



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

The Restructuring Procces of Iraq

Irak'ın Yeniden Yapılanma Süreci

Energy Security

Enerji Güvenliđi

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Ethnic and Secterian Groups

Etnik ve Mezhepsel Gruplar

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Relations with the West

Batı'yla İliőkiler



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1. IRAQ

- **Zebari, Cyprus Foreign Minister discuss bilateral relations, situation in the area**

Baghdad (NINA) – Foreign Minister, Hoshiyar Zebari, discussed with Cyprus Foreign Minister, Erato Kozakou-Marcoullis, Iraq's relations with the European Union, being current President of the European Union.



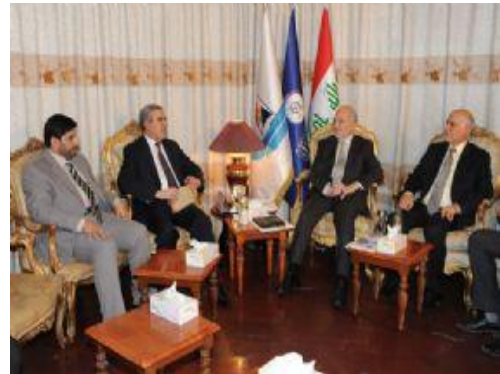
A statement issued on Thursday, Sep. 6, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the two discussed also the situation in Iraq.

It added that Zebari praised the developing relations between Iraq and the European Union, since the Cooperation and Partnership Agreement between the two was signed, earlier this year.

Relations between Iraq and Cyprus was discussed too and means to develop them; in addition to the situation in the area, especially in Syria, and its effect of the area.

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

- **Jafari discusses general situation with Khuza'e, Asadi**



Baghdad (NINA) – Leader of the National Alliance, Ibrahim al-Jafari, received on Thursday, Sep. 6, Vice President Khudaiyer al-Khuza'e, and Dawa Party official, Khalid al-Asadi.

In a statement to the press, Jafari's Media Office said that in the meeting discussion covered situation in Iraq stressing necessity to preserve Iraq's social fabric

without religious, sectarian, ethnical or racial discrimination.

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

- **Mutlaq, Fayadh discuss political, security issues**

Baghdad (NINA) – Deputy Prime Minister, Saleh al-Mutlaq, discussed with National Security Advisor, Faleh al-Fayadh, a number of political and security issues, in addition to the talks carried out by Parliamentary blocs about the Reform Paper presented by the National Alliance.

A statement issued on Thursday, Sep. 6, by the Deputy Prime Minister's Media Bureau, said that in the meeting, Mutlaq affirmed that challenges face Iraq in response to regional developments and the importance of national unity against rumors aiming to harm Iraq's security.

He pointed out the importance to speed up enacting the General Amnesty Law, because of its positive effects toward consolidate trust between citizens and security agencies and government institutions.

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

- **Zebari, Elaraby discuss Iraq's initiative to solve Syrian crisis**

Baghdad (NINA) – Foreign Minister, Hoshiyar Zebari, discusses with the Arab League's Secretary General, Nabil Elaraby, Iraq's initiative to solve the Syrian crisis.

The two discussed, also, resolutions passed by the Follow up Committee and commitments made by the Arab Summit, held in Baghdad last March.

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

- **Askari: "KSA hinders establishing diplomatic relations with Iraq"**

Baghdad (AIN) –Member of the Parliamentary Foreign Relations Committee, Sami al-Askari, accused "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia of hindering the process of establishing diplomatic relations with Iraq."

He stated to All Iraq News Agency (AIN) "The Saudi side in not interacting with the Iraqi new political scene till the current

time," noting that "The Saudi Arabia is hurdling launching normal relations with Iraq because till now the Saudi Arabia did not appoint a permanent ambassador to Iraq."

"The Saudi Arabia has a negative stance towards the Iraqi political process, government and the Prime Minister," he added.

Over the possibility of resuming oil exports through Yanbu pipeline which linking the two countries, he said "Iraq has a strong desire to inaugurate this pipeline again but this is related to the political situation and the tensed relations between the two countries."

http://www.alliraqnews.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=17972:ksa-hinders-establishing-diplomatic-relations-with-iraq&catid=41:2011-11-19-15-21-19

- **Tajdeed Movement expects judicial sentences to be issued against Hashimi next Sunday**

Baghdad (AIN) –Tajdeed Movement, headed by the judicially wanted Vice-President Tariq al-Hashimi, expected that

"The judicial sentences will be issued against the judicially wanted VP, Tariq al-Hashimi, on next Sunday."

MP, Jamal al-Kilani, member of the Movement stated to AIN "The court is expected to issue the judicial verdicts against Hashimi during the session of next Sunday."

"This will negatively affect the political process," he added.

"This will oblige the Iraqiya Slate to conduct political efforts to postpone this judicial decision or to cancel it because we think it is basically a political issue," he concluded.

Hashimi's case is one of the pending issues among the political blocs especially between the State of Law Coalition and the Iraqiya Slate.

Earlier, INTERPOL issued an arrest warrant against Hashimi for being suspected in conducting terrorist crimes against civilians and officials in Iraq.

http://www.alliraqnews.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=

[17973:tajdeed-movement-expects-judicial-sentences-to-be-issued-against-hashimi-next-sunday&catid=41:2011-11-19-15-21-19](http://www.alliraqnews.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=17942:fm-arabi-discuss-iraqi-initiative-for-settling-syrian-crisis&catid=41:2011-11-19-15-21-19)

- **FM, Arabi discuss Iraqi initiative for settling Syrian crisis**

Baghdad (AIN) –The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hoshyar Zibari, and the Secretary General of Arab League, Nabeel al-Arabi, discussed "The Iraqi initiative for settling the Syrian crisis."

Informed source stated "Both sides discussed implementing the decisions issued by the Arab Summit that was held in Baghdad."

"The Iraqi delegation headed by Zibari presented the decisions of the meeting for the AL's Council of Arab Foreign Ministers which was concluded on last Wednesday," the statement concluded.

http://www.alliraqnews.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=17942:fm-arabi-discuss-iraqi-initiative-for-settling-syrian-crisis&catid=41:2011-11-19-15-21-19

- **Jobouri: 660 Articles within Constitution need amendments**

Baghdad (AIN) –MP, Haitham al-Jubouri, revealed that "More than 660 Articles within the Iraqi Constitution need amendments," noting that "The Reforms Committee will recommend the Constitutional Amendments Committee to do the required amendments."

He stated to All Iraq News Agency (AIN) "The Constitutional Amendments Committee needs to present these amendments to the Iraqis through a referendum so the Reforms Committee will request the political sides to facilitate the performance of the Constitutional Amendments Committee to be able to accomplish its tasks."

He ruled out "Conducting the required amendments during the current parliamentary term due to the general situation in the country which does not encourage them."

Earlier, the Iraqiya Slate called to amend the constitution similarly the Premier, Nouri al-Maliki, confirmed the need to amend the constitution.

The parliament formed a Constitutional Amendments Committee to consider the defects of the current constitution to amend them.

http://www.alliraqnews.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=17975:jobouri-660-articles-within-constitution-need-amendments&catid=42:2011-11-19-15-21-51

- **Anbar council reelects Jassem al-Halbousi as its chairman**

ANBAR / Aswat al-Iraq: The Anbar council has reelected Jassem al-Halboursi as chairman of the council to replace the ousted Maamon al-Ulawani, a member of the council said on Wednesday.

"The council elected al-Halbousi, who belongs to the National Dialogue front, as a chairman of the council," Mezher al-Mulla told Aswat al-Iraq news agency.

"17 members out of the 19 who attended the session voted for the man," he added.

Ramadi, the capital of Anbar, lies 110 km west of Baghdad.

http://en.aswataliraq.info/%28S%28pqx4cv55nfq0tg45lw03cr55%29%29/Default1.aspx?page=article_page&id=150340&l=1

- **Iraq chairs Arab ministerial committee meeting in Cairo**

BAGHDAD / Aswat al-Iraq: The Arab ministerial committee meeting started at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo to follow up the implementation of the resolutions adopted during the recent Arab summit in Baghdad under the chairmanship of Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari with Egyptian President Mohammad Morsi attending.

Iraq hosted the Arab Summit meetings, following 25 years of the last meeting held in Baghdad.

http://en.aswataliraq.info/%28S%28pqx4cv55nfq0tg45lw03cr55%29%29/Default1.aspx?page=article_page&id=150338&l=1

- **Kirkuk Council votes on Tigris Operations Command today**

mohammed kamal KIKUK, Sept.6 (AKnews)- Kirkuk Provincial Council is due to meet today to collect a vote in favor or against an order for forming Tigris

Operations Command and it is expected that the order be rejected by a majority vote, a Council member said.



Recently Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki ordered to form the joint operations command in Diyala and Kirkuk provinces and demanded all the interior and defense forces in the two ethnically diverse provinces be subordinated to the new command, locally known as Dijla Operations Command.

The formation of the new command is not in the interest of Kirkuk and creates constitutional and legal violations because

Kirkuk has a particular situation and no forces should be formed in the province, said Mohammed Kamal.

He continued the situation in Diyala is quite different to that of Kirkuk.

Kamal wondered how the Tigris Operations Command can be unified when there is Salahaddin province separating Kirkuk and Diyala.

The representative thought formation of the new force is "politically motivated against the Kurds and Turkmen."

He thought the new force is not for improving the security situation in Kirkuk and the best evidence for this is "assassination of Brig. Adnan Abdul-Razzaq [a police chief in Kikuk]... They want police to be weak so that they say let Dijla force come [into Kirkuk]."

Calling into mind, a report in 2006 by James A. Baker (former US secretary of state) Lee H. Hamilton (former democratic congressman) which described Kirkuk as a "barrel gun", Kamal said "I believe that Kurds, Turkmen, Arabs, Assyrians,

Chaldeans [in Kirkuk] did not allow for this barrel to explode.

"But the Dijla force is the priming for this gun barrel to explode Kirkuk and this is not in the interest of any side."

<http://www.aknews.com/en/aknews/4/324974/>

- **We handed over detailed report about bombing of Council of Representatives, says parliamentary committee**

BAGHDAD, Sept. 6 (AKnews) - The committee investigating the bombing of the Council of Representatives says it gave the presidency of the council a detailed report documented with pictures about the attempted bombing of the council, adding that it is waiting for the report to be read.

