.

Police officers in Iraq say they see good coordination behind all these shellings, roadside explosions, car bombings and suicide attacks.

In its report, Radio Sawt al-Iraq said Saudi Arabia and a number of Persian Gulf Arab states are responsible for the attacks, adding that the terrorist moves were intended to make Iraq insecure and create a Syria-like condition in the country.

"In fact, these explosions indicate Saudi Arabia's growing hostility towards Iraq and its cooperation and coordination with Qatar, the UAE and Turkey in this regard, specially taking into account that the new wave of terrorist attacks started after the appointment of Bandar bin Sultan as the chief of Saudi Arabia's intelligence service," the report said.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9104251250>

- **Turkish government renews its solidarity with Iraq in combating terrorism**

Baghdad, July 24 (NINA) – The Turkish government renewed its solidarity with Iraq in combating terrorism.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, July 24, Turkish Foreign Ministry condemned recent attacks that Baghdad and other Iraqi cities have experienced in which hundreds of innocent people killed and wounded.

It added, "We repeat, once again, that Turkey stands alongside the Iraqi people in combating terrorism, hoping that

violence aimed against Iraq's peace and stability has ended."

(NINA)

- **Iraqi government capable of addressing internal threats - Pentagon**

WASHINGTON, July 24 (KUNA) -- US military officials believe the Iraqi government is capable of addressing threats from Al-Qaeda and other groups, Pentagon press secretary George Little said on Tuesday.

Al-Qaeda in Iraq has claimed the lives of nearly 600 people this year, and shootings and bombings on Monday alone killed a hundred people in Iraq.

"We condemn these cowardly acts," Little said during a Defense Department briefing. "Violence of this sort is totally intolerable." Asked what those attacks mean for the future of Iraq, Little said, "We believe that the Iraqi government is capable of providing for its own security and addressing internal threats that it is facing from Al-Qaeda and from other groups, perhaps. The level of violence is a potential challenge to the Iraqi government, but we are confident that

they can take care of business." "The Iraqi government has the tools and the capabilities to deal with these threats, he said.

www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2254557&Language=en

- **U.S. ready to support Iraq if requested (UPI)**

WASHINGTON, July 24 (UPI) -- The United States is ready to provide Iraq with any type of support it may request to address national security needs, an official said.

A series of coordinated attacks Monday in Iraq left more than 100 people dead and hundreds of others injured. Authorities in Baghdad said insurgents detonated car bombs, stormed military bases and attacked checkpoints in the bloodiest attacks of the year.

Victoria Nuland, a spokeswoman for the U.S. State Department, said the attacks were the work of al-Qaida in Iraq, an organization making "desperate efforts" to incite sectarian unrest in the country.

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2012/07/24/US-ready-to-support-Iraq-if-requested/UPI-24671343138762/

- **IS urges government to hold its responsibility towards massacres against Burmese Muslims**

Baghdad, July 24 (AIN) –The Iraqiya Slate called "The Iraqi Government to hold its responsibility towards the massacres committed against the Burmese Muslims ."

In response to a question by AIN reporter, the head of the IS in the parliament, Salman al-Jumaili, stated "The parliament as well as the IS issued a statement to clarify its stance concerning this issue," calling that "The international community and the government to use its diplomatic efforts to pressurize to stop these crimes."

The violence against Muslims in the Buddhist majority country started long since last June, 2012.

Reports mentioned that over 10,000 Muslims were killed in the last two months and more were rendered homeless

(alliraqnews)

- **Iraq bans Chevron over Kurdistan deal**

By Michael Kavanagh, July 24

Chevron has been banned from bidding for exploration licences by Iraq's federal government following its acquisition of oil interests in the semi-autonomous Kurdistan region of the country last week.

In a statement, Iraq's oil ministry said Chevron's investment in the Kurdistan region of Iraq was "illegal and illegitimate" as it announced "the disqualification of Chevron company" from doing business in the south and centre of the country and barred it "from signing any deals with the federal oil ministry and its companies".

The move follows a protracted stand-off between Iraq's federal government in Baghdad and the government in the Kurdish sector of northern Iraq over the control of oil production and exports from the region.

Chevron, the second-largest US oil group by market capitalisation, announced last Thursday that it was acquiring 80 per cent

stakes and operational control of two blocks north of Erbil in Iraq's Kurdish region from Reliance of India. OMV of Austria remains a junior partner in the fields.

<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/570981f2-d5a4-11e1-af40-00144feabdc0.html#axzz21ZtBzJuT>

- **MP demands legislating laws to hold to account traders that exploit national holidays**

ERBIL, July 24 (AKnews) - The leader in the Hal bloc in Iraqiya demanded the presidency of the Council of Ministers and Council of Representatives to legislate strict laws against traders that exploit religious and national events and double their prices, according to a statement.

A statement quoted Itab al-Dawri as saying: "The concerned authorities must impose strict sanctions against the traders who seek profit through high food prices that coincide with the holy month of Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr.

"The government can stand up against the high prices and strike the interests of those traders by increasing the number of

the ration card items to satisfy the citizens and thus don't need to buy many items from the public markets."

<http://www.aknews.com/en/aknews/4/318482/>

- **Tuma calls government to speed up solving crisis of electric power in Basra**

Basra, July 24 (AIN) –The head of the Fadhila bloc in the parliament, Ammar Tuma, called "The government to speed up the procedures to solve the crisis of the electric power shortage in Basra province."

He stated to AIN "The government must perform speed actions to settle this crisis especially in with the high temperature in Ramadan month."

Concerning the demonstration that was launched in Basra province on last Monday, he urged "The citizens to adopt peaceful means and to avoid violence."

He warned "The security force from conducting violent activities against the demonstrators."

It is worth mentioning that a demonstration was launched in al-Jamhuriya area of central Basra province on last Monday to protest the continuous lack of the electric power.

http://www.alliraqnews.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14971:tuma-calls-government-to-speed-up-solving-crisis-of-electric-power-in-basra-&catid=35:political&Itemid=2

2. IRAN

- **S. Africa: Oil Sanctions against Iran to Harm World States**

TEHRAN (FNA)- South African Energy Minister Dipuo Peters blasted the US and the EU for imposing oil sanctions against Tehran, and said such embargos will inflict heavy losses on different world states, including her country.

Peters reiterated that certain decisions by the US and Europe cause difficulties for South Africa since the sanctions against the Islamic Republic are really not "our decision, but we end up suffering losses due to the measures".

She meantime stressed her country's determination to continue its crude oil imports from Iran, despite the US-engineered sanctions against Tehran.

Peters emphasized that a disruption of oil imports from the Islamic Republic will be very costly for South Africa and would create many difficulties for the country since one of their main refineries operates with Iranian crude.

According to the report, Peters also said that Pretoria imports some 26 percent of its oil supplies from Iran, 80 percent of which is used to produce gasoline fuel for vehicles.

In relevant remarks earlier this month, member of the parliament's Energy Commission Robert Beglarian also told FNA that "the whole international economic system will be severely damaged by the oil sanctions against Iran".

"Energy is so important in the world that the whole world's economic system will be harmed by such sanctions and if Europeans continue the (present) trend

(of embargos), Iran's oil will definitely find its way to alternative markets," he added.

Reminding Iran's special geographic position in the region and the world and its closeness to the consuming nations, he said that Tehran can sell its oil at lower costs compared with the farther suppliers and can gain more money by swapping oil supplies and other measures.



Iran announced earlier this month that the oil ministry has worked out proper ways of dealing with the Western sanctions on the Iranian oil sector.

Iranian Oil Minister Rostam Qassemi said his office has drawn up plans to defuse the western sanctions on Iranian crude supplies.

Qassemi said his ministry is at the forefront of an economic battle with the West.

Qassemi's comments came two weeks after an EU oil embargo went into effect against Iran for its refusal to give up its uranium enrichment right.

Iranian officials have earlier said they are organizing a consortium of private companies to bypass the embargo. Iran says it can always find buyers for oil.

Also earlier this month, Iran announced that its government and parliament would set up a joint committee to counter the sanctions imposed by the West on the country's oil supplies.

The joint committee will comprise oil ministry officials, members of the parliament's energy commission and the national security and foreign policy commission.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9104251314>

- **Pakistan: Defense Cooperation with Iran to Serve Both States' Interests**

TEHRAN (FNA)- Pakistan underlined the necessity for further cooperation with Iran in military and defense fields, and

announced that such cooperation will serve the interests of both countries.

