



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

Enerji Güvenliđi

Economy News

Ekonomi Haberleri

Peace Process

Barış Süreci

Ethnic and Secterian Groups

Etnik ve Mezhepsel Gruplar

Non State Actors

Devlet-dış Aktörler

Relations with the West

Batı'yla İlişkiler



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

18 SEPTEMBER 2012

NO: 1457

1. IRAQ.....	3
• Kurdistani MP: Talabani will meet Iraqi political leaders in a few days.....	3
• Kurdistani MP: Talabani begins his contacts after receiving well-wishers.....	3
• Talabani back in Sulaymaniya coming from Germany	4
• Salhi threatens of detect hidden files if do not represent the Turkmen in the Electoral Commission.....	4
• Nusayif demands relieving Iraq from UN's sanctions	5
• INA stresses importance of endorsing Infrastructures Law draft	5
• IS' MP accuses "political bloc" of hindering endorsement of General amnesty law	6
• ISCI: Talabani's return will be inductive to crisis breakthrough.....	6
• Joint committee formed to find solutions for oil and gas issues between Baghdad and Erbil	7
• Two civilians killed in two separate incidents in Mosul	8
• Shafaq News publishes the names of the new commissioners	9
• Officials Hopeful New Agreement Could Resolve Baghdad-Erbil Oil and Gas	10
• Angelina Jolie Meets With Syrian Refugees in Kurdistan Region.....	12
• Tigris Operations Command Formed by PM Maliki Criticized as Unconstitutional	13
• Displaced Families Crammed into Substandard Housing in Kirkuk.....	17
2. IRAN.....	19
• Frustrated by Splinter Groups Iranian Kurds Form New National Front.....	19
• Iranian Parliament to Set Up Committee to Pursue Fate of Abducted Nationals.....	21
• Tehran, Muscat Resolved to Implement Agreements	22
• Italy to represent Canadian interests in Iran.....	23
• Iran's Jalili to meet EU's Ashton in Istanbul on Tuesday	23
• IAEA says will hold more talks with Iran.....	24
• Unilateral sanctions hinder Iran talks: Top Russian official.....	24
• Iran has no intention of enriching uranium above 20% level: AEOI chief.....	25
• Iran winner of intelligence warfare with arrogant system: Lawmaker.....	26
3. ISRAEL - PALESTINE	27
• Gaza court convicts 4 men in murder of Vittori Arrigoni	27
• Lawyer: Hunger striking prisoner hospitalized.....	29
• Gaza youth sentenced to death for murder.....	30
• Haniyeh, Mashaal arrive in Cairo for talks with Egypt officials	30
• Palestinians Clash with Soldiers near Nablus	31
• Israeli soldiers Attack Palestinian near Hebron.....	32
• PM: Red line can prevent conflict with Iran	32
• PM: You want fanatics to have nuclear weapons?	34
4. AFRICA and EGYPT	36
• Turkish FM: Turkey to invest US\$2 bn in Egypt, supports Morsy on Syria.....	36
• Abu Ismail to establish international Islamic movement	38
• Shafiq says his party will compete in parliamentary elections	39



• UN Calls on Libya to Move Forward with Transitional Justice Processes	40
• Benghazi Top Security Officials Expelled as Deputy Minister Disputes Decision	41
5. JORDAN and LEBANON.....	42
• Hezbollah warns US over film as toll rises.....	42
• Geagea says Nasrallah took advantage of anti-Islam film issue.....	45
• Jumblatt says Lebanese, Syrians don't need "lessons" on resistance	46
• Gemayel questions timing of Nasrallah's call for protests.....	48
6. SYRIA.....	49
• PYD Accused of Abuse of Power in Kurdish Areas of Syria	49
• Iran Stresses Contact Group's Shared Views on Syria	52
• Iran foreign ministry denies military presence in Syria	53
• Saudi Arabia absent from Egypt-Iran-Turkey talks on Syria	55
7. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA.....	57
• Saudi FM's Absence in Cairo Meeting Raises Doubts about Faisal's Health	57
• Bahraini police face trial over torturing medics	58
8. AFGHANISTAN - PAKISTAN	59
• Afghans hold rally against US-made anti-Islam film.....	60
• Afghan villagers take up arms to drive out the Taliban	61

1. IRAQ

- **Kurdistani MP: Talabani will meet Iraqi political leaders in a few days.**

BAGHDAD / NINA / spokesman of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, Azad Jundiyanı said : President Jalal Talabani will meet today with the leaders of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

The Website of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan quoting Jindiyanı as saying:"after this meeting, the President will receive the Iraqi political leaders to discuss the political problems in Iraq and ways to resolve them."

He added: "during the next few days, Talabani will meet Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and President of the Islamic Supreme Council Ammar al-Hakim, and a number of other Iraqi leaders.

President Jalal Talabani had arrived yesterday to Sulaymaniyah after a therapeutic trip in Germany lasted nearly three months.

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

- **Kurdistani MP: Talabani begins his contacts after receiving well-wishers.**



BAGHDAD / NINA / Vice President of the Kurdistan Alliance bloc in the House of Representatives, Muhsin al-Sadoun said that President Jalal Talabani will start his contacts with the political blocs to hold the national meeting after finishing receive well-wishers to his operation and return to the country.

He explained in a statement to the National Iraqi News Agency / NINA /: "The Kurdistan Alliance hopes that Talabani's invitation to hold a national meeting will be responded by the political parties in order to resolve the crisis."

Sadoun added: "The political blocs were awaiting and he is back to the country, so the political arena will witness movements

by all parties to find a common formula to resolve the crisis."

It is mentioned that President Jalal Talabani has returned to Sulaimaniyah yesterday evening after treatment trip that lasted 3 months in Germany.

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

- **Talabani back in Sulaymaniya coming from Germany**

Sulaymaniya (NINA) – President Jalal Talabani returned on Monday evening, Sep. 17, to Sulaymaniya coming from Germany ending a three-month medical treatment.

Talabani left for Germany on June 17 on a medical treatment trip during which he underwent a knee surgery.

Earlier in the day, Talabani's Advisor, Haji Sa'eed, said that upon his return to Sulaymaniya, Talabani is to meet with Kurdistan region's lawmakers and officials, later he will meet with other Iraqi forces.

He added that among Iraqi politician the President will meet with is Prime Minister

Nuri al-Maliki, which is going to be the beginning in preparation for the National Meeting.

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

- **Salhi threatens of detect hidden files if do not represent the Turkmen in the Electoral Commission.**

Baghdad / NINA /--Head of the Turkmen Front MP Arshad Salhi said : " He has hidden files he will uncover them to the Iraqi people against certain political blocs that oppose granting Turkmen seats in the Board of Electoral Commission.

He expressed in a statement to NINA today his belief: "The attitude regarding not granting Turkmen seats in the Commission stands behind it certain harmful intentions .

Salhi went to say : "There was consensus on granting Turkmen seats in the Commission because they are the third component of the Iraqi people , especially after they have nominated a woman to fill the seat.

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

- **Nusayif demands relieving Iraq from UN's sanctions**

Baghdad (AIN) –MP Aliya Nusayif of the Iraqiya Hurra Bloc demanded to activate the Iraqi Diplomacy during this period of time which witness holding the 67th meeting for the General Assembly of the United Nations in order to relief Iraq from the UN Charter's 7th Chapter.

In a press statement, she said “It is important for the Iraqi Government to activate the Iraqi Diplomacy to walk side by side with the current preparations for holding the 67th meeting of the General Assembly of the UN in New York in order to prepare for relieving Iraq from the UN Charter's 7th Chapter.”

“The current phase requires preparing the political atmosphere to relief Iraq from the UN sanctions through building positive and solid relation with the great powers of the world and show the positive image of the New Iraq,” she added.

It is worth to mention that the 67th meeting of the UN's General Assembly will

be held at the UN headquarter on Tuesday, September 18, 2012.

http://www.alliraqnews.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=18786:nusayif-demands-relieving-iraq-from-uns-sanctions-&catid=35:political&Itemid=2

- **INA stresses importance of endorsing Infrastructures Law draft**

Baghdad (AIN) –The Iraqi National Alliance held a meeting on last Monday night, stressing the importance of endorsing the Infrastructure Law Draft “after removing all suspicions around this law to achieve the general benefit and construct the country.”

A statement issued by the INA on Tuesday morning mentioned that “The Political Bureau of the INA held a regular session at the office of the Head of the INA, Ibrahim al-Jaafary on Monday evening to evaluate the latest political developments as well as stating the stances of the INA towards the law drafts submitted to the parliament to speed up its endorsement.”

“The constituents of the Alliance agreed upon the importance of speeding up the

finalizing the drafting process of other laws to be submitted for endorsement in order to keep balance among the Iraqi communities and supports its national merits,” the statement mentioned.

“The meeting also emphasized the necessity of consolidating the unity of the INA towards different cases in order to achieve the national accord and reach suitable settlements for all impediments,” the statement concluded.

http://www.alliraqnews.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=18785:ina-stresses-importance-of-endorsing-infrastructures-law-draft-&catid=35:political&Itemid=2

- **IS’ MP accuses “political bloc” of hindering endorsement of General amnesty law**

Baghdad (AIN) –The Iraqiya Slate’s MP Ahmed al-Misari accused a certain political bloc, he did not name, of hindering the endorsement of the General Amnesty Law Draft, assuring that “Most of the Iraqi blocs agree to endorse this law draft.”

In a statement to All Iraq News Agency, MP Misari said Tuesday “A certain bloc stands against endorsing this law draft,” noting that “This law draft is important for many Iraqis who are in prisons.”

“This law draft is very sensitive and should be endorsed since most of the prisoners have been detained due to false cases or the testimony of the secret informant or the political aspects that affected the Iraqi Judicial system,” he stressed.

It is worth to mention that the Iraqi parliament decided to postpone voting on this law draft till another announcement due to lack of agreement among the blocs on this law.

http://www.alliraqnews.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=18783:is-mp-accuses-political-bloc-of-hindering-endorsement-of-general-amnesty-law-&catid=35:political&Itemid=2

- **ISCI: Talabani’s return will be inductive to crisis breakthrough**

BAGHDAD, Sept. 17 (AKnews) - The return of President Jalal Talabani will allow holding new dialogues in Iraq with ope of

finding solutions to the political disputes, the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) led by Ammar al-Hakim stated Monday.

Talabani is expected to return tomorrow to the country after spending more than a month in Germany for medical treatment.

The spokesmen of the ISCI Hamid Maaleh said "Talabani has good relations with most of the political blocs and he can contribute to the convergence of views."

Maleeh echoed Kurdish MP, Muhsin Sadoun, who said yesterday that Talabani could end disputes upon his return by calling a national conference where all political parties meet to look at ways of putting an end to political disputes in the country.

Ruling State of Law Coalition (SLC) led by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has been in stalemate with major political parties in the country while the central government is also locked with Kurdistan Regional Government over several lingering issues including oil and gas, disputed areas and Peshmarga (regional guard) budget.

<http://www.aknews.com/en/aknews/4/326751/>

- **Joint committee formed to find solutions for oil and gas issues between Baghdad and Erbil**

ERBIL, September 17 (AKnews) – Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister said a joined committee has been formed between the Kurdistan regional government (KRG) and Iraqi Government to find common grounds in oil and gas issues between the two governments until a final Hydrocarbon law is passed and an end is put to the issues for good.