A car bomb driven by a suicide bomber exploded on November 28 outside the courtyard of the Iraqi Council of Representatives. The driver was killed and a number of others were wounded.

The investigative committee previously presented part of the report about the

explosion of the car that targeted the Council of Representatives. The report met widespread parliamentary criticism, where it was considered to be a non-detailed report.

Committee chairman Iskandar Wattout said: "Two of the detainees are in prison, one of them planned the bombing and the other implemented it."

The entrance to the Green Zone undergoes a series of complex electronic and manual inspections, including exposure to explosives detectors and special wheels for a radiation survey.

The Iraqi wing of al-Qaeda in Iraq announced its responsibility for the bombing of the Iraqi Council of Representatives and said that it was targeting PM Maliki.

<http://www.aknews.com/en/aknews/3/325013/>

- **Manager of Shirqat counter-terrorism office killed**

Shafaq News / A source in Salahuddin police revealed on Thursday that the manager of counter-terrorism office in

Shirgat district Colonel, Ismail Ahmed al-Jubouri was killed while three members of his bodyguards were injured by a roadside bomb attack that has targeted his convey north of Tikrit in Salahuddin province.

The source, who asked anonymity "Shafaq News", that "an armed group has blew up a roadside bomb today on the convoy of the manager of counter-terrorism office in Shirgat district 80 kilometers north of Salahuddin and killed him immediately " .

"Police forces took the body to the forensic medicine department in Biji district and transferred the injured to hospital for treatment."

"An extensive investigation was opened to know the party that stands behind the operation that targeted the manager of counter-terrorism Office."

The source said, "The police has intelligence and security information for the existence of an extensive plan implemented by al-Qaeda cells by targeting security officials", stressing that " it is exercising its operations through murder , assassination by silencer

weapons or roadside bombs in Tikrit , the northern provinces and Baghdad."

"These cells had carried out many operations against the security leaders in those provinces, saying that it is likely that it will carry out "organized assassinations operations against judges and security chiefs in the next days," the source added.

Salahuddin province, 170 km north of Baghdad is of the areas which are active with al- Qaeda and armed groups, particularly in Jazerra, al-Athem and Jalam areas as the security forces are trying to assert its control over these areas where Al- Qaeda tries to restore its presence and revive its sleeper cells .

<http://www.shafaq.com/en/news/3470-manager-of-shirgat-counter-terrorism-office-killed-.html>

- **Damluji: squad 56 of Maliki's office behind the attacks on social clubs**

Shafaq News / Al- Iraqiya List condemned on Thursday, what she has called as irresponsible government practices in limiting public freedoms, confirming the existence of "an organized campaign" to suppress freedoms and the right of

expression, as she called to pay attention to the "claws" that seeks to "tear" the Iraqi society.

Baghdad has witnessed in the last two days, the attack of a security force on a number of nightclubs and messing its contents as its visitors were exposed to beaten without knowing the reasons , as reports were circulated previously of preventing the unveiled women from entering Kathimiya city, north of the capital Baghdad.

The spokeswoman of Al- Iraqiya coalition, Maysoon al- Damluji , in a statement reported for "Shafaq News", that "there is an organized campaign to suppress freedoms and restrictions on the intellectual pluralism and the right of expression."

Damluji gave an example of what she has called the repressive actions of "Preventing unveiled women from entering Kathimiya city and its streets the shrine or the barefaced abuse that was conducted by the 56 squad of the General Commander of the Armed Forces on the social clubs, including the Writers Union,

pharmacists club, filmmakers club, Assyrians cultural club and others."



"Instead of prosecuting criminals and terrorists and defend the country , the 56 squad beat the artists, writers and social figures, in clear violation of human rights , the Constitution of Iraq and military ethics and values."

Damluji said that "This organized campaign to suppress freedoms is not taking place in isolation from the political developments in the region and the attempt of some neighboring countries to impose its political, intellectual, cultural dominance on Iraq."

The Article 37 / II of the Iraqi Constitution states that: (The State will guarantee the protection of the individual from intellectual, political and religious compulsion).

<http://www.shafaaq.com/en/news/3469-damluji-squad-56-of-maliki-office-behind-the-attacks-on-social-clubs.html>

- **Maliki to Jordan: let's face security challenges in the region**

Shafaq News / Prime Minister, Nuri al-Maliki has confirmed on Thursday that he met Jordan's general security chief, Lieutenant General, Ahmed Hussein al-Majali to face the security challenges in the region.

According to a statement issued by the Prime Minister, Nuri al-Maliki's office in which "Shafaq News", received a copy of it, "Nuri al-Maliki stressed the need to develop the relations and cooperation between the two countries to promote security, stability and security challenges surrounding the countries of the whole region."



The Jordanian official, Ahmed Hussein al-Majali said that "his country is doing its highest effort in this filed and is working to achieve cooperation and coordination with Iraq to establish security and stability, which serves all the countries of the region."

Ahmed Hussein al-Majali had met last Tuesday, the senior deputy of the Iraqi Interior Ministry, Adnan al-Asadi and expressed his country's readiness to cooperate with Iraq in the security field, confirming the need to concert efforts by the two countries to eradicate "the disaster of terrorism."

<http://www.shafaaq.com/en/news/3467-maliki-to-jordan-lets-face-security-challenges-in-the-region.html>

- **Clashes with al-Qaeda near Iraqi - Syrian border**



Shafaq News / A source in Nineveh Operations Command revealed on Thursday that two leaders of al-Qaeda were killed and two others were arrested in an armed clash with the Iraqi army near the Iraqi-Syrian border.

The source said in an interview with "Shafaq News" that "military force of the Iraqi army clashed today with four leaders of al-Qaeda in Rabia district , northwest of Mosul that resulted in killing one of al-Qaeda leaders from Iraqi nationality and other from Arab nationality", as the source did not reveal the State to which the leader's body belongs.

He added that "the clash also led to arrest two leaders of Syrian nationality, while two soldiers were wounded," noting that "the wounded were transferred to the nearest hospital for treatment and the dead to the forensic medicine department in Nineveh province."

Nineveh Operations Command announced, on Wednesday, at a news conference attended by "Shafaq News" that "about six senior leaders of al-Qaeda were arrested, including Arabs and a

cache contains quantities of weapons was seized west of the province.

It is worth mentioning that various armed groups take place on an almost daily basis against the security services, civilians as well as religious and ethnic minorities in Nineveh province; often result in killing and wounding several people.

The security plans announced by the security services and the military forces deployed in various districts, counties and villages couldn't eliminate these groups, according to statements of officials and citizens.

<http://www.shafaq.com/en/news/3468-clashes-with-al-qaeda-near-iraqi-syrian-border.html>

- **Iraqi Trade Minister: I Would Rather Resign than Sign Trade Agreements with Iran**

In this interview with Rudaw, Iraq's Minister of Trade Khairallah Hassan Babaker says he refused to sign a number of trade agreements with Iran during his last visit to the country. Babaker insists he will not sign anything until the Iranian side agrees to release the Iraqi share of water -

- referring to the blocked Alwand River, affecting regions such as Khanaqin. Babaker also said that, even though Turkey is cooperating with Iraq on the water issue, his ministry is still looking for an alternative source for trade, particularly for importing food items.

Rudaw: The Iraqi Ministry of Trade was one of the most corrupt ministries in the country. Is corruption still an issue in the ministry?

Khairallah Babaker: We have managed to control the issue of corruption in the ministry. There is no corruption in the ministry any longer.

The corruption was more to do with imported food ration items, which are in fact irrelevant to the Ministry of Trade. Ration food imports are not part of the ministry's laws, nor are they the responsibility of the ministry, but they were imposed on the ministry.

"There is a large population in Iraq that lives under the poverty line."

There is a large population in Iraq that lives under the poverty line. In the south,

middle and some areas of northern Iraq there has been no economic development. This has led to poverty in these areas. Even provinces like Musana have dropped below the poverty line; in some provinces, poverty has reached 48 percent. But in the Kurdistan Region, poverty is 12 to 13 percent.

These statistics show how the Iraqi economy has been ruined by the multiple wars and needs to be reconstructed. Until an economic infrastructure is built, the government has to support people in their daily lives.

Rudaw: During the mandate of Falah Sudani, the former trade minister, it was claimed that US\$5 billion went missing. Is this true?

Khairallah Babaker: There has been corruption, but it was not \$5 billion. The corruption was in the contracts. The exact statistics related to the corruption have been recorded by the Iraqi committee for financial supervision. It is not \$5 billion, but regardless of the amount, even if it is one dollar, corruption is corruption.

Rudaw: It is said that the Iraqi government is planning to end food ration distribution. Is there any such plan?

Khairallah Babaker: On an annual basis, US\$4 trillion is allocated for food rations. But this amount of money is not sufficient to provide food for 34.5 million people. In some southern Iraqi provinces, if people were not provided with sugar, rice and flour every month, they would be in very bad shape. The people in these provinces are not like the people of Kurdistan; their economy is very bad. Therefore, ending the food ration program would be disastrous to Iraq.

Rudaw: But people complain about the low quality of all the food ration items.

Khairallah Babaker: No, that is not true. The food items we distribute are of the best quality. We buy 500 million kilos of food on a monthly basis and distribute it to people. All these food items go through quality control before they are distributed.

As for wheat, we buy 3 million tons of wheat from Australia, America, Canada and Russia. For the current year, we have also bought Romanian wheat. We send

the wheat to the mills for processing, and then we distribute it in the form of flour to the people.

“Ending the food ration program would be disastrous to Iraq.”

We never distribute old wheat. The problem is between the mills and the distribution agents. They change the flour, and another issue is that ration recipients do not pick their share up in time. The agents sell the flour back to the mills, and because it remains in the mills and in the agents’ stores, the flour gets old. This problem exists all over Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region. We buy good quality flour to distribute to people, but it ends up being fed to the fish.

Rudaw: Before the Eid of Ramadan, a delegation from the economy and commerce committee, headed by Dr. Roj Nuri Shaways, visited Iran to sign a trade agreement. You were supposed to sign the agreement as the Iraqi minister of trade, but you did not. Why?

Khairallah Babaker: Yes, the delegation was on an official visit to strengthen trade and economic ties with Iran. Iran is

currently going through an economic crisis due to the embargoes on the country. Therefore, Iran has to open a new trade door, and Iraq is its only option. The Iran-Iraq border stretches 1,480 kilometers, and we are a good neighbor to Iran.

