



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

Barıő Süreci

Ethnic and Secterian Groups

Etnik ve Mezhepsel Gruplar

Non State Actors

Devlet-dıő Aktörler

Relations with the West

Batı'yla İliőkiler



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

28 SEPTEMBER 2012

NO: 1465

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. IRAQ..... | 3 |
| • A Christian MP denounces granting Deputy Commissioner of Electoral Commission for a Turkman candidate | 3 |
| • SL : Iraqiya Slate and Kurdistan Alliance hampered approval of the law on infrastructure by withdrawing from today's session of Parliament..... | 3 |
| • Reforms require long term of execution, says MP | 3 |
| • BOC arrest dangerous terrorist | 4 |
| • Kurds rate reduces within Iraqi Army..... | 4 |
| • Election Commission Chairman elected | 5 |
| • Al-Nujaifi receives invitation to attend Turkey's AKP festivity | 5 |
| • VP holds talks with US President..... | 5 |
| • Kurdistan Alliance show reservation on the infrastructure law..... | 6 |
| • Economic Advisor Estimates Baghdad Owes the KRG Trillions | 7 |
| • PUK Wants Strategic Agreement to Correct Balance of Power | 8 |
| 2. IRAN | 11 |
| • Driving Factors behind Canada's Break with Iran..... | 11 |
| • US Police Give Chance to Terrorists to Attack Iranian Diplomats in New York..... | 17 |
| • Three Kidnapped Iranian Nationals Freed in Syria after 4 Months..... | 19 |
| • Russia warns against isolating Iran over nuclear issue..... | 20 |
| • Iran's president leaves New York for Tehran | 21 |
| • Killing of Press TV reporter, premeditated attack: Analyst | 22 |
| • Islam pivotal to Iraq national unity: Iran parl. speaker | 23 |
| • Iran says will 'retaliate' if attacked, in response to Israel | 24 |
| 3. ISRAEL - PALESTINE | 26 |
| • Published yesterday (updated) | 26 |
| • Political leaders react to Abbas speech at UN..... | 28 |
| • Clan clashes leave man dead, 30 families homeless | 30 |
| • Settlers Pump Waste Water into Palestinian Land | 31 |
| • Ashton Reaffirms EU's Commitment to Creation of Independent Palestine | 32 |
| • C'tee head: Government must save 'Ma'ariv,' media | 33 |
| • Mofaz: PM can't color Israel less isolated | 34 |
| • Knesset security probes Marzel online threat to Tibi | 36 |
| 4. AFRICA and EGYPT | 37 |
| • Egypt reassures Israel: No need to amend peace treaty with Israel..... | 37 |
| • Sudan and its South: Partial deal after four days of marathon negotiations..... | 38 |
| • Clinton suggests Qaeda link in attack on US mission in Libya..... | 40 |
| • Khartoum and Juba sign deals to restart oil, boost trade, secure borders | 42 |
| 5. JORDAN and LEBANON..... | 43 |
| • Charbel: Hariri played major role in Shiite pilgrims' release..... | 43 |



| | |
|--|-----------|
| • Gemayel: Church must bless March 14 electoral draft law | 44 |
| • Suleiman wants Lebanese expatriates to participate in 2013 elections | 45 |
| 6. SYRIA..... | 46 |
| • Rebels in Aleppo offensive as UN warns on refugees | 46 |
| • Syria rebels announce decisive attack in Aleppo | 49 |
| • Second Islamist group claims Damascus attack | 49 |
| • Putin warns against 'wide-scale ethnic cleansing' in Syria..... | 50 |
| • Nations, activists seeking Assad's exit to meet at 'Friends of Syria' | 52 |
| • Assad's regime at its 'worst stage': Syria's defected PM Hijab..... | 55 |
| 7. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA..... | 57 |
| • Philippine maids to get minimum wage in Saudi | 57 |
| • How realistic is Arab military intervention in Syria | 58 |
| • Bahrain policeman sentenced to 7 years for killing protester | 61 |
| • Nigeria suspends pilgrimage flights to Saudi..... | 62 |
| 8. AFGHANISTAN - PAKISTAN | 63 |
| • Afghan minister calls for preservation of historical, cultural heritage..... | 63 |
| • Quadrilateral summit in Pakistan postponed..... | 66 |
| • 16 schoolgirls poisoned in Afghan capital | 66 |
| • U.S. Army to stand down for a day for suicide prevention | 67 |

1. IRAQ

- **A Christian MP denounces granting Deputy Commissioner of Electoral Commission for a Turkman candidate**

Baghdad / NINA /-- MP, Luis Caro for Chaldean Assyrian People Parliamentary Slate denounced granting Commissionaire position for the High Electoral Commission to a Turkmen MP in voting that conducted at today's session of the Parliament .

He said in a statement to NINA : "The candidate that earlier nominated by the Christian component could not realize progress on the Turkmen candidate, because he was named by Parliament Speaker , he said ."

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

- **SL : Iraqiya Slate and Kurdistan Alliance hampered approval of the law on infrastructure by withdrawing from today's session of Parliament.**

Baghdad / NINA /--State of Law coalition announced "that Iraqiya Slate and Kurdistan Alliance prevented approving the law on infrastructure By their

withdrawal from the parliament's session the took place earlier today .

In a statement the head of the SL parliamentary bloc MP, Khalid al-Attayah said at a press conference that "the delays practiced by some political blocs on approving the law intended to hamper passing the law in order to thwart the work of the government.

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

- **Reforms require long term of execution, says MP**

Baghdad (AIN) –The Iraqiya Slate’s MP, Yasin al-Mutleg, assured that “The Political Reforms Document will require long term of gradual execution, which is against the expectations of the politicians to settle the crisis.”

In a statement to the All Iraq News Agency, he said “Politicians have intentions to settle the crisis through real serious coordination among the blocs which will reach settlement soon,” noting that “This settlement demand to be set on a real solution paper to be presented to the People.”

Mutleg added "The political crisis started a long time ago and helped the blocs to relief their burdens and concerns in order to reach a close settlement to benefit all Iraqis."

http://www.alliraqnews.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=19508:reforms-require-long-term-of-execution-says-mp-&catid=41:2011-11-19-15-21-19

- **BOC arrest dangerous terrorist**

Baghdad (AIN) –The official spokesperson of Baghdad Operations Command, Dhiya al-Wakeal, announced arresting of the terrorist nicknamed (the walker killer).

Wakeal reported in statement received by AIN that "The security forces managed to arrest the dangerous terrorist after chasing him for a long time and depending on the intelligence efforts."

The statement added "The detainee admitted his responsibility for committing more than (30) assassination operations and bombings."

http://www.alliraqnews.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=19478:breaking-news-boc-arrest-of-dangerous-terrorist&catid=41:2011-11-19-15-21-19

- **Kurds rate reduces within Iraqi Army**

Erbil (AIN) –The Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs in Kurdistan Regional Government revealed that "The rate of Kurdish elements within the Federal Iraqi Army forces reduced to 4% during 2012."

The Secretary General of the Ministry and the Official spokesperson of the General Command of the Kurdistan Regional Protection Forces, Jabber Yawer, reported in statement received by AIN on Thursday that "The statistics indicate that the Kurdish rate within the Iraqi Army was 8% in 2007 and this rate has reduced to 4% during this year," noting that "This rate has reduced because the Kurds could not participate in the Iraqi Army for many reasons," without identifying these reasons.

The statement added that "The Kurdistan Regional Government can not force the

Kurd citizens to serve in the military duty as the former regime."

Yawer pointed out that "Two military units were decided to be formed in 2007 but the units were not started yet," noting that "When these units will be formed about 30,000 soldiers will be recruited within the Iraqi Army."

http://www.alliraqnews.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=19503:peshmerga-revealed-of-reduction-of-kurdish-within-iraqi-army-ranks&catid=42:2011-11-19-15-21-51

- **Election Commission Chairman elected**

BAGHDAD / Aswat al-Iraq: The Election Commission announced Mr Sarbast Mustapha Rasheed as it is chairman, according to a statement released today.

The post for deputy chairman was also elected, in addition to other administrative units.

No other details were given.

http://en.aswataliraq.info/%28S%28f2bev srogqa0yajtbr103c55%29%29/Default1.aspx?page=article_page&id=150678&l=1

- **Al-Nujaifi receives invitation to attend Turkey's AKP festivity**

BAGHDAD / Aswat al-Iraq: Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament, Osama al-Nujaifi, received an invitation from Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan to attend the Justice and Development Party festivity on its anniversary, a statement from the party said.

"The speaker received an invitation from Erdogan to attend the official celebration of the ruling Justice and Development Party," the statement said.

"Al-Nujaifi may accept the invitation and attend the celebration," it added.

http://en.aswataliraq.info/%28S%28f2bev srogqa0yajtbr103c55%29%29/Default1.aspx?page=article_page&id=150675&l=1

- **VP holds talks with US President**

BAGHDAD / Aswat al-Iraq: Iraqi Vice President Khudier al-Khuzai held on Tuesday talks with US President Barack

Obama on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meeting.

"The meeting tackled the latest developments in the world and ways of boosting bilateral relations," according to a statement released from al-Khuzai's office.

"The vice president met also with the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for Iraq, Martin Kobler, with whom he discussed ways to bring Iraq out of the UN Chapter VII," it added.

He also held a meeting with Tunisian Foreign Minister Rafik Abdessalem, who expressed interest in learning from the Iraqi democratic experience.

http://en.aswataliraq.info/%28S%28f2bev srogqa0yajtbr103c55%29%29/Default1.aspx?page=article_page&id=150674&l=1

- **Kurdistan Alliance show reservation on the infrastructure law**

Shafaq News / Kurdistan alliance showed on Thursday, its reservation on infrastructure law before voting on it at today's meeting of the parliament.

A parliamentary source said in an interview with "Shafaq News" that "Kurdistan Alliance expressed its reservation on the Law of the infrastructure to be discussed comprehensively and take its bloc's observations on the draft law."

The parliament voted on Thursday to postpone the legislation of the general amnesty and the infrastructure law to further notice.

The amnesty law is of the most controversial laws, as State of law refuses to pass it enacted in its current formula, while al-Iraqiya list confirm speeding up voting on it and releasing the detainees.



The parliament has decided on the 16 of September to postpone the approval of the draft law of the infrastructure to further notice, at the request of the heads of the relevant committees to make a

detailed study, as well as what it can achieve of an economic feasibility.

The parliament had hosted Prime Minister, Nuri al-Maliki on Saturday, at the request of the latter to discuss the infrastructure law, as al-Maliki has reviewed in front of the parliament what can be achieved by approving this private law, specially the paragraph of payment on credit in improving the service reality in the country.

Iraq suffers from dilapidated infrastructure in all sectors as a result of long years of siege and war during the last two decades of the last century.

Despite the passage of nine years on the overthrow of the former Iraqi regime, Iraqi governments have not been able to provide basic public services to the citizens, in which a lot of people are often protesting on its lack.

<http://www.shafaaq.com/en/news/3647-kurdistan-alliance-show-reservation-on-the-infrastructure-law-.html>

- **Economic Advisor Estimates Baghdad Owes the KRG Trillions**

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region – Based on a recent agreement between Baghdad and Erbil, the deferral government has agreed to pay governance costs to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).

KRG officials say this payment by Baghdad is long overdue and that the deferral government owes the Kurdistan Region trillions of Iraqi dinars.

Although the central government is required to pay the KRG's share of sovereign expenses that include 12 sectors, it paid only the expenses of four: food, medicine, census and pilgrimage.

Abdulkhaliq Rafiq, an economic advisor for the KRG Ministry of Finance, said, "From 2005 to 2012, the share of the Kurdistan Region's governance budget was over 11 trillion dinars."

He added, "Baghdad does not pay the KRG in cash when it comes to food and medicine. Instead, they buy medicine and food and give Kurdistan its share."

In 2012, 8.95 trillion dinars was allocated for governance expenses. According to the general Iraqi budget law, 17 percent of

that amount – or 1.52 trillion dinars -- must be given to the Kurdistan Region.

Rafiq told Rudaw that over the past two years, Baghdad has paid some governance expenses such as purchasing electricity from abroad, pilgrimage and for Kurdistan's census. "But it did not pay in the previous years and the amount due is big," he said.