Rojh Nouri Shawais believed "Solving the ongoing oil disputes between Baghdad and Erbil will have positive effect on sorting other issues, too."

KRG and Baghdad have been locked over several issues other than oil and gas including control over disputed territories, budget of the Kurdistan Region's Guard known as Peshmarga.

Forming the committee is a step toward impediment of creation of obstacles facing the implementation of the agreement, added Shawais.

The oil and gas issue has long been one of the major issues between the regional and central governments. Kurdistan Regoins has signed a oil deals with world giants amid Baghdad rejection of the deals.

Baghdad wants to maintain the authority as the only legitimate party to sign oil deals while Kurds want to manage their own oil fields.

Tensions rose between the two sides after KRG halted exports accusing Baghdad of not paying the dues of the companies working in the region. Baghdad said the KRG had not met its quota of of oil exports per day.

The new committee is headed by representatives of Iraq's oil Ministry and KRG's Ministry of Natural resources to sort any problems occurred before the ratification of oil and gas draft law.

The first oil and gas bill was submitted in 2007 but lack of political consensus left the bill unapproved. The oil and gas committee sent the second bill to parliament. Deputy Prime Minister for Energy Affairs Hussein al-Shahrestani also submitted another bill in 2011.

<http://www.aknews.com/en/aknews/4/326746/>

- **Two civilians killed in two separate incidents in Mosul**



Shafaq News / A security source in Nineveh police said on Monday that two civilians were killed by gunmen in two separate incidents in Mosul city, while a security force arrested 11 wanted for judiciary.

The source, who asked not to be named, told "Shafaq News" that "unidentified gunmen assassinated a Kurdish citizen in Zuhour area east of Mosul."

"The gunmen were traveling in a modern car and opened fire on him “.

The source noted, quoting the victim's father that "he is from Sumweel area and works in a commercial site in Mosul."

On a related context, the source said that "Gunmen killed a civilian in Karaje area north east of Mosul when they opened fire on him at his work place in that area".

The source did not disclose more details, but said that "the bodies were handed over to the forensic medicine."

On the other hand, the source said that " a security force has arrested 11 wanted in a security operation in Tahrir and Zahra areas east of Mosul," noting that "the security force had taken them to Nineveh operation center in order to hand them over to the judiciary."

Many areas of Nineveh province is experiencing, armed operations carried out by armed groups targeting mostly security forces and citizens that often result in casualties in their ranks.

<http://www.shafaq.com/en/news/3563-two-civilians-killed-in-two-separate-incidents-in-mosul.html>

- **Shafaq News publishes the names of the new commissioners**



Shafaq News / Shafaq News has obtained the names of candidates that have been voted on for membership of the Electoral Commission.

Meqdad al-Sharifi / Baghdad / National Alliance

Katee al-Zobaie / Baghdad / Al-Iraqiya list

Mohsen Jabbari / Baghdad / National Alliance

Wael al-Sharifi / Najaf / National Alliance

Safaa al-Moussawi / Karbala / National Alliance

Serbes Mustafa / Dohuk / Kurdistan Alliance

Serwan Ahmed / Kirkuk / Kurdistan Alliance

Suror al-Hetawi / Anbar / Al-Iraqiya list

<http://www.shafaq.com/en/news/3561-shafaq-news-publishes-the-names-of-the-new-commissioners-.html>

- **Officials Hopeful New Agreement Could Resolve Baghdad-Erbil Oil and Gas**

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region—According to an agreement signed between Baghdad and Erbil last week, Iraq’s federal government has agreed to pay the fees to foreign oil firms operating in the Kurdistan Region.

In return, Kurdish authorities have agreed to export 200,000 barrels of oil per day through Iraq’s national oil pipeline network. Baghdad will give Kurdistan 17 percent of the 700,000 barrels of refined oil that it produces per day.

The agreement was reached during a meeting between Kurdistan’s Minister of Natural Resources Ashti Hawrami and Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Roj Nuri Shaways and the Iraqi ministers of finance and trade.

But Iraq Minister of Oil Abdulkarim Luaibi did not sign the agreement. He is waiting until it is approved by Deputy Prime Minister Hussain Shahrستاني who oversees Iraq’s energy sector. Shahrستاني has been known to be a fierce opponent of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)’s oil contracts with international companies.

“The agreement is good for all sides. It is good for Iraq and for the Kurdistan Region and it resolves most of the oil problems,” Hawrami told Rudaw. “We told them that we have not hidden anything or done anything secretly. The Iraqi financial auditing authorities can come [to Kurdistan] and we will clarify everything for them.”

Hawrami said the agreement will be signed during the next meeting of the Iraqi cabinet.

According to the agreement, the Iraqi government will give around \$900 million to international oil companies operating in Kurdistan by the end of this week.

A Kurdish lawmaker from the opposition Change Movement (Gorran) downplayed the significance of the agreement. Latif Mustafa said the deal was no more than a “tactic” on the part of the Iraqi government.

“The Iraqi government acts very wisely. It does the small things for the Kurdistan Region but it does not do the bigger

things. For example, it is not ready to give Kirkuk back to the Kurds,” said Mustafa.

He said the disputed areas -- which both the Kurds and the Iraqi government claim ownership of -- are under the control of the Iraqi government “and there is just as much oil there as there is in the Kurdistan Region.”

The agreement between Baghdad and Erbil comes following a disruption in oil exports by the KRG in April.

If the Iraqi cabinet approves the agreement, then it will have to pay around \$1.5 billion to international oil companies operating in Kurdistan.

Khairallah Hassan Babaker, the Iraqi trade minister and a Kurd, said that the KRG has agreed to a request from Baghdad to allow a committee from the Iraqi Oil Ministry to visit Kurdistan and meet with oil companies to receive information and data from them.

Babaker said that the central government agreed to give the delayed payments to oil companies after the KRG agreed to raise the level of its oil production to 200,000

barrels a day. In the past, the Kurdish government was exporting around 150,000 barrels of oil per day.

The Iraqi government recently threatened to cut \$3 billion of the Kurdistan Region’s budget if it did not provide relevant information and documents on its dealings with international oil firms.

But Hawrami said the threats were not why he visited Baghdad.

“According to Iraqi budget law, if the Kurdistan Region does not export oil, the Iraqi government cannot cut its budget,” he said.

The two sides have been in an ongoing dispute over the management of oil and gas resources in Kurdistan. Iraq’s constitution states that the KRG has the right to control the oil and gas fields in areas under its control that were discovered after 2003.

The Kurds have signed around 50 deals with foreign firms so far, but Baghdad has objected to the terms of the deals and accused the KRG of giving large shares to the foreign companies. The disputes have

hampered the passage of an oil and gas law in Iraqi Parliament.

But Hawrami believes the recent agreement “is a good step toward moving the oil and gas bill forward.”

However Bayazid Hassan, a member of Iraqi Parliament’s oil and energy committee, casts doubt over the viability of the agreement.

“The agreement cannot be relied upon because other agreements have been made in the past but they have not been implemented after six months,” said the Kurdish MP.

In 2007, Erbil and Baghdad agreed on a draft oil and gas law, but it was not ratified as the Kurds said certain provisions had been changed by the Iraqi government before the bill was sent to parliament.

Hassan said that there are now efforts to prepare a new draft based on the 2007 one and other agreements made in 2011 and send it to parliament for ratification.

Since early August, the KRG has been exporting around 100,000 oil barrels per day. The number will go up to 140,000 next Tuesday and increase to 200,000 barrels as of early October.

Iraq now exports over 3 million barrels of oil per day.

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurds/5213.html>

- **Angelina Jolie Meets With Syrian Refugees in Kurdistan Region**

ERBİL, Kurdistan Region—Hollywood Star Angelina Jolie visited Syrian Kurdish refugees at Domiz camp in Duhok on Sunday.



"The most important thing is cooperation from the countries on the (Syrian) border... and to make sure these borders

in all countries stay open," said Jolie, AFP reported.

Jolie, who is UN refugee agency's special envoy, visited the camp accompanied by Duhok governor Temer Ramazn.

"I've been of course very encouraged to be here and hear the government speak of continuing this wonderful, life-saving open border policy," Jolie told reporters.

Since the start of anti-government protests in Syria last year, which soon turned into an armed revolt, hundreds of Kurdish families have escaped Syria, among them defected soldiers and they are settled in camps set up by Kurdish authorities in Duhok province.

(Hollywood star and UNHCR special envoy Angelina Jolie meets with Kurdish Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani to discuss the situation of Syrian refugees at Domiz camp.)

Barzan Bahram, a member of the Domiz camp managing committee told Rudaw, "During her visit Angelina Jolie saw firsthand the conditions of Syrian Kurdish refugees and listened to their concerns.

The refugees asked Jolie to bring their voice to the world,"

Bahram said that a children's music band from Qamishli dressed up in colorful dresses and welcomed the Hollywood star with Kurdish music.

According to an AFP report, UN statistics puts the number of Syrian refugees registered in Kurdistan at 16,833 with thousands more awaiting registration.

Jolie's visit to the Kurdistan Region was part of a tour to Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan to meet with Syrian refugees.

"With the continuation of the bloodshed in Syria, we have to all be prepared for a greater influx (of refugees), and I'm so happy to hear that the government is continuing to commit to these people," Jolie told the media in Kurdistan.

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurds/5204.html>

- **Tigris Operations Command Formed by PM Maliki Criticized as Unconstitutional**

KIRKUK, Kurdistan Region -- The Iraqi Ministry of Defense formed the Tigris Operations Command in July.

This military command was established under direct orders from Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and the general command of the Iraqi Armed Forces.

At the time, officials from the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) confirmed the existence of the order to form this command, while officials from the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) dismissed the claim.

Jamal Tahir, a major general and Kirkuk police chief, spoke to Rudaw when the command was formed. "This operations command will consist of military divisions No.12 and No.5 and will have nothing to do with the police. They will not carry out police duties," he said.

But on Aug. 30, Baghdad announced that this command would begin operations and that their base would be located in region K1, west of Kirkuk near the airport.

In the latest meeting of the PUK political bureau, this military command was

mentioned. Maliki had previously promised Iraqi President Jalal Talabani that such military groups would not be formed.

But after the support Maliki received from Talabani in the face of the demands that he be removed from office, and after the calls to subject the Iraqi PM to a non-confidence vote subsided, it became clear that Maliki had already assembled these forces and formed the Tigris Operations Command.

Galib Attiya, a Diyala police spokesperson, told Rudaw, "This operations command began its duties on Sept. 3. Its duties consist of coordinating and supervising the activities of the police, security forces and army in Diyala and Kirkuk provinces."

In 2008, a joint force which consisted of the U.S. Army, Iraqi Army and the Peshmerga operated in the disputed regions. After the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, the Iraqi Army has been avoiding any cooperation with the Kurdish forces.

Halo Najat, a KDP Asayish (security) chief in Kirkuk, said, "According to the existing

agreement, the security file was managed by a joint operation made up of members from the army, police and the Asayish of Kirkuk."

Najat described the formation of the Tigris Operations Command as destructive to the military balance of power in Kirkuk "because Kirkuk is a disputed region between Baghdad and Erbil."

Regarding the threats from this new operations command, Najat said, "Using Kirkuk airport to transport weapons and planes is dangerous. They might secretly bring more forces into the city under the cover of this new command."

He added, "The second threat is the violation of the treaty with the Kurdistan Region, because they should not have made these moves without consulting the Kurdish government."

The Tigris Operations Command will unite the military division of Kirkuk No.12, the police directorate and security units of Kirkuk and the military division No.5 of Diyala province.