However, there are 49 water sources coming into Iraq from Iran. Iran has dried all these rivers. It has redirected the water in Iran and on some rivers it has built dams. I told the Iranian trade minister that if Iran didn't solve the water problem, I would not sign the agreement. He said that it was a different package, and that the problem was for the Iraqi and Iranian resources ministries to solve, not us. But I said no, and that if the problem was not solved, I would not sign the agreement.

Alwand River is now completely dry and the water at the Dukan Dam has significantly lowered. If Iran does not solve the water issue, we will use other ways to pressure them. We will restrict imports of Iranian goods.

This subject now lies in the hands of the Iraqi Trade Ministry. We should take advantage of the Iranian embargo, and get Iran to solve the water problem. I told Dr.

Shaways that I would not sign the agreement because we cannot offer Iran flowers and in return have them ignore the water problem.

Iraqi Parliament would not tolerate the signing of such an agreement either. However, Dr. Shaways had a different opinion. During the visit, we told Iran that that was it. We also told them that not signing the agreement was not the end of the matter, it was just a start.

Rudaw: Did you face any trouble after your return from Iran?

"I will not sign the agreement and I will not accept any pressure."

Khairallah Babaker: No, to the contrary. I am planning to frankly address this issue at the Iraqi Council of Ministers meeting. I will ask for the government's support, and the government has to support me with this step. However, when we returned, there were some individuals who asked me to take it easy on the issue and sign the agreement.

Rudaw: Who were they?

Khairallah Babaker: I will leave that to history. I do not want to further deepen political conflicts.

Rudaw: Will you sign the agreement under pressure?

Khairallah Babaker: I will not sign the agreement and I will not accept any pressure.

Rudaw: Are you willing to resign over this issue?

Khairallah Babaker: Yes, I would resign before signing the agreement.

Rudaw: You have also threatened to cancel economic and trade contracts with Turkey. Was this threat to create a balance between Iran and Turkey?

Khairallah Babaker: With Turkey, we have a number of memorandums of understandings and a free market. However, if Turkey also does not release Iraq's share of water, I will annul all agreements.

I have started researching an alternative to Turkey for providing Iraqi needs. For

example, we have a \$670 million annual contract with Turkey for cooking oil. But the Turkish response to the water issue has been much better than that of Iran.

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/news/iraq/5172.html>

- **Turkish Albaraka Bank Opens Branch in Erbil**

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region --The Turkish bank Albaraka has opened its first branch in Erbil, the capital of Kurdistan Region, the latest move in a series of ventures by Turkish banks to enter the Kurdish market.

Despite severe crises between Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan in the past, relations between the two have improved dramatically in recent years. Turkey now has a consulate in the Kurdistan Region and its businesses have dominated the region's market.

In fact, confidence in the flourishing ties between the Kurdistan Region and Turkey appears to be at an all-time high, to the point that Sami Gul, manager of the Albarak branch in Erbil, has an enthusiastic way of describing the relationship.

"Economic relations between Turkey and Kurdistan are like the marriages of Catholics -- they last forever," said Gul.

The branch's inauguration ceremony was held on April 25 and attended by senior officials such as Sinan Chalabi, Kurdish minister of trade and industry, Nawzad Hadi, governor of Erbil and Aydin Salcan, the Turkish consul general in the Kurdistan Region.

According to the Kurdish minister of trade, trade between Turkey and Iraq has reached \$12 billion, 75 percent of which is with the Kurdistan Region. However, most of the trade is unilateral, meaning only Kurdistan imports goods from Turkey.

Celebi said that, in 1995, there was only one Turkish company in Kurdistan. Today, this number has grown to 1,020 companies.



The Albaraka bank is an Islamic bank and belongs to the Fethulla Gulen group. The bank has 400 branches, 133 of which are located in Turkey.

"It aims to provide services for business projects in the region and consolidate the bilateral economic relations between Turkey and Erbil," said Gul.

The Turkish consul talked about the growth of economic relations between the Kurdistan Region and Turkey and how more banks are needed in this region to cope with the growth.

"We have opened airlines, schools and hospitals in the Kurdistan Region. Today, the branch of Albaraka has begun its services and other banks will follow," said Salcan.

For his part, Erbil's Governor Hadi expressed happiness at the inauguration, saying, "Opening this bank is the result of good relations between the two countries. Opening banks and expanding the banking system are prerequisites for a successful economy."

Apart from Albaraka Bank, there are currently branches of three other major Turkish banks in Kurdistan -- İş Bank, Ziraat Bank and Vakif Bank.

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/business/4697.html>

2. IRAN

- **Iranian President Stresses Necessity for Breaking Power Monopoly in World**

TEHRAN (FNA)- Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad condemned the Zionists for their interference in the global management system, and reiterated the necessity for breaking the power monopoly in the world.



Ahmadinejad said that "egoism" and "monopoly of power" are two features of the failed global management mechanism.

He also renewed call for a change in the current global management system to the benefit of all human beings.

"A management system must be established in the world that is not after power or domination but positive and constructive interaction between the nations and the one which does not seek monopoly but the establishment of justice and provides an opportunity so that all nations can participate in the social management," he said.

"The root cause of the existing problems in the world today is the extremist powers and those who seek to expand their domination over the nations ... in one word, the main reason behind the current woes in the world is the ruling management (system)," President Ahmadinejad said on Wednesday at a meeting of the participants in the First International Independent Filmmakers Conference in the Iranian capital, Tehran.

The Iranian chief executive said that the global management system aims to gain "power, superiority and domination" for a minority of monopoly-seeking groups and added an "organized, highly complicated

and dangerous" organization comprised of the Zionists are behind the world management system.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9106062064>

- **Iran Raps Members for Pressuring IAEA to Release Technical Issues before Conclusion**

TEHRAN (FNA)- Iran's Permanent Representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency Ali Asqar Soltaniyeh blasted certain members of the IAEA for pressuring the UN nuclear watchdog to release the technical aspects of other members' nuclear program before completion and conclusion.



"When the totally technical issues are publicized, it leads to a political hue and cry, which impedes the progress of the work," Soltaniyeh said, adding it will also undermine the IAEA's credibility as well as

the trust between the member states and the secretariat.

He said after a briefing session of the IAEA on Wednesday that he criticized certain IAEA member states for exerting pressure on the agency's secretariat to publicize the technical issues before all analyses and studies are completed and scientific conclusions are drawn.

Soltaniyeh also criticized attempts to make a political fuss over completely technical issues in the IAEA reports on Tehran's nuclear energy program.

"Iran and the Agency can resume their professional job and settle issues only without a political and media hue and cry," the Iranian envoy said.

The meeting of 35-member Board of Governors will convene on Monday. IAEA Director-General Yukiya Amano's latest report on Iran will be discussed in the meeting.

An IAEA briefing session is usually held before the meeting of the Board of Governors on IAEA reports.

During the briefing session, the deputy director-general of the IAEA provides explanations on the latest reports and responds to technical questions.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9106062058>

- **Karzai Underlines Importance of Consultations with Iran on Regional Issues**

TEHRAN (FNA)- Afghan President Hamid Karzai in a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi stressed the importance of consultations and talks with Tehran on bilateral relations and different regional developments.



Karzai said that exchange of delegations and consultations on bilateral and regional subjects are of great importance.

He conveyed his greetings to Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah

Seyed Ali Khamenei and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, calling the 16th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit in Tehran as an "important" event.

The Iranian top diplomat, for his part, called for removal of minor impediments on the way of expansion of Iran-Afghanistan relations.

Salehi thanked Karzai for his presence at the head of a high-ranking delegation in the NAM summit, and conveyed President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's warm greetings to his Afghan counterpart.

He said continued exchange of delegations by Iran and Afghanistan will give an impetus to development of bilateral relations.

Iran is one of the most important donors to Afghanistan, which has kept its promises to help to the reconstruction of the war-ravaged country.

Iran has built several roads, power transmission lines, border stations and many other infrastructure projects to better link the two nations.

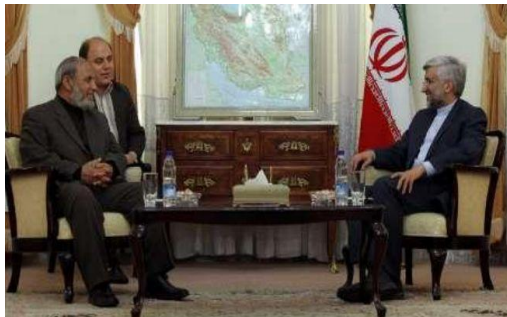
Iran has also contributed more than \$50 million annually to Afghan anti-narcotics efforts during the last five years.

Tehran has repeatedly called for a withdrawal of the US-led foreign troops from Afghanistan, stressing that establishment of peace and security in the war-ravaged country is possible only through cooperation among the regional states.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9106062030>

- **Jalili meets with senior Hamas official**

Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Saeed Jalili (R) meets with senior Hamas official Mahmoud al-Zahar in Tehran on September 6, 2012.



Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Saeed Jalili says the

Islamic Republic's decades-long "unwavering support" for the Palestinian resistance is rooted in Islamic principles and thought.

He made the remarks at a meeting with visiting senior official of the Palestinian resistance movement of Hamas, Mahmoud al-Zahar on Thursday in Tehran, IRNA reported.

Jalili also said that "the support for Palestine and the opposition to the Zionist regime [of Israel]" are "the common goals of the Islamic Awakening movement."

He went on to say that the West's futile efforts to spread Islamophobia throughout the world stems from the widespread popularity of Islam among nations.

For his part, the Palestinian official underscored the need for Palestinian resistance.

"Resistance is part of our faith. It does not change, nor does it have any replacement," Zahar noted.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/09/06/260214/jalili-meets-with-top-hamas-official/>

- **Iran not using Iraqi airspace to send arms to Syria: Iraq**

Until now, there is no evidence of any violation in this regard, and if anyone has any evidence, they should bring it to us and we will take the needed measures."

Ali al-Moussawi, media adviser to Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki

Iraq has rejected claims made by the United States officials that Iran is using the Iraqi airspace to send military equipment to Syria.

"Until now, there is no evidence of any violation in this regard, and if anyone has any evidence, they should bring it to us and we will take the needed measures," Ali al-Moussawi, media adviser to Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki told the Associated Press.