On Sept. 13, the KRG agreed to begin exporting oil to the international market again, and Baghdad agreed to pay the expenses of companies involved in this process. This agreement also included a promise from Baghdad to pay the governance expenses that are owed.

Ali Hassan Balo, an advisor to the KRG Ministry of Natural Resources, said, "Baghdad agreed to pay the costs of fuel purchases and consumption at electricity stations in the Kurdistan Region."

According to the data obtained by Rudaw, the money owed by Baghdad to the Kurdistan Region from the governance budget from 2005 to 2012 is equal to 2.68 trillion dinars. And, for the costs of

electricity stations and fuel, Baghdad must pay 1.68 trillion dinars.

"We demand our share of this budget every year, but Baghdad refuses to pay," Rafiq said. "In addition, within the same time period, Baghdad has failed to pay the budget of the Peshmerga forces which is equal to 6.13 trillion dinars."

He also mentioned the Kurdistan Region's share in Iraq's general budget from the past two years, saying, "In the complementary budget of 2011, Kurdistan's share was 772.9 billion dinars which Baghdad has not paid. In 2010, it was 217 billion dinars which Baghdad has not paid."

According to Rafiq, the total amount owed by Baghdad to the KRG from 2005 until the current year is 9.8 trillion dinars.

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurds/5256.html>

- **PUK Wants Strategic Agreement to Correct Balance of Power**

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region -- Five years ago, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK),

signed a strategic agreement. The PUK is now demanding the reevaluation of two provisions in this agreement. The KDP says it is ready to revise all the provisions of the agreement if deemed necessary.

A statement recently released by the PUK read: “The strategic agreement is still fundamental and is the achievement of bilateral relations between the PUK and KDP. It still preserves its fateful importance, but it also needs reevaluation. Whenever a reevaluation is needed, we should discuss it with our ally (KDP) in a peaceful manner.”

Halo Penjweni, a PUK leadership member, said the need to reevaluate was created by politics and the rapid developments in Iraq, Kurdistan and the region.

“When an agreement is signed, it does not mean that both sides only get benefits; they also get some disadvantages,” he added. “Both sides might think that they have more disadvantages than the other. We need to reevaluate the agreement in a way that answers our contemporary needs.”

According to Penjweni, the strategic agreement states that the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) rules areas from Zakho to Garmiyan. The PUK might think it is at a disadvantage in the areas controlled by the KDP. “Even in Mosul, the PUK does not have any district administrators or mayors and it doesn’t have any administrative posts in Duhok either,” he said.

“The same is true for the KDP in Sulaimani and Garmiyan,” he added. “For this reason, the PUK deems it necessary to achieve balance in this partnership. Political decisions must be taken jointly and rights and duties must be equal.”

When Penjweni was asked whether the KDP has made any unilateral decisions without informing the PUK, he said, “The answer to this question is clear and obvious. We all know it.”

Jaafar Ibrahim, a KDP spokesperson, has previously talked about the balance between the PUK and KDP and said that, while his party supports the agreement, it is not possible to run the district administrations in a 50-50 manner.

Fareed Assasard, a leadership member of the PUK, talked about the points of the strategic agreement his party wants revised. “In the strategic agreement, the PUK and KDP are to run in the elections as one bloc. This point needs to be reevaluated,” he said. “Also, the PUK has some proposals to broaden the agreement.”



Assasard said that there are two important points in the agreement the PUK wants focus on in the talks with the KDP. “First, making political decisions in a bilateral manner and preventing unilateral decisions for both sides. Second, the decentralization of power in areas below the ministries has caused some problems and the PUK believes there is an imbalance in that respect,” he said.

It has been said that the PUK was previously against decentralization and the redistribution of powers because it

does not have the majority in the provincial council of Sulaimani and might lose many important posts to the Change Movement (Gorran).

“The KRG is a coalition government between the PUK and KDP. Some of the powers have been given to other parties. But, when it comes to the general administrators, mayors, governors and district administrators, these posts are tied to amending the election laws in the provinces,” said Penjweni.

Regarding whether the PUK will accept increasing the authorities of the provincial councils, even if it’s not in its interests in Sulaimani, Penjweni said, “We do not know yet how these laws will be amended. But, if this happened, then PUK representatives in the provincial councils of Erbil and Duhok, who have no power now, would gain more power.”

The provincial council of Sulaimani consists of 42 members. Five of them are of KDP, five are from the Kurdistan Islamic Union (KIU), 21 from Gorran and the remaining eight are PUK.

Penjweni said, “If the provincial council of Sulaimani creates problems for the PUK, then problems would be created for the KDP in Erbil and Duhok as well. In the provincial councils of Erbil and Duhok, there are representatives of the KIU, Kurdistan Islamic League (Komal), PUK, Gorran and other groups. Therefore, we will not have problems decentralizing powers if all is done legally.”

Jutiyar Adil, head of the Sarinj Center for research, said, “The strategic agreement does not reflect the common perspectives of the PUK and KDP. Therefore, instead of this agreement, we need a constitution for the Kurdistan Region where the rules of running this country are all covered.”

“The intention of the PUK might be to seek the post of the Kurdistan Region presidency, and giving the KDP a post in the Iraqi government,” said Adil.

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurds/5254.html>

2. IRAN

- **Driving Factors behind Canada's Break with Iran**

TEHRAN (FNA)- On Friday, September 7, 2012, Canadian government at the order of Prime Minister Stephen Harper shut down the Iranian Embassy in Toronto declaring the Iranian diplomats in Toronto "persona non-grata" and giving the staff there only five days to leave the country, while at the same time pulling its ambassador and embassy staff out of Tehran, severing all diplomatic relations with the Islamic Republic.

The Foreign Minister of Canada John Baird at the Asia-Pacific Meeting in Vladivostok made the announcement in a name-calling tirade charging Iran with being a "state sponsor of terrorism", being "the most significant threat to global peace and security in the world today," and mimicking Israeli myths about Iran's "racist anti-Semitic rhetoric and incitement to genocide". When two days later the American Iranian Friendship Committee (AIFC) circulated a petition on the internet protesting the belligerent act of the Canadian government's unilateral decision, some respondents were dismayed by the flagrant act of the Harper government against a nation that has not attacked Canada, has not carried out any hostile actions, and has not been any

threat to the international community in the last 200+ years.

Some people expressed surprise at Canada's actions, thinking that Canada's national health care and social welfare programs were reflective of a more moderate, less imperialistic country. What are the true causes of the Canadian government's behavior?

By glancing over the history of the economic and political structures of the West we show why Canada's actions have a definite logic, and why Prime Minister Harper took such a drastic measure. The following analysis does not provide Canada with moral justification for its libelous words and actions but tends to prove the polarization of the world into two hostile camps: a small minority of the wealthiest nations pitted against the great majority of the developing countries.

TEHRAN'S SUCCESS AT NAM SUMMIT

The Canadian government resorting to severing diplomatic relations, a pathetic act, is for several reasons:

1) Iran is becoming a regional power in the Middle East - overshadowing Israel and Saudi Arabia, two clients of the domineering powers in that region. The shift in the balance of forces has been felt by the West in central Asia, with the expansion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to include Iran in an observer status since 2005. This has increased Iran's cooperation with Russia, China, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and as a result of these developments the NATO masters have been driven to extremes.

2) Iran's success in convening the 16th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Tehran the last week of August was almost too much to bear for Tel Aviv, and was one of the driving factors in Canada's actions against Iran. The success of NAM, with 120 countries in attendance, over 30 heads of state and 90 foreign ministers, representing two-thirds of United Nations member states was a brilliant proof and reflection that Iran is a respectable member of the international community and is NOT isolated as Washington, Tel Aviv and Ottawa would like to claim. According to Mazda Majidi,

writing in Liberation Newspaper of the Party for Socialism and Liberation on September 7, 2012, "Hosting an international summit of this magnitude has enabled Iran to counter the claims of the United States, its imperialist allies and Israel that Iran is internationally isolated...the Summit's final communiqué included a unanimous adopted resolution supporting Iran's right to a nuclear program."

3) Doubtlessly, the support of NAM members was a strong rebuff to all those states who have tried to deny Iran's right to uranium enrichment and development of an independent economy and have imposed sanctions on the country for more than three decades. Such a defeat could not be tolerated by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, nor his neo-conservative ally Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

4) Tehran has the chairmanship of NAM for the next three years, and the members of NAM have begun planning how to strengthen the role of NAM in world affairs and begin to democratize the United Nations.

DEMISE OF A UNIPOLAR WORLD

By all and every indications, short of engaging in a full scale continental and nuclear arms war which may trigger the involvement of Russia, China, India, Israel and Pakistan, a handful of NATO top dogs - the US, Britain, France, Germany, Canada, and their loud-mouth puppet Israel - have been trying every conceivable strategy, tactic, fantastic scenarios and sophisticated tools of war propaganda to intimidate or harm the countries and nations who do not dance to the tune of a unipolar world. A universe in which a small number of highly industrialized countries of the West in the grips of the neo-conservative and fundamentalist Christian-Zionist ideologies headed by the US would be in control of nuclear energy, weapons of mass destruction (WMD's), the choke points of the world's waterways, and be in command of the most vital raw materials and their related prices, particularly the sources of energy, oil and gas, and the materials needed for the production of advanced technological instruments. The pre-requisite of this universe is that the US and its junior partners are also in command of the world's arms manufacturing-marketing

and their means of transportation in the world of finance capital, for example, International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), and the European Central Bank (ECB). The aforementioned overwhelming domination in the material world necessitates its corollary in the world of politics, international relations, the offices and structure of the United Nations, the sphere of diplomatic and ambassadorial interrelations.

In pursuit of preserving the world monopoly control by a few over the world's affairs and its resources, Canada as one of the main beneficiaries of the unipolar world, in severing its relationship with Iran, used its diplomatic tool with the aim of isolating Iran and tilting the world balance of forces back toward the West, which for more than a decade has been shifting in favor of China, Russia, Iran and the Arab masses.

In the first decade of the twenty-first century (the beginning of the post US era), Russia which after its downfall in 1989 was excluded by NATO from the economic and geopolitical affairs of the Middle East and the Arab world in general, now is benefitting from the unsuccessful US-

NATO interventionist voluntarism in Iraq and Afghanistan that coincided with great losses of life (fatalities of 4500 in Iraq, and over 2000 in Afghanistan) and a great amount of treasures, and once again it is finding a space on the side of the peoples of Iran and Syria, having prevented the West from duplicating their criminal experience in Libya in the new theatre of war in Syria.

The longevity of US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the inability of NATO, headed by the United States, to bring the people of those countries to their knees - accepting the supremacy of the United States and Israel - the Arab nations realized the vulnerability of the US and their own capabilities in challenging the world's status quo. The attacks currently taking place on US embassies and today's uprisings in Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and ten other countries are the result of the US NATO policies of total domination.

The struggle of the Arab masses could be heard in their slogans against US imperialism and their attacks on the symbol of hatred, i.e., US embassies as military fortresses in the midst of the Arab cities. In the process of the Arab

Awakening, the Arab masses have realized that rulers such as Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and Ali Abdullah Saleh of Yemen were the puppets of US-UK-France and their financial backers.

SYRIAN CONFLICT

For more than a year and a half the US, France, Britain, Canada, using the UN and the Security Council, have been attacking the legitimacy of the Syrian government, planning to use NATO and a "No Fly Zone" similar to the intervention in Libya, but were blocked by Russia and China's vetoes against any overt military action. Fortunately, not being able to use the UN Chapter VII to intervene, the West has been funding and aiding foreign mercenaries, operating as part of the opposition. The US has made no secret that the Obama Administration has been providing communications technology, while US, Britain, and the European big powers are financing the arms and ammunition, and some reports say that Britain and Turkey, along with the Arab Sheikdoms allied with the US provide direct training and military intelligence.

The United States and Canada have placed unilateral sanctions on Syria and hoped to intensify sanctions on a broader scale by using UN resolutions. However, that path has been consistently blocked by the Russian and Chinese, who are advocating resolution to the Syrian conflict through diplomacy and dialogue between the Syrian government and the opposition. Canada openly stated that the cutting of relations with Iran was directly connected to Iran's support for Syria, and their act no doubt was intended to use the sanctions as another tool of war.