The issue was raised in a meeting between Pakistan Defense Minister Seyed Navid Qamar and Iran's Ambassador to Islamabad Ali Reza Haqiqian, during which the Pakistani minister described mutual cooperation in the field of military and security as good.



He also called for further cooperation between Tehran and Islamabad.

Qamar said bilateral cooperation in different fields is growing and relations are friendly and brotherly.

He added that cooperation of the two countries in the fields of defense and military secures Iran and Pakistan interests in the region and these ties necessitate double interaction and progress.

During the meeting on Tuesday evening, Haqiqian and Qamar also discussed issues of mutual interest and bilateral cooperation in the field of defense.

Haqiqian, for his part, praised Pakistan's role in fighting against terrorism in the region and hard work of armed forces of the country.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9104251312>

- **Ayatollah Khamenei: No Enemy Dares to Attack Iran**

TEHRAN (FNA)- Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei hailed Iran's might and power in defending the country's territorial integrity, and stressed that enemies don't dare to make an aggression against the Iranian nation.

"In a period of time (during the Iraqi-imposed war against Iran 1980-1988), Iranian ships in the Persian Gulf were targeted and oil terminals and industrial centers were bombarded by the enemy but now they do not dare to get close to Iran," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

He made the remarks on Tuesday, addressing the officials of the country who had come to meet him on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan.



Ayatollah Khamenei said crises in the western countries which are opposed to Islamic Republic is another reality, adding that the real danger of economic crisis in the European Union and the Eurozone, instability in some European countries, collapse of some European countries, budget deficit in the US and 99 percent Movement are important events which should not be ignored.

Israel and its close ally the United States have recently intensified their war rhetoric against Iran. The two arch foes of the Islamic Republic accuse Iran of seeking a nuclear weapon, while they have never presented any corroborative document to substantiate their allegations. Both Washington and Tel Aviv possess

advanced weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear warheads.

Iran vehemently denies the charges, insisting that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes only. Tehran stresses that the country has always pursued a civilian path to provide power to the growing number of Iranian population, whose fossil fuel would eventually run dry.

Iran has, in return, warned that it would target Israel and its worldwide interests in case it comes under attack by the Tel Aviv.

The United States has long stressed that military action is a main option for the White House to deter Iran's progress in the field of nuclear technology.

Iran has warned that in case of an attack by either the US or Israel, it will target 32 American bases in the Middle East and close the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

An estimated 40 percent of the world's oil supply passes through the waterway.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9104251302>

- **Iran Wants Tangible Results in Talks with World Powers**

TEHRAN (FNA)- Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ramin Mehman-Parast expressed the hope that talks between Iran and the Group 5+1 (the five permanent UN Security Council members plus Germany) would result in the materialization of Iran's nuclear rights and removal of alleged concerns about Iran's nuclear program.

Answering a question about today's meeting between Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Undersecretary Ali Baqeri and Helga Schmid, the deputy to the EU foreign policy chief, in Istanbul, Mehman-Parast said that talks are aimed at brining the two sides' views closer and reaching an agreement acceptable to both sides.

"If these talks reach a certain result in a way that both concerns of the other side are removed and our rights are fully recognized in a (specific) period of time, that would be the best solution to the problem, and we hope that negotiations will be pursued in this way," Mehman-Parast told reporters on Tuesday.

He said that Iran has reiterated its preparedness to continue cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the best way and remove the other sides' concerns about its peaceful nuclear program.

Deputies to the top negotiators of Iran and the six world powers plan to discuss ways of narrowing the differences in their meeting today.

The two sides will decide on the date and venue of the next round of talks between Iran and the G5+1.

Iran and the G5+1 agreed to hold the expert-level talks during their negotiations in the Russian capital, Moscow, in June.

The Moscow meetings came after three sessions of plenary talks in Baghdad in May and an earlier round of negotiations in Istanbul in mid-April.

The two sides had, prior to the Istanbul talks, held two rounds of negotiations, one in Geneva, Switzerland, in December 2010, and another in Istanbul in January 2011.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9104251292>

- **Iran Rejects Allegations about Involvement in Anti-Israeli Terrorist Attacks**

TEHRAN (FNA)- Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ramin Mehman-Parast rejected the recent accusations about Iran's involvement in terrorist attacks against Israel as "baseless", stating that the US and Israel make such allegations to demonize Iran.

Speaking to reporters at a weekly press conference here in Tehran on Tuesday, Mehman-Parast denied the allegations raised by the Zionist regime of Israel about Tehran's involvement in a terrorist attack in Bulgaria, and voiced Iran's strong opposition to any kind and form of terrorism.

He said the Israeli regime is a prime suspect in terrorist activities throughout the globe and it "embarks on terrorist moves in an organized manner in different parts of the world and endangers the lives of the innocent people in different countries".

The spokesman reminded that Israel has had "a direct role in the assassination of Palestinian and resistance figures and leaders".

He pointed to Israel's direct involvement in the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientists, and noted that the Zionist regime of Israel rushes into accusing other states, including Iran, in a bid to escape the accusations raised against Tel Aviv.

A deadly attack against Israeli tourists took place in the Black Sea city of Burgas, 400 kilometers (248 miles) east of the Bulgarian capital Sofia, on Wednesday.

The Israeli officials rushed to accuse Iran and the Lebanese resistance movement of Hezbollah of carrying out the attack even before the Bulgarian police started investigations. The police have announced that they have not found any clue about possible suspects.

He pointed to similar allegations raised by Tel Aviv about Iran's involvement in the 1994 bombing attack on the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association (AMIA) in Buenos Aires, and called them a

propaganda campaign to link Iran to the terrorist incident.

He said Iran has repeatedly declared its preparedness to cooperate with Argentine in investigations into the incident to find the real culprit behind the terrorist attack.

The Israeli regime has accused Iran in connection with the AMIA case, which left 85 dead and wounded more than 300 others.

Iran has strongly denied the allegations, saying Alberto Nisman, the prosecutor of the case, has received huge sums of money from Jewish lobby groups in Argentina to accuse Tehran of the bombing.

Under intense political pressure by the US and the Israeli regime, Argentina formally accused Iran of carrying out the attack.

Faced with lack of any evidence for their anti-Iranian allegations, only false and contradictory statements by Iranian dissidents seeking asylum in the West have been used by Argentine's prosecutors to level charges against Tehran. The Islamic Republic has

vehemently and consistently denied any involvement in the terror bombing.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9104251290>

- **Iran Welcomes OIC Meeting to Settle Regional Crises**

TEHRAN (FNA)- Iran announced on Tuesday that it welcomes any meeting by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to resolve the crises in the region, specially in Bahrain.

"We welcome any meeting to gather the Islamic countries to study the regional crises and we will participate in them actively," Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ramin Mehman-Parast said on Tuesday when asked to comment on Saudi Arabia's call for an emergency OIC meeting.

He further reminded crises in the region, and said "certain countries have a flagrant role in stirring crises and if such a meeting (of the OIC) is due to be held, the settlement of Bahrain's issue should be a priority".

Anti-government protesters have been holding peaceful demonstrations across

Bahrain since mid-February 2011, calling for an end to the Al Khalifa dynasty's over-40-year rule.

Violence against the defenseless people escalated after a Saudi-led conglomerate of police, security and military forces from the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) member states - Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Qatar - were dispatched to the tiny Persian Gulf kingdom on March 13, 2011, to help Manama crack down on peaceful protestors.

So far, more than 69 people have been killed, hundreds have gone missing and thousands of others have been injured.

Police clampdown on protestors continues daily. Authorities have tried to stop organized protests by opposition parties over the past month by refusing to license them and using tear gas on those who turn up.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9104251286>

- **Iran launches first domestically made oil tanker**

BUSHEHR, July 24 (MNA) – The first of four oil tankers being built by Iran for the Venezuelan state oil company entered the Persian Gulf waters on Tuesday.



The Aframax-category tanker – capable of carrying 113,000 tons of oil – the equivalent of 75,000 barrels – was built in two years by the Iranian Marine Industrial Company (SADRA).

The oil tanker, which was ordered by Venezuela's state oil company (PDVSA), will be delivered by late September citing managing director of the company, said Salman Zarbi, the SADRA managing director.

Zarabi added the production of "the Aframax ship is the first export shipbuilding activity of Iran, and we must continue by attracting more customers."

The tankers will each cost about \$52 million, he said.

The other three will be built in the coming months as part of the 2007 euro-denominated contract signed with Venezuela. At today's exchange rate, the total contract is worth the equivalent of \$278 million, according to AFP.