Moussawi added that US Vice President Joe Biden was supposed to provide the proof about a month ago but it was never received.

State Department Deputy Spokesman Patrick Ventrell said on Wednesday that the United States would like the Iraqi government to require all Iranian aircraft flying over the Iraqi territory to land and be inspected before travelling onward.



US Senator Joe Lieberman also said that Iraq's failure to stop the flights could threaten the country's relationship with the US and the aid Iraq could receive as part of a 2008 strategic pact between the two countries.

"Bottom line, this kind of problem with these Iranian overflights can make it more difficult to proceed with the Strategic Framework Agreement in the manner that the prime minister and we would like to see happen," he told AP in Baghdad.

US officials have repeatedly claimed that Iran uses Iraq's airspace to send weapons

for the Syrian government under the cover of relief aid.

Iran sent the first consignment of humanitarian supplies to Syria on March 15, 2012, to help people affected by the unrelenting unrest in the Arab country.

Syria has been experiencing unrest since mid-March and many people, including security forces, have lost their lives in the violence.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/09/06/260164/iran-not-using-iraq-airspace-for-syria/>

- **Tehran NAM Summit dealt humiliating blow to enemies: Leader**

The success, grandeur and glory of the Tehran summit was such that the opposition of the Islamic establishment and their media were put to shame and forced to admit the realities.”

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says Tehran’s hosting of the 16th Non-Aligned

Movement (NAM) Summit was a “humiliating defeat” for the enemies of the country.

“With their stupidity, the enemies of the Iranian nation turned this summit into a diplomatic war against the Islamic Republic of Iran, which resulted in humiliating defeat for them,” Ayatollah Khamenei said in an address to the members of the Assembly of Experts on Thursday.

The Leader added that the “successful” hosting of the NAM Summit in Tehran is an example of the favorable intellectual system which Iran has offered to the world.

Ayatollah Khamenei said the world’s political conditions, the time and venue of the summit, and the stupidity of the ill-wishers of the Iranian nation turned the gathering into both an “impressive phenomenon” which drew the attention of the world, and a diplomatic war against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

"Efforts were made to create an atmosphere in which the Islamic Republic

of Iran would resort to self-censorship and avoid giving voice to its positions against the Zionist regime [of Israel], but the meeting was held in such a glorious manner that all those efforts were foiled," the Leader added.

Ayatollah Khamenei said some of the summit's other positive points included the convention of nearly two-thirds of the world countries and the platform that it provided for the expression of views which are not voiced in other international meetings.



"The views that were expressed by some heads of state and delegations present in the Tehran Summit, especially criticism of the United Nations and the Security Council structures as well as the international dictatorship ruling the world, lacked precedence in similar international meetings."

Ayatollah Khamenei stated that the Tehran Summit also helped neutralize the propaganda over the US-led illegal sanctions on Iran, as the NAM leaders witnessed firsthand the ordinary flow of life in the Iranian capital and other cities, and negotiated with Iranian officials on the sidelines of the summit about conclusion of various contracts.

"The success, grandeur and glory of the Tehran summit were such that the opposition of the Islamic establishment and their media were put to shame and forced to admit the realities."

Elsewhere, Ayatollah Khamenei also spoke of the situation in Iran, saying that on the whole, the country is making "favorable progress."

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/09/06/260150/iran-summit-humbled-enemies-leader/>

- **UN must condemn Israel war threats against Iran: Poll**

The majority of respondents to a recent poll conducted by Press TV believe that the United Nations should condemn

Israel's war threats against Iran because they challenge world peace.

The survey suggests that 61 percent of the participants believe Israel's threats should be condemned by the UN.

According to the poll, 33 percent of the participants said the UN will not react because it is based in the United States which is Israel's top ally.

This is while only 17 percent of respondents believed that the UN should not react because Israel's threats are just part of a psychological war.

A total number of 9,202 respondents took part in the poll, which was conducted from August 26 to September 5, 2012.

US citizens accounted for 21/7 percent of the participants, while 11/9 percent were Britons, 4/9 percent were Canadians, and 61/5 percent were from other countries.

Israel has recently carried out a number of war games and drills as Tel Aviv steps up its war rhetoric against Iran under the pretext that Iran's nuclear energy program includes a military component.

Iran has refuted the allegations maintaining that as a signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and a committed member of the International Atomic Energy Agency, it has every right to develop and acquire nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

Iranian officials have also promised a crushing response to any act of aggression against the Islamic Republic.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/09/06/260142/un-must-condemn-israel-war-threats-poll/>

3. ISRAEL - PALESTINE

- **Opposition decries gov't anarchy; trust in PM peaks**

New poll puts public trust in the prime minister at a 10-year high of 56%; Mofaz: This anarchy needs to stop.

Netanyahu at cabinet meeting Photo: Pool/Eli Selman

The Prime Minister's Office on Thursday touted findings from the Israel Democratic Institute showing that the public's trust in

the prime minister is the highest it has been in at least 10 years.

However, the findings come amid claims by the political opposition that Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's dramatic decision to adjourn the security cabinet on Wednesday because of leaks is a sign of governmental anarchy.

The Israel Democracy Institute's annual Israeli Democracy Index released this week found that 56 percent of the public have confidence in the prime ministership.

This is the highest percentage since the in-depth surveys of local attitudes on democracy, government systems and elected officials were started in 2003.

The previous highest percentage was in 2003, when Ariel Sharon was prime minister and nearly 53% said they had confidence in the prime minister. The lowest period was in 2008, under Ehud Olmert's tenure, when this number stood at only 17%.

The numbers, however, are dramatically different in the Jewish and Arab sectors, with 61.5% of the Jews saying they have

trust in the prime minister, as opposed to only 32% of the Arab population.



The poll, carried out by Tel Aviv University's Cohen Institute for Public Opinion, was taken between April 16 and May 17 among a representative national sample of 1,025 Israeli adults (834 Jews and 191 Arabs). It has a 3.1% margin of error.

Netanyahu's spokesman Mark Regev said international audiences should take note of the overall findings, "and that when the prime minister speaks it appears he has the unprecedented confidence of the people."

The Prime Minister's Office continued, however, to have no comment on Wednesday's sudden adjournment of a security cabinet meeting on Iran because some details of the first part of that meeting that took place the day before

were leaked to the press. Nor would the office say whether Netanyahu had made a decision to initiate polygraph tests for those who attended the meeting to try and track down the person who leaked the information.

Kadima head Shaul Mofaz came out Thursday in support of a Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency) investigation of the security leaks, but said “the prime minister should be the first investigated” and should be asked whether he briefed journalists about classified military or diplomatic moves over the last few weeks.

“This is a government that is not only leading an unruly policy on all fronts, but is also managed in an unruly manner,” he said.

Mofaz said that leaks from the security cabinet, which he described as the government’s inner sanctum where the most classified information is discussed, was nothing but anarchy.

“This anarchy needs to stop,” he declared.

<http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=284194>

- **Abbas: Liberman is an irresponsible personality**

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas called the Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman “irresponsible personality, not a statesman, and he does not respect his own words” during a meeting with Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi, at the Presidential Palace in Heliopolis on Friday.

After his meeting in Cairo with President Mahmoud Abbas Morsi added: “Lieberman says something different every day. If he really wants us removed, the task will be easy because we are under occupation.”

<http://www.jpost.com/Headlines/Article.aspx?id=284223>

- **Hamas official: Democrat J'lem policy begs for Jewish votes**

Senior Hamas official Izzat al-Rishq on Friday condemned the Democrat decision to reinstate Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

Writing on his Facebook page, Al-Rishq commented: “Jerusalem was and will

always be the eternal capital of Palestine, and of the Arab and Muslim nations."

The official said that the return of the Democratic Party platform reinstating Jerusalem as the capital of Israel is "begging for Jewish votes."

On Thursday, The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine condemned the use of Jerusalem "in competition for the Jewish vote" between the two main sides of the American election, according to Palestinian Ma'an news agency.

<http://www.ipost.com/Headlines/Article.aspx?id=284219>

- **Fayyad 'ready to resign'**

A Palestinian protester wearing a Guy Fawkes mask gestures as he stands near a burning effigy of Salam Fayyad during a demonstration against the high cost of living, in the West Bank city of Hebron on Sept. 4, 2012. (Reuters/Mussa Qawasma) RAMALLAH (Ma'an) -- Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salam Fayyad on Thursday announced he would resign if that was the will of the people, amid

growing protests across the West Bank over the rising cost of living.

Palestinians have taken to the streets for three days in mass demonstrations against price rises and unemployment, and protesters in cities across the West Bank have called for Fayyad's resignation. In Hebron on Tuesday, protesters burned an effigy of the premier.

Fayyad told Voice of Palestine radio that replacing figures in the government was not the solution to the financial crisis, but that a new economic strategy was needed.

The premier said he could not set a date for paying government workers their August salaries because the Palestinian Authority was waiting on donor funds to arrive.

Fayyad also said the Palestinian Authority needed to be restructured on a democratic basis to address political and economic crises.

The PA is waiting for the US Congress to approve a request by President Barack Obama's administration to pay \$200

million to the Ramallah-based government. A hoped-for \$1.1 billion in 2011 reached only \$750 million, as pledges from Gulf states in particular fell short.

The revenue received from Gaza has dropped from 28 percent to 4 percent of the Palestinian Authority's budget since Hamas took over the coastal enclave. Meanwhile, 48 percent of the PA's budget is spent on the Gaza Strip, Fayyad said.

Between the national division and Israel's occupation, the PA cannot cope with the rising prices of imports.

The government is subsidizing fuel to assuage price increases, but a 5 percent hike in the price of fuel has angered transport workers. Bus, taxi and lorry drivers have protested and held strikes across the West Bank in response to the price increase.

Fayyad said the PA could not scale back the increase without diminishing the government's ability to pay salaries.



The premier called on the private sector and importers to reduce their profits to lessen the economic burden on citizens. He added that the PA had been in talks with Libya and Gulf states to create job opportunities for young people.

Israeli restrictions

Earlier Thursday at a meeting in Ramallah with his Italian counterpart Giulio Terzi, Fayyad said the PA's economic growth was hindered by Israeli restrictions.

Fayyad said Israel paralyzed economic development in Area C, the 60 percent of the West Bank under full Israeli military control.