The Syrian opposition is very much similar to the opposition in Libya - both promoted, funded, trained and backed-up by the financial and military arsenals and treasury of the major imperialist countries. This trend of financing NATO and its wars of intervention has been continuing while unemployment, poverty and homelessness are on the rise in all the industrialized countries. To divert the attention of their own people from the causes of their misery and the lowering of their standard of living, the White House, State Department and doubtlessly Tel Aviv and Ottawa are pointing their fingers at Iran, Syria, Yemen, North Korea and many

other countries in a long list too many to mention here.

Listen to the daily propaganda of CNN, MSNBC, ABC, Fox News; you will receive the pungent smell of their hatred toward the people of those countries who resist foreign domination, but every time there is a resistance to the onslaught of the Western countries, by the masses of people, the US State Department automatically attributes that to the specter of "Al Qaeda", who is no one else except the shadowy forces armed and financed by the US and old colonial powers.

It was a disappointment to the US when they realized that a great majority of the people of Syria saw into the plot of Washington, London and Paris: the partition of their country. The security and armed forces of Syria, with all the casualties they've endured still steadfastly resisted and are driving the enemies of that country into the border and arms of Turkey, which in collaboration with the reactionary Arab regimes, was turning into a springboard of NATO'S design.

Support by the Islamic Republic of Iran for Syria was like a dagger coming down on the Turkish-NATO spine. Canada kept a low profile in the attacks against Libya, but in the case of Syria, has openly demonstrated its wrath by severing its diplomatic relations with Iran. Canada severed relations with Syria when it closed its embassy in Damascus last March (2012). By doing that, Canada, which provided the US with foot-soldiers in US wars in Korea, Vietnam, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq, reveals its servile character.

Aside from the full engagement of the Canadian military forces in the first and second world wars, Canada has been involved in practically every imperialist war against every struggle for liberation. During the US war on Korea, 1951-1953, Canadian military forces were an integral part of the US invading forces, suffering 1,558 casualties. During the US war on Vietnam (Nov. 1, 1955 - May 15, 1975), Canada provided the US with billions of dollars worth of war materials and supplies, with the result that 110 Canadians were killed in Vietnam. As usual Canadian military forces aggressed against

the people of Yugoslavia and the partition of that country.

Just as in all other wars, Canadian military forces, along with the US, British, French and New Zealand, (coalition of the willing), have had their share of killing the people of Iraq and Afghanistan. As we examine history, we see that Canadian governments over the last 100 years have stood on the side of the imperialist forces against the countries struggling for liberation or simply wanting to maintain their sovereignty.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9106242622>

- **US Police Give Chance to Terrorists to Attack Iranian Diplomats in New York**

TEHRAN (FNA)- The Iranian delegation in New York came under attack by members of the terrorist Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) in the presence of US police.

The terrorist members of the MKO, also known as the MEK, PMOI and NCR, attacked Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ramin Mehman-Parast near the United Nations headquarters.

Mehman-Parast and several other Iranian officials were walking to their hotel when they were surrounded and assaulted by MKO terrorists on Wednesday.

New York City police and the US security forces made no arrests as the attackers physically abused members of the Iranian delegation accompanying Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in his visit to the United States to address the 67th session of the UN General Assembly.

The US is responsible for the security of all diplomatic delegations attending the UN meetings as the host to the world body.

The incident came days after US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton notified Congress that she plans to take MKO (also known as the MEK, PMOI and NCR) off a State Department terror list.

The notification will be followed by formal removal in coming days from the list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations, which includes more than 50 groups.

Earlier this month, the seventh and last group of the MKO terrorists left Camp Ashraf, their main training center in Iraq.

The last group of the evacuees included 88 terrorists. They have been transferred to Camp Liberty which lies Northeast of the Baghdad International Airport.



Camp Liberty is a transient settlement facility and a last station for the MKO in Iraq.

Earlier this year, the Iraqi government set a new deadline for the MKO to evacuate its members from Camp Ashraf by October this year.

The MKO cannot find a shelter outside Iraq as it is blacklisted by much of the international community, including the United States.

The MKO is blacklisted by much of the international community.

Before an overture by the EU, the MKO was on the European Union's list of terrorist organizations subject to an EU-wide assets freeze. Yet, the MKO puppet leader, Maryam Rajavi, who has residency in France, regularly visited Brussels and despite the ban enjoyed full freedom in Europe.

The MKO is behind a slew of assassinations and bombings inside Iran, a number of EU parliamentarians said in a recent letter in which they slammed a British court decision to remove the MKO from the British terror list. The EU officials also added that the group has no public support within Iran because of their role in helping Saddam Hussein in the Iraqi imposed war on Iran (1980-1988).

Many of the MKO members abandoned the terrorist organization while most of those still remaining in the camp are said to be willing to quit but are under pressure and torture not to do so.

The group, founded in the 1960s, blended elements of Islamism and Stalinism and participated in the overthrow of the US-backed Shah of Iran in 1979. Ahead of the

revolution, the MKO conducted attacks and assassinations against both Iranian and Western targets.

The group started assassination of the citizens and officials after the revolution in a bid to take control of the newly established Islamic Republic. It killed several of Iran's new leaders in the early years after the revolution, including the then President, Mohammad Ali Rajayee, Prime Minister, Mohammad Javad Bahonar and the Judiciary Chief, Mohammad Hossein Beheshti who were killed in bomb attacks by MKO members in 1981.

The group fled to Iraq in 1986, where it was protected by Saddam Hussein and where it helped the Iraqi dictator suppress Shiite and Kurd uprisings in the country.

The terrorist group joined Saddam's army during the Iraqi imposed war on Iran (1980-1988) and helped Saddam and killed thousands of Iranian civilians and soldiers during the US-backed Iraqi imposed war on Iran.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9106242614>

- **Three Kidnapped Iranian Nationals Freed in Syria after 4 Months**

TEHRAN (FNA)- Three Iranian nationals, who had been kidnapped by Syrian armed groups in May 2012, returned to their families after they were freed in a Syrian army operation.

Informed source in the Iranian Embassy in Damascus told the Islamic republic news agency that three Iranian truck drivers have been freed during a Syrian Army operation against the insurgents.

The truck drivers, identified as Morteza Adeli, Hossein Alinejad, and Ismail Mohammad Zeinali, were kidnapped on May 21 in Syria after entering into the Arab country via its border with Turkey. They were carrying equipment for a refinery in the city of Homs.

Meantime, Iran says it is using all diplomatic, political and security means to release the 48 Iranian pilgrims kidnapped in Syria earlier in August.

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.

Later, unconfirmed media reports said three of them have been killed, but Iran rejected the reports saying that all of them are alive.

In similar remarks late in August, Chairman of the Iranian parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Alaeddin Boroujerdi said at a press conference in Damascus that the Iranian pilgrims kidnapped in Syria are reportedly in good health.

Meantime, 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 release of the kidnapped Iranian nationals through different channels.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9106242610>

- **Russia warns against isolating Iran over nuclear issue**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has severely warned against the ramifications of West's scenario to isolate Iran over the country's nuclear energy program.

"If people believe that the more you provoke Iran, the sooner Iran will make its decision, then I think this is a very dangerous path," Lavrov said in a Wednesday TV interview with Bloomberg.

"If isolation is the slogan of the day -- more and more sanctions and threats to bomb Iran -- and, God forbid, if this happens, what we'll suffer immediately is [the future of] cooperation between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)," he added.



"By threatening and sanctioning again and again, we are not making Iran more cooperative," the Russian foreign minister pointed out.

He defended Iran's program to achieve full nuclear fuel cycle as "absolutely in line with the [nuclear] Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)" stressing that, "There is no indication that Iran has taken a political decision to go military in its nuclear program."

Lavrov went on to say that even the information that Pentagon makes public from time to time corroborates the same contention.

The West's sanctions are meant to pressure the Islamic Republic over its nuclear energy program, which Washington, Israel and some of their allies claim includes a military aspect.

The United States, Israel, and some of their allies accuse Iran of pursuing military objectives in its nuclear energy program, but Iran rejects the allegations, arguing that as a committed signatory to the NPT and a member of the IAEA, it is entitled to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

In addition, the IAEA has conducted numerous inspections of Iran's nuclear facilities but has never found any evidence

showing that Iran's nuclear program has been diverted toward military objectives.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/09/27/263812/russia-warns-against-cornering-iran/>

- **Iran's president leaves New York for Tehran**

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has left New York City for Tehran, having brought his five-day-long stay there for the United Nations General Assembly to an end.



Ahmadinejad left New York on Thursday and is expected to arrive in Tehran on Friday.

The Iranian president was in the US to attend the annual session of the General Assembly, held at the world body's headquarters in the city.

In an address to the High-level Meeting of the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels, President Ahmadinejad called on Monday for a total structural overhaul of the UN Security Council in order to facilitate the observance of the rule of law in international interactions, and enumerated 10 proposals to that end.

In his second speech at the assembly, the Iranian chief executive on Wednesday criticized the existing global politics for discrimination, unilateralism, and double-standards.

This was Ahmadinejad's eighth trip to New York for a General Assembly session since he took office in 2005.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/09/27/263869/iran-pres-leaves-new-york-for-tehran/>

- **Killing of Press TV reporter, premeditated attack: Analyst**

I think clearly this murder was premeditated. Just look at how sophisticated this was. This murder was

timed to occur right after a terrorist attack and it clearly was a terrorist attack.”

The recent killing of Press TV's correspondent in Syria Maya Naser was a “sophisticated” act of assassination plotted against the staff of the Iranian English-language news channel, an international lawyer says.

“I think clearly this murder was premeditated. Just look at how sophisticated this was. This murder was timed to occur right after a terrorist attack and it clearly was a terrorist attack,” Paul Wolf, a renowned human rights and international lawyer, told Press TV.

“The purpose of it is to make a big splash in the news media and make it look like the Syrian military headquarters was actually attacked itself,” he added.

Wolf argued that the assailants may have known that Press TV was covering the incident and they “may have been watching or even tracking, by their cellphones, the Press TV's journalist.”

Naser was hit by a sniper on Wednesday morning while reporting live. He was accompanied with Press TV and Al-Alam Damascus bureaus chief, Hosein Mortada, who was also injured in the attack.

The two were covering twin bomb blasts, which targeted the military command building in the Syrian capital and killed at least four Syrian security forces.

The assassination of the 33-year-old journalist has drawn strong international condemnation with Reporters Without Borders denouncing the murder.

Born on July 30, 1979 in Syria, Naser had studied political science, was fluent in Arabic and English and had worked in many countries including the US, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Bahrain.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/09/27/263852/killing-of-press-tv-staff-preplanned/>

- **Islam pivotal to Iraq national unity: Iran parl. speaker**



Any kind of dispute will be detrimental for the interests and national security of Iraq and countries that are worried about the emergence of a powerful and progressing Iraq in the region benefit from discord in Iraq."

Iran's Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani

Iran Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani says Islam plays a pivotal role in the national unity of Iraq and any kind of dispute will be damaging for the country's interests and national security.

"Any kind of dispute will be detrimental to the interests and national security of Iraq and only countries that are worried about the emergence of a powerful and progressing Iraq in the region benefit from discord in Iraq," Larijani said in a meeting with the Secretary General of Iraq's Kurdistan Islamic Union Muhammad Faraj on Thursday.

The Iranian Majlis speaker underlined Islam as the main pivot of national unity in Iraq, saying that the key to the development of Iraq is adherence of all political groups and currents to Islam and the law, and efforts to reconstruct the Arab country.

Mohammad Faraj, for his part, said following the path of Islam is the only way for the progress of Iraq.

He added that the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a great country in the region, has always wanted to be the pivot of unity among the Islamic countries.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/09/27/263842/islam-pivotal-to-iraq-national-unity/>

- **Iran says will 'retaliate' if attacked, in response to Israel**

By AL ARABIYA WITH AGENCIES

Iran has warned it is ready to retaliate against attack after Israel's prime minister urged a red line to be drawn over its nuclear program.

Benjamin Netanyahu told the U.N. time was running out to stop Iran having enough enriched uranium for a nuclear bomb.

In response, Iran's deputy U.N. ambassador said his country was strong enough to defend itself.

Iran's U.N. mission said Israel had made "baseless and absurd allegations against (its) exclusively peaceful nuclear program."