This will be done without any inclusion of Peshmerga or Asayish forces from these two provinces, which means the Iraqi military is taking control of security from the police in these areas and giving it to a military commander, Abdulameer Zaidi of Diyala division No.5.

Ahmed Askary, the security committee chairman in Kirkuk provincial council, said that his committee is against the formation of this military command.

"We rejected it because it is against the constitutional principles," Askary said. "The Iraqi constitution says that the security file shall be controlled by the governor. The Iraqi Army is free to make changes in their military units, but if the military hijacked the security control in the provinces, it would be considered a coup against the constitution of Iraq."

Rebwar Talabani, deputy to the president of Kirkuk provincial council, said that the council has rejected the presence of this military command because "it cannot be done without coordination with the provincial council of Kirkuk. This move also requires cooperation with the Kurdish government since it is a disputed region."

In a voting session last week, the majority of members in the provincial council of Kirkuk rejected the presence of the Tigris Operations Command in their city. Legally, this vote is not binding because the constitution gives the authority of mobilizing army units to the central government.

Nevertheless, there are security treaties between the Kurdistan Region and Iraqi government regarding Kirkuk province.

"All of Iraq is being ruled by treaties," said Najat.

In a press release announced at the end of a meeting between the president of the Kurdistan Region and political parties held last Saturday, the stance of the Kirkuk provincial council was supported.

The press release also described the formation of this operations command as a "political game" which will jeopardize the security, military and political stability in the disputed regions, and demanded "disbanding this military operations command."

The Turkmen Front, like the Kurds, rejects the formation of the military command. Ali Mahdi, the group's spokesperson, explained their stance by saying "Kirkuk is supposed to be protected by its own people," and called on the provincial council to reject all the military units from "either north or south Iraq" that want to come to Kirkuk.

Sheikh Burhan Muzhar Asi, a provincial council member from the Arabic Republic, said that there are no other alternatives to this military command.

Asi told Rudaw, "The Iraqi Army has the duty of protecting security and their coming to Kirkuk is to fill the security vacuum in the city created by the withdrawal of U.S. forces."

Najat attributed the security vacuum to the lack of action by security forces, and the vast borders with Hawijah, Rashad and Hamrin that have become "hotbeds of terrorists."

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/news/iraq/5202.html>

- **Displaced Families Crammed into Substandard Housing in Kirkuk**

KIRKUK, Kurdistan Region -- Ali Raheem, a taxi driver, is critical of the government for his current living conditions and he longs for the years he spent living in Raniya.

"They gave us false hope and made many promises. They told us to go back to our old houses and promised to give us financial and logistical support. Where is the support? We have been living for 12 years in the muds of Faylaq. Isn't that enough?" said Raheem.

Faylaq -- an old, abandoned military facility -- is a sad neighborhood to live in for the Kurds of Kirkuk. The facility was previously used as a military court by the former Iraqi regime.

Kamal Abdulkhaliq, who lives in the neighborhood, said that many of the residents here were previously tried in this same court for deserting military service with the previous Iraqi army and that the space is "full of dismal memories for them."

Until Saddam's regime collapsed, Faylaq was made up of a few buildings in a large

field. But after many displaced Kurds returned home to find their houses occupied, they had no choice but to turn to Faylaq and make it into a residential area.

Piled garbage, mud, stagnant water and noxious odors characterize the streets in this neighborhood, many of which have been rendered inaccessible to pedestrians. Abdulkhaliq expressed gratitude just for having had potable water for a few days. Nearly 700 houses make up this neighborhood which is far from public schools and hospitals.

Fatima, a resident of the neighborhood, summed up the problems of the area, saying, "Let's say it's alright that we don't have water, electricity, roads, sewage, houses, jobs ... but at least save us from the mud!"

"When we were refugees in Erbil and Sulaimani, we had everything except Kirkuk," she added.

The situation in the neighborhood of Panja Ali is not much better. Jamal Taha, a resident there, told Rudaw, "The refugees

are suffering everywhere and they all have the same demands."

Thousands of Kirkuk refugees returned home from Erbil and Sulaimani after receiving promises of support from the ruling parties of the Kurdistan Region. According to those promises, these refugees should be currently living in their occupied houses, having resumed their regular lives, received land and been compensated for the years of displacement and suffering they endured.

In one of the deserted military facilities lives a man named Ali with his family. Ali did not want to give his full name due to his job as a security employee (Asayish). He described the distance his children had to travel to their public school from where they live. "I spend part of my salary on the transportation of my kids to their schools," said Ali.

"Before our return to Kirkuk, they told us every possible sweet word," Ali said. "They said they would do good things for us. Alas, we fell for their rosy promises quickly."

The building where Ali's family lives now hosts 20 other families, but "it is suitable for six families only," he said.

A group of children were hanging out under a damaged building in Faylaq. The children were all on bikes, and one of them told Rudaw that many kids in this neighborhood have bicycles to go to school because they can't afford to commute by car, noting that several of them had been victims of road accidents.

Abdulkareem Hassan, director of Kirkuk municipality, accepted the grievances of Faylaq residents and said, "They should have been compensated with Article 140. We have registered 33,000 families to be compensated with pieces of land. Residents of Faylaq are on this list. But it is not clear when they will get it."

He added, "It is true that they are far from public schools, but they should have demanded a school from the government. We have allocated 500 million Iraqi dinars to be used to bring in services. I have asked them to tell me about their priorities in order to help them in the best possible manner."

Some Faylaq residents were critical of Abdulraham Rasoul, the former Kirkuk governor, for promising to provide them with housing.

But Rasoul said, "They do not have the right to criticize us. I have visited them many times and brought many projects to their neighborhood. That was all our resources allowed at the time."

He added "The Iraqi government did not allow us to bring social services to this neighborhood and told us that the residents were illegally occupying the area. But we did not listen and brought some projects to the area."

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/news/iraq/5192.html>

2. IRAN

- **Frustrated by Splinter Groups Iranian Kurds Form New National Front**

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region—A number of Iranian Kurdish activists have established the Eastern Kurdistan National Front. But some Iranian Kurdish political parties are skeptical about the group and say that its political goals are not clear. Nonetheless,

many welcome such a step and hope the group will bring unity between the parties.

Tahir Mahmoudi, an official from the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI), told Rudaw that his party would welcome any attempt that served the Kurdish cause in Iran.

"However, the goals and political agenda of the group must be clear to the people as they are the ones who will evaluate them," he added.

Najmadin Gulparwar, a leader from Revolutionary Society of Iranian Kurdistan's Toilers (Komala), told Rudaw, "We welcome efforts to unite the parties in order to achieve the rights of Kurds in Iran. But the problem is that the group doesn't have a clear plan and we have no information about them outside or inside Kurdistan."

The establishment of the Eastern Kurdistan National Front reflects recent developments in the region and international pressure on the Iranian government.

A spokesperson for the group said, “The recent unrest in the Middle East, the developments in the Southern and Western Kurdistan, the increasing international pressure on Iran and the lack of unity among Iranian Kurdish political parties are the reasons this group was formed.”

The group emerged after the KDPI and Komala signed an agreement which they declared would act as the foundation for uniting Iranian Kurdish parties in one national coalition.

Muhammad Shaswari, one of the founders of the Eastern Kurdistan National Front, said that Kurdish parties are not yet ready to put the public’s interests ahead of their own.

“Iranian Kurdish political parties have not yet been able to establish a united coalition after 34 years of struggle against the Iranian government,” he said.

Shaswari dismissed claims that the agreement was the solution. However, he admitted that it was a positive step toward unification, adding that the Islamic

Republic’s hostility toward the two groups was proof of that.

He added, “If their effort is to establish a united national coalition, then we welcome it because that’s what we have been trying to do.”

Gulparwar also noted that Iran’s attack on the agreement was proof of its success, and described it as the fulfillment of a goal Iranian Kurds have had for a long time.

Most importantly, he believes it will lead to unity. “Without preconditions, the door is open for everyone to join us,” he said.

Party officials who spoke to Rudaw believe that the situation in Iranian Kurdistan is not yet ripe for revolution due to the large number of Kurdish activists and politicians in Iranian prisons and the brutality of the regime’s crackdown on revolutionaries.

However, Shaswari said that, despite the obstacles and dangers, members of the National Front have been carrying out activities against the Iranian government.

“In order to protect the lives of our members inside Iran, we have coordinated

small groups inside Iran to stay connected with someone outside the country through the Internet,” he said.

Shaswari accused the leadership of Iranian Kurdish parties for neglecting the needs of the people. He added that the number of people joining his group every day proves that Iranian Kurds are tired of the political parties and their empty promises.

But Gulparwar rejected claims that Iranian Kurdish parties have lost their popularity. “It’s impossible to establish a united coalition without the Kurdish political parties,” he said, adding that the activities of the National Assembly were limited to the Internet.

For his part, Gulparwar insisted that the only solution for Iranian Kurdistan is the unification of its political parties under the umbrella of one coalition. “We must resolve our issues before returning to Eastern Kurdistan,” he said.

Mahmoudi also believes that without bringing the Iranian Kurdish political parties on board, any attempt toward unification is futile.

“We support every movement that supports the Kurdish cause in Iran,” he said. “However, any movement in that direction without the KDPI is useless.”

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/news/iran/5212.html>

- **Iranian Parliament to Set Up Committee to Pursue Fate of Abducted Nationals**

TEHRAN (FNA)- The Iranian Parliament plans to establish a committee to pursue the fate of the Iranian nationals kidnapped outside the country.

"A committee will be set up at the parliament to pursue the status of the Iranian nationals abducted outside the country," member of the parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Javad Karimi Qoddosi told FNA on Monday.

He stated that the committee will be established in the next few days, and added that pursuing the fate of the kidnapped Iranian nationals in Syria and Libya will top the agenda of the committee.

On August 4, armed insurgents in Syria kidnapped 48 Iranian pilgrims who were traveling on a bus from Damascus International Airport to the shrine of Hazrat Zainab (AS) on the outskirts of Damascus.

Iran is using all diplomatic, political and security means to release the 48 Iranian pilgrims.

Ever since the abductions took place, the Foreign Ministry and the Iranian embassy in Damascus have been pursuing the fate and the release of the kidnapped Iranian nationals through different channels.

Also in Libya, 7 Iranian Red Crescent workers were abducted by armed groups in the North African state early in August.

The Libyan Red Crescent said in a statement at the time that armed men have kidnapped a seven-member delegation from the Iranian Red Crescent visiting Benghazi.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9106240720>

● **Tehran, Muscat Resolved to Implement Agreements**

TEHRAN (FNA)- Senior Iranian and Omani officials in a meeting on Monday discussed avenues for the further expansion of cooperation, and laid emphasis on finalizing and implementing the agreements already signed by the two states.

Iranian Labor, Cooperatives and Social Welfare Minister Abdolreza Sheikholeslami met with visiting Omani Minister of Commerce and Industry Ali bin Masud bin Ali al-Sunaidi here in Tehran today.

At the meeting, the two ministers stressed finalization of the agreements already reached between the two governments, and discussed the issue of labor and job opportunities.

Given the long-lasting relations between Tehran and Muscat, Sheikholeslami hoped the two countries would further boost all-out cooperation.

With regard to Tehran's know how in job creation, the labor minister pointed out that Iran is ready to share its experiences

in various fields with its brotherly country of Oman.