Israel frequently demolishes development projects in Area C, and has not implemented provisions in the Paris

Protocol of 1994 to allow Palestinians access to Israeli markets. Israel's control of the West Bank's borders hinders the export market, and restrictions on imports limit domestic industries.

Israel has serially withheld the payments import duties as punishment for past Palestinian political maneuvers, such as negotiations with Hamas or UN statehood initiatives.

While Fayyad has been lauded abroad for his efforts to combat corruption in the PA, he has faced the brunt of people's anger at the rising costs of basic commodities and growing unemployment.

Fayyad helped preside over economic policy as finance minister until being replaced earlier this year.

In the third day of mass protests across the West Bank, Palestinians marched through Jenin demanding Fayyad's resignation and calling on the PA to set a minimum wage, create jobs for the unemployed and lower university fees.

Union leaders addressed the crowds and said they would not remain silent amid

rising prices, growing unemployment and lack of welfare which they said had led to an economic "tsunami."

Taxis and buses blocked roads in the northern West Bank city. Taxi drivers, angry at a five percent hike in fuel prices, organized a mass strike across the West Bank on Thursday causing traffic jams through the morning rush hour.

In Tulkarem, protesters marched with donkeys to show that fuel had made conventional transport unaffordable as the taxi strike shut down traffic in the city. They chanted "Salam, leave, the people want Fayyad to step down."

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=517945>

- **Hamas: Gaza attacks meant as 'test' for Egypt leader**

BETHLEHEM (Ma'an) -- Israel's deadly attacks on the Gaza Strip on Wednesday and Thursday were intended as a "test" of the new Egyptian president's tolerance for violence in Gaza, Hamas said Thursday.



Spokesman Fawzi Barhoum said the airstrikes that killed six militants in separate attacks were "unjustified," and came after Egyptian President Mohammad Mursi delivered a speech affirming his support for the Palestinian cause.

"Muhammad Mursi and the Arab League supported the Palestinian people," Barhoum said of a speech Mursi gave at the regional body on Wednesday. "Israel's attacks are aimed at testing the Arab position."

He added: "After Israel's clear messages, Egypt and the Arab League have to put forward a new strategy to deal with Israel and respond to the aggressive attacks against the Palestinian people."

Six Palestinians died after separate airstrikes late Wednesday and early

Thursday in what Israel called a response to rocket fire and attempts to plant a road-side bomb on the border.

In a statement Thursday, the Israeli military said that "IDF soldiers targeted a terrorist squad that was planting an explosive device near the security fence in the northern Gaza Strip."

On Wednesday, an airstrike killed three gunmen after Israel said they tried to launch short-range rockets.

In his remarks at the Arab League, Mursi said the Palestinian cause remained "the first cause for the Arab world ... We need a just and inclusive solution for the Palestinian issue, we all need this as Arabs."

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=517857>

- **Brazil Fully Supports PA's Move to Gain UN Non-Member Status**

RAMALLAH, September 6, 2012 (Wafa) - The Brazilian representative to the Palestinian Authority (PA), Ligia Maria Scherer, on the occasion of Brazil's national day on Thursday, affirmed his

countries full support of the Palestinian bid to seek a non-member state status at the United Nations General Assembly.

During the celebration of Brazil's 190th anniversary of its independence in Ramallah, he said the position of Brazil is well known: "We recognize the state of Palestine, comprising the West bank and Gaza, within the 1967 borders and with Jerusalem as its capital."

He stressed his country's clear position on the "appalling acts that Palestinians endure daily," saying that settlements "are illegal under international law and an obstacle to peace." "Attacks, restrictions, demolitions and evictions by Israel must stop and the siege on Gaza must be lifted."

He said that alternative means to diminish the huge asymmetry of power between the Palestinian and Israeli sides should come to the forefront. In this scenario the United Nations could be a strategic pillar." "These new avenues could enhance the chances of the resumption of the negotiations on legitimate and credible basis, as well as safeguard the solution of

having two free states living peacefully and in security side by side."

Scherer praised the Palestinian people for being an example of hope and determination in their pursuit of their national rights, as well as for their courage and resilience in these difficult and challenging times, when reasons for optimism seem elusive.

<http://english.wafa.ps/index.php?action=detail&id=20628>

4. AFRICA and EGYPT

- **Libya Assures Word it Would Give Fair Trial to Former Gaddafi Master Spy**

The United States and human rights organisations around the world have urged Libyan authorities to give a fair trial to slain Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi's former intelligence chief Abdullah al-Senussi after he was deported by Mauritania.

Libya has always maintained it would give al-Senussi, Seif al-Islam and any other person that was captured in the revolution that it would give them a fair trial and has once again confirmed this

through outgoing Prime Minister Abdurrahim el-Keeb who rebutted any claims that Libya would not be fair with al-Senussi or any others.

At a press conference in the presence of Chief of Staff Yusuf Mangoush and government spokesman Nasser Al-Manaa, el-Keeb stressed that el-Senussi would "receive a fair trial in Libya according to International standards," and that justice would be met.

Like Saif al-Islam, Senussi, who is in "excellent health", is also wanted by the International Criminal Court, ICC, on charges of crimes against humanity.

Nasser Al-Manaa on his part, re-iterated the Libyan government's position said his described his extradition was "a victory of justice, a victory for the law and a victory for the revolution".

He added that Senussi was in "excellent health" and that a medical report had been sent by the Mauritians. He said that any trial would be transparent and held in public.

With these assurances from high up, in Libya the people find it strange that there are still organisations and nations that seem to be trying to infuse doubts about its fairness. The United States said Abdullah al-Senussi must be tried 'in full compliance with Libya's international obligations'.

Many still also find it strange that the US, above all nations, would show such concern and be among the ones calling for fairness when it is still being criticised for the way it killed without warning or without trial, Osama Bin Laden.

Acting US state department deputy spokesman Patrick Ventrell has told BBC: "It will be critical that Libya take all necessary steps to ensure that he's held securely, treated humanely and tried fairly in full compliance with Libya's international obligations."

Geraldine Mattioli-Zeltner, of Human Rights Watch, HRW, too said Senussi must be treated humanely.

Senussi, a confidante and brother-in-law to Gaddafi was arrested in May this year by Mauritanian authorities for illegally

entering the country. He is alleged to be behind a massacre in Tripoli's notorious Abu Salim prison that left around 1,200 inmates dead, and triggered Libya's revolt when lawyers sought to reopen the case last year.

Senussi is also wanted by France in connection with the 1989 bombing of an airliner over Niger in which 170 died.

<http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=9148>

- **Eight Candidates to Run for Libyan PM's Post**

Having postponed the contest among the 200 members of the General National Contest for the post of Prim Minister of Libya from September 8 to 12. Eight nominations were submitted by Wednesday, the closing day for nominations for the prestigious but very important post.

Mahmud Jibril, who at one time led a transitional council from a similar position during last year's revolution that ousted Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi, and leader of the liberal National Forces Alliance, seems to be one of the

favourites, but he is expecting a tough contest from, among others, current deputy Prime Minister Mustafa Abushagur, and the Electricity Minister and Justice and Construction Party candidate Awad Barasi.

Among the independent candidates for the post of premier is Abdelhamid al-Naami, head of the small Libyan Centre party, Mohammed Berween, Mohammed Al-Mufti, Fathi Al-Akkari and Al-Mabrouk Al-Zway.

Prospective candidates needed to be ratified by the Integrity and Patriotism Commission to contest the election thus ensuring that the candidates have not been implicated in cases of corruption or in repression during last year's revolution.

The national assembly is currently made up of Jibril's coalition of some 60 small liberal groupings that holds 39 of the 80 assembly seats reserved for political parties, the Justice and Construction Party, the second largest grouping in the congress with 17 seats, and 120 independents whose affiliations are less predictable.

<http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=9149>

- **Mauritania Extradites Gaddafi's Former Master Spy to Face Justice in Libya**

Abdullah al-Senussi (right) in the company of his former master, Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi

The government of Mauritania has extradited on Wednesday Gaddafi's former intelligence chief and close assistant Abdullah al-Senussi, a major accomplishment by the new democratic government in Libya which will lead to more peace and stability in the country.

Security sources in Tripoli have confirmed to The Tripoli Post that al-Senussi has already arrived in Libya and he is now in secure place awaiting trial for crimes committed against the Libyan people.

The extradition of Senussi sends a message to the remnants of the pro-Gaddafi elements who are now outside Libya that they will be hunted down and brought back to face justice in Libya.

Egyptian government is providing safe heaven to hundreds of Gaddafi's men who took part in crimes against Libyans and committed corruption as senior officials in various government post and institutions.

A Mauritanian government source told the media on Wednesday that al-Senussi "was extradited to Libya on the basis of guarantees given by Libyan authorities."

In March, Mr Senussi was held at Nouakchott airport in Mauritania after flying in from Morocco.

In June 2011, the International Criminal Court in The Hague issued a warrant for Mr Senussi for crimes against humanity alleged to have been carried out in Benghazi, the main base of the Libyan opposition during the revolt last year.

He has been accused of playing a major role in Tripoli's Abu Salim prison massacre of 1996 in which over 1270 political prisoners were gunned down within less than three hours.

As the closest assistant to the dead dictator for decades, Senussi knew too much information about all crimes

committed by Gaddafi and his regime against the Libyan people and also around the world.

He is believed to have information about Libyans kidnapped and assassinated abroad.

France has already sentenced Mr Senussi to life imprisonment for the shooting down of a UTA airliner over Niger in 1989 in which 170 people were killed.

<http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=9142>

- **Tunisia Salafists destroy last remaining bar in Sidi Bouzid**

Interior ministry says inquiry is ongoing, but admits no arrests have been made because hotel manager 'did not want to identify' suspects.

SIDI BOUZID (Tunisia) - A group of Salafist militants claimed responsibility on Wednesday for the attack on a hotel bar in central Tunisia, saying they were responding to "the demands of the people."

"It was done in response to the demands of the people," Wael Amami, a member of the "Salafist jihadi" group, said, two days after the raid.

"The youths just smashed the bottles of alcohol... They did not hit anyone," said Amami, estimating that between 15 and 20 customers were present at the moment of the attack, which took place in Sidi Bouzid's Hotel Horchani.

He also said the group had warned the hotel management over the sale of alcohol, which nevertheless continued.

On Monday, bearded men burst into the hotel, which hosted Sidi Bouzid's last working bar, smashing bottles and chasing away customers, before raiding the reception and the upstairs rooms, shouting "Allahu Akbar" and "Al-Sharab haram" (drinking is a sin).