Iran's fleet of around 40 oil tankers, the biggest in the Middle East, is mostly made up of far bigger supertankers bought from foreign shipbuilders and capable of each carrying up to two million barrels of oil.

Iran and Venezuela are members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and have deepened economic ties in recent years.

<http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1657695>

- **Iran, EU reps meet to find common ground for nuclear talks**

TEHRAN, July 24 (MNA) -- Negotiators from Iran and the European Union met in Istanbul on Tuesday in an attempt to find common ground for another round of high-level talks between Iran and the 5+1

group (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany) over the country's nuclear program.

According to the statement issued by the office of European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton on Monday, Ali Baqeri, the deputy secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), and Helga Schmid, the deputy secretary general for political affairs of the European External Action Service, were scheduled to hold a closed-door meeting.

The statement also read that after Tuesday's negotiations, Ashton, who represents the 5+1 group in nuclear negotiations with Iran, and SNSC Secretary Saeed Jalili, who is Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, would be in contact "about the prospects for a future meeting at the political level."

The latest round of high-level talks between Iran and the six major powers was held in Moscow on June 18 and 19.

The world powers have demanded that Iran halt 20 percent enrichment, shut down the Fordo uranium enrichment facility, and ship all of its stocks of 20

percent enriched uranium out of the country.

Iran's main demand is that its right to uranium enrichment, as enumerated in the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, be recognized.

<http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1657686>

- **Iran's Bagheri and EU's Schmid to meet in Istanbul today**

ISTANBUL, July 24 (MNA) – European Union's Deputy Secretary General for Political Affairs Helga Schmid and Iranian deputy nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri will meet today in Istanbul for nuclear talks.

According to a statement from the office of EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, after this meeting Ashton and Saeed Jalili, Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, will assess "the possibility of a meeting at the political level in the future."

<http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1657007>

- **Iran, P5+1 end deputy-level talks in Istanbul**

The deputies to the chief negotiators of Iran and the P5+1 have ended their talks in the Turkish city of Istanbul, and the top negotiators of both sides have agreed to be in contact.



Ali Baqeri, the deputy to Saeed Jalili, the Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), and Helga Schmid, the deputy to Catherine Ashton, the EU foreign policy chief, led the Tuesday meeting in Istanbul.

In a brief statement, a spokesman for Ashton said, "as agreed in" the Moscow round of negotiations, "the next stage will be a contact between... Ashton and Dr. Jalili."

The Tuesday meeting comes three weeks after Iran and the P5+1, comprising

Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States plus Germany, held an expert-level meeting on July 3 in Istanbul with the participation of representatives and experts from both sides.

The two sides had agreed to hold the expert-level talks during their negotiations in the Russian capital, Moscow, in June.

The Moscow meetings came after three sessions of plenary talks in Baghdad in May and an earlier round of negotiations in Istanbul in mid-April.

The two sides had, prior to the Istanbul talks, held two rounds of negotiations, one in Geneva, Switzerland, in December 2010, and another in Istanbul in January 2011.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/07/25/252656/iran-p51-officials-end-talks-in-istanbul/>

3. ISRAEL - PALESTINE

- **Liberman: EU may eventually call Hezbollah a terror group**

Foreign minister cites significant support for Israeli call to add Hezbollah to EU

terrorist blacklist, process is complicated, could take time; believes Assad understands Israel's red-lines on chemical weapons.

Avigdor Lieberman Photo: Ariel Jerozolimski

There is significant support for Israel's call to add Hezbollah to the EU's terrorist blacklist, Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman told Israel Radio from Brussels, in an interview aired Wednesday morning.

Liberman met Tuesday with his EU colleagues as part of the annual EU-Israel Association Council meeting, where he called on the body to put the Lebanese organization on its terrorist list.

Related:

J'lem begins campaign to out Iran, Hezbollah terror

J'lem ups saber rattling over Syrian chemical arms



He said that discussion of his request, which seemed to be initially dismissed by EU officials, had been misrepresented, and that no one had expected it to be immediately accepted without debate.

The foreign minister added that it is a complicated process which requires the consensus of 37 countries, but he sounded hopeful as he stated that he had heard a lot of support for the move. "We have put the proposal forward officially," he said, indicating that it was a substantial beginning of what could be a long process to achieve the desired result.

Addressing fears that Syria would pass chemical or biological weapons on to Hezbollah, Liberman stated that for Israel this was a "red line" that would require immediate action. He said that all countries understood the gravity of such a move by Syria, and expressed his belief that Syrian President Bashar Assad also understood this, which was demonstrated by his regime's statements that the weapons were safely guarded.

The foreign minister reiterated sentiments expressed by both Prime Minister

Binyamin Netanyahu and himself on Tuesday, that Israel was keen to repair relations with Turkey, which deteriorated following the May 2010 Mavi Marmara incident.

Liberman said that he did not see any reason why Israel and Turkey could not enjoy normal relations, and stressed that the two countries had many shared interests.

Finally, Liberman asserted that Yisrael Beytenu would without a doubt, oppose Vice Premier Moshe Ya'alon's proposal to replace the Tal Law, which he branded as "Tal Law 2."

<http://www.ipost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=278811>

- **PM: We must find way to restore Turkish relations**

Netanyahu reaches out to visiting Turkish journalists, says reconciliation especially important amid regional uncertainty.

PM Netanyahu meets with Turkish journalists Photo: Avi Ohaion/GPO

Israel and Turkey need to find a way to restore the important relationship they

once had, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu told a delegation of senior Turkish print journalists he met earlier this week.

The Prime Minister's Office put out a short statement about the meeting on Tuesday, to coincide with reports of the meeting in the Turkish media, saying that Netanyahu said both Turkey and Israel were "important, strong and stable" countries in an unstable region.

"Turks and Israelis have a relationship that goes back a long way," he said. "Turkey and Israel have relations that go back a long way. We need to find ways to restore the relationship that we had, because I think it is important for each of our countries."

Netanyahu stressed this was especially important now – at a time of regional instability.

According to a report of the meeting posted Tuesday evening on the website of the Today's Zaman daily, which had a reporter in the delegation, Netanyahu said that the close ties that Israel has developed over the last few years with

Greece and Cyprus – Turkey's historic rivals – happened coincidentally, and had nothing to do with the deterioration of Israeli-Turkish ties.

While this was not the first group of Turkish journalists to visit the country since the May 2010 Mavi Marmara incident that plunged relations between Jerusalem and Ankara into a downward spiral, it was the first to meet the country's senior leadership.

Netanyahu met the group in the conference room just outside his inner office, which was decorated with an Israeli and a Turkish flag.

One diplomatic official said that the reason the delegation was invited was because Israel is interested in reaching out to the Turkish people, to let them know that the relationship is important to Jerusalem.



Israel's ties with Turkey, which peaked in the late 1990s and early 2000s, started to gradually deteriorate soon after Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan swept into power in 2002.

The deterioration was felt at first primarily by much more critical rhetoric toward Israel and its policies coming from Ankara, even though Turkey served a role – which it coveted – as mediator in indirect contacts between Syria and Israel.

The ties plummeted with Operation Cast Lead in 2008-2009 and Erdogan's verbal attack on President Shimon Peres at Davos just after the operation, followed by his dramatic act of storming off the stage. Relations sank even further in May 2010 after Israeli commandoes trying to stop the Turkish ship Mavi Marmara from breaking the Gaza blockade boarded the vessel and – after they came under assault – killed nine Turks.

<http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=278765>

- **Dweik says to meet with Abbas soon**

BETHLEHEM (Ma'an) – Palestinian Legislative Council speaker Aziz Dweik says he will meet with the president soon to discuss ways to push forward the paralyzed reconciliation process between Hamas and Fatah.

Speaking to Ma'an, Dweik said Tuesday that he and Abbas would exert more efforts to try and resume reconciliation in a few days. "There are friendly feelings between us (Hamas) and our brothers in all factions as well as President Abbas, and so we do not consider boycotting anybody."

Dweik neither confirmed nor affirmed if Hamas would run in municipal elections in the West Bank. "It is too early to talk about these issues, but they will be discussed during our meeting with Abbas."



He added: “A political solution should be thorough and if God wills we will succeed to finalize Palestinian reconciliation and get the PLC to resume functioning.”

Commenting on Israel’s decision to consider Hamas lawmakers in the West Bank members of a banned organization, Dweik said, “The parliamentarians who represent the Palestinian people are not an organization. We are affiliated neither to Hamas nor to Fatah, and there is nothing called an organization of lawmakers.”