The Omani minister, for his part, referred to direct flight between Muscat and Tehran and stressed that it will help promote bilateral cooperation.

Iran and Oman have expanded cooperation in a variety of areas such as economy and defense since Iran's President Ahmadinejad took office in 2005.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9106240710>

- **Italy to represent Canadian interests in Iran**

The Ottawa government announced on Monday that Italy will represent Canada's interests in Iran as a "protecting power".

The announcement came 10 days after Canada broke off diplomatic ties with Tehran.

"The government of Italy has agreed to provide critical support in urgent cases involving Canadians who require consular assistance in Iran, among other functions,"

Reuters quoted Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird as saying.

<http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1698628>

- **Iran's Jalili to meet EU's Ashton in Istanbul on Tuesday**

TEHRAN, Sept. 17 (MNA) – Saeed Jalili, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council who acts as Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, will hold informal talks with European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton in Istanbul on Tuesday.

Ashton leads the major powers (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany) in nuclear talks with Iran.

A spokeswoman for Ashton said on Monday that the meeting "is part of continuing efforts to engage with Iran, led by the High Representative, and in line with the understandings reached at the negotiating round in Moscow in June."

"While it is not a formal negotiating round, the meeting will be an opportunity to stress once again to Iran the need for an urgent and meaningful confidence

building step and to show more flexibility with the proposals... tabled in Baghdad (on May 23 and 24),” she stated.

<http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1698523>

- **IAEA says will hold more talks with Iran**

TEHRAN, Sept. 17 (MNA) – The International Atomic Energy Agency will hold further talks with Iran, IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano announced in Vienna on Monday, Reuters reported.

The UN nuclear watchdog is “firmly committed” to intensifying dialogue with Iran, Amano told the IAEA’s annual member state gathering.

“We will continue negotiations with Iran on a structured approach to resolving all outstanding issues,” Amano added, noting, “I hope we can reach agreement without further delay, to be followed by immediate implementation,” he said.

The IAEA has called on Iran to sign and implement a structured approach document to resolve the outstanding issues and has stated that gaining access

to the Parchin military site, which is located southeast of Tehran, is a priority for the UN nuclear watchdog.

The IAEA has claimed that Iran might have been trying to sanitize the Parchin site of any incriminating evidence of explosive tests that would indicate efforts to design nuclear weapons. However, Iran has dismissed the claim, calling it “baseless”.

Tehran rejected requests by IAEA delegations to inspect the Parchin site during their visits to Iran from January 29 to 31 and February 21 to 22 and has made it clear that access to the site would not be possible before an agreement is reached on the structured approach document.

The latest round of talks between Iran and the IAEA was held in Vienna on August 24.

<http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1698389>

- **Unilateral sanctions hinder Iran talks: Top Russian official**

The Russian deputy foreign minister says illegal US-engineered unilateral sanctions against Iran over its nuclear energy

program undermine the negotiating process between Tehran and the six major world powers (P5+1).



Gennady Gatilov said on Monday that Russia remained “convinced that unilateral sanctions undermine the chances of the resumption of the negotiating process with Tehran, and also significantly hurt the unity of the six” world powers, comprising the US, Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and China.

The Russian diplomat renewed his country’s opposition to the US-led embargoes against the Islamic republic, saying there are no grounds for the continuation of sanctions against Tehran.

He further said that the foreign ministers of the P5+1 group plan to meet on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session on September 24.

Gatilov noted that the ministerial meeting “has been planned, but no ultimate decision has been made so far.”

At the beginning of 2012, the US and the EU approved new sanctions against Iran's oil and financial sectors. The embargoes aim to prevent other countries from purchasing the Iranian oil or transacting with the Central Bank of Iran.

Washington and the EU have declared that the bans are meant to force Iran to abandon its nuclear energy program, which they claim to include a military component.

Iran has vehemently refuted the allegation, arguing that as a committed signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency, it is entitled to use the nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/09/18/262200/unilateral-bans-hinder-iran-talks-russia/>

- **Iran has no intention of enriching uranium above 20% level: AEOI chief**

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Fereydoun Abbasi says Iran has no intention of enriching uranium above the 20 percent level.



Abbasi told reporters on Monday that Iran started producing 20 percent enriched uranium when it could not obtain fuel for Tehran Research Reactor from the international market due to the sanctions imposed against the country.

Abbasi made the remarks after the annual meeting of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) members in the Austrian capital, Vienna.

The head of AEOI said most of Iran's enrichment activities are conducted at the 3.5 percent level but added that in the future, Tehran will determine its enrich level according to its needs.

The Iranian official added that the objective of 20 percent enrichment is to produce radiopharmaceuticals, but certain parties are trying to connect Iran's nuclear activities to non-civilian purposes.

The United States, Israel and some of their allies have repeatedly accused Iran of pursuing non-civilian objectives in its nuclear energy program.

Iran argues that as a signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and a member of IAEA, it is entitled to develop and acquire nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

IAEA has conducted numerous inspections of Iran's nuclear facilities, but has never found any evidence indicating diversion in Tehran's nuclear energy program toward military purposes.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/09/18/262198/iran-doesnt-look-enrichment-over-20/>

- **Iran winner of intelligence warfare with arrogant system: Lawmaker**



The enemy cannot target Iran's internal security.”

Hojjatollah Souri, Iranian lawmaker

An Iranian lawmaker says the US and the Israeli regime’s scenario to hatch anti-Iran plots has no potential to be implemented, stressing Iran has been the winner of the intelligence warfare against the arrogant system.

“The enemy cannot target Iran's internal security,” a member of the Majlis (parliament) Committee on National Security and Foreign Policy Hojjatollah Souri said on Monday, ICANA reported.

He added that the Iranian nation would not hesitate about achieving its revolutionary aim and emphasized that efforts by enemies’ intelligence agencies would bear no fruit.

The legislator emphasized that Western governments hatch more plots against Iran whenever the country makes a great diplomatic success.

Iran's success to hold the 16th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) made the enemy’s intelligence services become more active in hatching plots against Tehran, Souri said, reiterating that their efforts would be futile.

The 16th NAM Summit wrapped up in the Iranian capital on August 31, with the movement’s member states passing a final resolution, which included over 700 clauses.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/09/17/262143/iran-winner-of-intelligence-warfare/>

3. ISRAEL - PALESTINE

● Gaza court convicts 4 men in murder of Vittori Arrigoni

GAZA CITY (Ma'an) -- An appeals court in the Gaza Strip on Monday convicted four Palestinians of the killing of Italian peace activist Vittori Arrigoni in 2011.

The court sentenced Mahmoud Salfiti, 23, and Tamer Hasasna, 25, to life imprisonment plus 10 years for kidnap and murder, while Khader Ajram, 26, was sentenced to 10 years for abduction.

The three defendants were identified by the Hamas-run court as Hamas security men who had been working for a Salafi group for ideological reasons.



Amer Abu Ghula, a 25-year-old fisherman, fled Gaza after the killing and was sentenced in absentia to 12 months for harboring a fugitive.

The men flashed defiant smiles as the sentences were handed down.

"They will find justice with God and not with this court," a relative of the one of the defendants muttered.

Lawyers said Arrigoni's family had written to the court to oppose imposing the death penalty.

Hamas forces killed two men accused of the murder when clashes erupted during a raid in Nuseirat refugee camp three days after Arrigoni was killed. A third was injured and a fourth detained.

Arrigoni, a long-time member of the International Solidarity Movement, was kidnapped on April 14, 2011.

Shortly after his disappearance, a previously unknown Salafist group released a YouTube video showing a bruised and bloodied Arrigoni and threatened to kill him within 30 hours if Hamas failed to release a group of jihadist prisoners.

Security forces found Arrigoni's body shortly afterward, ahead of the stated deadline, in an abandoned house in northern Gaza.

News of the Italian activist's murder was greeted with widespread condemnation, and demonstrations and vigils were held across the West Bank in his memory.

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=520947>

- **Lawyer: Hunger striking prisoner hospitalized**

RAMALLAH (Ma'an) -- Palestinian prisoner Samer al-Barq was hospitalized on Monday as he entered his 119th day on hunger strike, a lawyer said.



Jawad Boulos of the Palestinian prisoners society told Ma'an that al-Barq was taken to a civilian hospital in central Israel after collapsing in Ramla prison clinic.

Doctors at the clinic could not deal with al-Barq's health condition and he was transferred by ambulance to Assaf Harofeh medical center.

Al-Barq had stopped drinking water or taking intravenous fluids, Boulos said.

Minister of Prisoners Affairs Issa Qaraqe told Ma'an on Sunday that Israel had agreed to al-Barq's request to be deported to Egypt.

No date has been set for the arrangement to be carried out, Qaraqe added, noting that al-Barq will not end his hunger strike action until the agreement is finalized.

He has been detained without charge or trial since July 2010.

He ended a month-long hunger strike in May after Israel agreed to address the issue of administrative detention and resumed his hunger strike a week later when Israel renewed his detention without charge or trial.

The European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton on Friday called on Israel to "do all it can to preserve the health" of Palestinian hunger strikers in Israeli jails.

In addition to al-Barq, Hassan Safadi has been on renewed hunger strike for 89

days and Ayman Sharawna has refused food for 79 days.

The International Committee of the Red Cross warned on Friday that the hunger strikers were in a critical condition, and urged a prompt solution.

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=521039>

- **Gaza youth sentenced to death for murder**

GAZA CITY (Ma'an) -- A Gaza court sentenced a Palestinian youth to death by hanging on Monday after he was found guilty of two murder charges.

The Court of Appeal said the man, named as H.A., admitted to stabbing another man to death in 2009. H.A. was under 18 at the time of the crime, which was premeditated, the court said.

During interrogation over the stabbing, H.A. admitted to the rape and murder of a male child relative in 2010.

After the rape, H.A. said he hit him over the head and threw him into a pit, where he buried him alive with gravel.

Another man from Gaza was sentenced to death on Wednesday on charges of collaborating with Israel.

A total of 14 Palestinians have now been executed since the Islamist group Hamas seized the Gaza Strip in 2007 from Western-backed President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah faction.

Under Palestinian law, Abbas is supposed to have the final say on whether executions are carried out, but Hamas runs its justice system without consulting the president.

Human rights groups have repeatedly condemned the use of the death penalty in Gaza.

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=520936>

- **Haniyeh, Mashaal arrive in Cairo for talks with Egypt officials**

GAZA CITY (Ma'an) -- Gaza Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh and Hamas chief-in-exile Khaled Mashaal arrived in Cairo on Monday for talks with Egyptian officials, Hamas said.



Spokesman Taher al-Nono told reporters that Haniyeh will meet with Egyptian Prime Minister Hisham Qandil to discuss security cooperation, ending the siege on Gaza, and the establishment of a duty-free zone at the Rafah crossing.

The delegation headed by Haniyeh includes Mahmoud Zahhar and interior minister Fathi Hammad.

Mashaal is scheduled to meet with Egyptian President Muhammad Mursi on Tuesday to discuss relations between Hamas and the Egyptian authorities.

In July, the Gaza premier led a Hamas delegation in talks with Egyptian President Muhammad Mursi, Egypt's intelligence chief Murad Mowafi and the supreme guide of the Muslim Brotherhood Mohammed Badie.

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=521048>

- **Palestinians Clash with Soldiers near Nablus**

NABLUS, September 17, 2012 (Wafa) – Clashes erupted on Monday in the southern part of Iraq Burin, a village southwest of the northern West Bank city of Nablus, between Palestinians and Israeli soldiers after Jewish settlers stormed the village, according to a local activist.