An interior ministry official said on Wednesday that the inquiry was ongoing, but admitted that no arrests had been made because the hotel manager "did not want to identify" the suspects.

Lotfi Hidouri said the police had summoned those suspected of carrying out the attack, but was unable to elaborate on the number or identity of the people implicated.

Amami said the young man trying to film the raid, who was beaten by members of the group before being taken away according to witnesses, had been released.



"We just held him for the time it took to check that there were not images on his mobile phone," he added.

Amami said his group, again complying with popular request, was also combatting the proliferation of illegal alcohol outlets in the central Tunisian town.

"The residents complain, but the police don't interfere," he charged.

The incident comes around four months after the city's Salafist community first launched a war against alcohol consumption, pressuring or intimidating several bars into shutting down. Those who tried to resist saw their businesses come under attack, much like the Horchani hotel.

Amami gained notoriety when he was sentenced to life in prison under the regime of former president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, after bloody clashes with the army in Soliman, near the capital, in 2007.

He was released under an amnesty, following last year's revolution.

Sidi Bouzid, the birthplace of the uprising that Ben Ali last year, is a stronghold of the Salafist movement, which has grown increasingly assertive in recent months.

The North African country has witnessed numerous violent incidents linked to the hardliners, prompting opposition activists to accuse the Islamist-led coalition government of not doing enough to rein them in.

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=54242>

- **Who will become Libya's new PM?**

Mahmud Jibril is among eight candidates vying to become Libya's new PM in September 12 election.

TRIPOLI - Eight candidates are to contest a September 12 election among members of the General National Congress to become Libya's new prime minister, an official source said on Thursday.



Among them are Mahmud Jibril, who led a transitional council during last year's revolution which toppled Moamer Gathafi and now heads the liberal National Forces Alliance, and Electricity Minister Awadh al-Barassi, an Islamist.

The vote for the new premier will be held among the 200 members of the country's national assembly that was itself elected in early July.

Current vice premier Mustafa Abu Shagur, considered close to the Islamists, is also a candidate to succeed the transitional prime minister, Abdel Rahim al-Kib, the Integrity and Patriotism Commission added.

The commission ratifies prospective candidates to ensure they have not been implicated in cases of corruption or in repression during the 2011 uprising that led to Gathafi's ouster and subsequent killing.

Jibril's coalition of some 60 small liberal groupings holds 39 of the 80 assembly seats reserved for political parties.

The Justice and Construction Party, born from the Muslim Brotherhood, is the second largest grouping in the congress with 17 seats.

In addition to the 80 seats reserved for parties, 120 General National Congress

seats are reserved for independents whose affiliations are less predictable.

Among the independent candidates for the post of premier is Abdelhamid al-Naami, head of the small Libyan Centre party.

The main tasks facing the new administration will be to tackle rampant security problems and reconstruct sectors of the oil-rich country damaged in last year's conflict.

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=54236>

- **Brotherhood Guidance Bureau drafts action plan for new governors**

Security measures in front of main headquarter of Muslim Brotherhood in Moqattam, Cairo, 23 August 2012, as political powers called for million-man rally on 24 August against President Mohamed Morsy.

The Muslim Brotherhood's Guidance Bureau drafted initial action plans on Wednesday for the newly appointed governors of Kafr al-Sheikh, Cairo, Assiut

and Minya, who are all affiliated with the Brotherhood.

The plan aims to ensure that the governors receive full support from their constituencies in order to implement President Mohamed Morsy's Renaissance Project.

Saad Khalifa, head of the Brotherhood's Suez branch, explained that the group is forming technical committees to determine problems and report them to the governors, and is also forming volunteer advisory committees to help them make the right decisions.

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/brotherhood-guidance-bureau-drafts-action-plan-new-governors>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **PSP leader says fall of Lebanese government serves no one**

Progressive Socialist Party leader MP Walid Jumblatt said in remarks published Thursday that the fall of the Lebanese government "that is loyal to Syria" was in the interest of no one, including the US

administration, in light of the current circumstances.

During an interview with Le Figaro newspaper, the PSP leader also said that it was “better for Hezbollah – an Iranian loyalist – to remain in the government [and not be part of the] opposition.”

Furthermore, Jumblatt downplayed the possibility of his National Struggle Front bloc ministers resigning from the cabinet of Prime Minister Najib Miqati.

Turning to the Syrian crisis, Jumblatt said that as long as the international community will not agree on providing heavy weapons to the Syrian opposition, “which would allow them to shoot down [regime jets, the Syrian security forces] will keep on killing oppositionists.”

Asked about the alleged support that some Druze in Syria are throwing behind the regime of Bashar al-Assad, Jumblatt said there were “mercenaries working for the Damascus regime,” in an indirect reference to Brigadier General Haitham Zein al-Deen, who is currently leading a security campaign against rebels in Aleppo.

Regarding his recent meeting with former Lebanese Premier Saad Hariri in Paris, the PSP leader said the purpose of their discussion was to settle a disagreement between them.

“[The meeting was] to [resolve] a disagreement between us [that started] 15 months [ago when] I refused to allow my allies to resign from a government joined by Hezbollah.”

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

- **Lebanese army officers implicated in Abdel Wahed shooting released**

The Lebanese Military Court of Cassation headed by Judge Elias Nayfeh released three Lebanese Army officer on Friday implicated in the case of the shooting of Sunni cleric Ahmad Abdel Wahed in North Lebanon, The National News Agency reported.

According to the report, the military court annulled First Military Investigative Judge Riad Abu Ghida’s decision to further detain the army officers and approved their release on \$200 bail each.

In July, Abu Ghida summoned the three officers for questioning in the death of Abdel Wahed and his bodyguard when his convoy was fired upon after allegedly failing to stop at a checkpoint in North Lebanon in May, the NNA reported.

The army officers were interrogated and further detained after being released earlier in the month.

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

- **Armed dispute erupts in Beirut's Tariq al-Jdide**

Two people were injured in heavy gunfire on Thursday in Beirut's Tariq al-Jdide area, New TV reported.

It added that the shooting took place between the Al-Fakhani and Abu Sahel neighborhoods.

Furthermore, LBC television also reported that the Tariq al-Jdide incident took place after a dispute erupted between the Hojeiry and the Kroumby families.

Meanwhile, the National News Agency reported that Lebanese Army troops deployed in the Al-Fakhani neighborhood and managed to contain the "personal dispute between [the] two families."

To read more:

<http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArticleDetails.aspx?ID=433837#ixzz25lqU0NRv>

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

6. SYRIA

- **Ban Ki-moon: Syria situation is 'grave and deteriorating'**

BAGHDAD / Aswat al-Iraq: United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told the UN General Assembly on Tuesday that the humanitarian situation in Syria is "grave and deteriorating".

Ban also accused both the Syrian government and the opposition of large scale human rights violations.

Those violations include torture and reported execution of prisoners, and failure to protect civilians.

Ban said the UN's response to the humanitarian crisis has been constrained by underfunding, stating that the \$180 million response plan was only half-funded.

He stressed that the neighboring countries, which have opened their borders to Syrian refugees, urgently needed support in sheltering the influx of people, according to Reuters.

The UN said on Tuesday that more than 100,000 Syrians fled the country in just the last month, marking a sudden increase in refugees.

Syrians fled as President Bashar al-Assad's government began using its air force to rout out the rebels.

More than 235,000 Syrian refugees have fled to Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, to date.

http://en.aswatiliraq.info/%28S%28pqx4cv55nfq0tg45lw03cr55%29%29/Default1.aspx?page=article_page&id=150342&l=1

- **Syria tops agenda of EU ministerial meeting in Cyprus**

Europe remains divided over how best to help Syria's fractured opposition, with many capitals reluctant to provide support due to presence of Islamist extremists.

As calls mount for an end to the bloody violence in Syria, European Union foreign ministers meet Friday to try and find a way out of a conflict threatening a humanitarian crisis in Europe's backyard.

EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton has put Syria top of the agenda for a two-day informal ministerial meeting in Cyprus which, at just 110 kilometres (70 miles) from the Syrian coast at its closest point, is the bloc's nearest member to the conflict.

The 27-nation bloc has been in the frontline of efforts to get President Bashar al-Assad to step aside since the beginning of the conflict in March last year.

But after 17 rounds of sanctions, including embargos on arms exports and oil imports, and a freeze on the assets of scores of Assad's lieutenants, Ashton said in a letter to ministers that it was time "to take forward our work."

"Given the dramatic developments unfolding in Syria and the appointment of Lakhdar Brahimi as new envoy of the UN secretary general, I would like to exchange views on the tragic situation on the ground and on how to adjust the EU's response," she said in the August 31 note.

In his first comments since taking over as the new UN-Arab League envoy, Brahimi called the death toll "staggering" and the destruction "catastrophic".

Ashton's to-do list calls for improved liaison with the Syrian opposition, more humanitarian aid and, last but not least, preparing for a political transition.

"Sooner or later, Assad will fall and the EU will have to be ready to respond. We must prepare well in advance," said a European diplomat who asked not to be named.

But Europe remains divided over how best to help Syria's fractured opposition, under fire from many capitals reluctant to provide support due to its continuing divisions and the presence of Islamist extremists fighting on its behalf.

In Rome this week, French President Francois Hollande renewed a call on Assad opponents to quickly form an "alternative government".

The French leader has pledged immediate recognition from Paris to "a provisional, inclusive and representative" government.

"The sooner we can find a real interlocutor in the opposition, the easier it will be for the EU to help it," a diplomatic source said.



"If we can offer promises of recognition this could help the opposition to unite," said another European diplomat.

But Washington has cautioned that before setting up any transitional government, the opposition first needs to unite around plan.

"That's the first order of business -- for them to all agree on what a transition ought to look like," State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said late last month.

In a letter to their counterparts, the foreign ministers of France and Italy have asked that the talks also touch on an international inquiry into human rights violations by the Assad regime and seek ways of easing the humanitarian crisis.

Some 235,000 Syrians have fled the country while 1.2 million are displaced inside the country, but the situation has deteriorated sharply since as Assad forces have fought rebel fighters in the two largest cities Damascus and Aleppo.

More than 100,000 people fled Syria in August, a record since the start of the conflict, meaning how to prepare for a potential humanitarian crisis on Europe's doorstep will be high in the minds of the ministers.