It also said Israel "on a daily basis, threatens countries in the region, particularly my country (with) military attack."

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is strong enough to defend itself and reserves its full right to retaliate with full force against any attack," the Iranian mission said in a written statement.

Netanyahu had said on Thursday the only way to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons was by setting "a clear red line" to stop its atomic program.

“At this late hour, there is only one way to peacefully prevent Iran from getting atomic bombs and that’s by placing a clear red line on Iran’s nuclear weapons program,” Netanyahu said in a speech at the U.N. General Assembly. “Red lines don’t lead to war; red lines prevent war.”

“The hour is late, very late,” Netanyahu said, alleging Iran was already 70 percent of the way through the process of enriching enough uranium to fuel a bomb, and must be prevented from reaching the 90 percent level.

He said that by next summer, Iran will be on brink of having enough enriched uranium for a nuclear bomb.

Israel has warned that it could launch military action against Iran in order to prevent it reaching a certain nuclear threshold, and has urged the international community to force Tehran to abandon its atomic quest.

Iran denies it is building a nuclear weapon and has dismissed the Israeli threat.

Meanwhile, China said on Thursday that the disagreement over Iran’s nuclear

program had reached “a new, crucial stage,” calling for Tehran to begin a new round of talks with world powers, something a U.S. official said could happen at some point.

Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi spoke several hours after Netanyahu’s U.N. General Assembly address and after a meeting of officials from the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council - the United States, France, Britain, Russia and China - and Germany yielded no obvious signs of progress toward a diplomatic solution.

“The Iranian nuclear issue has reached a new, crucial stage,” Yang said in a speech at the U.N. General Assembly. “The relevant parties should remain committed to a diplomatic solution and begin a new round of dialogue as soon as possible.”

A senior U.S. official said “at some point” the group would likely return for a fourth round of talks with Iran.

“I think we’ve got some additional work to do first, so I would not expect that to happen immediately, but I would hope that we will get there in the not-too-

distant future," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The push to resume talks comes at a time when tensions between Iran and Israel are rising and diplomatic efforts to resolve the decade-long dispute over Iran's nuclear work have foundered.

Israel, the United States, the European Union and their allies say Iran is amassing the capability to produce a nuclear bomb, an allegation the Islamic Republic denies.

The six world powers, represented by EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, have sought to persuade Iran to scale back the enrichment of uranium through intensifying economic sanctions and diplomacy.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/09/28/240624.html>

3. ISRAEL - PALESTINE

Abbas tells UN will seek Palestine upgrade

- **Published yesterday (updated)**

BETHLEHEM (Ma'an) -- President Mahmoud Abbas said on Thursday that he

plans to seek upgraded membership of Palestine at the UN, in his address to the world body's General Assembly.

He said "intensive consultations" were underway with UN members to secure a vote on Palestine being granted the status of 'observer state' before the end of the assembly's current session, "in order to enhance the chances for peace."

"In our endeavor, we do not seek to delegitimize an existing state - that is Israel - but to assert the state that must be realized - that is Palestine," he said.

"Despite all the complexities of the prevailing reality and all the frustrations that abound, we say before the international community there is still a chance - maybe the last - to save the two-state solution and to salvage peace," Abbas told the delegates.

Security Council resolution

Abbas urged the UN Security Council, where last year's bid for full statehood recognition fell apart, to urgently adopt a resolution on avenues to peace.

The resolution should set out "the basis and foundations for a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that would serve as a binding reference and guide for all if the vision of two-States, Israel and Palestine, is to survive," he said.

But he warned the 193-nation assembly that Israel was "promising the Palestinian people a new catastrophe" if it continues with its current settlement policies in the occupied West Bank.

"The Israeli occupation remains the only obstacle to the realization of the State of Palestine," he said.

'Terrorist militias'

The president accused Israel of ethnic cleansing in Jerusalem and condemned violence by "terrorist militias of Israeli settlers" which he said had become a daily reality "with at least 535 attacks perpetrated since the beginning of this year."

"We are facing relentless waves of attacks against our people, our mosques, churches and monasteries, and our homes and schools; they are unleashing their

venom against our trees, fields, crops and properties, and our people have become fixed targets for acts of killing and abuse with the complete collusion of the occupying forces and the Israeli Government."

He said settler violence was an "inherent byproduct" of occupation, racist incitement and a government policy "that deliberately fosters the settlements and settlers and deems their satisfaction to be an absolute priority."

Prisoners

Abbas called for the international community to investigate the conditions of Palestinians jailed in Israel, calling them "soldiers in their people's struggle for freedom, independence and peace."

He said Israeli policies in the occupied territories undermined the stability of the Palestinian Authority, and would ultimately threaten its existence. He also called for the lifting of the Israeli blockade on Gaza.

Last year, Abbas told the UN General Assembly he was seeking full membership

for Palestine, but the Security Council committee able to confer this upgrade never returned a decision.

Israel and the US -- which has veto power at the Security Council -- opposed the bid, saying a Palestinian state could only be achieved through negotiations with Israel.

Palestinian officials later announced their intention to seek the lesser upgrade, but have declined to set a date for the actual request. Aides suggest it could come as early as October but most likely after US presidential elections a month later.

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=524173>

- **Political leaders react to Abbas speech at UN**

GAZA CITY (Ma'an) -- Political leaders jumped to both congratulate and criticize President Mahmoud Abbas' address to the UN General Assembly on Thursday, where he told delegates he would seek a membership upgrade.

"We were waiting for something new and we have not heard anything," Yousef Abu Rizqa, an adviser to Hamas premier Ismail

Haniyeh, told Ma'an. Each of the points in Abbas' speech had been mentioned before, he said.

"Despite all the complexities of the prevailing reality and all the frustrations that abound, we say before the international community there is still a chance - maybe the last - to save the two-state solution and to salvage peace," Abbas told the delegates in New York.

He said "intensive consultations" were underway with UN members to secure a vote on Palestine being granted the status of 'observer state' before the end of the assembly's current session, "in order to enhance the chances for peace."

Abu Rizqa criticized the president's stance in favor of popular and peaceful resistance to Israeli occupation.

While popular action "is a useful type of resistance, it doesn't liberate the land because countries who were liberated have used several methods ... I think Abbas weakened the Palestinian position and himself as a negotiator in this case," he said.

"I was expecting the president to bring up reasonable and real solutions, but instead he held up to the two state solution and negotiations," the official continued.



Meanwhile, the Hamas government spokesman Taher al-Nunu called Abbas' speech desperate, and said it reflects the failure of his political plan.

"We are surprised that he is determined to continue the absurd negotiations," he told Ma'an.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine said it considered Abbas' speech an announcement of the failure of the "delusions" of negotiations.

In a statement, the party called for leaders to ask the UN and its agencies to take real decisions which will help the Palestinian cause "instead of waiting and betting for

the success or failure of these negotiations."

'Historic'

Meanwhile, the president's Fatah party called the speech "historic" and said the leader had clarified to the world its responsibilities to the Palestinian people.

"We consider Abbas' speech to be a letter from the Palestinian people ... we confirm that the people are angry because of the occupation and angry with those who are silent about it, and that it is our people's right to put an end to their suffering," Fatah spokesman Fayez Abu Aita said in a statement.

The Palestinian People's Party also praised the president's address, saying it "expressed the determination of the Palestinian people to achieve their national legal rights and it reflected the dignity of the people."

PPP spokesman Walid Al-Awad said: "I think that the message reached the UN, and it became a trial of the Israeli occupation's attacks on the Palestinian people."

However he called for the speech to be followed up with practical actions, suggesting leaders meet "to redraw the foundations of the political process between the Palestinian people and the Israeli occupation, and to set up a Palestinian road map to invest this international effort and to reestablish Palestinian institutions."

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=524199>

- **Clan clashes leave man dead, 30 families homeless**

BETHLEHEM (Ma'an) -- A feud between two Bedouin clans near Bethlehem has left one man dead and 30 families homeless.

The families are living in tents and under trees after 18 homes were burned in al-Rashayida village as revenge for the murder of 23-year-old Maher Mefleh al-Rashayida in August.

Thirty families fled to neighboring areas, without taking any belongings. Ten families have since returned to the village,

but they are also living in tents as their homes were destroyed.



Faisal al-Ghrinat, director of the Ministry of Agriculture's Bedouin department, said the families were in al-Nasiriyah in difficult conditions, particularly with winter approaching. The owners of the land are asking the families to leave, he said.

"The homes of 20 families were attacked, destroyed and burned. Kids were left hungry and without clothes, some of these children are new born babies. This happened 50 days ago due to feuds between families."

"How can these families live like this, especially with winter coming up?"

He added: "The youngest one of these children is a week old. These families have no homes, they live on the ground."

Al-Ghrinat said a formal notice had been sent to officials but received no response. He called for immediate assistance to the families.

One of the family members who fled al-Rashayida, Saleh Khalil Rashaydiha, also appealed to officials for help. He said the families needed tents to protect their children and somewhere for their livestock to shelter.

"We disowned the killer and we are not responsible for what he did ... We're living today in very miserable and difficult situations that wild animals couldn't stand.

"We call all officials to stand with us and rescue us from this suffering."

Head of al-Rashayida village council Fawwaz al-Rashayida told Ma'an that the 10 families who had returned to the village were also suffering.

"Those who came back found their houses burned and nothing left for them or their children," al-Rashayida said.

He said the village council had worked with the Palestinian Authority and local leaders to reach a legal solution, exempting the relatives of the killer from responsibility for the murder.

Only three family members, who have left the village, will be charged, the village council head said.

Al-Rashayida added that the council had notified President Mahmoud Abbas and the Ministry of Public Works has agreed to visit the village and review the damage to the homes.

He said there were many obstacles blocking a return to the village's normal way of life.

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=524052>

- **Settlers Pump Waste Water into Palestinian Land**

BETHELEHEM, September 27, 2012
(Wafa) – Jewish settlers from the illegal

Israeli settlement of Beitar Illit Thursday pumped waste water coming out from the settlement into Palestinian-owned agricultural land in Wadi Fukin, a village west of Bethlehem, according to a local activist.

Head of Wadi Fukin village council, Ahmed Sokar, told Wafa that the waste water stemming from the nearby settlement of Beitar Illit, built illegally on confiscated land from the Palestinian villages of Wadi Fukin, Husan and Nahalin, flooded around 50 dunums of the southern part of the village's agricultural land.

He added that the village's residents repeatedly suffer from this Israeli measure that led to polluting the environment, making land unsuitable for cultivation, and warned of the danger of spreading diseases among residents.

He said they have appealed to humanitarian organizations and all concerned institutions to stop this aggressive measure and did not get any response.

Sokar said that Israeli settlers, protected by soldiers, are constantly harassing the village's residents.

<http://english.wafa.ps/index.php?action=detail&id=20754>

- **Ashton Reaffirms EU's Commitment to Creation of Independent Palestine**

BRUSSELS, September 27, 2012 (Wafa)- European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton Wednesday reaffirmed EU's commitment to the creation of a future sovereign, independent, democratic, contiguous and viable state of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security with Israel.

In a statement following her meeting with President Mahmoud Abbas in New York, Ashton said EU is determined to help bring an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and believes that substantive negotiations aiming at a comprehensive solution are the best way forward. "Ending the conflict is a fundamental interest of EU, as well as of the parties themselves and the wider region."

The statement said Ashton and Abbas also discussed Palestinian institution-building

and the economic situation of the Palestinian Authority, both of crucial importance for the resolution of the conflict.

She repeated her call to all the donors to step in and help PA to overcome the financial and economic crisis and to continue with the building of state institutions.

<http://english.wafa.ps/index.php?action=detail&id=20752>

- **C'tee head: Government must save 'Ma'ariv,' media**

MK Shama-Hacohen says law must safeguard workers against wage defaults: "not 1 shekel can remain owed to even 1 worker."

The government is obliged to prevent scenarios such as the current one in which Ma'ariv workers have not received payments owed to them by law, Knesset Economics Committee chairman Carmel Shama- Hacohen said on Thursday.

"Should such scenarios occur, justice must be found so that not one shekel is owed to even one worker, and if somebody knowingly acted against them, they must

be brought before the law," Shama-Hacohen said at a hearing on the fate of Ma'ariv employees.