Ghassan Douglas, in charge of settlements file at the Palestinian Authority in the northern part of the West Bank, told Wafa that a number of settlers from the settlement of Bracha, illegally built on the village land, stormed the village, under Israeli forces protection, provoking residents leading to clashes.

Forces fired tear gas bombs and rubber bullets towards the residents, causing a number of suffocation cases among them.

<http://english.wafa.ps/index.php?action=detail&id=20692>

- **Israeli soldiers Attack Palestinian near Hebron**

HEBRON, September 17, 2012 (Wafa) – Israeli soldiers attacked and injured a 38-year-old Palestinian man while he was travelling in his car near Khirbet al-Majaz, a locale south of the Hebron hill, Monday said a press release by Operation Dove.

It said four Israeli soldiers stopped the Palestinian car, beat the Palestinian, a resident of the town of Yatta, south of Hebron, injuring him in the leg, chest and face, damaged his vehicle and left him standing by their military jeep for an hour before leaving him there.

Residents found the beaten Palestinian, a father of seven, and took him to the locale where he was transferred by an ambulance to hospital for treatment.

<http://english.wafa.ps/index.php?action=detail&id=20693>

- **PM: Red line can prevent conflict with Iran**

In CNN interview Netanyahu asserts US must send Tehran clear message on its nuclear work. 'Iran must know there's a

line they shouldn't cross – because otherwise, they'll cross it,' he says

WASHINGTON – Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave an interview Sunday with CNN's "State of the Nation" and stressed, yet again, the need for the United States to send a clear message to Iran over its nuclear work.

Netanyahu reiterated that Washington must set a clear red line for Tehran: "I think the issue is how to prevent Iran from completing its nuclear weapons program.

"They're moving very rapidly to completing the enrichment of the uranium that they need to produce a nuclear bomb. In six months or so, they will be 90% of the way there.

"I think it's important to place a red line before Iran, and I think that actually reduces the chance of a military conflict because, if they know there's a point, a stage in the enrichment or other nuclear activities that they cannot cross because they're face consequences, I think they'll actually not cross it," he stated.

"I think we should have a red line communicated to Iran, I think that's vital. I know people value flexibility, I think that's important, but I think that in this late stage of the game Iran needs to see clarity.

"I'm not sure I would have said such a thing three years ago, or two years ago, or even one year ago, but as we get closer and closer to the end game I think we have to establish that. It's becoming very important."

The threat posed by Tehran possessing nuclear weapons, a regime "guided by the same fanaticism" as those who killed US Ambassador to Libya, the prime minister continued, has "Become something very urgent for all of us, to make sure that they don't get there. And if you want to make sure that they don't get there, make sure that they know that there's a line they shouldn't cross – because otherwise, they'll cross it."

'Israel supports Democrats, Republicans alike'

Netanyahu also commented on the criticism leveled at him over his supposed meddling in the US presidential elections.

Tensions between Israel and the US have grown recently over Jerusalem demand that Washington set a "clear red line" to Iran.

Israel's insistence on the matter has taken on a decidedly political tone, as it has become a clear issued in the presidential campaign.

Recent editorials in the New York Times and Washington Post joined various US officials in criticizing Netanyahu over his attempts to "corner Obama" into launching a premature attack on the Islamic Republic.



"Leaders need flexibility and ambiguity, not just hard and fast red lines. And it is

dangerous for Mr. Netanyahu to try to push the president into a corner publicly and raise questions about Washington. Is that really the message he wants to send to Tehran?" the New York Times wondered.

"Presidents don't turn over that power of war and peace, even to their best friends," the Washington Post echoed.

"I knew people are trying to draw me into the American elections, and I'm not going to do that," Netanyahu told CNN Sunday.

"But I will say that we value, we cherish the bipartisan support for Israel in the United States, and we're supported by Democrats and Republicans alike."

"This is not an electoral issue. It is not based on any electoral consideration.

I think that there's a common interest of all Americans, of all political persuasions, to stop Iran. This is a regime that is giving vent to the worst impulses that you see right now in the Middle East."

Later Sunday, US Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice said that

"there's no daylight" between the United States and Israel when it comes to stopping Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.

She did, however say that US-Israeli intelligence indicates that the two nations have "considerable time" before that happens.

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4282028,00.html>

- **PM: You want fanatics to have nuclear weapons?**

In attempt to curb flood of criticism against possible military strike against Tehran, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu tells Meet the Press 'Iran puts zealotry above survival', explains why containment strategy won't work

WASHINGTON – Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu criticized certain American columnists saying that they "set a new standard for human stupidity" for writing that a nuclear Iran may "stabilize the Middle East".

In interviews with CNN's State of the Nation and NBC's Meet the Press, both

scheduled to be aired on Sunday, Netanyahu tried to rein in the flood of criticism expressed in American newspapers.

In a segment from the interview which was published Saturday night ahead of the NBC interview, the prime minister was asked whether he believed a "containment strategy" would work on Iran, as was done with the Soviet Union in its time.

Netanyahu on Meet the Press

Netanyahu responded: "I think Iran is very different, they put their zealotry above survival, they have suicide bombers all over the place, I wouldn't rely on their rationality."

According to Netanyahu: "Since the advent of nuclear weapons you've had countries that have had access to nuclear weapons who always made a careful calculation of cost and benefit but Iran is guided by a leadership with an unbelievable fanaticism.

"It's the same fanaticism that you see storming your embassies today. You want these fanatics to have nuclear weapons?"

Netanyahu then responded to the slew of recent criticism expressed in US newspapers towards his plans for a military strike on Iran: "I heard some people suggest...I actually read this in the American press, they said 'well you know if you take action that's a lot worse than having Iran with nuclear weapons.'

"Some have even said that Iran with nuclear weapons would stabilize the Middle East. Stabilize the Middle East! I think that the people who say this set a new standard for human stupidity."

On Friday Defense Secretary Leon Panetta dismissed this week's public debate between US and Israeli leaders over whether the allies should set "red lines" that could trigger military action against Iran's nuclear program.

"The fact is, look, presidents of the United States, prime ministers of Israel or any other country – leaders of these countries don't have, you know, a bunch of little red

lines that determine their decisions," Paneta told Foreign Policy Magazine.

"What they have are facts that are presented to them about what a country is up to, and then they weigh what kind of action is needed to be taken in order to deal with that situation. I mean, that's the real world.

"Red lines are kind of political arguments that are used to try to put people in a corner," he added.

The New York Times reported on Friday that President Barack Obama has rejected an appeal by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to define a specific "red line" that Iran could not cross in its nuclear program.

Netanyahu reportedly asked Obama in a phone call earlier this week to set the size of Iran's stockpile of close-to-bomb-grade uranium as the threshold that, if passed, would trigger a US military strike on the Islamic Republic's nuclear facilities.

The report cited an unnamed senior US official as saying that the Obama

administration's "red line" is a nuclear weapon.

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4281893,00.html>

4. AFRICA and EGYPT

- **Turkish FM: Turkey to invest US\$2 bn in Egypt, supports Morsy on Syria**

Egypt's President Mohamed Morsy attends a meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu (L) at the presidential palace in Cairo July 2, 2012. Egypt will approach the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other financial institutions to help get its economy back on track once Morsy appoints a government, a financial adviser who helped draw up his manifesto said.

Reuters

The Turkish Central Bank plans to deposit US\$2 billion in the Central Bank of Egypt, a sum earmarked for funding small and medium-size enterprises, said presidential spokesperson Yasser Ali on Monday.

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and President Mohamed Morsy came to this agreement on the sidelines of a

meeting of international monitors regarding Syrian refugees, Ali said, adding that Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is also planning to visit Egypt soon.

After the meeting, Davutoglu said that Turkey agrees with Morsy's views on Syria, and that he is optimistic that the crisis could be resolved.



The quartet of monitors, an initiative launched by Morsy during his visit to Tehran last month for the Non-Aligned Summit, includes representatives from Egypt, Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia failed to attend the first meeting of the quartet on Monday.

“Turkey has made efforts in this regard — alone at first, and then with the Arab League and the United Nations,”

Davutoglu said. “But Syrian President Bashar al-Assad did not deliver.”

“A regime that kills its people cannot survive,” he added. “We must work together to stop the bloodshed and make the transition possible, for it has become a humanitarian crisis.”

He also believed the new UN envoy to Syria, Lakhdar Brahimi, does not have the full support of the United Nations. “I hope Brahimi's mission does not give Assad more time to kill his people, like that of former UN and Arab envoy Kofi Annan's did,” he said.

On the topic of Iran's influence in Syria and support for its regime, Davutoglu said this could be exploited in a positive way so as to stop the bloodshed.

He also stressed Turkey's support for the democratization process in Egypt. “The success of Egypt is a success for the whole region,” he said.

Finally, regarding the anti-Islam film that sparked outrage across the Muslim world, Davutoglu said Turkey agrees with Egypt that religion should be respected, but

called on demonstrators to protests peacefully rather than portraying Muslims in a poor light by assaulting foreign embassies.

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/turkish-fm-turkey-invest-us2-bn-egypt-supports-morsy-syria>

- **Abu Ismail to establish international Islamic movement**

Dr. Hazem Salah Abu Ismail, Islamist Presidential Hopeful, greets his supporters during public conference in Mahla al-Kubra, Gharbiya, January 20,2012.



Salafi Sheikh Hazem Salah Abu Ismail, who was eliminated from the presidential race earlier this year, has decided to establish an international Islamic movement and a political party that aims to spread

“moderate Islam,” a former media adviser to his campaign said on Monday.

“The movement will have a political and educational dimension based on the application of Sharia, deriving its understanding from a Salafi perspective. It aims to spread moderate Islam. The name of the movement, the party and its leadership will be announced in a press conference on 15 October,” said Ayman Elias.

The movement would focus on educating a new generation about Sharia in the Gulf states, Egypt and Libya, Elias said.

Abu Ismail was disqualified from the presidential race after the Presidential Elections Commission ruled that his mother had American citizenship, as the Constitutional Declaration stipulates that presidential candidates’ parents must only hold Egyptian citizenship.

Abu Ismail said that the documents submitted to the PEC were false and his mother holds only Egyptian citizenship.

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/abu-ismail-establish-international-islamic-movement>

- **Shafiq says his party will compete in parliamentary elections**

Presidential hopeful Ahmed Shafiq holds press conference at his electoral campaign headquarters to comment on rumors that have been recently circulated, Dokki, Giza, 23 May, 2012. The conference is held on the first day of the presidential elections at which Shafiq runs for the post of president along with another twelve candidates.

Former presidential candidate Ahmed Shafiq announced that his new political party, the Egyptian National Movement, will compete in the upcoming parliamentary elections and will be a strong competitor.

“It would not just be a guest of honor in political life, but would seek to rule,” Shafiq said.

Shafiq told Al-Masry Al-Youm from his residence in the United Arab Emirates that the party would restore Egypt’s rights, and

“will be joined by millions who supported me in the presidential race.”

He stated that the party’s policies would be based on preserving the civil state and the Egyptian identity, both of which are being weakened.

Party adviser Ibrahim Darwish said that he joined the party because it supports a civil state and “will compete against the Muslim Brotherhood, which wants to own Egypt like [it is] a supermarket.”

Novelist Gamal al-Ghitani denied rumors that he had joined the party, saying that he sympathized with Shafiq on a human level because of smear campaigns he has faced since losing the presidential election, but will not join his party.