Turkey, which along with Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon, is hosting tens of thousands of refugees, has suggested creating

protected safe havens inside Syria for civilians fleeing the violence.

But the idea fell on deaf ears at the UN Security Council last week amid concern even among Western governments over the implications of such a controversial military operation.

France is expected instead to urge its partners at Friday's talks in the Cypriot resort of Paphos to find ways to help funnel medicines, cash and other resources to civilians trapped in rebel-held areas.

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=54233>

- **Syrian fighting rages as Russia urges Western re-think**

Fighting raged in Syria on Thursday, as troops and pro-regime neighborhood militias clashed with rebels in the central region of Homs and as combat rattled Damascus and the area around the besieged city of Aleppo.

With at least 90 people reportedly killed on Thursday, Russian President Vladimir Putin urged Western and Arab

governments to review their policy on Syria, saying the key objective should be to end the deadly violence.

In Homs province, at least nine soldiers and four members of the "popular committees" of civilians armed by the government were killed and dozens more civilian fighters wounded, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

These committees are made up of people who have taken up arms to defend their villages or neighborhoods against the rebels.

The fighting in Homs was concentrated in the Crac des Chevaliers region, home to a historic Crusader castle, and Wadi al-Nassara, a valley where a number of Christian villages are located.

The Britain-based Observatory which gave Thursday's toll, also reported fierce battles and army shelling in Qadam in southern Damascus where anti-regime sentiment is strong, as well as shelling in nearby Assali.

Clashes also broke out elsewhere in the city, including in the Sayyida Zeinab area of the southeastern outskirts, home to an

important Shiite Muslim shrine, the group said.

In the central province of Hama, Kafr Zeita, another main arena of the nearly 18-month revolt against President Bashar al-Assad, came under fierce shelling by regime forces for a second consecutive day, according to activists.

Elsewhere, a military source said the army has retaken the strategic Barkum bridge south of Aleppo on the highway to Damascus, three weeks after rebels seized it.

In the west of Aleppo city itself, regime forces have advanced towards the Rashid mosque in the Izaa district amid fierce fighting, a military source said.

And more than a dozen people were killed when a mortar round exploded for the first time in a Kurdish quarter of the city, the Observatory and witnesses said.

In an alleged new massacre, 23 corpses, including those of women and children, were found in Zamalka, in Damascus province, said the Observatory, as anti-

Assad activists pointed the finger at the regime.

The town has been a hotbed of anti-regime protest, army raids and clashes between regime forces and rebels.

The Observatory also reported that two kidnapped brothers of a Syrian rebel commander were killed on Thursday.

The men were seized at an army checkpoint on Wednesday night, it said. They were found dead in the Qadam district of Damascus amid a sharp increase in reports of abductions across the country.

Amateur video posted on YouTube by activists showed the bodies of the two men, identified as Mohammed and Ahmed al-Zakh, covered in blood. The head of one of the victims had been partly blown off.

A toll compiled by the Observatory said at least 90 people, including at least 33 civilians, were killed in violence across Syria on Thursday, a day after 176 people died, most of them civilians.

The violence has claimed more than 26,000 lives since it erupted in mid-March 2011, according to the Observatory.

Meanwhile, Putin lambasted the West and Arab countries for their position on Syria.

"Why should Russia be the only one reassessing its position? Perhaps our negotiating partners should reassess their position," he told Russia Today television.

"To us, the most important thing is to end the violence, to force all the sides in the conflict... to sit down at the negotiating table, determine the future and ensure the security of all the participants of the domestic political process," he said.

"Only then move on to these practical steps about the internal organization of the country itself."

Putin has previously rejected providing asylum to Assad and insisted that Moscow still viewed either him or his representatives as an integral part of the negotiating process.

Moscow has stirred Western and Arab world anger by vetoing three UN Security

Council resolutions that would have slapped sanctions on Assad during the conflict.

The Russian Foreign Ministry, meanwhile, said it had full assurance that the chemical weapons stockpile amassed by the regime was safe and would not be used against Assad's foes.

"We are fully confident – and have the official assurance from Damascus – that this country's government is taking all the necessary measures to guarantee the chemical arsenal's safety," said Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov.

Meanwhile, France and Britain have agreed on the need to speed up the transition from Assad's regime to a new government, French President Francois Hollande said.

"David Cameron and I are in total agreement. We must accelerate the political transition [and] help the opposition to form a government," said Hollande, after talks with the British prime minister in London.

"We have a duty to help the Syrian opposition in any way we can," Hollande added in a statement with Cameron at his side.

Britain and France are among the Western nations leading calls for Assad to step down in a bid to end the bloody conflict, which erupted in March 2011.

In that vein, the Syrian Foreign Ministry denounced as a "flagrant interference in the domestic affairs of the country," a call on Wednesday by Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi for Assad to go.

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

- **EU ministers explore fresh help to Syria opposition**

EU foreign ministers gather in Cyprus some 100 kilometers from the Syrian coast Friday to explore how to best assist its opposition while defusing a humanitarian crisis looming in Europe's backyard.

European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton has put Syria top of the agenda for two days of informal talks

starting around 0930 GMT, the first meeting of EU foreign ministers since the summer break.

The talks, which will also address deepening worry over Iran's nuclear program, come amid increasing concern over mounting violence between the opposition and President Bashar al-Assad's regime that last month alone sent a record 100,000 people fleeing across the borders.

Turkey, which along with Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon is hosting tens of thousands of refugees, has suggested creating protected safe havens inside Syria for civilians seeking to escape the violence.

But the idea fell on deaf ears at the UN Security Council last week amid concern even among Western governments over the implications of such a controversial military operation.

France is expected instead to urge its partners at Friday's talks in the classy Cypriot resort of Paphos to find ways to help funnel medicines, cash and other resources to civilians trapped in rebel-held areas.

France and Britain too are agreed on the need to speed up the transition from Assad's regime in Syria to a new government, French President Francois Hollande said Thursday after talks with British Prime Minister David Cameron.

"We must accelerate the political transition [and] help the opposition to form a government," said Hollande.

But Europe remains divided over how best to help Syria's fractured opposition, under fire from many capitals that are reluctant to provide support due to continuing internal divisions and the presence of Islamist extremists fighting on its behalf.

And Washington has cautioned that before setting up any transitional government, the opposition first needs to unite around a plan.

"That's the first order of business – for them to all agree on what a transition ought to look like," State Department spokesperson Victoria Nuland said late last month.

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

7. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Qatar to invest \$18 billion in Egypt**

Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem said on Thursday his country will invest \$18 billion in Egypt over the next five years to help shore up the economy, which has taken a beating since last year's uprising

Doha "will inject investments in Egypt worth \$18 billion over five years," he said in remarks carried by the official Egyptian news agency MENA.

Qatar will invest in electricity, natural gas and tourism mainly, he said after talks with Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi.

Last month, Qatar announced that it would provide Egypt with \$2 billion in aid, with a first tranche of \$500 million already being transferred.

Egyptian Prime Minister Hisham Qandil said the balance would be transferred in September, October and November.

The Egyptian central bank's reserves have fallen sharply since Mubarak was forced out in February 2011. Reserves are down to \$14.4 billion from \$36 billion a year and a half ago.

The cash short fall raises fears about Egypt's ability to maintain imports of basic commodities such as wheat and refined fuel and to honor its international financial commitments.

Egypt has faced serious and growing economic challenges since the ouster of President Hosni Mubarak last year, with key foreign currency earner tourism falling as well as incoming investment.

Last month, Cairo asked for a \$4.8 billion loan last month from the International Monetary Fund.

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

- **Egyptian: Saudi court evidence fabricated**

Al Gizawi accused of trying to smuggle 21,380 capsules of anti-anxiety drug

Jeddah: An Egyptian lawyer whose arrest on drug trafficking charges sparked a diplomatic row with Cairo charged on Wednesday that prosecution evidence against him was fabricated, a judicial source said.

In his second court appearance since the trial began in July, human rights lawyer Ahmad Al Gizawi, his wrists and ankles shackled, denied any wrongdoing.

Al Gizawi was arrested in April and accused of trying to smuggle 21,380 capsules of the anti-anxiety drug Xanax, which is banned in Saudi Arabia.

“If the X-ray system of the customs has indeed caught me, how did I manage to get out and buy a mobile phone SIM card?” Al Gizawi said in court in the presence of a legal counsellor from the Egyptian consulate in Jeddah.

Article continues below

He demanded that investigators provide the court with “a list of the calls made with that chip,” the judicial source said.

He also challenged further evidence provided by the prosecution.

“The prosecution says I was caught at 5.30am, while in fact I was free till 1.30pm,” he said.

And he dismissed as fabricated pictures showing him with two milk cartons and a cover for the Quran, in which the prosecution alleges he had hidden the banned substance.

“I was forced to sit for this picture seven days after my arrest,” he charged.

The case was adjourned until September 26.

In the first hearing the prosecution demanded the death penalty, the punishment for drug trafficking in the kingdom.

Al Gizawi had travelled in April to Saudi Arabia with his wife to perform the Umrah, a minor pilgrimage to Islam’s

holiest sites in Makkah and Madinah, when he was detained at Jeddah airport, the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information said.

The Egyptian organisation claimed at the time that Al Gizawi was held after he was sentenced in absentia to one year in prison and 20 lashes for criticising the Saudi government.

Al Gizawi was being targeted for his activism over Egyptian detainees in Saudi prisons, it said.

Hundreds of Egyptian protesters rallied outside Riyadh's embassy in Cairo demanding his release, prompting the kingdom to shut down its mission.

The embassy reopened on May 4 following a fence-mending visit to King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz by a large delegation of Egyptian politicians and prominent figures.

<http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/saudi-arabia/egyptian-saudi-court-evidence-fabricated-1.1070720>

● **Kuwait launches investigations into PoWs report**

Daily reported more than 350 of the 600 Kuwait PoWs were alive

Manama Kuwait's foreign ministry has launched a series of moves to verify reports that Kuwaiti Prisoners of War (POWs) were alive and that they have been transferred to neighbouring Iran.

A spokesman for the ministry said that officials held a meeting with Mohammad Bahar Al Oloum, Iraq's ambassador to Kuwait, to request him to check with the Iraqi authorities the accuracy of the reports on the potential existence of the Kuwaiti POWs.