He added, “When they were sworn in, our lawmakers pledged to be loyal to the Palestinian people and their cause.” Further, he added, Israel has detained hundreds of thousands of Palestinians since the beginning of occupation, “so are those supposed to be considered a terrorist organization? Or is the truth that Israel rejects both the Palestinian people and their representatives?”

For his part, deputy speaker Hasan Khreisha rejected Israeli officials remarks describing Hamas lawmakers as an axis organization. “This is only an attempt to justify more detentions of lawmakers.

Israeli forces have shut down lawmakers’ offices and telephoned them warning them not to go to their offices.”

What we need now, he said, is to reopen offices of the parliamentarians in the West Bank, since legislative elections were sponsored by the Europeans. All factions should ask the president to convene the legislative body, added Khreisha.

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=507372>

- **Ramallah violence 'unjustified,' inquiry concludes**

RAMALLAH (Ma’an) -- A committee to probe violence against protesters in Ramallah last month has concluded that attacks on civilians, including journalists, were unjustified, an official said Tuesday.



Wasel Abu Yousif told Ma'an that President Mahmoud Abbas has received the report from the committee, which was formed by Munib al-Musri and included Abu Yousif, a PLO leader, and Ahmad Harb of the Independent Commission for Human Rights.

The findings are based on interviews with victims of assault as police cracked down on protesters who opposed a visit by Israel's vice premier to Ramallah for talks with the president. The violence was condemned by the protesters as well as journalists and human rights groups.

Abu Yousif said it was essential that action be taken in order not to repeat such incidents.

The report is expected to be released later this week.

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=507313>

- **Ashrawi calls on EU to review economic relations with Israel**

BETHLEHEM (Ma'an) -- Senior PLO official Hanan Ashrawi on Tuesday called on the European Union to review its relations

with Israel in light of its persistent violations of international law.

The EU-Israeli Association's annual meeting, held in Brussels on Tuesday, is an opportunity for the EU to ensure any economic relations with Israel are contingent on its compliance with international obligations, Ashrawi said in a statement.

"Rather than rewarding Israel by giving it preferential treatment, the EU should use its economic influence to end Israel's illegal occupation of Palestine."

"As the market for 60 percent of Israel's exports, the EU has the ability to prevent Israel from destroying the chances for peace. All it needs is the political will," Ashrawi said.



By expanding cooperation between government agencies and within business

sectors, Ashrawi said the EU was separating issues of international law from issues of trade and economy, "allowing the EU to ignore Israel's ongoing violations" against Palestinians.

She urged the EU to revoke any preferential treatment Israel receives in view of its "willful and persistent violations of its agreements and obligations."

Article 2 of the Euro-Mediterranean agreement conditions Israel's membership on respect for human rights and democratic principles, she noted, while Article 83 precludes applicability to all the occupied territories and so excludes settlement produce.

The executive director of international aid agency Oxfam Jeremy Hobbs also called Tuesday on the EU "to step up and take a leadership role" and to match its condemnations of settlement expansion "with urgent and concrete measures."

"Europe's condemnation of Israel's settlement expansion is welcome but words alone mean nothing when people's

lives keep worsening," Hobbs said in a statement.

At the 2011 EU-Israeli Association meeting, statements condemning Israeli settlement expansion were issued "yet we've seen a sharp rise in new settlement construction across the West Bank," he added.

"Meanwhile, Palestinian displacement and Israeli-led demolition of Palestinian homes and water cisterns, many of which were funded by EU taxpayers, has increased."

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=507069>

- **Lawyer: Israel to allow Palestinian doctor to visit detainees**

RAMALLAH (Ma'an) -- Israel's prison service agreed Monday to allow a Palestinian doctor to visit two detainees in an Israeli jail, a lawyer for the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Detainee Affairs said Tuesday.



Fadi Ubeidat said PA Minister of Health Hani Abdeen, who is a cardiologist, will visit Riyad al-Umour and Alaa Hassoura in Israel's Ramle prison. Al-Umour and Hassoura suffer from heart problems.

Meanwhile, the health of a 32-year-old prisoner in Israel's Ashkelon prison has seriously deteriorated, lawyer Karim Ajwah said.

Muhammad Khamis Barash, from al-Amari refugee camp near Ramallah, is serving a life sentence. He lost his eyesight and his left foot in Israeli shelling before he was detained.

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=507135>

- **Fayyad Calls to Prevent Israel from Demolishing 8 Locales in Hebron**

RAMALLAH, July 27, 2012 (Wafa) – Prime minister Salam Fayyad Tuesday called for an immediate international and European intervention to compel Israel to revoke its decision to demolish eight locales in Hebron city.

During a meeting with of the president of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats in the European Parliament, Hannes Swoboda, and European Union Representative to the Palestinian Territory John Gatt-Rutter, in Ramallah, Fayyad stressed the seriousness of this decision, which if implemented, will displace around 1500 Palestinians; in an attempt to seize the land.

He stressed the need to activate the role of the European Union through activating the EU ministerial declarations of 2009 and 2010.

The EU declaration made a clear legal reference to the peace process and took a clear position regarding the 1967 borders and East Jerusalem as the capital of the future Palestinian state.

Fayyad also discussed the latest developments in the Palestinian Territory

and the Israeli violations against the Palestinian people and their legal national rights.

<http://english.wafa.ps/index.php?action=detail&id=20328>

- **Settlers Put Up Military Tower in Agricultural Land**

BETHELEHEM, July 24, 2012 (Wafa) – A group of Jewish settlers Tuesday put up a military tower in an agricultural land in the town of al-Khader, a town south of Bethelhem, according to a local activist.

Ahmad Salah, the coordinator of the popular committee against settlements in al-Khader, told Wafa that settlers protected by Israeli soldiers put up a 10-meter military tower in an agricultural area to the west of the town.

A moving home was also placed there by Israeli soldiers a week ago.

Salah said this tower will be used as a military outpost to watch and control farmers' movements, which farmers consider a nightmare as the grape harvest season is approaching.

He stressed that this Israeli measure aims to seize the land for the benefit of establishing a settlement outpost.

<http://english.wafa.ps/index.php?action=detail&id=20326>

4. AFRICA and EGYPT

- **Libya to Pay Half its Debts to Turkish Contractors**

Turkish Economy Minister Zafer Çaglayan said in a statement and reported by Turkish media, that the Libyan government has agreed to immediately pay half the amount of money, that could amount to \$700 million, it owes to Turkish construction contractors who were not paid for the projects they carried out before last year's revolution that ousted Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi from power.

Mr Çaglayan continued to say in his statement, that Libya's interim Prime Minister, Abdurrahim el-Keib has already ordered the partial servicing of the debt.

Turkish construction companies were forced to suspend projects already started in Libya before the country-wide conflict.

They said they failed to receive the \$1.4 billion for the projects they had completed prior to the revolution.

Libya's National Transitional Council, NTC, that acted as transitional government during and after the liberation of Libya in October last year, has already agreed to pay \$400 million of that total.

It is also reliably understood that unpaid money aside, the Turkish construction companies suffered losses to their construction equipment during the conflict and as a result of looting. Turkish companies also had \$100 million in deposits in Libyan banks.

Most of the construction projects carried out by Turkish companies, worth \$15 billion, are still to be carried and work on them is expected to be resumed soon.

<http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=8874>

- **Libya: EU Approves Italy's Immigration Requests**

Italian Minister Giulio Terzi hailed the EU Foreign Affairs Council's approval of a document on integrated border controls

“that responds to Italy's requests to the letter”.

The document confronts immigration with strategies common to all 27 EU member states as urged by Italy in a letter signed by Minister Terzi and EU Commissioner for Home Affairs Malmstrom.

It adds that the EU recognises the serious security challenges Libya is facing”, and reiterates its readiness “to provide further assistance, including through CSDP if appropriate, in the areas of security and border management, in close partnership with Libya's new democratic authorities and in coordination with UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and the rest of the international community. Establishing secure and stable borders is key to ensuring well-managed migration”.(APO)

<http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=8875>

- **Egypt's new PM faces first dilemma over claimed Islamist affiliations**

Newly-appointed Prime Minister Hisham Kandil says he has no affiliations with political parties or groups. Some critics,

however, allege otherwise; others question his political credentials

No sooner had speculation ended over the identity of Egypt's new prime minister than questions emerged over the surprise appointment of Hisham Kandil to the top position on Tuesday, given lingering uncertainties about his political past, views and affiliations.