Shafiq left Egypt a day after the presidential election results were announced in June.

Later, he was referred to criminal court, along with former President Hosni Mubarak’s two sons Alaa and Gamal, on charges of squandering state funds.

Shafiq served as commander of the Air Force then as minister of civil aviation before he was appointed by Mubarak as his last prime minister during the 25 January revolution.

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/shafiq-says-his-party-will-compete-parliamentary-elections>

- **UN Calls on Libya to Move Forward with Transitional Justice Processes**

Tripoli-- “A transitional justice strategy can contribute to defining how Libyan society will go forward, and lay the foundations for a new democratic society” the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) says in a report released Monday 17 September.

The report, titled “Transitional Justice – Foundation for a New Libya”, recommends that the General National Congress and new government commit to implementing a comprehensive transitional justice process within the next year.

Commenting on the report, Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and Head of UNSMIL Ian Martin

stated that the successful conduct of the 7 July election and the establishment of the General National Congress represent major milestones in the transition to building a new Libya, the success of which, however, requires addressing past human rights violations and facilitating reconciliation.

The report provides an overview of the challenges facing transitional justice in Libya. It advocates the inclusion of truth-seeking in a comprehensive transitional justice strategy; recommends a victim-oriented approach in the Libyan transitional justice process; and calls for putting in place a prosecutorial strategy, including to end the continued detention of some 7000 persons without legal process. The report contains a set of recommendations to the General National Congress and Government aimed at assisting them in moving forward in the transitional justice processes.

“As noted in the report, Libya is at a critical juncture in its history and there is an opportunity for the country to lay solid and lasting foundations for a just society based on human rights”, SRSG Martin said. “This report is meant to assist the

new Libyan authorities in building the new Libya. We strongly encourage them to give transitional justice the priority it deserves and to consider instituting an official public consultation on this matter of critical national importance. For democracy to be fully achieved in Libya, human rights and the rule of law must prevail and long-lasting reconciliation must be achieved”, SRSB Martin concluded.

<http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=9181>

- **Benghazi Top Security Officials Expelled as Deputy Minister Disputes Decision**

Tripoli— The outgoing Minister of Interior Fawzi Abdulal sacked two top security officials based in Benghazi city after the deadly attack on the US consulate in which the American ambassador was killed.

According to the ministerial decision no. 1606 of the year 2012, Colonel Salah Eddin Aawad Doghman was appointed head of the Benghazi Security Directorate to replace General Bou Hmida.

Doghman will also temporarily act as Deputy Interior Minister instead of Wanis El-Sharef who has made headlines since the attack on the US consulate on Tuesday 11 September.

Speaking to Anba Libya, an online newspaper in Arabic, on Monday morning, el-Sharef said he did not receive any official orders from the Interior Minister stating he was replaced.

El-Sharef said the reason behind his dismissal, if true, could be linked to his public criticism of the incompetence of the Interior Minister in dealing with a number of security issues including the attack on the US consulate.

He said “the Interior Minister did not even make a phone call to find out about what happened with regard to the consulate attack.

El-Sharef also confirmed to Anba Libya that the number of wounded in the consulate attack was 18 people including Libyan security personnel and American employees who were in the consulate at the time of the attack.

He said that 32 American officials were evacuated after the attack.

He added that Annsar Al-Sharia Brigade, the allegedly behind the attack, was illegitimate body that does not belong to any state institution.

El-Sharef also said up to the time of his interview by phone with Anba Libya he was aware of only four people were arrested in connection to the American consulate attack. But he added that investigations were ongoing.

Mohammed al-Magarief, President the Libyan National Congress, announced Sunday 50 arrests and blamed the attack on foreign extremists who he said entered the country from Mali and Algeria and pre-planned it with local "affiliates and sympathizers."

"It was planned, definitely, it was planned by foreigners, by people who entered the country a few months ago," Magarief, president of the Libyan National Congress, told US broadcaster CBS.

<http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=9179>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

• Hezbollah warns US over film as toll rises

Hezbollah supporters march during a rally in southern Beirut to denounce a film mocking Islam. (AFP)

Hezbollah warned of "very dangerous" global repercussions if an anti-Islam film is released in its entirety, as a fatwa was issued against the film's producer who has gone into hiding with his family.

Hezbollah's Hassan Nasrallah warning came Monday as the death toll from a week of violence sparked by the movie rose to 19.

An eruption of Muslim anger over a trailer of the American-made film that appeared on the Internet has spread across the world, taking hold Monday in Afghanistan, Indonesia, the West Bank, the Philippines and Yemen.

Tens of thousands of demonstrators poured into the streets of southern Beirut to denounce the film at Nasrallah's request, and the head of the powerful

Shiite Muslim group surprised supporters by making a rare public appearance.

Nasrallah, whose Lebanese movement is blacklisted in the United States as a terrorist group, has called for a week of protests across the country over the film, describing it as the "worst attack ever on Islam".

"America must understand... the US must understand that releasing the entire film will have dangerous, very dangerous, repercussions around the world," he told the rally.

The filmmaker Nakoula Basseley Nakoula, a 55-year-old Egyptian Copt and fraudster who was sentenced to 21 months in prison in the US in June 2010, has not been seen since Saturday when he was questioned by his US parole officer.

The risks now facing those involved in the production of the film "Innocence of Muslims", which depicts the Prophet Mohammed as a thuggish womanizer, were underlined when a Salafist cleric in Egypt called Monday for the deaths of all those involved in its making.

The film producer's family joined him in hiding, as more cast members of the film that outraged the Islamic world insisted they had been duped into making it.

Before dawn on Monday, officers from the Los Angeles County sheriff's department escorted four members of Nakoula's family out of their home to be driven in unmarked police vehicles to an undisclosed location to join him.

The terrorism monitoring service SITE Intelligence Group said Ahmad Fouad Ashoush issued his fatwa, or religious edict, against the cast and crew of "Innocence of Muslims" via jihadist Internet forums over the weekend.

"I issue a fatwa and call on the Muslim youth in America and Europe to do this duty, which is to kill the director, the producer and the actors and everyone who helped and promoted the film," the cleric said.

The controversial movie has sparked a week of furious protests outside US embassies and other American symbols in at least 20 countries.

In Pakistan, thousands of students burned US flags and chanted anti-American slogans in the northwestern city of Peshawar, where Osama bin Laden kept a home during the 1980s jihad against Soviet troops in adjacent Afghanistan.

In the nearby district of Upper Dir, a protester was killed and two others wounded in a shootout with police.

In Karachi, Pakistan's biggest city, another demonstrator died after being shot in the head during clashes with police near the US consulate on Sunday.

The US embassy in Islamabad was closed on Monday because of the risk of demonstrations and diplomats have been banned from all but essential travel throughout the country.

In neighboring Afghanistan, protests turned violent for the first time when more than 1,000 people rallied in Kabul, setting police cars and containers ablaze, police told AFP.

Between 40 and 50 policemen were "very slightly wounded" by stone-throwers and members of the crowd waving sticks, said

Kabul police chief Mohammad Ayoub Salangi.

Google has barred access to the video of the film in Egypt, India, Indonesia, Libya and Malaysia, while the government has restricted access to Google-owned YouTube in Afghanistan.

Later, Pakistan blocked access to YouTube after an order from Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf to do so, following the video-sharing website's failure to take down the anti-Islam film.



Attempts to access YouTube met with a message saying the website had been classed as containing "indecent material".

In Jakarta, protesters hurled petrol bombs and clashed with Indonesian police outside the US embassy shouting "America, America go to hell", as

demonstrations in the world's most populous Muslim nation turned violent.

The capital's police chief Untung Rajab said 11 policemen and a protester were injured and taken to hospital, and that four protesters were arrested.

Mass demonstrations after the main weekly Muslim prayers on Friday saw 11 protesters killed as police battled to defend US missions from mobs in Egypt, Lebanon, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen.

The unrest began in Cairo, where protesters stormed the US embassy late Tuesday, replacing the Stars and Strips with an Islamic flag.

Hours later it spread to the eastern Libyan city of Benghazi, where the US consulate came under sustained attack, killing four Americans, including ambassador Chris Stevens.

In Afghanistan, two US Marines died and six US fighter jets were destroyed when Taliban fighters on Friday stormed a giant airfield to avenge the film.

The United States has deployed counter-terror Marine units to Libya to protect its embassy in Tripoli and stationed two destroyers off the North African coast.

A Marine unit was also dispatched to protect the US embassy in Yemen, where police shot dead four protesters and wounded 34 others on Thursday as a mob breached its perimeter. There were more protests in Yemen on Monday.

The United States has evacuated all non-essential staff and family members from Sudan and Tunisia and warned US citizens against travel to the two countries.

Libya said it has arrested 50 suspects in connection with the consulate attack.

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

- **Geagea says Nasrallah took advantage of anti-Islam film issue**

Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea criticized on Monday evening the manner in which Hezbollah chief Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah voiced his stance on the anti-Islam film that has triggered deadly protests across the globe. However, the

Christian leader supported the demands of Nasrallah.

“I adopt all the demands requested by [Nasrallah, such as] preventing the broadcast [of the full movie], pursuing [those involved in it] and averting any new insult... but I am against the way [these demands were made],” Geagea told MTV television.

“Sayyed Hassan took advantage of the [issue] and turned it into a cause that concerns his party and a ‘bridge’ to reach his political [objectives].”

The film, which portrays the Prophet Mohammed and Islam in a negative light, sparked fury in Libya, where four Americans including the ambassador were killed on Tuesday in a mob attack on the US consulate in Benghazi, and has led to protests at US missions in Morocco, Sudan, Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen.

Nasrallah called on his supporters to hold protests against the movie and appeared in person on Monday to speak at a massive rally in Beirut’s southern suburbs of Dahiyeh.

Also, the LF leader said that he will not take part in the next national dialogue session.

“I support dialogue in general, but Hezbollah is not yet ready to sit down [and join] the dialogue table,” he said.

Geagea commented on the remarks of the commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards Brigadier General Mohammad Ali Jafari, who said that members of his elite special operations unit, the Quds Force, were present in Syria and Lebanon but only to provide "counsel."

“I was not surprised [with Jafari’s statements] as others were,” adding that Tehran might have been seeking to warn against attempts to meddle with its interests in Lebanon and Syria.

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

- **Jumblatt says Lebanese, Syrians don’t need “lessons” on resistance**

Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) leader MP Walid Jumblatt commented on the latest remarks made by the commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards about the presence

of the Quds Force in Lebanon and Syria, saying that Lebanese and Syrian people do not need lessons on resistance.

“...As if the Lebanese and Syrian people need lessons and pieces of advice on the [issue of] resistance and dignity,” Jumblatt said in his weekly editorial to be published by the PSP daily Al-Anbaa on Tuesday.

“The Lebanese people struggled to liberate [their land], get rid of the [Israeli] occupation, and [attain] freedom, sovereignty and independence before Iranian assistance arrived,” he added.

The PSP leader also said that the “Syrian people today are...struggling for freedom and dignity and do not need lessons; especially that their national history in opposing the occupation and liberating itself from the [French] mandate is very noble.”

The commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, Brigadier General Mohammad Ali Jafari, said Sunday that members of his elite special operations unit, the Quds Force, are present in Syria and Lebanon but only to provide "counsel."

Jafari told a rare press conference that "a number of Quds Force members are present in Syria and Lebanon... we provide [these countries] with counsel and advice, and transfer experience to them."