The ministry also asked the Kuwaiti ambassador to Iraq Ali Al Moumen to take up the issue with Iraqi authorities and contacted the regional mission of the International Committee , Kuwait News Agency (Kuna) reported.

Local Arabic daily Al Seyassah on Thursday reported that more than 350 of the 600 Kuwait POWs were alive after the collapse of the regime of Saddam Hussain in March 2003.

The daily said that it gathered the information from Iraqi official and tribal sources who reportedly said that they believed the prisoners were “transferred to Iran as part of political calculations by some parties who took advantage of the collapse of the Iraqi state to smuggle them out of the country and use them later as bargaining cards.”

According to the report, well-informed sources in the Iraqi government revealed that Wadhban Al Tikriti, the former interior minister and half-brother of Saddam Hussain, told the current Iraqi government that most of the Kuwaiti PoWs were alive until the fall of the regime in 2003.

Tribal leaders corroborated the information and said that more than 350 prisoners were held in the prisons of Babel and Samawa in southern Iraq until March 9, 2003 when the Saddam regime fell, the daily reported.

The tribal leaders said that they believed that the prisoners were likely taken to a neighbouring country when Iraq slid into chaos.

<http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/kuwait/kuwait-launches-investigations-into-pows-report-1.1071133>

8. AFGHANISTAN - PAKISTAN

• Karzai Underlines Importance of Consultations with Iran on Regional Issues

Fars News Agency
September 6, 2012

TEHRAN (FNA)- Afghan President Hamid Karzai in a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi stressed the importance of consultations and talks with Tehran on bilateral relations and different regional developments.

Karzai said that exchange of delegations and consultations on bilateral and regional subjects are of great importance.

He conveyed his greetings to Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, calling the 16th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit in Tehran as an "important" event.

The Iranian top diplomat, for his part, called for removal of minor impediments on the way of expansion of Iran-Afghanistan relations.

Salehi thanked Karzai for his presence at the head of a high-ranking delegation in the NAM summit, and conveyed President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's warm greetings to his Afghan counterpart.

He said continued exchange of delegations by Iran and Afghanistan will give an impetus to development of bilateral relations.

Iran is one of the most important donors to Afghanistan, which has kept its promises to help to the reconstruction of the war-ravaged country.

Iran has built several roads, power transmission lines, border stations and many other infrastructure projects to better link the two nations.

Iran has also contributed more than \$50 million annually to Afghan anti-narcotics efforts during the last five years.

Tehran has repeatedly called for a withdrawal of the US-led foreign troops from Afghanistan, stressing that establishment of peace and security in the war-ravaged country is possible only through cooperation among the regional states.

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

- **Al-Qaida operative killed in Afghan town: ISAF**

KABUL, Sept. 6 (Xinhua) -- The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) on Thursday announced that the security forces had killed an al-Qaida operative namely Abu Saif in Afghanistan's eastern Kunar, a statement of the alliance released here said.

"Afghan and coalition forces today confirmed the death of an al-Qaida operative following a precision airstrike in Watahpur district, Kunar province, Friday," the statement noted.

Abu Saif, also known as Haidar Baba, according to the statement had worked with Kunar al-Qaida leaders Yusuf and Mufti Assad, was killed by Afghan and

coalition forces on August 31, along with two other insurgents.

Abu Saif was also a known associate of al-Qaida leader Hanzallah, who was killed along with several of his fighters in July 1 operation in Kunar, the statement further said.

A post-strike assessment determined no civilian property was damaged and no civilians were harmed, the ISAF statement contended.

Taliban militatns whose regime was overthrown by the U.S.-led military compaign in late 2001 for harboring al-Qaida's leader Osama Bin Laden are yet to comment.

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

- **Pakistani Militants Launch Counteroffensive From Afghan Safe Haven**

By Majeed Babar, Charles Recknagel

September 6, 2012

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

Fighting has been raging for more than a week in Pakistan's Bajaur tribal agency as militants surge back into the region from safe havens across the border in Afghanistan.

Just a year ago this area was declared free of insurgents. That was after a three-year military operation that Islamabad hailed as a major success in its strategy of clearing, holding, and developing militant-plagued regions of the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA).

Now, as calls are made for similar operations elsewhere in northwestern Pakistan, the resumption of fighting in Bajaur is raising questions about how effective the strategy really is when safe havens can easily be found across the border in Afghanistan.

The thousands of villagers fleeing the fighting for the safety of Bajaur's main town of Khar tell of relatives and neighbors struck down in the cross-fire.

"I asked my father, 'Why you are going back?' He said, 'We left our doors open, so I am going back to shut them.' And he said one of our relatives, named Mujahid, was

shot dead and there weren't enough people at home to dig graves," says Farooq Shah of the village of Batwar, in Bajaur's Salarzai district

"But when he got back to our house to lock it, the shooting started and he was hit."

Pakistani Taliban insurgents attacked security checkpoints and seized Batwar after crossing over from Afghanistan's Konar Province on August 26.

Azam Khan, another Batwar resident, says the militants told them to leave. "When the Taliban came to the area, and the army arrived too, the Taliban told us to leave quickly to avoid damage," he says. "So we left without taking anything. We don't even have blankets or clothes. We left with nothing."

Shoukat Ullah, Pakistan's federal minister in charge of FATA and the border regions, says the fighting has virtually emptied Batwar and its surrounding area. "More than 2,000 families have left the area so far. Each family from that area has many members, so it means many people are affected," Ullah said, adding that they

received shelter from other people in Bajaur.

Declaration Of Victory Premature

In recent days, security forces claim to have cleared most parts of Batwar of militants but pockets of resistance remain.

How many militants are involved in the fighting is not known. The military has reported dozens of militants killed over the past 12 days, suggesting there could be hundreds of fighters. It has also reported injuries, but no deaths, among Pakistani troops and local tribal fighters known as "peace lashkars" opposed to the Taliban. The official casualty figures cannot be independently verified.

According to the military, all of the militants are members of the Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) -- the same group Islamabad announced in August 2011 was fully evicted from Bajaur. At the time, the government urged hundreds of thousands of residents who had fled the three years of fighting in Bajaur to return home. To ensure that they did, aid to the displaced-persons camps where they were staying was cut off.

But now the TTP's reappearance suggests that it used its eviction as an opportunity to regroup and recruit new fighters. The TTP recruits across Pakistan and includes members of multiple ethnic groups who are bound together by a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam and a goal of toppling the government and imposing strict Shari'a law.

The TTP's use of safe havens in Afghanistan mirrors the Afghan Taliban's successful use of safe havens in Pakistan. The two groups are believed to help each other but to fight only for themselves. No Afghan Taliban groups are reported to be taking part in the Bajaur combat.

Pakistani journalist Rahimullah Yusufzai, an expert on FATA based in Peshawar, says the resurgence of fighting in Bajaur shows how mixed the results of Pakistan's military sweep operations can be. He says the strategy has so far been only been successful in two areas. Both are far from the Afghan border.

"They haven't had a full victory yet. The Pakistani Army has had some success against the Taliban in Swat and in

Malakand district [of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province] -- now there is no presence of the Taliban in those areas. And even if the Taliban want to come back to those areas, they won't be able to come openly," Yusufzai says. "But in my opinion, it's a very long war and it will be very difficult to achieve full victory."

Near the border, security forces have the upper hand in weaponry, including tanks and artillery, to pound militant hideouts in the mountainous region. But the militants' ability to melt across the border to safety gives them a tactical advantage. They can disappear and reappear at will and choose when and where to fight.

Written by Charles Recknagel, based on reporting by RFE/RL Radio Mashaal correspondents Shahnawaz Tarakzai in Bajaur and Siraj Zaheer in Islamabad

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

- **Pakistan Expels Save the Children's Foreign Staff**

VOA News

September 6, 2012

Pakistan has ordered Save the Children's foreign staff members to leave the country.

An official with the U.S.-based aid agency, Ghulam Qadri, told reporters Thursday that the Interior Ministry ordered six foreign employees to leave Pakistan, but gave no reason for the expulsion.

Save the Children is said to have come under increased government scrutiny following media reports that it helped facilitate meetings between the CIA and a Pakistani doctor, Shakil Afridi, who is said to have helped the U.S. intelligence agency track down Osama bin Laden.

U.S. special forces killed the al-Qaida leader in May of 2011 during a covert raid in the Pakistani town of Abbottabad.

Qadri on Thursday denied allegations that the aid group put Afridi in touch with the CIA.

Save the Children has been operating in Pakistan for more than 30 years and employs some 2,000 Pakistani staff members.

Afridi was accused of running a fake vaccination campaign to help the CIA obtain DNA samples to confirm Osama bin Laden's presence at a compound in Abbottabad. In May, a Pakistani court convicted the doctor of having militant ties and sentenced him to 33 years in prison.

The reported expulsion of Save the Children's staff comes a week after the International Committee of the Red Cross announced it was scaling back its aid operations in Pakistan following the killing of one of its staff members in Karachi earlier this year.

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

- **Youth urged to contribute to national development, human rights**

By UNAMA Gardez

6 September 2012 – Hundreds of youth participated at a conference earlier this week in southeastern Paktya province, organized by UNAMA with the aim of encouraging them to contribute to Afghanistan's development and promotion of peace and human rights.

The one-day gathering, which was aired live by local radio and television stations, saw active participation of about 400 youth including university and school students, members of the civil society and Government officials, among others.

University professors, intellectuals and elders spoke on some of the most pressing issues of Afghanistan such as peace and reconciliation, good governance, women's rights and social harmony, and the critical role the youth could play in those areas.

Similar event is planned in the neighbouring Khost province later this month.

"Some miscreants have been propagating poisonous views into the society and break our national unity and this is our youths' core responsibility to nip this evil in the bud," said Habibullah Rafee, a scholar and a member of the Academy of Sciences.

Asadullah Ghazanfar, Law and Political Science professor at Kabul University, said youth could make the driving force for social change. "Fresh minds bear new thoughts and ideas, much more than the

elderly, for bringing evolution, betterment of the society," said Mr. Ghazanfar, urging the youth to tolerate views of the opponents.

"You have to be social...you ought to adjust yourselves according to the changing circumstances because stagnation is the second name of death," Mr Ghazanfar argued.

The Paktya University Chancellor, Abdul Khaliq Farahi, concluded: "Though we have no sufficient human and financial capital, you have to obtain more with fewer resources and actively participate in the economic development of the country, education, health and human rights protection."

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

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

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