Prominent public figures – including reform activist Mohamed ElBaradei, veteran central banker Farouq El-Oqda and Deputy PM Hazem El-Beblawi – had been initially tipped to take on the job shortly after the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohamed Morsi was sworn in as Egypt's first freely-elected president late last month.

The presidential office, however, continued to deny that it had settled on any of the names initially touted by the media. It was later reported that Morsi had asked the interim government – led by interim prime minister Kamal El-Ganzouri – to stay put, suggesting a further delay to the formation of the new cabinet the appointment of which had

originally been expected only one week after Morsi assumed office.

After weeks of uncertainty over Egypt's new government, with no official nominees or timeframes announced, Kandil was abruptly unveiled on Tuesday as Egypt's new premier.

The appointment, which has received mixed reactions from Egypt's political forces, appears to mark the beginning of a new chapter in the ongoing saga over Egypt's incoming government.

Fear of Islamists

A jovial, bearded man who served as irrigation minister in the post-revolution governments of Essam Sharaf and El-Ganzouri, Kandil has heretofore seldom been in the public eye.

The presidential office has played down Kandil's Islamist look, typified by his beard, stressing that he was never part of any political group or party, nor was he committed to a particular ideology. Several critics, however, have linked him to Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood.

Hussein Abdel-Razek, a leading member of the leftist Tagammu Party, claimed that Kandil "was, in fact, a Brotherhood member before quitting the Islamist group to travel to the US."

Abdel-Razek also stressed that Morsi, who himself hails from the Brotherhood's ranks, "did not keep his promise to appoint a premier who is completely independent and who doesn't proclaim allegiance to any political or social factions."

Secularists have voiced concerns that the Brotherhood would seek to dominate Egypt's post-Mubarak political landscape, since the group's political arm, the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), captured nearly half the seats in the People's Assembly (the lower house of Egypt's parliament). The assembly was dissolved in June on orders of the military after the High Constitutional Court ruled it unconstitutional.

Fears of theocratic rule in Egypt were aggravated after the Brotherhood's Morsi was elected president last month. Now, Kandil is seen by the same doubters as another figure who could potentially

enable the Islamist group to rule the country unopposed.

Ahmed Taha, a spokesman for the National Front for Change, alleged that pro-Brotherhood cleric Safwat Hegazi had recommended Kandil for the irrigation ministry under ex-premier Sharaf, before taking up the post of prime minister once a Brotherhood president had assumed power.

"Where is the 'independent patriotic figure' that Morsi promised to appoint as premier?" Taha asked. "I'm afraid Morsi is still acting as the FJP president; he must prove he's a president for all Egyptians."

While others echo similar sentiments, Kandil describes himself as "a religious man" who has never belonged to an Islamist political group.

Young, inexperienced

While bemoaning Kandil's appointment as new PM, Taha touched upon the second point of controversy: Kandil's relative lack of political experience.

A water and irrigation engineer with a PhD from the University of North Carolina, Kandil, born in 1962, has never been involved in Egyptian domestic affairs – either before or after last year's Tahrir Square uprising.

"He lacks a political history, experience or knowledge," said Taha.

While lacking political experience, Kandil is relatively young compared to his predecessors – and this, say supporters, should be considered one of his advantages.

Salafist Nour Party spokesman Nader Bakar said on his Facebook page that "Morsi's decision [to appoint Kandil] was good for more than one reason, including his age."



Kandil received a BA in Engineering from Cairo University in 1984, going on to earn a Master's Degree in 1988 from Utah State

University and a Doctorate in irrigation in 1993 from North Carolina State University.

He served as office director for then-irrigation minister Mahmoud Abou Zeid from 1999 to 2005. He was also part of the Nile Basin Initiative, launched in 1999 with the aim of bolstering cooperation between the states of the Nile Basin.

He later worked as chief water resource engineer at the Tunisia-based African Development Bank.

On 15 July, Kandil travelled with President Morsi to the African Union summit in Ethiopia. The trip sought to rekindle Cairo's relationship with its African neighbours following decades of Mubarak-era neglect.

Improving Egypt's relationship with Nile Basin countries is one of Morsi's stated priorities, according to his electoral programme.

Kandil was appointed minister of irrigation and water resources by then-PM Sharaf in July of last year. He was subsequently asked to remain in the post by El-Ganzouri last November.

Abdel-Ghaffar Shokr, a founding member of the Socialist Popular Alliance Party, told Al-Ahram's Arabic-language news website on Tuesday: "We're facing a big question mark that will remain until the government is formed ... it's too early to make any judgments."

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/48617/Egypt/Politics-/Egypts-new-PM-faces-first-dilemma-over-claimed-IsI.aspx>

- **New PM Kandil to hold a press conference Tuesday, meets Morsi**

Egypt's newly appointed Prime Minister Hisham Kandil meets with President Morsi, will hold press conference later Tuesday

PROFILE: Egypt's new PM Hisham Kandil President Mohamed Morsi is currently in a meeting with Hisham Kandil, Egypt's newly appointed prime minister. He will hold a press conference after the meeting.

Kandil was appointed by the president on Tuesday morning after weeks of speculation.

He was minister of irrigation and water resources in the interim government of Kamal El-Ganzouri.

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/48557/Egypt/Politics-/New-PM-Kandil-to-hold-a-press-conference-Tuesday,-.aspx>

- **Moody's Downgrades Tunisia's Credit Rating Due to Political Concerns**

Yesterday, Moody's Investor Services downgraded Tunisia's sovereign credit rating to Baa3. The rating reflects uncertainty in Tunisia's business and investment sectors following the Tunisian government's dismissal of Mustapha Kamel Nabli, the governor of the central bank.

The Baa3 rating is considered a "medium" investment-grade rating, characterized by moderate associated risk and an "acceptable" ability to repay short-term debt.

Moody's evaluation cited weakened perceptions among international investors regarding Tunisia's economic stability, which, according to the ratings agency,

have been compounded by unresolved political conflicts.

The credit rating agency also raised concerns over the independence of the country's central bank, following the dismissal of Nabli, last Wednesday, July 18. A delegation of analysts from Moody's visited the country two days after Nabli was removed from office by the Constituent Assembly.

"Mr. Nabli's dismissal is credit negative for Tunisia (Baa3 negative) as it damages the central bank's credibility, a key factor in the sovereign's credit strength, and will further unsettle investors already jittery after last year's revolution," stated the Moody's report.

According to the evaluation from Moody's, the decision to downgrade Tunisia's credit rating was also influenced by its weak financial services sector. Tunisia's banking system has recently been burdened by poorly-performing loans, a factor which has contributed to the current economic crisis facing the euro-zone.

The announcement of Tunisia's credit rating downgrade corresponded with negative readjustments of the credit ratings of Luxemburg, Germany, and the Netherlands as well.

<http://www.tunisia-live.net/2012/07/24/moodys-downgrades-tunisia-credit-rating-due-to-political-concerns/>

- **Liberal victory in Libya stuns Maghreb**

A triumph by moderate forces in Libya's democratic election could alter the politics of the Maghreb.

Political analyst Bassel Torjemane says that the outcome of Libya's elections "will re-shape relations between states and alliances" in the Maghreb.

[Houda Trabelsi] Political analyst Bassel Torjemane says that the outcome of Libya's elections "will re-shape relations between states and alliances" in the Maghreb.

After the success of liberal forces in Libya's congressional election, many Maghreb

analysts expect a shakeup in the regional balance of power.

"The results of the elections in Libya will surely have significant implications in the region as a whole and will re-shape relations between states and alliances in the region," Bassel Torjemane, a political analyst in Maghreb affairs, told Magharebia.

"The results were a surprise to all observers, who expected a great rise for the Islamists as a result of political support from their previous successes in Tunisia and Egypt," he said, "or the clear and declared support, politically and financially, from the Arab parties trying to create a role and influence in the Arab reality by way of the Muslim Brotherhood."

Mahmoud Jibril's National Forces Alliance won 39 of the 80 seats open to parties in the General National Congress, while the Muslim Brotherhood's Justice and Construction Party took home 17 seats. The other 120 congressional seats are reserved for independent candidates.

The Islamists now must accept the results of the ballot box, Torjemane continued. He explained it was a dangerous situation, "especially since these forces have armed military groups and continued the same course of action on the Libyan scene after the fall of the Kadhafi regime, creating serious popular fears of their transformation into a new oppressive bloody regime in the name of Islam."

It was this "fear of a bloodier dictatorship in the name of religion", the analyst said, that "made voters in Libya shift toward the new political forces far-removed from the Islamists, creating a major shift in the entire region, the effects of which will extend to several areas in the Arab world and will be reflected in the changing reality".