Furthermore, Jumblatt said that Jafari's remarks served as a threat against the Arab popular uprisings that rocked a number of countries in the Middle East.

“This kind of advice that serves as a danger [threatening] the unity of Arab and Islamic people also threatens the Arab revolutions and plunges us into a whirlpool; [thus serving the interests] of some Western [groups].”

“Such statements lead to further destruction and killing in Syria. But the Syrian people will triumph in the end.”

Jumblatt also commemorated Sunday's 30th anniversary of the launch of the Lebanese National Resistance Front (Jabhat al-Muqawama al-Wataniyya al-Lubnaniyya), saying that the LNRF laid the foundation for confronting the Israeli forces.

Turning to Pope Benedict XVI's three-day visit to Lebanon, the PSP leader said that it had attained "important objectives."

He added that the visit underlined the "pioneering role of Lebanon that has [always distinguished itself] with [its] diversity and pluralism."

Jumblatt also underscored the importance of curbing the sale of Christian-owned lands in Lebanon in order to preserve "diversity" in the country.

Pope Benedict XVI left Lebanon on Sunday evening after a three-day visit, during which he stressed the importance of peaceful coexistence between peoples of different religions in the Middle East.

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

- **Gemayel questions timing of Nasrallah's call for protests**

Kataeb Party leader Amin Gemayel on Monday condemned an anti-Islam film that sparked angry protests in Muslim communities, and also questioned the timing of the Hezbollah chief's Sunday speech.

"[It sounded] as if [Sayyed Hassan] Nasrallah's speech [aimed] to harm the reassurance the Lebanese people received through Pope [Benedict XVI's recent] visit [to Lebanon]," Gemayel said in a press conference.

On Sunday evening, Nasrallah called for protests across the country this week to denounce the anti-Islam movie.

"We understand how the Muslims feel because of this insult against the prophet and the Qur'an, but is this a way to defend them? One was killed in Tripoli [in North Lebanon] and others were injured [during a protest against the film]. Did this serve Islamic symbols?" the Kataeb leader asked.

He also asked Nasrallah if he can guarantee that the protests he called for would remain peaceful.

A wave of anti-American protests erupted across the globe last week over the US-made "Innocence of Muslims" film, which has offended many Muslims because of its insulting depiction of the Prophet Mohammed.

Gemayel also addressed Iranian Revolutionary Guards Commander General Mohammed Ali Jafari's Sunday statements that guards were present in Lebanon and Syria "for counsel."

"Iran has many experts in Lebanon but this is the first time they admit it. We want a clear answer from the Iranian authorities in order to take the appropriate measures."

He also condemned the series of abductions that has hit the country in recent weeks and said it was unacceptable.

"Abductions are unacceptable. Security forces are doing a good job [confronting them,] but we request they put an end to this phenomenon because it distorts Lebanon's image."

Regarding Pope Benedict XVI's visit to Lebanon, Gemayel said the visit "was historic par excellence" and commended the pope's message to the region.

"The pope's visit was a call for peace and dialogue – a [call] that all people are concerned about."

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

6. SYRIA

• PYD Accused of Abuse of Power in Kurdish Areas of Syria

ERBİL, Kurdistan Region -- Kurds in Syria say the armed groups of the Democratic Union Party (PYD) are arresting citizens and threatening them in the name of security.



There are also reports that the groups have extorted money from those who want to travel to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

The situation in the Kurdish areas of Syria is different from other areas of the country where battles between President Bashar al-Assad's army and opposition forces have been raging for 19 months.

The Syrian regime has been using tanks, cannons and warplanes to bombard the cities of Aleppo, Homs, Daraa, Damascus and Hama, but Kurdish cities are calm now that Syrian troops have withdrawn from the area.

Barav Hassan, a member of the Kurdish National Council (KNC) in Qamishli, believes that the Syrian army has withdrawn from the Kurdish regions to instigate a conflict among Kurds.

"But we did not fall for it and the Syrian regime is aware of its failure," he said.

Before getting involved in politics, Hassan was a businessman. "The situation in Syria and West Kurdistan left us no choice but to become political," he said.

Hassan's job in the KNC is to organize people in Qamishli and teach them how to defend themselves and their neighborhoods.

"The Syrian government was plotting to have the Kurds in Qamishli kill each other by creating power outages in the middle of the night," he said. "Some Kurds began to rob houses during the blackout. The families had no choice but to defend themselves and their property."

Hassan said that when they discovered the blackouts were a government plot to encourage theft, they formed security groups in each neighborhood.

"The Syrian regime discovered that their plot had failed and feared these small, organized, armed groups of locals might develop into bigger ones. Therefore, they stopped the power outages," he said.

Hassan has visited Iraqi Kurdistan in the past through smuggling routes. He said that anyone who now wants to visit must inform the PYD and write their name on a list. He criticized the PYD for violating two important provisions of the Erbil Agreement.

"According to the treaty of Erbil, the armed groups in Western Kurdistan must not appear among civilians while armed,



and must not arrest people and set them free in return for cash. But the PYD have been walking among the civilians with their weapons, arresting civilians and setting them free after extorting money from them," said Hassan.

"Around 1,000 members and senior officials from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) have entered Western Kurdistan and formed mobile groups," he said. "They are moving from one city to another. They have created military camps in Qamishli, between Kobane and Efrin in order to give military training to people to fight and protect security."

He added, "The KNC has neither the ability nor the permission to create such military camps. The PYD has armed groups that arrest people and then set them free and financially support their own cadres."

Muhammad Salih Muslim, leader of the PYD, said that the group's armed forces do not leave their bases if they don't have to, and that when they do, it is to protect the people.

"This situation will continue until a joint armed group is formed as required by the

Erbil Agreement," he said, adding that the Kurdish Supreme Committee, made up of both KNC and PYD members, has decided to form such a group.

"There was some misunderstanding regarding the issue of PYD armed groups, but from now on the security issues shall be controlled by the supreme committee," Muslim said.

He also denied claims that PYD armed groups arrested civilians and extorted money from them. "There are people who come from outside the Kurdish regions; they are Arabs. They are the ones who arrest Kurds and extort money from them and accuse the PYD of their crimes. They are lying," said Muslim.

Hassan, who has been in Iraqi Kurdistan for 10 days, arriving and returning via the smuggler's route, said that the Kurds in Syria are still living in constant fear.

"There are five security headquarters of the Assad regime still in Qamishli," he said. "The entire city is under the control of Syrian government security forces. The security forces of Assad are helping the

PYD to make them stronger than the other Kurdish groups in Western Kurdistan."

He also noted that the Syrian regime has handed over the control of all public facilities -- such as gas stations, factories and the border control between Syria and the Kurdistan Region -- to the PYD.

This has given the PYD a great source of revenue, especially from the border. They have made more than \$200 million from controlling the border with Iraqi Kurdistan, taking tax on a variety of goods that pass through the checkpoints.

Muslim did not deny controlling the borders and imposing taxes. "We take \$8 from each person crossing the borders and some extra money if they carry goods. The revenue from the border is very small and barely enough to cover the expenses of the border guards," he said.

He also denied that \$200 million profit had been made from this practice, stating, "This is not true."

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/news/syria/5214.html>

● **Iran Stresses Contact Group's Shared Views on Syria**

TEHRAN (FNA)- Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi said that members of the Contact Group on Syria share identical views about finding a solution to the current crisis in Syria.

"The common ground between us is more than our differences," Salehi said in a joint press conference with his Turkish and Egyptian counterparts after the quadrilateral ministerial meeting on Syria in Cairo last evening.

Salehi also stated that more talks were needed to agree on a plan which meets the demands of all sides.



The Iranian minister emphasized that there must be a Syrian solution and not one imposed from the outside.

During the press conference, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu called for a diplomatic solution to the Syrian crisis, adding that the group of four countries agreed on some common points.

"The United Nations is committed to find a solution and we are striving to reach another diplomatic initiative... Four countries from our region, Saudi Arabia and us three, we have decided to meet in order to hold consultations to reach a common perspective regarding the future of our region, specifically the future of Syria," he underscored.

Meantime, Egyptian Foreign Minister Mohammed Kamel Amr said it was too early to devise a specific plan and stated that the talks would continue in New York on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly session, which opens in less than ten days.

The three foreign ministers also held a meeting with UN-Arab League Special Envoy on Syria Lakhdar Brahimi and Arab League Secretary General Nabil al-Arabi.

The initiative for forming the quadrilateral contact group on Syria was put forward by Egypt's first post-revolution President Mohammad Mursi at a recent emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

Meantime, Salehi said originally, the Egyptian President had suggested a gathering of four countries, but Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad suggested that two further countries should be included in this group.

The proposal went under further discussions during a phone talk between the Iranian and Egyptian foreign ministers and was also a topic of discussions between senior Iranian and Egyptian officials on the sidelines of the 16th heads-of-state summit meeting of the NAM in Tehran late in August.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9106240748>

- **Iran foreign ministry denies military presence in Syria**

A portrait of Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is installed in front of

Lebanese (C) and Iranian flags on a flyover leading to Beirut International Airport.
AFP

Iran's foreign ministry on Monday denied remarks by the Revolutionary Guards commander-in-chief that members of the country's military forces were present in Syria and Lebanon, according to Arabic language Al Alam television.

In comments published by Iranian media on Sunday, Mohammad Ali Jafari said members of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) were providing non-military assistance in Syria and Lebanon, adding that Tehran might get involved militarily in Syria if its closest ally came under attack.

"Reports by some Arabic and Western media, citing ... Jafari were selective, false and with political aims," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Ramin Mehmanparast told Iran's Al Alam television.

"Iran has no military presence in the region, especially in Syria," Mehmanparast added.

It was not immediately possible to clarify the apparent contradiction between Mehmanparast and Jafari's position.

Jafari's comments had been the first official acknowledgement that Iran had military personnel on the ground in Syria, where an 18-month-old uprising against the Iranian-backed Syrian government has left tens of thousands dead.



Mehmanparast's denial hinted that Jafari's comments had caused problems for Iran, which was asked by Lebanese President Michel Suleiman earlier in the day to assure that its Revolutionary Guards had no presence in his country now.

The Lebanese Hezbollah, a powerful Shia Muslim militant and political group backed by Syria and Iran, was established with

IRGC help after Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon.

Western countries and Syrian opposition groups have long suspected Iran has troops in Syria. Iran has denied this.

Qods is an IRGC unit set up to export Iran's ideology. It has been accused of plotting attacks inside Iraq since the overthrow of Saddam Hussein by US-led forces in 2003.

Shia Iran voiced favor for Arab popular uprisings which removed autocratic leaders in Egypt, Libya and Yemen but has steadfastly supported Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, a member of the minority Alawite sect, an offshoot of Shia Islam.

Iranian leaders have accused the West of plotting with some Arab countries to overthrow the Syrian leadership and bolster the status of Tehran's arch-foe Israel in the region. US-aligned Gulf Arabs have supported the anti-Assad Syrian rebels.

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/iran-foreign-ministry-denies-military-presence-syria>

- **Saudi Arabia absent from Egypt-Iran-Turkey talks on Syria**

Saudi Arabia opted to stay away from a meeting of four regional powers on the Syrian crisis on Monday, adding to a sense that the forum is unlikely to advance the quest for peace.

The "contact group" of Egypt, Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia was assembled at Egypt's initiative. But Egyptian presidential spokesperson Yasser Ali and an Arab League official both said the Saudi foreign minister was staying away for health reasons, without saying why no one else was coming in his place.