Shama-Hacohen argued that the government must examine whether there is a public interest in supporting the media, saying that otherwise "the trend is obvious." He added that on top of the imminent entry into the job market of around 2,000 Ma'ariv employees, the fact that all Israeli media outlets are at risk of closing "does not strengthen democracy."

Last Thursday, Ma'ariv Holdings filed for a stay of proceedings at the Tel Aviv District Court, reporting a debt of NIS 408 million – of which almost one-quarter is owed to employees. The company filed the application after completing the sale of Ma'ariv and associated publications to businessman Shlomo Ben-Tzvi for up to NIS 74m.

Court-appointed trustee Shlomo Ness told the committee that "there are all sorts of complicated allegations," and promised that he and co-trustee Yaron Arbel were trying to examine all of them. He elaborated that Judge Varda Alshech has

frozen the Ben- Tzvi deal, and that the trustees are looking at “other options.”

Tal Raz, CEO of Ma’ariv Holdings, said that he too has more work to do, given that he has only been at the newspaper for eight months, and that parent company IDB Holding Corp only took control of the newspaper one year and three months ago.

IDB has made all allocations and deductions in an orderly manner since taking control, Raz said, adding that he is certain this was also the case under the newspaper’s previous owners. He stated the problem was not what was deducted from workers’ salaries, but that in the past they were not paid retrospective supplementary income.

Veteran Ma’ariv Knesset reporter Arik Bender was the first speaker at the Economics Committee meeting, saying that after 27 years of covering committee meetings, this was the first time he has participated, and that he hoped this would be the last.

“We need to save the print media,” Bender said, his voice trembling. “We

need a free, established, strong media. Otherwise, all we will be left with is a pro-government newspaper that is handed out for free,” he added, referring to Israel HaYom.

Bender suggested that the government look to France for ideas to support the print media, such as giving free newspaper subscriptions to citizens for their 18th birthdays and increasing government print advertising.

<http://www.jpost.com/Business/BusinessNews/Article.aspx?id=286345>

- **Mofaz: PM can't color Israel less isolated**

Opposition leader praises Netanyahu for putting Iran on world's agenda but blames him for instigating unnecessary conflict with US.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu would not have had to draw red lines in a speech at the UN had he succeeded in building a positive relationship with US President Barack Obama, opposition leader Shaul Mofaz said Thursday night.

Kadima head Mofaz praised Netanyahu for putting Iran on the world's agenda but he blamed the prime minister for instigating an unnecessary conflict with the US. He suggested that had Netanyahu gotten along better with Obama, the president would have made sure to meet with him.

“Netanyahu drew a nice diagram but he did not draw an effective international road map to stop Iran's nuclear program,” Mofaz said. “The problem is not whether to wait until the spring or the summer but with the way the Western world has distanced itself from Israel under Netanyahu's leadership.”

Mofaz and other opposition MKs were careful not to criticize Netanyahu too harshly, because his predecessor as Kadima leader, Tzipi Livni, lost support following a television appearance after Netanyahu's UN speech last year in which she was seen as unpatriotic.

[Click here for full Jpost coverage of the Iranian threat](#)

Labor leader Shelly Yacimovich made a point of praising Netanyahu for “lowering

the flames” in his conflict with Obama and speaking for all Israelis who are united in opposition to a nuclear Iran. She focused her criticism on the prime minister's repeated use of Holocaust analogies with Iran.

“As the granddaughter of a Holocaust victim, I have to say that the Jewish people's weakness then cannot compare to our strength now when we have our own sovereign country and army. We are not in the Holocaust, and we are not on the way to Treblinka.”

Labor MK Isaac Herzog said Netanyahu missed an opportunity to present a diplomatic initiative to the Palestinians that would have given Israel leeway on Iran.

Habayit Hayehudi leadership candidate Naftali Bennett said the Left had gone too far in attacks against Netanyahu and that it should set a red line in its criticism when it comes to Iran. He said that on an existential issue there should not be Right or Left and all Israelis should unite behind the prime minister.

National Union MK Arieh Eldad attacked Netanyahu from the Right, saying that instead of attacking Iran, he was “wasting valuable time talking” to an international community that “won’t lift a finger to stop Iran.”

Shas leader and Interior Minister Eli Yishai said Netanyahu sounded a shofar to wake up the world and expressed hope that the international community was listening.

<http://www.ipost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=286385>

- **Knesset security probes Marzel online threat to Tibi**

Knesset security will investigate a Facebook status update by far-right activist Baruch Marzel that threatened MK Ahmed Tibi (United Arab List-Ta’al).

On Thursday, Tibi demanded that Marzel be banned from the Knesset after he posted a status the Arab MK interpreted as a thinly veiled death threat.

After consulting with Knesset legal adviser Eyal Yinon and Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin, Knesset security chief Yosef Griff

responded by calling Marzel in for a “clarification talk.”

Ahead of Yom Kippur, when Jews traditionally apologize for their sins from the past year, Marzel wrote on his Facebook profile on Tuesday: “The main desecration of God’s name, for which I must apologize, is that there are so many enemies among us that I have yet to expel, especially in Hebron.

“I am sorry for the time I was in the Knesset and passed by Ahmed Tibi, may his name be erased, and did not do what was necessary,” Marzel added.

Marzel is the head of the Eretz Yisrael Shelanu party, which is part of the National Union faction and represented in the Knesset by MK Michael Ben- Ari. The Boston-born activist and disciple of Rabbi Meir Kahane officially serves as Ben- Ari’s parliamentary aide.

Tibi responded on Thursday morning by sending letters to Rivlin, Griff and Attorney-General Yehuda Weinstein.

“This is a threat to murder, which cannot be ignored,” Tibi wrote. “It seems to me

that the appropriate step is to forbid this despicable, racist type from entering the Knesset.”

The UAL-Ta'al MK added that many of Marzel's Facebook fans “shared” his status update and wrote violent comments.

As such, Tibi said, Marzel must be investigated for incitement to violence.

According to Marzel, “Only a twisted criminal mind like Tibi's could understand my message in an illegal way as he did.”

“In any case,” he quipped, “I am glad that Tibi loses his appetite when he sees me in the Knesset.”

Ben-Ari said that “Rivlin works for Ahmed Tibi,” and accused Griff of treating different MKs unequally, because he did not respond to a complaint by Ben-Ari about Peace Now head Yariv Oppenheimer.

<http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=286313>

4. AFRICA and EGYPT

• Egypt reassures Israel: No need to amend peace treaty with Israel

Presidential spokesman says Egypt sees no reason to make changes to its peace treaty with Israel.

Camp David: Peace accord that Morsi can't break

CAIRO - Egypt sees no reason to make changes to its peace treaty with Israel, presidential spokesman Yasser Ali said in statements carried Thursday by the state-owned paper Al-Ahram.

"There is no need for the moment to amend the Camp David agreement," said Ali who was accompanying President Mohamed Morsi in New York for the meetings of the UN General Assembly.

In 1979, Egypt became the first Arab country to sign a peace deal with Israel.

Israel has watched with concern as Islamists were catapulted to the forefront of politics following a popular uprising that toppled President Hosni Mubarak.

Morsi, who emerged from the powerful Muslim Brotherhood, has repeatedly said he would respect international treaties signed by Cairo.

But his former movement has also said there is room to revise the accords, without objecting to them in principle.

On Sunday, Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman rejected the idea of any changes to the treaty.

"There is not the slightest possibility that Israel will accept the modification of the peace treaty with Israel," Lieberman told Israeli public radio. "We will not accept any modification of the Camp David accords."



The statements come amid tensions between Egypt and Israel, particularly over the issue of security in the Sinai

Peninsula, where Egyptian armed forces have launched an unprecedented campaign to root out Islamist militants.

Last week, an Israeli soldier and three militants who infiltrated from the Sinai were killed in a clash along the border, after troops opened fire on the gunmen as they crossed the frontier.

Israel has urged Egypt to tackle the growing lawlessness in the Sinai, and Cairo has responded by boosting its military presence in the peninsula, but that has also raised concern in Israel, because the Camp David treaty limits the number of Egyptian troops that can be present in the territory.

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=54600>

- **Sudan and its South: Partial deal after four days of marathon negotiations**

Juba, Khartoum reach agreements on demilitarised border zone, oil production but make limited progress on contested areas.

Sudan and South Sudan reached agreements on a demilitarised border

zone and oil production but made limited progress on contested areas, their officials said late Wednesday.

"There is agreement on some areas," said South Sudan delegation spokesman Atif Kiir, while his Sudanese counterpart Badr el-din Abdullah Badr spoke of "progress on many issues," with both saying a deal would be inked Thursday.

The partial agreement was reached after four days of marathon negotiations between the former civil war foes, President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan and his Southern counterpart Salva Kiir, in Ethiopia's capital.

While few details were released, both said a demilitarised border buffer zone -- where troops must withdraw 10 kilometres (six miles) from the de facto line of control along the undemarcated frontier -- had been agreed.

The buffer zone would also potentially cut support for rebel forces in Sudan's Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile regions that Khartoum accuses Juba of backing, just as the South accuses Sudan of arming rebels in its territory.

Economic agreements were also reportedly reached, building on an oil deal last month to ensure South Sudan's stalled production would restart, after a stoppage that has damaged the economies of both nations.

The talks -- originally billed as a one-day summit -- had been hoped to provide a comprehensive solution to the festering disputes that took the rivals to the brink of war earlier this year.

But they did not reach agreement on the contested flashpoint Abyei region or on a series of border zones claimed by both sides.

"The two countries failed to reach an agreement on two issues -- that of Abyei... (and) the second issue is that of the border," Kiir told reporters after the talks ended late Wednesday.

"The two countries have agreed to have another round of talks... mainly on the issue of the border, on the disputed and unclaimed areas," he added.

His counterpart Abdullah said optimistically that the issues would be addressed in the future.

"We have overcome many differences... but here are some differences on Abyei," he said, adding also that resolving border areas claimed by both sides "is going take time".



No dates were given for a potential further round of talks.

It was also not clear if all negotiations had been entirely settled, or whether talks could still continue Thursday.

"Only the final touches remain," Abdullah added.

Amid international pressure on both sides to reach a deal -- after missing a UN Security Council deadline to settle by

Saturday -- their teams spent days trying to narrow positions as mediators shuffled between them.

The UN set a deadline for a deal after border fighting broke out in March, when Southern troops briefly wrested the valuable Heglig oil field from Khartoum's control, and Sudan launched bombing raids in response.

The protracted talks under African Union mediation began in Addis Ababa several months before South Sudan split in July 2011 from what was Africa's biggest nation, following an independence vote after decades of war.

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=54594>

- **Clinton suggests Qaeda link in attack on US mission in Libya**

Confusion reigns as Clinton appears to suggest for first time that militants close to Qaeda are linked to attack on US mission in Libya.

NEW YORK - Confusion reigned Wednesday as US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton appeared to suggest for the

first time that militants close to Al-Qaeda were linked to an attack on a US mission in Libya.

During a speech to a high-level meeting on the crisis in the West African Sahel region, Clinton warned the vast desert area was becoming a powder keg with militants moving into the lawless area and creating instability.



"For some time, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and other groups have launched attacks and kidnappings from northern Mali into neighboring countries," Clinton told the meeting, convened by UN chief Ban Ki-moon.

"Now with a larger safe haven, and increased freedom for maneuver, terrorists are seeking to extend their reach and their networks in multiple directions.

"And they are working with other violent extremists to undermine the democratic transitions underway in North Africa, as we tragically saw in Benghazi," she said.

Some reports maintained Clinton was explicitly saying that Al-Qaeda militants were behind the September 11 assault on the US mission in Benghazi, in which four Americans, including ambassador Chris Stevens, were killed.

Clinton has already acknowledged that it was a "terrorist attack," but the State Department swiftly denied she was affirming that Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb was definitely linked to the assault.

"Don't read more into what the secretary said than she actually said," a senior State Department official said.

"What she actually said is that AQ in the Maghreb is working with other violent extremists to try to undermine democratic transitions under way in Africa.

"This something that we've known. This is something that we have been watching."

Questions have swirled about who was behind the Benghazi attack, with the Obama administration and the State Department initially maintaining it arose out of a spontaneous protest against an anti-Islam Internet video.

The explanations about the events surrounding the attack have changed over the past several days, with the White House eventually acknowledging it was an act of terrorism.