"The only side who understood and supported the Brotherhood in Libya are their allies the Ennahda Movement in Tunisia, who sacrificed much to support them and turned over Libyan Prime Minister al-Baghdadi al-Mahmoudi to them, despite the reactions and problems this act generated within the three governing parties and the position of the opposition," Torjemane said.

Professor Monsef Ouiannes, a Tunisian academic and researcher of Libyan affairs, said that the election alone was not enough to create stability, adding it was "necessary for this election to lead to a state of political accord and to help especially with integration of the militias, with their 70,000 members, within state security and military structures and to lead to collection of weapons of all kinds".

"It likewise must lead at the external level to control by the new authority over the flow of arms to Tunisia, Egypt, Chad, Mali and Algeria," Ouiannes added. "We must not forget the tragedy taking place in Mali and al-Qaeda's control over more than 60% of Malian territory in the Azawad region, caused by the flow of Libyan arms and their entering Malian territory easily."

He continued, "For they are what overthrew the president of Mali and increased the power of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb... and they are what supported and strengthened the separatist Azawad movement in northern Mali."

http://www.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/features/2012/07/24/feature-01

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

• **Fatfat: March 14 to cast no-confidence vote against FM**

Future bloc MP Ahmad Fatfat told Future News television on Wednesday that March 14 parties will cast a no-confidence vote against Foreign Affairs Minister Adnan Mansour as soon as possible if the parliament convenes.

Fatfat also called for expelling Syrian Ambassador to Lebanon Ali Abdel Karim Ali.

On Monday, President Michel Sleiman accused Syria of violating Lebanese territory after a house East of the country was hit by a blast and shells fell on the northern border. The president requested Mansour send a letter of complaint to Ali to address the issue.

On Tuesday, Mansour said he was waiting "to verify facts before submitting the letter of complaint to Ali."

[http://www.nowlebanon.com/Sub.aspx?
D=125478](http://www.nowlebanon.com/Sub.aspx?ID=125478)

- **Al-Manar: Mansour will not send complaint letter to Syria**

Al-Manar television reported on Monday that Foreign Minister Adnan Mansour will not send the letter of complaint to Syrian authorities requested by President Michel Sleiman following border violations earlier in the week.

Al-Manar added that Mansour was waiting to “verify the facts on the ground.”

On Monday, Sleiman accused Syria of violating Lebanese territory after a house in the east of the country was hit by a blast and shells fell on the northern border.

The Syrian envoy responded to Sleiman, saying that “Syria is the one supposed to complain, as it is the one that is on the receiving end of gunfire and rockets fired from the Lebanese side.”

[http://www.nowlebanon.com/Sub.aspx?
D=125478](http://www.nowlebanon.com/Sub.aspx?ID=125478)

6. SYRIA

- **Iran's FM Renews Call for Negotiated Solution to Syrian Crisis**

TEHRAN (FNA)- Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi reiterated the necessity for the peaceful settlement of the crisis in Syria, and renewed Iran's call for talks between Damascus and the Syrian opposition.

"The Syrian conflict must be resolved through negotiations. Moreover, sabotage and terror as well as slaughter of people must be brought to an end," Salehi said on Tuesday.

"We call on those Syrian opposition groups that are opposed to terrorist attacks and bloodshed to travel to Tehran and engage in negotiations with Syrian authorities," he told al-Alam TV network.

The Iranian foreign minister noted that numerous efforts are underway by certain Western states to further complicate the situation in Syria.

Earlier this month, Salehi had announced Tehran's readiness to hold meetings with the Syrian dissidents in a move to

facilitate talks between the opposing parties in the Muslim country.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to have meetings with Syrian dissidents to invite them to Iran in a bid to prepare and facilitate the ground for talks between the Syrian dissidents and government," Salehi told reporters at the time.

Stressing the importance of finding a Syrian solution to the crisis in the Arab country, he said no foreign prescription and government should be imposed on the Syrians.

Tehran has repeatedly offered to help resolve the crisis, but this has been opposed by the US and its allies which support rebel and terrorist groups in the country. At the insistence of the US, Iran was left off the guest list of Annan's multinational "action group" meeting on Syria in Geneva late last month, where the participating nations approved a communiqué outlining broad parameters for a "transitional" government.



Also in July, UN-Arab League Special Envoy on Syria Kofi Annan was in Tehran in a visit which signaled Iran's key role in resolving the Syrian crisis. The former UN chief tried to rescue his peace plan for Syria by seeking help from Iran.

Prior to his Tehran visit, Annan said despite Washington's harsh rhetoric, Iran is a main actor in the Syrian issue that "cannot be ignored".

Annan told France's Le Monde daily that Iran should be involved in discussions.

"Russia wields influence but I am not sure that the events will be determined by Russia alone.... Iran is an actor. It has to be part of the solution. It has influence and we cannot ignore it."

Analysts believe that Annan's visit may signal some new role for Iran in resolving the Syrian crisis.

In a statement, Annan said he had come to Iran "to see how we can work together to help settle the situation in Syria".

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9104251318>

- **Syria rebels say chemical weapons moved to borders**

Syrian rebels man a checkpoint in the northern city of Aleppo which has become a new front in the country's uprising, after being largely excluded from the violence. (AFP/BULENT KILIC)

Syrian rebels have accused strongman Bashar al-Assad of moving chemical weapons to the country's borders, after his beleaguered regime said it would use its stockpiles if attacked.

The accusation came as helicopter gunships strafed rebel neighborhoods of second city Aleppo, Syria's commercial capital, pro-government media said Tuesday.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said at least 108 people were killed in violence on Tuesday across the country.

The rebel Free Syrian Army said the chemical arsenal had been moved in a bid to pressure the world community, much of which has called for Assad to step aside in the face of the more than 16-month uprising against his rule.

"According to our information, the regime began moving its stocks of weapons of mass destruction several months ago...with the goal of putting pressure on the region and the international community," said the FSA.

"We also reveal that Assad has transferred some of these weapons and equipment for mixing chemical components to airports on the border," it added.

Foreign ministry spokesperson Jihad Makdissi acknowledged on Monday that Syria has chemical weapons and said the regime would use them if attacked by outsiders, although not against its own civilians.

US President Barack Obama warned Assad not to make the "tragic mistake" of unleashing chemical weapons.

"Given the regime's stockpile of chemical weapons, we will continue to make it clear to Assad and those around him that the world is watching," said Obama.

Russia reminded Syria that it had joined a Geneva protocol on the non-use of such weapons.

On the political front US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton insisted that President Assad must hand over power and said Washington was stepping up its support for the opposition.

"We have to work closely with the opposition because more and more territory is being taken and it will eventually result in a safe haven inside Syria which will then provide a base for further actions by the opposition," she said.

"We do believe that it is not too late for the Assad regime to commence with planning for a transition to find a way that ends the violence."

The opposition Syrian National Council, for its part, said only an opposition figure

should lead a transition government if the regime falls.

A Council statement also said the uprising was "about to achieve victory against the murderous junta in power."

And Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of neighboring Turkey, which hosts the rebel leadership, said he was confident it was close to victory.

"The ruthless killings committed in panic in recent days show the world that the Syrian regime is on the road to oblivion," he said.

Activists and regime sources say government forces have reclaimed most of Damascus after a week of heavy fighting with rebels, who remain in the city but are planning a guerrilla strategy.

Clashes continued Tuesday, with the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reporting that 71 civilians, 28 soldiers and nine rebels were killed across Syria.

A video it distributed showed the bodies of dead children, including a young girl in a pink and white dress, lying on a blood-

smeared floor, said to be in the besieged town of Herak.

In Aleppo, the Observatory said helicopter gunships fired on the districts of Qadi Askar, Bab al-Hadid, Al-Katergi and Karam al-Jabal.

A rebel spokesperson said that a "large number" of regime forces had been moved from the northwestern province of Edleb to fight in Aleppo, which recently became a new front in the country's 16-month uprising against the Assad regime.

Meanwhile, Syria named General Ali Mamluk the new head of its National Security office in a shake-up after a bombing killed four top regime figures, an official told AFP.

"General Ali Mamluk, who was head of state security, is becoming the head of the Bureau of National Security, with the rank of minister, overseeing the entire security apparatus," said the source.

Also on Tuesday, UN peacekeeping chief Herve Ladsous arrived in Damascus, where the new head of a UN observer mission,

General Babacar Gaye, was due later in the day.