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu also said Saudi Arabia, which attended a preparatory meeting last week, would be absent on Monday, but that it would join in future meetings. There was no immediate Saudi comment.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal underwent surgery last month, keeping him away from official business, but he has been represented at international meetings by Deputy Foreign Minister Prince Abdul Aziz bin Abdullah.

Diplomats and Western officials have been skeptical that the group can reach any tangible deal, particularly when it includes both Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shia Iran, who have tussled for influence in sectarian conflicts across the Middle East.

Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Egypt have all demanded that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad step down, while Iran is his main ally and accuses states including Saudi Arabia and Turkey of helping the rebels who are fighting to topple him.

Against that backdrop, some analysts said Egypt may itself not have expected much from the group and that Egyptian President Mohamed Morsy's main aim may have been to put Cairo back on the map as a regional power broker.

One ambassador to the Arab League said it was "not possible for regional states to succeed in solving this (Syrian) file in light of the differences between Russia and China on one side and America and the West on the other."

Deadlock

China and Russia have vetoed Western- and Arab-backed UN Security Council resolutions intended to raise pressure on Assad to halt the violence and engage in talks on a peaceful solution.

The U.N.-Arab League mediator on Syria, Lakhdar Brahimi, also visited Cairo on Monday after making his first trip to Damascus in his new post. Brahimi met privately with Arab League chief Nabil Elaraby in Elaraby's home in Cairo.

During the meeting Brahimi told Reuters that his visit to Damascus made him "form an inclusive image about the situation in Syria that confirmed that the situation is extremely dangerous and escalating."

Brahimi said he would next go to New York where he would report to the UN Security Council and some Arab ministers, who will be there to attend the UN General Assembly meeting that starts on Tuesday. He said he would then return to Syria, without specifying precisely when.

Davutoglu said Brahimi should have a different mandate from Kofi Annan, the former UN secretary general who quit as

Syria envoy complaining about the impasse at the Security Council.

"He must not allow Assad to buy more time with this type of mission," Davutoglu said. "Assad misused Kofi Annan's mission to increase pressure on people. Brahimi shouldn't give Assad this chance."

A diplomatic source told the daily Al-Ahram that Egypt would seek agreement at Monday's meeting on a call for an immediate halt to Syria's violence, a rejection of any foreign military intervention, and an endorsement of Syrian unity.

The quartet meeting also aimed to help bring together Syria's myriad opposition groups and sects to achieve its people's "aspirations for democracy, freedom and dignity," according to Al-Ahram.

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/saudi-arabia-absent-egypt-iran-turkey-talks-syria>

7. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

• Saudi FM's Absence in Cairo Meeting Raises Doubts about Faisal's Health

TEHRAN (FNA)- Sources announced on Monday that the Saudi top diplomat will not attend the quadrilateral ministerial meeting on Syria due to be held in Cairo tonight, raising doubts about Saud al-Faisal's health which is a focus of the media these days.

The sources told al-Ajel news agency that Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi and his Turkish and Egyptian counterparts Ahmet Davutoglu and Mohamed Kamel Amr will attend the Cairo meeting, but Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal will not be there and his Deputy Abdulaziz Bin Abdullah will represent Riyadh in the quadrilateral meeting.

The initiative for forming the quadrilateral contact group on Syria was put forward by Egypt's first post-revolution President Mohammad Mursi at a recent emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

The report came after media speculations said the Saudi top diplomat might have died of a chronic disease.

But the Saudi Royal Court denied the reports and issued a statement, saying, "Prince Saud Al-Faisal, the Foreign Minister, suffered a minor blockage in the intestines because of adhesions due to a previous surgery. He underwent a minor surgery to break the adhesions. The surgery was successful. He is in stable condition, thanks to Almighty Allah."

Also the Saudi foreign ministry announced on September 11 that Faisal is convalescing in Los Angeles.

"He is in good health and he is right now in Los Angeles where he will spend some weeks to recover before returning home," the foreign ministry said, denying reports about his death.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9106240714>

- **Bahraini police face trial over torturing medics**

Bahrain's public prosecution has charged seven police officers over the torture and

maltreatment of Shiite medics detained in the aftermath of nationwide protests last year, authorities said on Monday.

The two defendants facing the "most serious" charges have been referred to the High Criminal Court over the "use of torture and threats against six medic detainees, for the purpose of forcing a confession," said a government statement.

It said all coerced confessions were dismissed during the widely-criticized trial of the medics.

The rest of the officers would appear in the Lower Criminal Court, it said.

The seven officers are lieutenants at the Interior Ministry. Ten other officers accused of mistreatment were being questioned, it said.

The hearing is scheduled for October 1.

Bahrain's appeals court acquitted in June nine medics and cut the jail terms of nine others on Thursday for their role in anti-regime protests last year. Two others remain at large.

The 20 doctors and nurses worked at Manama's Salmaniya Medical complex, stormed by security forces after a crackdown on a protest encampment at the capital's nearby Pearl Square in March 2011.

Nine of the medics were found not guilty, five were to be freed for time served, while four that were convicted still had their right for appeal, authorities said at the time.

Among the four are consultant orthopedic surgeon Ali Alekri, whose initial 15-year jail term was cut to five years and Ibrahim al-Damstani, the Bahraini Nursing Society secretary general, sentenced to three years.

The other two are doctors Ghassan Daif and Saeed al-Samaheji, who were both sentenced to one year in prison.

The medics had faced various charges, the most serious of which was occupying the vital medical center and possessing weapons while denying Sunni Muslims access to the hospital as Shiite demonstrators camped in the car park.

They were handed sentences of between five and 15 years by a semi-military tribunal last September but were retried in civil court after the public prosecutor dismissed confessions allegedly extracted under torture.

The doctors had also been accused of spreading false information, particularly concerning the condition of wounded protesters, illegal acquisition of medicines and medical facilities and of participation in demonstrations.

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

8. AFGHANISTAN - PAKISTAN

ISAF Sends Team To Investigate Afghan Casualties In Laghman

September 17, 2012

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said in a statement that it was sending a team to Afghanistan's Laghman Province to investigate civilian casualties as a result of a NATO air strike.

NATO confirmed an air strike on September 16 "on a large group of armed individuals showing hostile intent," according to the ISAF statement.

ISAF said the air strike killed several insurgents but also caused "the unintentional deaths of a number of Afghan civilians."

Local Afghan officials said eight women gathering wood were killed in the NATO attack, near the village of Alingar.

The ISAF statement said coalition forces took civilian casualties "seriously" and promised a complete assessment of the incident.

ISAF offered its "sincerest regret to the families" of civilian victims of the strike.

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

- **Afghans hold rally against US-made anti-Islam film**

Press TV

September 17, 2012

More than 1,000 Afghan protesters have taken to the streets of the capital Kabul to

protest against a blasphemous anti-Islam film as anti-US demonstrations spread across the Muslim world and Europe.

The angry protesters shouted "Death to America" during the rally and set fire to cars, including two police cars on Jalalabad Road, east of the capital on Monday.

Meanwhile, shootings were reported at the demonstration. The police said no one had been injured.

Similar rallies were held on Sunday in Kabul, mainly by Kabul University students, who cancelled classes and poured into the streets to condemn the sacrilegious film.

Over the past days, thousands of protesters have held similar demonstrations in Afghanistan to voice their anger over the insulting film.

Demonstrations over the movie have been held across the Muslim world, with the protesters in some countries marching on the US embassies and torching the US flags.

In Libya, angry protesters attacked the US consulate in the eastern city of Benghazi on Tuesday and set fire to the consulate building, while gunmen and security forces clashed.

The violence led to the killing of the US Ambassador Chris Stevens, two former Navy SEALs and a State Department worker.

Meanwhile, White House Press Secretary Jay Carney has said that the Obama administration will not apologize for the US-made video.

The USD five-million movie, called Innocence of Muslims, was reportedly financed by more than 100 Zionist Jews.

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

- **Afghan villagers take up arms to drive out the Taliban**

by Farid Behbud, Chen Xin

QADIS, Afghanistan, Sept. 17 (Xinhua) -- The uprising of villagers against the harsh policies of the Taliban, which started four months ago in Ghazni province, some 125 km south of Kabul, has spread to the

western province of Badghis province and the trend is gaining momentum.

"Up to 1,000 people are taking up arms at the present time and the number will swell as we intensify our efforts to drive out the Taliban militants from Jawand and Qadis districts in Badghis province," Mullah Abdul Hakim, who leads the armed villagers, told Xinhua over the weekend.

Abdul said that their group would support the police and the army in driving out the Taliban.

In June this year, a group of six students in Andar district of Ghazni province took up arms against Taliban fighters after their school was closed by the Taliban insurgents operating in the area.

Supported by villagers, the student uprising swelled to about 100 forcing the Taliban militants to retreat from several villages within weeks and allowing the school to reopen.

The leader of the uprising in Ghazni province, Lutfullah Kamran, a clean-shaven engineer, vowed to drive all the

Taliban insurgents from the whole province.

Kamram, reportedly a former Taliban fighter, became fed up with the fundamentalist group's harsh policies, particularly its order to close all schools, clinics, and bazaars. He said that what the Taliban is doing would eventually lead to extreme poverty of the people in Andar district.

Similar village uprisings against the Taliban were also reported in the eastern Paktia, Nuristan, Nangarhar and western Ghor province as well as in several other provinces.

"We are fed up with the Taliban-imposed totalitarian reign and the elders have decided to join the uprising that our brothers in Ghazni had launched," one villager said.

A statement released by the Paktia provincial administration on Sept. 10 has confirmed local uprising against Taliban militants in Ayub Zazai district.

"The locals in Ayub Zazai district stood against Taliban militants on Monday

morning (Sept. 10) and kicked them out from several villages. The aim of the revolt was to drive out the militants, including foreign fighters, who are killing innocent civilians and targeting local elders, teachers, religious people," the statement of the Paktia provincial administration said.

According to the statement, the villagers, some of them armed only with sticks, succeeded in evicting the Taliban militants from several villages even without the support of government forces.

The uprising, according to the statement, began when the villagers found that Taliban fighters shot and killed a local religious figure named Zahurruddin, a teacher Abdul Raziq, and two staff members of a school in the area.

"It is Taliban's cruelty, injustice and tyranny that caused us to take up arms; otherwise, we want peace and stability," the statement added.

According to the statement, the Talibans stop vehicles and buses and take people hostage for ransom. They also extort money and they force people to pay

'Zakat' or charity in crop harvesting time and torture people who do not comply with their edict.

"We do not want fighting, we do not want killing, we want reconstruction, we want our government to support so that we can work in our farms," said Mohammad Akbar, a resident who was holding an AK-47.

Meanwhile, a total of 25 people were killed and 65 others were injured when a bomb hurled by Taliban insurgents hit a funeral ceremony in Dur Baba district of eastern Nangarhar province on Sept. 4.

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

those of ORSAM and their inclusion does not imply factual accuracy.

Bu bülten **ORSAM Ortadoğu Uzman Yardımcıları Nebahat Tanrıverdi O ve Selen Tonkuş tarafından hazırlanmaktadır. Bülten Ortadoğu ülkelerinin yerel haber kaynaklarından derlenmektedir. Belirtilen görüşler bölge ülkelerinin haber kaynaklarına ve ismi geçen yazarlara ait olup ORSAM'ın görüşünü yansıtmamaktadır.*

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*