The FBI is conducting its own investigation into the attack, and Clinton has also opened an official review into whether proper security measures were taken.

"With regard to the specific issue of who was responsible for the Benghazi attack, as everybody in the administration has said, we can't go beyond our preliminary statements until we have the results of the FBI investigation," the State Department official said.

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=54597>

- **Khartoum and Juba sign deals to restart oil, boost trade, secure borders**

Sudan and South Sudan signed deals on Thursday to secure their border and boost trade, a move which will restart crucial oil exports but fails to solve other conflicts left over from when the South seceded last year.

The defense ministers of both countries signed a deal to set up a demilitarized buffer zone at the joint border after a five-day presidential summit in Addis Ababa, the seat of the African Union which has been brokering the talks.

The security arrangement will allow South Sudan to restart oil exports through a Sudanese Red Sea port, giving both ailing economies a shot in the arm, according to Reuters.

They shook hands after signing the deal with delegates in the crowded room cheering and clapping in support, according to AFP.

Sudanese Defense Minister Abdul Rahim Mohammed Hussein and his counterpart John Kong Nyuon also signed a security

agreement, which paves the way for a demilitarized border zone for their volatile and contested frontier.

Economic deals including agreements to restart stalled oil production were also reached at the ceremony, held in a hotel in the Ethiopian capital.

However the deal does not tackle issues including contested border areas or the flashpoint Abyei region.

Those issues would be addressed during another round of talks, officials said.

Kiir said the deal on the contested flashpoint border region of Abyei was not reached, saying that Bashir rejected an African Union proposal.

“Unfortunately, my brother Bashir and his government totally rejected the proposal on Abyei in its totality,” Kiir said at signing ceremony for a raft of other agreements between the two former civil war foes.

Abyei is contested between the regions Ngok Dinka people, who are settled in the area and consider themselves southerners, and Misseriya nomads who

herd their cattle south in the dry season and are supported by the Bashir’s government in Khartoum.

“We will continue to work together to resolve the outstanding issues, including Abyei,” Bashir said in his address after the signing ceremony.

Output of Dar Blend crude will resume in December at the earliest, South Sudan’s government said on Aug. 21. Dar Blend makes up the majority of South Sudan’s output and is lower in quality than Nile Blend.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/09/27/240506.html>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

• **Charbel: Hariri played major role in Shiite pilgrims’ release**

Interior Minister Marwan Charbel said in remarks published on Friday that Future Movement leader MP Saad Hariri played a major role in releasing the Shiite pilgrims kidnapped in Syria.

“Despite the political division in the country, Future Movement leader Saad

Hariri [played a major role] in releasing the Lebanese [pilgrims] kidnapped in SyriaAl-Jumhuriya,” Charbel told newspaper.

Charbel also said he would “disclose Hariri’s [role]” at the right time.

Lebanese Shiite pilgrim Awad Ibrahim was set free on Tuesday and handed over to Turkish authorities. He arrived in Lebanon on Wednesday.

Ibrahim was set free a month after another Lebanese hostage, Hussein Ali Omar, arrived in Turkey from Syria.

Charbel revealed in the interview that the other kidnapped pilgrims would be all released within a month.

However, he said that all ongoing negotiations for their release would remain secret.

In May, 11 Shiite pilgrims were kidnapped in Syria while on their way to Lebanon from Iran.

Following the abduction, a previously unknown armed group calling itself the

"Syrian Revolutionaries – Aleppo Province" said that it was holding the Shiite men, while the Free Syrian Army had repeatedly denied its involvement in the abduction.

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

- **Gemayel: Church must bless March 14 electoral draft law**

Kataeb Party leader Amin Gemayel said in remarks published on Friday that the Maronite church must bless the draft electoral law submitted by the March 14 Christian parties.

“The draft law that we submitted is the closest to what was agreed in Bkirki; therefore, the church cannot but bless this draft law, [which is based] on small constituencies, because it achieves partnership [among all sects] without provoking anyone,” Gemayel told Al-Jumhuriya newspaper.

The March 14 Christian parties presented a draft electoral law based on 50 small electoral constituencies.

An-Nahar newspaper reported Thursday that the Lebanese Forces contributed to the main structure of March 14 alliance's draft law that was wrapped up on Wednesday in coordination with the Kataeb party and March 14 MP Boutros Harb.

Gemayel also commented on Free Patriotic Movement leader MP Michel Aoun's position on the electoral law.

"Aoun [seems] to be confused; he approved the cabinet's draft electoral law [based] on proportionality, and then two of his MPs submitted another draft [electoral] law to the parliament," Gemayel said.

Last month, the cabinet approved an electoral law based on proportionality and 13 electoral districts for the 2013 parliamentary elections. It seeks to replace the 1960 electoral law, which was based on simple majority representation.

Meanwhile, Change and Reform bloc MPs Alain Aoun and Neematallah Abi Nasr proposed a draft electoral law based on proportional representation and one electoral district, and requires Lebanese

citizens to vote only for MPs of their own sect.

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

- **Suleiman wants Lebanese expatriates to participate in 2013 elections**

President Michel Suleiman said Thursday that Lebanese expatriates ought to have the right to vote in the Lebanese parliamentary elections.

"Our concern today is to communicate with them and to use their expertise in establishing a modern and fair state. It is their right [to participate in Lebanese elections] and vote," Suleiman said during a televised speech to launch a campaign entitled "The Expatriates' Right in the 2013 Elections."

He also said that the cabinet transferred a draft law to parliament on the expatriates' right to vote in the 2013 parliamentary elections.

The president added that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was working to allow Lebanese working and living abroad to

register in consulates and embassies in their current countries of residence.

Suleiman added that expatriates without Lebanese nationality also had the right to restore it.

“Let it be known to [everyone] that granting [expats] the nationality does not aim to alter political formulas.”

Suleiman added that it was the right of people who are 18 years old and above to vote in the elections.

The voting age in Lebanon is 21.

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

6. SYRIA

• **Rebels in Aleppo offensive as UN warns on refugees**

An injured rebel fighter is helped away during heavy fighting with Syrian government troops some 50 meters away in Aleppo's northern Izaa quarter on Thursday. (AFP/Miguel Medina)

Rebels claimed to have launched a major assault on Syria's second city Aleppo Thursday as the UN refugee agency warned that up to 700,000 refugees could flee the country by year's end.

UN and Arab League leaders meanwhile expressed fears the country could become a "regional battleground."

"Tonight, Aleppo will be ours or we will be defeated," Abu Furat, a rebel commander, told AFP as several thousand fighters went on the offensive in the key northern city that has been a battleground since July.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported fierce combat in the early evening in the districts of Izaa and Saif al-Dawla in the southwest, involving "hundreds of rebel fighters."

The Britain-based group said 20 rockets had hit the central district of Sulamaniyeh, some of them striking an office of the political security service.

There were clashes in several districts, amid bombardment by government forces, it added.

In a video posted on YouTube in the name of the most important rebel unit, the Al-Tawhid Brigade, a man in civilian clothing clutching a walkie-talkie is seen giving instructions.

"Today the attack against Bashar's army began on all fronts," he says, referring to President Bashar al-Assad's forces. "God willing, today's battle in Aleppo will be decisive."

Amid the incessant rattle of rebel assault rifles and the occasional explosion of an army rocket, rebel fighters shouted "Allah akbar" (God is greatest).

"We shout to frighten the soldiers and to show them how many of us there are," said one rebel fighter.

Fighting was also reported in Homs, Hama, the coastal province of Latakia and the eastern province of Deir az-Zour.

Elsewhere, an oil pipeline in the northeastern province of Hasaka was sabotaged, according to the Observatory.

Wednesday was the deadliest day of the conflict, with more than 305 people killed

nationwide, the Observatory said. That included 14 in twin bombings targeting the armed forces headquarters in central Damascus.

More than 30,000 people have been killed overall in violence since the March 2011 outbreak of the revolt against Assad, in a toll compiled by the Observatory.

Islamist rebel group Tajamo Ansar al-Islam said its men carried out Wednesday's bombings at the headquarters of the regime's armed forces, and that five of its fighters, including a suicide bomber, died during the assault.

Another group, Al-Nusra Front, also claimed the attack in a statement on jihadist forums.

The military said all senior commanders and other officers had escaped injury.

It was the biggest attack on the security apparatus since a July 18 suicide bombing killed four top regime officials, including Defense Minister General Daoud Rajha and Assad's brother-in-law, Assef Shawkat.

With the fighting escalating, the UN refugee agency warned that hundreds of thousands of refugees were streaming out of Syria, and that up to 700,000 could be in neighboring countries by the end of the year.

Faced with the soaring need for aid, humanitarian agencies upped their call for funds to \$487.9 million (379.2 million euros) to sustain operations until the end of the year.

At present, only \$141.5 million in funding is available: just 29 percent of the overall sum requested.

The UN children's agency UNICEF also joined the appeal, saying more than 50 percent of the refugees were under 18 and one fifth under five.

The conflict dominated proceedings at the UN General Assembly in New York.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, Arab League leader Nabil al-Arabi and special envoy Lakhdar Brahimi meanwhile expressed their fears that Syria would become a "regional battleground" as the conflict worsened.

They met at UN headquarters to discuss "the appalling levels of violence" and efforts to help the special envoy, said UN spokesperson Martin Nesirky.

"The three leaders warned against the risk of Syria turning into a regional battleground as violence intensifies.

"They were concerned that Syria will fall prey to actors whose agenda has nothing to do with Syria if violence continued," the spokesperson added.

There was mounting Western pressure on Russia and China to ease their opposition to UN action against the Assad regime.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton denounced the UN's inability to act.

"The atrocities mount while the Security Council remains paralyzed and I would urge that we try once again to find a path forward" for the council to try to end the violence," she said.

British Prime Minister David Cameron said the blood of children killed in the conflict

had become "a terrible stain on the reputation of this United Nations."

Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose country stands accused of blocking UN action, accused the West of pursuing policies that had destabilized Arab countries.

"They have already created a situation of chaos in many territories and are now continuing the same policy in other countries – including Syria," news agencies quoted him as saying.

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

- **Syria rebels announce decisive attack in Aleppo**

Several thousand Syrian rebels on Thursday afternoon launched what they said would be a decisive battle for control of the strategic northern city of Aleppo.

"Tonight, Aleppo will be ours or we will be defeated," Abu Furat, a rebel commander, told AFP.

Separately, an AFP correspondent saw dozens of rebels grouping in schools in the

city's northern Izaa quarter, some of whom were firing mortars.

Aleppo has been the scene of fierce fighting since July, when rebels launched an offensive to capture the commercial capital.

After some early successes, the rebel campaign slowed because of a shortage of ammunition.

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

- **Second Islamist group claims Damascus attack**

A second Islamist militant group has claimed responsibility for Wednesday's assault on a Syrian army headquarters in the heart of Damascus, in a statement posted to the Internet.

Al-Nusra Front said on a jihadist website on Thursday that it was behind the attack on the heavily guarded headquarters in the capital.

Al-Nusra Front was unheard of before the Syrian revolt erupted in March 2011. It has claimed the majority of suicide attacks

over the course of the conflict, including a twin suicide bombing in Damascus in May that killed 55 people.

It said that a suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden vehicle outside the headquarters.

Amid the panic, four Al-Nusra members disguised in military uniforms were able to trick the security guards into letting them into the building, after which a three-hour gun battle ensued, according to the group.

Al-Nusra said all five men were killed in the attack, whose description was strikingly similar to one given the day before by a separate Islamist group.

On Wednesday, an Islamist rebel group calling itself Tajamo Ansar al-Islam (Gathering of Partisans of Islam) claimed responsibility for the attack.

It said a suicide bomber blew up his vehicle at the entrance of the headquarters, while bombs planted in the third floor of the building were made to go off at the same time.

Five of its fighters, including a suicide bomber, were killed in the attack, a statement added.

State media said the attack on the heavily guarded site killed four guards and sparked a gun battle between troops and rebels.

For its part, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, as well as a rebel officer, said the attack was an inside job.

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

- **Putin warns against 'wide-scale ethnic cleansing' in Syria**

Russian President accuses West of pursuing policies that are encouraging chaos in Syria.