Syria also appeared to suffer a new blow on Tuesday as the head of its mission in Cyprus, Lamia al-Hariri, defected to Qatar, Arab television networks reported.

If confirmed, Hariri's defection would be the second of its kind following that of Nawaf Fares who this month renounced his post as ambassador in Iraq and joined rebel ranks.

One official who has definitely changed sides, General Manaf Tlass, called on Syrians to unite and start building a post-Assad future, in his first public appearance since defecting from the regime.

Reading a prepared statement on the Saudi-based Al-Arabiya television channel, Tlass called on Syrians to "unite... to serve a Syria after Assad... and do the impossible, to ensure the unity of Syria, and to be sure to start building a new Syria."

Tlass, who defected on July 6, said he was "the blood of its innocents is being shed."

<http://www.nowlebanon.com/Sub.aspx?ID=125478>

- **Turkey to shut border crossings with Syria**

Turkey will close its border crossings with neighboring strife-torn Syria on Wednesday until further notice, a Turkish official told AFP.

"We have taken such a measure for our citizens for security reasons," said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity. "This is an open-ended measure and the reopening depends on the developments on the ground."

The move comes after rebels seized two border posts along the border in clashes with the regime's loyalist troops.

The official said foreigners who want to cross the border would be required to sign a paper warning them about potential danger in Syria.

There are seven functioning border posts along the nearly 900-kilometre (560-mile) frontier between the two countries.

The rebels control Jarabulus, Bab al-Hawa and Al-Salama border crossings along the Turkish frontier. During last week's clashes between rebels and Syrian army troops at Bab al-Hawa, which lies across Turkey's Cilvegozu crossing, Turkish trucks were burned and ransacked.

<http://www.nowlebanon.com/Sub.aspx?ID=125478>

- **Defector General Tlass calls for Syrian unity**

Syrian General Manaf Tlass called on Syrians Tuesday to unite and start building a post-President Bashar al-Assad Syria as he made his first public appearance since defecting from the regime.

Reading a prepared statement on the Saudi-based Al-Arabiya television channel, Tlass called on Syrians to "unite... to serve a Syria after Assad... and do the impossible, to ensure the unity of Syria, and to be sure to start building a new Syria."

Tlass, who defected on July 6, said he was "reaching out to [Syrians] in these difficult times for the country, as the blood of its

innocents is being shed, and whose only crime has been to call for freedom."

The defector said the "new Syria ... should not be built on revenge, exclusion or monopoly."

He said he was speaking as "one of the sons of the Syrian Arab Army, who has rejected this regime's criminal and corrupt ways... and who cannot accept its crimes to our country."

The defector said he did not blame those troops who have not defected, adding that "whatever mistakes made by some members of the Syrian Arab Army... those honorable troops who have not partaken in the killing... are the extension of the [rebel] Free Syrian Army."

It is "the duty of Syrians to unite, to build a free, democratic Syria," said Tlass.

A high-profile military figure and former member of Assad's inner circle, Tlass has been mentioned as someone who could play a leading role in a transition phase in Syria should Assad fall.

On July 6, sources close to the regime told AFP that general Tlass had defected and left Syria, information later confirmed by French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius.

Until Monday's televised address, Tlass had yet to make a public appearance.

A general in the elite Republican Guard charged with protecting the regime, Tlass is the son of former Defense Minister Mustafa Tlass, a close friend of Assad's late father and predecessor, Hafez al-Assad.

His defection was hailed in Western capitals as a key setback for the regime while the opposition umbrella group the Syrian National Council called it an "enormous blow" to Assad.

However Tlass has faced criticism and suspicion among Syrian rebels, who say that he and his 80-year-old father, who lives in Paris, should have made their positions clear at the start of the uprising against the Assad regime last year.

<http://www.nowlebanon.com/Sub.aspx?ID=125478>

7. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Dissidents Call for Public Protests against Doha Regime, US Bases in Qatar**

TEHRAN (FNA)- People and dissident groups issued their first nationwide call for holding peaceful protests in Qatar to demand ouster of the Al Thani ruling dynasty and dismantlement of the US bases in the Persian Gulf state.

According to a report by al-Nakhel news agency, in the first massive popular move in such social networks as tweeter, the Qatari opposition forces called on the people to start action to demand political reforms and an overthrow of Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani.

They called for nationwide rallies on March 16, 2013 to voice their protest against the country's undesirable conditions.



The opposition forces who have named their move as "Qatar March 16 Freedom Revolution" plan to demand expulsion of Qatar's First Lady Mozah bint NBasser al-Missned, who is among influential figures in the country, as well as dismantlement of the US bases in Qatar.

Qatar is experiencing critical conditions after it was the scene of a coup attempt against Sheikh Hamad in April.

The limited news reports released by some local and Arab media at the time said that the Qatari Emir succeeded in foiling the coup attempt against him. They added some 30 senior army officers were detained, while many others were put under house arrest.

Since the start of 2011, the regional Arab states have witnessed a growing wave of popular protests resulted from the people's growing awareness and vigilance.

Tunisia saw the overthrow of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in a popular revolution in January, which was soon followed by a revolution which toppled Hosni Mubarak in Egypt in February.

Libya was the third country touched by the Islamic Awakening. Libyans also embraced victory after months of bloody campaign against the country's dictator, Muammar al-Qaddafi.

Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Yemen have since been the scene of protests against their totalitarian rulers, who have resorted to brutal crackdown on demonstrations to silence their critics.

In Yemen, although the people have toppled the dictator and elected a president, the revolution still continues as allies and family members of the former dictator, Ali Abdullah Saleh, still hold key posts in the country and have not been brought to justice.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9104251280>

- **Australian gas rush set to overtake Qatar**

Analysts expect Australia to pip small Gulf emirate by 2020 as it unlocks reserves that could last more than a century.

Australia is set to become the world's biggest liquefied natural gas producer, with analysts predicting it will overtake Qatar by 2020 as it unlocks reserves that could last more than a century.

Seven of the world's 10 major LNG projects are under construction Down Under, with Aus\$176 billion (US\$183 billion) of private Australian and foreign investment in gas projects since 2007.

"The projects already under development will take us ahead of Qatar. It's just a case of when that happens," Wood Mackenzie analyst Chris Graham said.

Analysts expect Australia to pip the small Gulf emirate, which holds the world's third-largest gas reserves and last year saw LNG production capacity rise to 77 million tonnes per annum (mtpa), by 2020.

But the government is hoping it reaches the target sooner, with China's demand for LNG growing by almost one-third last

year, while India's import capacity is projected to triple by 2015.

Australia is already the fourth biggest source of LNG in the world, with three export-operational projects -- Western Australia's North West Shelf and Pluto projects, and Darwin LNG in the Northern Territory.

Indonesia and Malaysia are the second and third largest producers.

But based on projects that are already committed or under construction, Australia's LNG exports -- of 18.9 mtpa worth Aus\$11.1 billion in 2011 -- are expected to hit 63 mtpa by 2016-17.

Beyond these, there is a suite of other proposals that if developed could increase output above 100 mtpa, and potentially position Australia as the world's largest LNG exporter by the end of the decade.

"By 2017, based on proposed and committed new projects, Australia's LNG production capacity is projected to quadruple," Resources Minister Martin Ferguson said.

Australia's abundance of natural resources and proximity to commodities-hungry Asia helped the economy avoid recession during the global financial crisis, thanks to exports of coal and iron ore.

LNG is the newest potential earner from Asia's development, with the vast majority of exports already sold to Japan (69 percent in 2010) and with sales contracts to supply China and South Korea also in place.

"Australia is a very popular source for East Asian buyers because of low political risk and they are comfortable dealing with operators in this country," Graham said.

"Sure, it is a high cost environment but resources in Australia are huge and opportunity from a resource perspective is obviously there and it ultimately comes down to competing projects elsewhere in the world."

Adrian Wood, an analyst at Macquarie Securities, said Australia was likely to overtake Qatar by 2020, but only just, with strong competition from the United States and also potentially parts of Africa.

The Australian government expects LNG exports to expand rapidly as developing countries enjoy economic growth and move away from using coal to gas for electricity generation.

"Natural gas is increasingly the fuel of choice for developing economies because of its versatility and lower carbon emissions compared with other fossil fuels," Ferguson said this month.

He also noted the challenges of providing adequate skilled labour and the infrastructure needed to deliver projects that export LNG -- natural gas that has been cooled to liquid state to make it practical for transportation.

As a Bureau of Resources and Energy Economics report released this month noted: "The principal challenges for Australia's LNG export sector is that projects have relatively high costs, slower construction times and larger capital expenditure."