Putin warned that Syria risked seeing the kind of bloody chaos that followed the Roman Empire's invasion of Carthage and the great city's fall in 146 BC

MOSCOW - Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday accused the West of pursuing policies that had destabilised

states in the Arab world and now risked creating chaos in Syria.

"The most important thing is that our partners cannot stop themselves," news agencies quoted Putin as saying at his local Moscow residence at a meeting with local residents of the Ryazan region in central Russia.

"They have already created a situation of chaos in many territories and are now continuing the same policy in other countries -- including Syria," said Putin.

Putin's tough talk comes a day after British Prime Minister David Cameron told the UN General Assembly that nations like Russia and China who vetoed sanctions resolutions on Syria had left a "terrible stain" on the United Nations' reputation.

Countering the accusations, Putin used apocalyptic language to warn that Syria risked seeing the kind of bloody chaos that followed the Roman Empire's invasion of Carthage and the great city's fall in 146 BC.



He described this as the world's first example "of wide-scale ethnic cleansing".

One fable said the Romans then salted corpses to make sure that nothing ever grew there -- a process Putin described in bloody detail and warned might be repeated again in Syria.

"The Roman empire not only seized and occupied Carthage, but even when it destroyed everything, it dismembered everyone and then poured salt over them to make sure that nothing grew back," Putin said.

"We would really like not to see what happened in history many centuries ago repeated again today," the strongman Russian leader stressed.

But he then argued that "something similar happens when strong countries try

to force weak ones to follow their own rules of conduct and their moral codes."

Putin has often used colourful and forceful language to make his point in disputes with the West over policies ranging from the conduct of war to his own human rights record.

Cameron had used the UN General Assembly podium to effectively accuse Russia of having the blood of Syrian children on its hands

"The blood of these young children is a terrible stain on the reputation of this United Nations," Cameron said in reference to a death toll that the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said has reached more than 30,000.

"And in particular, a stain on those who have failed to stand up to these atrocities and in some cases aided and abetted President (Bashar al-Assad's) reign of terror."

Russia continues to sell arms to Syria and has repeatedly rejected sanctions against is last major Arab world all as an example of biased policy in a civil war.

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=54607>

- **Nations, activists seeking Assad's exit to meet at 'Friends of Syria'**

Foreign ministers and senior diplomats from the "Friends of Syria" - a group that includes the United States, France, Saudi Arabia and Turkey - are due to meet in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly on Friday.

"I just expect ideas to be presented. There will be no concrete plans," Arab League Secretary General Nabil El-Erabi told Reuters. "Governments are not ready to put plans into action and the Security Council is not agreeing on anything."

The 18-month uprising against Assad's rule has killed around 30,000 people, according to activists. The protests have further escalated into an armed insurgency fighting with sectarian overtones that could drag in regional powers.

Appearing on the sidelines of the world's largest diplomatic gathering, Syrian activists, many of whom have flown in

from Syria, will attend a meeting of the ad-hoc Friends of Syria group hosted by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

Syrian grassroots activists, who are working to run field hospitals and repair fuel lines, will Friday urge world leaders to do more to help a stricken people caught up in the battle to oust the Assad regime.

Clinton is expected to unveil further funding to help the Syrian opposition as it battles to topple Assad.

The United States has already provided some \$100 million in humanitarian assistance, and a further \$25 million in non-lethal aid. Washington has however also insisted it will not bow to calls to arm the rebels, fearing it will further complicate the situation on the ground.

In a sign of the dangers they are facing, the representatives of some of the Syrian political opposition groups and revolutionary councils springing up in liberated areas such as Homs and Aleppo have asked not to be identified.

“It’s important to recognize the courage of these people, but also we need to hear from them firsthand about the types of support that they want,” a senior State Department official said Thursday.

The talks in New York will focus on what extra support can be given to the opposition, what the humanitarian needs are and how pressure can be increased on the Assad regime, the official said.

“None of this is happening as quickly as we would like, in terms of the regime leaving, of Bashar al-Assad and his clique stepping aside to allow a transition to go forward,” the US official said.

“That said, the regime is steadily losing ground if you look at the changes on the ground... the regime is definitely slipping militarily,” he said, pointing to cracks in the Assad power structure including defections, military losses, and the loss of control of many of the border crossings with Turkey and Iraq.

One of the major concerns is the growing refugee crisis. About one million to 1.5 million people are internally displaced, with a further 300,000 having slipped into

neighboring countries, according to UN estimates.

Iraq will join a meeting of the Friends of Syria for the first time, in growing recognition of the role it plays in the region, and the number of refugees it is now hosting.

The General Assembly this week highlighted the global stalemate, with most of the 193-states condemning events in Syria but showing no substance behind their rhetoric.

Russia, which has three times vetoed a Security Council resolution on Syria, stuck to its position: Assad's departure should not be a precondition for a political transition and under no circumstances will it support a UN resolution that could lead to military intervention.

Painting a bleak picture of mediation efforts, U.N.-Arab League representative Lakhdar Brahimi told the Security Council that the situation in Syria is worsening and Assad's government is clinging to the hope of returning to the past. Five weeks into the job, he admitted he had no plan but "a few ideas."

Opponents of the Syrian president look less united in their approach. Qatar called for an alternative plan and once again urged Arab states to create a regional force to stop the bloodshed.

President Barack Obama, preoccupied with his re-election bid on Nov. 6, barely mentioned Syria in his address to delegates. Former colonial power France urged the UN to protect areas "liberated" in Syria, but officials acknowledged behind the scenes the calls were essentially symbolic.

Most nations, including Russia and China, agree on the principles of a previously proposed six-point peace plan and framework of an accord struck in Geneva between the permanent members of the Security Council.

Both those plans are stillborn unless an agreement with Russia can be struck on how to ensure they are implemented.

"Unfortunately, all these mediations have failed," Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu told Reuters. "We all support Lakhdar Brahimi, but we have learned that

there must be a stronger mandate given to the special representative.”

He said the Friends of Syria was created to defend the rights of the Syrian people and not to undermine the United Nations. The group now seems as hamstrung as the Security Council.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/09/28/240630.html>

- **Assad’s regime at its ‘worst stage’: Syria’s defected PM Hijab**

There is no solution to end the Syrian crisis but to arm the opposition which now controls 70% of the country, a defected Syrian top official told Al Arabiya on Thursday, pointing out that the solution to the Syrian crisis will arise from inside the country.

Riadh Hijab, the former Syrian prime minister, expected that the U.N.-Arab envoy to Syria Lakhdar Brahimi would face the same fate of his predecessor, Kofi Annan, which is failure.

“The regime is only buying time and I’ve heard this from Bashar [al-Assad],” Hijab

told Al Arabiya’s weekly show Studio Beirut.

He said that the Syrian regime maintains its power only from Russian and Iranian support. “Those two powers are keeping the regime thriving until today,” he said, adding that the regime was at its worst stage. He said that the Assad regime was collapsing morally, materially and economically.

Commenting on the ongoing fighting between the Syrian regime and the Free Syrian Army (FSA), Hijab said that the regime relied completely on its air force, while the FSA controls the ground.

In his first interview following his defection, Hijab pointed out that he wasn’t willing to assume any leadership role in the formation of a new Syrian government; but he was later convinced by a friend – who is one of al-Assad’s consultants – that his new role might bring a “spark of hope” or a “ray” of solution to the country’s complicated crises.

“When I met Bashar al-Assad for several hours, I’ve detailed him with what was

happening in the street and that using the army to solve Syria's crisis was a wrong method. I've also spoke to him about corruption, reform and dialogue. We have also discussed other alternative approaches for the government to stop bloodshed and he had agreed on that," Hijab said.

Hijab expresses how he was shocked by Bashar's speech at the parliament when he said that this was a war.

"I've asked Bashar not to enter my city 'Deir Ezzor, but instead he had bombed it on the first day of the formation of the government," Hijab said.

Hijab explained that Bashar's brother, Maher, was the decision-maker and that his cousins Rami Makhouf and Hafez Maklouf were the most influential of his aides.

Regarding the attack on the crisis management cell, "it was solely done through the Free Syrian Army and my defection has nothing to do with it. I've been always trying to persuade Bashar not to take this crisis as a battle against his

people, there is no such thing as victory against his people."

"After the bombing, I met Bashar to convince him that the use of power is not logical and will not bring results, except destruction and more killings. I have told him that the only solution is through constructive dialogue with the opposition, but he rejected. I've then lost hope that the regime would change its approach, especially after a rebel commander announced that 'around 70% of Aleppo city has fallen in the hands of the Free Syrian Army'," Hijab said.

"I'm not trying to form a transitional council, but to unite the efforts of the opposition abroad. We are looking for establishing a new council that would include all spectrums of the opposition to represent Syria in international forums and to take international legitimacy," he said.

Hijab said that government should be in Syria to communicate with local councils and that the new government should be formed of technocrats.

“There is no nation in history that has suffered as the Syrian nation. There is no head of state in this world who acted like Bashar. I have no doubts that Bashar could use any means after he used tons of TNT to kill his people,” he concluded.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/09/27/240565.html>

7. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Philippine maids to get minimum wage in Saudi**

Saudi Arabia agrees to \$400 monthly minimum wage for Filipina maids, lift ban on them imposed a year ago.

1.2 million Filipinos are employed in Saudi Arabia

MANILA - Saudi Arabia has agreed to a \$400 monthly minimum wage for Filipina maids, a year after a row over the issue halted the entry of such workers, Philippines officials said Thursday.

Philippine Vice President Jejomar Binay, who oversees the welfare of Filipino overseas workers, said in a statement that

the kingdom had agreed to lift its ban on Filipino workers, imposed in June 2011.



"More than the lifting of the ban, I find the decision of the Saudi government to increase the mandated salary for our household service workers further proof of a shared commitment to protect (their) welfare," he added.

Binay's spokesman Joey Salgado later confirmed that Saudi Arabia had agreed to the \$400 minimum monthly wage that the Philippines had been asking for its maids -- one of the key issues that led to the ban being imposed.

Earlier this week, Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the Philippines, Abdullah Al-Hassan, said an agreement would be forged within a month allowing Filipina maids to be allowed back into his country, without going into details.

The row erupted last year when Manila insisted the minimum wage for its maids was necessary to protect them from exploitation. Riyadh had resisted the demand and suspended the processing of employment contracts.

Saudi Arabia is a major employer of Filipinos, with 1.2 million working there as labourers, technicians, salesgirls and domestic helpers.

They are part of the estimated nine million Filipinos -- or about 10 percent of the population -- who work overseas and whose remittances back home are a major pillar of the economy.

The welfare of overseas Filipino workers, who frequently face abuse and exploitation while abroad, is a sensitive issue back home.

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=54604>

- **How realistic is Arab military intervention in Syria**

Analysts warn Qatari-proposed Arab military intervention in Syria will risk dragging region into all-out conflict.

Qatar's call for Arab military intervention in Syria would be difficult to achieve practically and politically, and would risk dragging the region into an all-out conflict, analysts say.

Qatar's emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani on Tuesday urged Arab action over war-torn Syria because of the failure of the UN Security Council and other international efforts to end the conflict.

Because of this failure, "it is better for Arab countries to intervene themselves out of their humanitarian, political and military duties and do what is necessary to stop the bloodshed," Sheikh Hamad told the General Assembly.

But according to Mustafa al-Ani of the Gulf Research Centre in Dubai, "Arab countries do not have the military capabilities to act as deterrent forces and do not have a united leadership or coordination."

"An Arab intervention would also open the door for a counter intervention by (Syria's staunch ally) Iran, and eventually a regional conflict," said Ani.

Qatar's emir cited the precedent of an Arab intervention force sent to Lebanon in the 1970s in a bid to halt that country's civil war. He called the 1976 Arab League-backed operation "a step that proved to be effective and useful."

But for Ani, the Lebanon intervention, as well as a similar Arab intervention to counter Iraqi forces in Kuwait based on a decision by the Arab League in 1961, "failed politically and militarily."

In October 1976, a 30,000-strong predominantly Syrian Arab Deterrent Force was sent to Lebanon.

Three years later, Arab troops withdrew, except for the Syrians who stayed on until they eventually pulled out under international pressure in 2005.

Yezid Sayigh, an expert at the Beirut-based Carnegie Middle East Centre, agrees that Qatar's proposal is "impracticable."

"There is no diplomatic consensus among Arab countries, so how could they agree on military action?"

So far, only Tunisia's President Moncef Marzouki has said his country could support an Arab peacekeeping force in Syria.

Military intervention also requires "strong involvement from neighbouring countries -- Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey," says Sayigh. "Lebanon and Iraq are not prepared for such an intervention. And even Jordan might not be."

Neil Partrick, a London-based Middle East expert, also agrees that the proposal is not feasible.

"Qatar is unlikely to get UN blessing for an Arab force that does anything more than observe," said Partrick. "Without UN Security Council authorisation, not many Arab states will rush to join this army."

He dismissed the idea as "perhaps just a reflection of the need for leaders to be seen to be doing, or more appropriately, saying something."

Sheikh Hamad, once a major ally of embattled Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, has become one of his fiercest critics as Damascus accuses Qatar and Saudi Arabia of arming Syrian rebels.

The Qatari emir said on Tuesday the 18-month-old Syrian conflict "has reached an unacceptable phase" with a government "that does not hesitate to use all sorts of weapons against its people."

He said intervention was needed because all efforts to "get Syria out of the cycle of killing" had been in vain and the UN Security Council has "failed" to take a stand.

The 15-nation Security Council is deadlocked over the conflict that began in a March 2011 uprising and which the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights says has left more than 30,000 dead.

Russia, Assad's main ally, and China have vetoed three Security Council resolutions which could have led to sanctions against Damascus.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Wednesday appealed for the "paralysed"

Security Council to make a new attempt to reach an accord on Syria.

Earlier, Qatar's prime minister, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem al-Thani, told CNN there was a "Plan B."

"You need to make safe haven areas, first of all," he said. "That would require a no-fly zone.

"If the Syrians want to break that, that's another subject. We need somebody to have the teeth to tell them 'don't do that', because that will not be allowed," he said.

Qatar's proposal demonstrates that all parties, including Damascus, believe that "there is no diplomatic or political solution" to the conflict in Syria where events have proved it can only be resolved militarily, as in Libya and not with a political agreement as in Yemen.

For Sayegh, the Qatari emir's remarks were mainly "an expression of frustration at the international, especially Western, lack of action" on Syria.

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=54601>

- **Bahrain policeman sentenced to 7 years for killing protester**

Policeman sentenced for murder of Hani Abdel Aziz, court acquits two others officers charged for murder of two other protesters.

At least 60 people have been killed since the protests first erupted last February

DUBAI - A Bahraini court on Thursday sentenced a policeman to seven years in prison for killing a protester during the Shiite-led anti-government demonstrations that rocked the tiny Gulf kingdom in 2011, a lawyer said.



"The policeman was sentenced to seven years in prison for the murder of Hani Abdel Aziz," a Shiite protester, said the lawyer who asked to remain anonymous.

However, the court "acquitted two other officers who were charged with the murder of two other protesters, Ali al-Moumin and Issa Abdel Hasan," the lawyer added.

All three victims died of wounds sustained in clashes with riot police who used bird shot to disperse the crowds.

On September 17, the kingdom's attorney general charged a total of seven police officers with torture.

The authorities say they are implementing the recommendations of an independent commission of inquiry called for by the king that confirmed allegations of excessive use of force by security forces during the month-long Arab Spring uprising against the Sunni ruling dynasty.

Home to the US Fifth Fleet and strategically situated across the Gulf from Iran, Bahrain has continued to witness sporadic Shiite-led demonstrations, mostly outside the capital since it crushed the pro-democracy uprising in March last year.

According to Amnesty International, at least 60 people have been killed since the protests first erupted last February.

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=54606>

- **Nigeria suspends pilgrimage flights to Saudi**

Hundreds of Nigerian women, among more than a thousand denied entry to Saudi Arabia, flew back from Jeddah late Thursday after Nigeria suspended pilgrimage flights to the kingdom.

The angry would-be pilgrims, who were turned back because they were not accompanied by men, denounced their treatment at the hands of the Saudi authorities, with one traveller saying they had been treated criminals.

A total of 511 women arrived at the Kano international airport at 8:13 pm (19H13 GMT) on a flight from Jeddah, some of them in tears.

Some of them said they had been kept at Jeddah airport as long as five days, under what they said were humiliating conditions.

"Some of us were kept in two halls for five days in humiliating conditions with little food, water and other basic needs and inadequate toilet facilities," said one of the women, Zainb Mohammed.

"Many of us have cold and fever. We did not have blankets and it was cold, especially at night.

"It is obvious that we will miss the hajj," she said, referring to the Muslim's hajj pilgrimage to Mecca.

Maryam Abdullahi said officials had humiliated them.

"I have never been so sad in my life like in the past three days," she said.

"We were held like criminals in debasing conditions. We deserve human treatment and as women and mothers, we deserve to be treated with honor but the Saudis have shown that they have no heart."

Earlier Thursday, 102 Nigerian women returned to the country having been denied entry into the Kingdom because they were not accompanied by men.

A statement earlier Thursday by the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria described the situation as an "unprecedented and worrisome development."

More than a thousand Nigerian women stopped from making the hajj had been stranded for five days in Saudi Arabia.

Some were stuck at King Abdulazeez International Airport in Jeddah and others at Prince Muhammad Ibn Azeez International Airport in Madina, the commission said.

"After consultation with all stakeholders, the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria has been compelled to temporarily suspend all Hajj flights for the next 48 hours," it added.

The suspension of all flights would enable the commission to "appraise the situation critically," it added.

The first women began arriving at Jeddah airport on Sunday and 171 of them flew home to Nigeria on Wednesday.

Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan on Wednesday had set up a five-member team to negotiate with the Saudi authorities, an official statement said.

Roughly half of Nigeria's 160 million people are Muslim.

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

8. AFGHANISTAN - PAKISTAN

• Afghan minister calls for preservation of historical, cultural heritage

KABUL, Sept. 27 (Xinhua) -- The Afghan government and the international community should take more urgent measures to save the rich historical sites and structures as well as cultural facilities in Afghanistan, the Afghan Minister of Culture and Information said.

"I have frequently warned the government and the international community in the past and now I repeat it again that if more urgent measures would not be in place to preserve the historical monuments and cultural heritages of Afghanistan we would witness a dangerous situation by losing major parts

of Afghan heritage in coming years," local newspaper -- the Daily Afghanistan quoted Syed Makhdoom Raheen as saying on Thursday.

"The danger to Afghanistan heritage, which is part of world's heritage as well, has grown steady over the past years as more than 1,200 historic and archaeological site have been threaten by natural hard times and protracted conflicts," Raheen told audience in a ceremony to mark the World Tourism Day, which falls on Sept. 27 every year.

Like other institutions, Tourism Industry has also been badly damaged in insurgency-hit Afghanistan due to protracted wars and civil conflicts.

The minister said that the government has in the past made great efforts for awareness of vulnerability of the cultural heritage and historical site but specific preservation is needed in an efficient manner to safeguard and monitor the situation of the sites.

"The government should take the proper administrative measures to ensure that all sites with historical and archeological

importance not just in Kabul and other big cities but throughout the country should be preserved and maintained for the next generation."

According to Afghan archaeologists and cultural officials, armed conflicts, uncontrolled urbanizations as well as digging the sites by the looters and gangs have been the main objects to put the site in danger.

However, the government has set up several hundreds of special police forces to preserve the sites across the country, according to officials.

Although in the pre-war times Afghanistan had been one of the few international tourist destinations in South and Central Asia, the decades of militancy and civil war has virtually pushed the country back into a conservative social order.

While tourism industry is yet at its toddling stage, the loving and hardworking people of Afghanistan are doing overtime to promote the industry.

"If we promote the tourism once again in the country, Afghanistan could earns an

estimated of 4 billion to 7 billion U.S. dollars from the industry by year as we know," the minister said in his remarks.

"Efforts are underway to preserve the sites but many important sites are still out of the list. The list is not in a proper way. So many heritage sites in the country remain unprotected," he said.

To develop the tourism, the government has declared Band-e-Amir, a natural lake in the central Bamyān province, some 200 km west of Kabul, as a national park in 2009.

Although Afghanistan is the cradle of old civilizations ranging from Bactrian, Zoroastrian, Buddhism and Islam, and even the legacy of cold war era are available there in bulk but little has been invested in tourism industry.

There are castles, historical forts and archeological sites dated back to 5,000 years. However, these national assets are not properly preserved.

Archeological sites, like the huge castle in Balkh province, Takht-e-Rustam (Rustam's Throne) in Samangan province, Shahr-e-

Ghulghula (Scream city) in Bamyān province, Munar-e-Jam (Jam Minarets), and many other relics are living monuments of all these civilizations.

Also in Bamyān province, once the center of Buddhism, the giant Buddhas dated back to 3,500 years were destroyed by Taliban regime in March 2000 and the monks' caves around have been housing homeless people in the contemporary world.

"Great efforts and hard works must be in place and measures have been put in place to improve the tourism industry in Afghanistan," Afghan President Hamid Karzai said in his message readout in the ceremony.

The president also ordered the related government agencies to set up an institute of tourism to further help the industry in the country.

In the eve of the tourism day, the National Archie of Briton has announced to transfer copies of some 5,000 Afghanistan-related documents to the Afghan National Archive, according to Director of Afghan National Archive, Sakhi Munir.

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

- **Quadrilateral summit in Pakistan postponed**

ISLAMABAD, Sept. 27 (Xinhua) -- Pakistan said Thursday that the quadrilateral summit (Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Afghanistan) which is scheduled to be held in Islamabad on October 2-3 has been postponed.

New summit dates will be worked out after seeking convenience of the respective leaders through diplomatic channels, the Foreign Ministry said.

The Foreign Ministry did not give any reason for the postponement.

Russian President Vladimir Putin was scheduled to attend the summit along with Afghan President Hamid Karzai and Tajik President Emomalii Rahmon.

"In a letter to the President of Pakistan, President Vladimir Putin expressed his eagerness to jointly enhance our efforts to further develop Russian-Pakistani ties and advance mutually beneficial trade and

economic projects," a Foreign Ministry statement said.

"I am confident that in future we shall be able to find opportunities for arranging our personal meeting. We shall always be happy to receive you in Russia," Putin wrote.

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

- **16 schoolgirls poisoned in Afghan capital**

Press TV

September 26, 2012

At least 16 schoolgirls have been poisoned in Afghanistan in the latest similar poisoning incidents in the country.

The incident took place in Um-ul-Benin high school in the capital Kabul on Wednesday, Khaama Press reported.

Amanullah Iman, a spokesman for the Afghan Education Ministry, said that the girls were taken to a nearby hospital for treatment.

He added that most of the poisoned girls were discharged after receiving medical treatment.

It is not clear yet what caused the poisoning, but the country's health authorities have launched an investigation into the case.

Iman went on to say that similar incidents, in which militants had been involved, were also reported in the past.

In June, at least 116 students, mostly girls, were poisoned at Hazrat Imam Zada Yahya high school in the northern province of Sar-e-Pol.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai has blamed the enemies of Afghanistan for the instances of poisoning.

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

- **U.S. Army to stand down for a day for suicide prevention**

WASHINGTON, Sept. 26 (Xinhua) -- U.S. Army said Wednesday its soldiers have been ordered to put aside duties on Thursday, and spend the day on suicide prevention training.

Sergeant Major Raymond Chandler said at a news conference the day will focus on making sure troops and their families know what programs are available to them and helping them get over the embarrassment and seek help.

Troops with duties such as combat operations in Afghanistan or medical duties in army hospitals will schedule their training when possible.

The U.S. military is facing a growing problem of suicide, as the cumulative effects of 10 years of war take a heavy toll on servicemembers. Being the largest of the services with the highest number of suicides, the Army had 167 suicides in 2011. The figure could approach 200 this year. The Army is also the only one planning the special training Thursday.

In an interview this week with a North Carolina newspaper, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said the Defense Department is partnering with the Department of Veterans Affairs to allot 100 million dollars toward advancing diagnosis and treatment, in order to prevent suicides.

"We've really been pushing on trying to open up access to quality mental and behavioral health care, trying to expand access, so we've got some 9,000 new psychiatrists and psychologists, social workers and nurses," Panetta said.

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

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

Bu bülten **ORSAM Ortadoğu Uzman Yardımcısı Nebahat Tanrıverdi 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.*