The costs, partly due to the remote locations of offshore gas fields, have lumped some Australian projects with capital costs of about Aus\$3-4 billion per

million tonnes of annual capacity -- well above recent projects in Papua New Guinea and Angola, the report said.

This compares with a capital cost of less than US\$1.7 billion per million tonnes of annual capacity for the Angola LNG project.

"These costs are the highest in the world and are attributed to high labour and other input costs and a high Australian dollar," the report said.

"Counterbalancing these relatively higher costs are Australia's stable system of government, high levels of personal security, well-defined property rights, and established fiscal and regulatory frameworks that encourage foreign investment."

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=53542>

- **Kuwait royal donates \$215 million to debtors, suitors, boffins**

Any Kuwaiti man who marries female citizen will receive \$21,400 while those in debt are entitled to \$14,300 each, those who complete PhD get around \$71,500.



KUWAIT CITY - A wealthy senior member of Kuwait's ruling family on Tuesday announced a donation of 60 million dinars (\$215 million) to help those in debt, those getting married and the learned elite.

Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Salem al-Ali al-Sabah, in his 80s, said in a statement that the donation would go towards helping those in debt, men who plan to get married and those who complete their doctorates.

Any Kuwaiti man who marries a female citizen will receive \$21,400 while those in debt are entitled to \$14,300 each, said a statement posted on his Twitter account.

A Kuwaiti who completes his doctorate degree gets around \$71,500, the statement said.

Expatriates living in the oil-rich emirate are not included.

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=53539>

8. AFGHANISTAN - PAKISTAN

• Two Afghan civilians killed in US-led drone attack

Press TV

July 24, 2012

At least two Afghan civilians have been killed in an airstrike by US-led forces in Afghanistan's eastern province of Nuristan, Press TV reports.

Nuristan Governor Tamim Nuristani said the attack took place on Monday when US-led assassination drones targeted a passenger car in the Want Waigal district.

The civilian victims were a young girl and an employee with the education ministry, he said.

The US-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in a statement confirmed the attack without giving further details.

Insecurity continues to rise across Afghanistan despite the presence of some 130,000 US-led forces in the war-torn country.

The United Nations announced on February 4 that 2011 was the deadliest year on record for Afghan civilians. The death toll for the civilians rose eight percent compared to the year before and was roughly double the figure for 2007.

Washington invaded Afghanistan in 2001 under the pretext of combating terrorism.

<http://www.aopnews.com/today.html>

- **American, 2 Afghans Killed in Attack Near Kabul**

VOA News
July 24, 2012

Gunmen have killed an American engineer and two Afghans in an area north of Kabul.

Provincial administration spokeswoman Roshan Khalid told VOA, on Tuesday, the attack occurred as the three were traveling from the central Bamiyan province to the capital.

She says no one has been arrested. The Taliban has claimed responsibility for the attack.

On Sunday, a man dressed in an Afghan police uniform killed three foreigner advisers working for NATO in the western Herat province.

In another development, Afghan security officials say they have foiled an insurgent attack on a major international hotel in Kabul.

Officials announced the alleged plot on Tuesday but did not name the hotel.

<http://www.aopnews.com/today.html>

- **7 Afghan children killed in bomb blast**

CHIGHCHIRAN, Afghanistan, July 24 (Xinhua) -- Seven Afghan children were killed when a bomb went off in western province of Ghor on Tuesday, a provincial government spokesman said.

"A total of seven innocent children were grazing their animals in Taiwara district earlier Tuesday but one stepped on a

pressure- plate bomb leading to a powerful blast killing all of them on the spot," Abdul Hai Khatibi told Xinhua.

He blamed Taliban insurgents for planting the bomb targeting security forces in the area.

Taliban militants, who launched an annual spring offensive on May 3 against Afghan and NATO forces, have been largely relying on roadside bombs and suicide attacks, often causing civilian casualties.

A total of 3,021 Afghan civilians were killed in the conflict in 2011, up 8 percent compared with 2010, according to the United Nations annual report released in Kabul in February this year.

<http://www.aopnews.com/today.html>

- **13 Afghan Police 'Defect' To Taliban**

July 24, 2012

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

Officials in Afghanistan say a police commander and 12 junior officers have defected to the Taliban after poisoning seven colleagues.

Officials in the western province of Farah said on July 24 that the commander, known as Mirwais, was in charge of a checkpoint in the Bala Boluk district when he and his unit defected to the Taliban and handed over their equipment and weapons, including military vehicles.

Officials said the seven police were apparently poisoned because they refused to join the Taliban.

All of those poisoned were taken to a hospital for treatment and their condition was not immediately clear.

Officials said the defection was the first time police have joined the Taliban and taken so much equipment with them.

Farah, bordering Iran, is one of western Afghanistan's most insecure provinces.

Based on reporting by AFP and BBC Pashto

<http://www.aopnews.com/today.html>

- **US-led trooper killed in E Afghanistan**

Press TV

July 24, 2012

At least one US-led trooper, enlisted by the NATO, has been killed in a militant attack in eastern Afghanistan, Press TV reports.

The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said on Tuesday that the trooper had been killed in a Taliban attack.

The brief statement did not disclose the nationality of the trooper or the exact location of the attack.

This is while, according to the Western military alliance, another US-led trooper was killed in the eastern part of the war-ravaged country on Monday.

According to the independent website icasualties.org, 255 foreign troopers, 189 of them being US personnel, have lost their lives in Afghanistan so far this year.

Insecurity continues to rise across Afghanistan despite the presence of about 130,000 US-led forces in the country.

The high number of military casualties in Afghanistan has intensified opposition in the United States and other NATO members against the protracted war in the country.

<http://www.aopnews.com/today.html>

- **Gunmen Attack NATO Supply Trucks in Pakistan**

July 24, 2012

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

Gunmen in northwest Pakistan have attacked a convoy of container trucks carrying supplies to NATO troops in Afghanistan.

Officials said the attack on July 24 outside Jamrud town in the Khyber tribal district killed one driver and left another injured.

Officials said the attackers were riding a motorbike and escaped after the attack.

It is the first such attack since Pakistan reopened its border to NATO supply convoys three weeks ago after a seven-month blockade staged in protest at a NATO air raid that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers at a border post.

The Pakistani Taliban have threatened to attack NATO trucks and their drivers.

Islamist groups have also held large demonstrations against the resumption of supply lines.

NATO supplies have been frequently attacked in Pakistan since 2008.

Based on reporting by AFP and Radio Mashaal

<http://www.aopnews.com/today.html>

- **NATO Troops in Afghanistan Suffering from Lack of Supply**

Fars News Agency / July 24, 2012

TEHRAN (FNA)- NATO troops in Afghanistan are left with no logistical backups as the supply route which passes through Pakistan is still practically closed.

The ban on NATO supplies routes through Pakistan may have officially been lifted three weeks ago but the containers carrying goods for the US-led NATO forces stationed in Afghanistan remain stranded at the Karachi Port Trust (KPT).

The cargo has stood there for almost eight months now. According to KPT General Manager (Operations) Rear Admiral Azhar Hayat, not a single container or vehicle of NATO supplies has left the KPT premises since July 3, when Pakistan officially reopened the ground lines of communication.

Islamabad had blocked NATO supplies on November 26, 2011, after the killing of two dozen soldiers in a NATO-led air raid on the Salala border post.

"There has been no clearance of NATO cargo at KPT so far," Hayat told The Express Tribune, adding there was no hindrance on the part of the KPT as consignees needed to get their cargoes cleared from the customs department.

There are 3,851 vehicles and 1,983 containers belonging to NATO currently stranded at the KPT.

When the supply routes were resumed some three weeks ago, port authorities expected to receive up to Rs2.2 billion from NATO for storing its containers and vehicles for an extended period of time.

Known as demurrage charges, the expected amount has now exceeded Rs2.5 billion, according to Hayat.

At the average rate of 250 units per day, port authorities estimate it will take them roughly 24 days to clear the backlog, according to the KPT official.

Moreover, the KPT has not entertained any vessels carrying Afghanistan-bound cargo in the last three weeks. Hayat offered no comment when asked about the possible reason for the delay on the part of NATO authorities to get their cargoes released from the KPT.

<http://www.aopnews.com/today.html>

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This media summary is prepared by **ORSAM Middle East Research Assistants Nebahat Tanrıverdi O and Selen Tonkuş. It covers news and commentaries as reported by the national media sources publishing in the Middle Eastern countries. The views expressed are not*